

‘Bildung’ and ‘Erziehung’: On the Possibility of a Distinction (and its importance for educational research)

Gert Biesta

Maynooth University Ireland – University for Humanistic Studies, The Netherlands

OR

**What John Dewey doesn’t understand about education
(and Gert Biesta may fail to grasp as well)**

OR

Spooky action at a distance?

INTRODUCTION

my concern is that in a significant part of contemporary educational research something is missing (see also the British Educational Research Journal)

the English language seems to lack a vocabulary for this – it only has the one word ‘education’ – and may only have just one ‘mode’ of theorising

the German language has (at least) two words - ‘Bildung’ and ‘Erziehung’ - and although definitions and distinctions are messy and fuzzy, there may be something ‘there’

which I seek to clarify, also because

there is strong enthusiasm in the Netherlands for ‘Bildung’ as the ‘solution’ for a narrow focus on ‘Ausbildung,’ but something ‘educational’ seems to be missing there as well

THE EINSTEIN-PODOLSKY-ROSEN PARADOX

Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality be Considered Complete?

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Can Quantum-Mechanical Description of Physical Reality Be Considered Complete?

A. EINSTEIN, B. PODOLSKY AND N. ROSEN, *Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, New Jersey*

(Received March 25, 1935)

In a complete theory there is an element corresponding to each element of reality. A sufficient condition for the reality of a physical quantity is the possibility of predicting it with certainty, without disturbing the system. In quantum mechanics in the case of two physical quantities described by non-commuting operators, the knowledge of one precludes the knowledge of the other. Then either (1) the description of reality given by the wave function in

quantum mechanics is not complete or (2) these two quantities cannot have simultaneous reality. Consideration of the problem of making predictions concerning a system on the basis of measurements made on another system that had previously interacted with it leads to the result that if (1) is false then (2) is also false. One is thus led to conclude that the description of reality as given by a wave function is not complete.

1.

ANY serious consideration of a physical theory must take into account the distinction between the objective reality, which is independent of any theory, and the physical concepts with which the theory operates. These concepts are intended to correspond with the objective reality, and by means of these concepts

Whatever the meaning assigned to the term *complete*, the following requirement for a complete theory seems to be a necessary one: *every element of the physical reality must have a counterpart in the physical theory*. We shall call this the condition of completeness. The second question is thus easily answered, as soon as we are able to decide what are the elements of physical

the problem of "spooky action at a distance"



THE PARKS-EICHMANN PARADOX

Can ***'s Description of Educational Reality be Considered Complete?

****: John Hattie/RCT/PISA/SESI/and so on*

or is there something missing?

2 examples

SUCCESS OR FAILURE?



Was Rosa Parks unable to read?

SUCCESS OR FAILURE?



Did Adolf Eichmann learn to listen too well?

THE PARADOX

ROSA PARKS

a case where the qualification task of education seems to have failed,
but where Parks steps forward as an 'I' who refuses the social order imposed on her

ADOLF EICHMANN

a case where the socialisation task of education has been very successful,
but where Eichmann's 'I' is absent from the scene

what is failure/success from the perspective of effective instruction,
is the very opposite from the perspective of the 'I'



the human perspective – the existential perspective
the perspective of 'subjectification' – existing as subject

What is the 'status' of this perspective?

NATURE – NURTURE – EDUCATION?

1/3 – 1/3 – 1/3?

40% – 30% – 30%?

70% – 25% – 5%?

98% – less than 2% – insignificant?

Dietrich Benner – *Allgemeine Pädagogik* (2015)



NATURE & NURTURE = 100%

(the) education(al question) is of a different ‘order’



not: Which natural and social factors determine in what way and to what degree how we become who we are, and how can we get a grip on the impact of these factors?

but: How can an ‘I’ step forward from this?

[and what’s the educational ‘work’ in relation to this?]

(THE) EDUCATION(AL QUESTION) IS EXISTENTIAL

**NOT THE QUESTION WHO WE ARE
or how we become who we are**



identity

**BUT THE QUESTION HOW WE ARE
how we exist**

**the question what we do with who we have become
with what we have learned, our skills, our competences and our incompetence**



subject-ness (in German: 'Subjektivität' or 'Person')

[NOTE: WE'RE BEGINNING TO REACH THE LIMITS OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE]

THIS SUGGESTS THAT THERE MUST BE (AT LEAST) . . .

TWO EDUCATIONAL 'PARADIGMS' (1)

PARADIGM A: THE PARADIGM OF CULTIVATION [including reflexive self-cultivation]



an account of how human individuals become who they are through their engagement with culture in the broadest sense of the words ['culture' & 'engagement']

THE PARADIGM OF CULTIVATION PROVIDES AN EXPLANATION
THE PARADIGM OF CULTIVATION IS ALSO AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMME



to facilitate the widest engagement with the broadest range of culture in order to allow the individual to develop the largest number of capacities in the fullest way possible

A 'PARADIGM CASE': JOHN DEWEY (1859-1952)

EDUCATION AS CULTIVATION



“The problem of education lies in the co-ordination of the individual and social factors.”
the human individual as an ‘acculturated organism’

THE 'POINT' OF EDUCATION IS GROWTH



“Since growth is the characteristic of life, education is all one with growing; it has no end beyond itself.” “The aim of education is to enable individuals to continue their education ... (and) the object and reward of learning is continued capacity for growth.”

DEMOCRACY AS THE OPTIMAL 'CONDITION' FOR GROWTH

“How numerous and varied are the interests which are consciously shared?
How full and free is the interplay with other forms of association?”

CAN WE EDUCATE DIRECTLY?

Dewey: “We never educate directly, but indirectly by means of the environment.”

living organisms in transaction with their environment

experience as ‘doing and undergoing’

when the environment calls forth conflicting habits there is a ‘problem’

which the organism can resolve through trial-and-error

or by inserting symbolic operations (‘acting without acting’)

we gain access to symbols through communication

‘making something in common’ in ‘at least two centres of behaviour’



a theory of reflective problem solving: towards restoring the

‘smooth’ transaction of organism and environment

and a theory of learning: acquiring new habits and acquiring ‘symbolic knowledge’

Q: how can we promote the acquisition of new habits and knowledge?

A: by putting the human organism in different environments!

WHAT IS MISSING IN THIS PICTURE?

this is a theory of intelligent adaptation
a theory of survival



but it's not a theory of life, of human existence

what is absent is the ability to say no
what is absent is the ability to refuse adaptation, intelligent or otherwise

it explains Eichmann, but is unable to speak to Parks

WHAT IS MISSING IS THE 'I'

the 'I' who can speak & the 'I' who can be spoken to

THIS REQUIRES A DIFFERENT EDUCATIONAL 'PARADIGM'
ONE THAT JOHN DEWEY DOESN'T PROVIDE AND MAY FAIL TO UNDERSTAND

TWO EDUCATIONAL 'PARADIGMS' (2)

PARADIGM B: THE EXISTENTIAL EDUCATIONAL PARADIGM the paradigm of the 'I'

the 'I' cannot be produced but is the 'work of the self' (Winfried Böhm)
the educational 'work' in relation to this
is therefore 'Aufforderung zur Selbsttätigkeit' (Dietrich Benner)

not the injunction to be yourself
[the disastrous contemporary obsession with identity]
but the injunction to be a self

"Hey, you there! Where are you?"
to which Eichmann responded: "I'm not here"

this is the 'spooky action at a distance' where we educate directly
not the crossing of two 'centres of behaviour'
but 'soul to soul'

A HESITANT HYPOTHESIS

as I may fail to grasp this as well

**COULD THE TWO PARADIGMS HAVE SOMETHING TO DO
WITH THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN 'BILDUNG' AND 'ERZIEHUNG'?**

It depends who you ask!



“Ein Teil der nicht zu leugnenden Schwierigkeiten hängt damit zusammen, dass die Begriffe ‘Erziehung’ und ‘Bildung’ **schon im Deutschen nicht eindeutig sind und dass es selbst unter deutschen Pädagogen und Erziehungswissenschaftlern spezielle Aversionen und Vorlieben ... gibt.**” (Benner in press)

some see **Erziehung as direction or even indoctrination** and **Bildung as an open process of development and (self-)cultivation** (e.g., Peter Petersen)

some see **Erziehung as reproduction** of the existing societal order and **Bildung as orientated towards emancipation** (e.g. Heinz-Joachim Heydorn)

A DIFFERENT WAY TO MAKE A DISTINCTION

AND IT'S THE DISTINCTION THAT MATTERS

Dietrich Benner (going back to Plato)

Bildung: the ability to direct one's own gaze

Erziehung: the art of directing the gaze of another human being

[education as attention formation]



**Erziehung as the (non-affirmative) attempt to set processes of Bildung into motion,
which, when successful, no longer need Erziehung to continue**

**which sounds a bit like “Aufforderung zur Selbstbildung”
and in his latest book remarkably becomes “Aufforderung to learning”**

not: be a self! – but: be a learner!

which is strange because Parks and Eichmann both learned and were both learners

A DIFFERENT TAKE: DIE PÄDAGOGIK DER PERSON

Winfried Böhm [but also Dutch scholars]



the person is not a 'thing' but the way in which the human being exists

Bildung as the work of the self to be a self
Erziehung (perhaps) as the 'support' for this work

a little less precise than Aufforderung zur Selbsttätigkeit
but more existential than a focus on learning

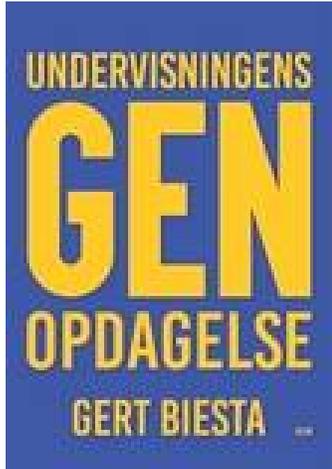
in my own work

“arousing the desire in another human being for wanting to exist in the world in a grown-up way – not driven by one’s desires, but always asking the question whether what one desires is what one should desire”



a first person question
education as the non-coercive rearrangement of desires (Spivak)

THE EXISTENTIAL WORK OF 'EDUCATION' (1)



(1) INTERRUPTION

interruption of desires, of being with oneself,
of identity, of the natural and the social order



by introducing resistance into the life of the child

not any interruption is educational (e.g. direct moral education)
the educational interruption is aimed at grown-up-ness

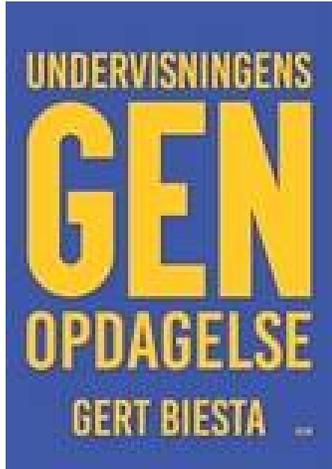


opening up a space in which the I can step forward
but it's still up to the I to step forward or not

Homer Lane: "Do you want to break my watch as well?"

Rancière: Denying students the satisfaction of not being a subject.

THE EXISTENTIAL WORK OF 'EDUCATION' (2)



[2] SUSPENSION

making time, providing space and creating forms
for meeting the world, and meeting ourselves and our desires
in relation to the world
and 'work through' all this



two champions of educational suspension
Janusz Korczak
A.S. Neill's Summerhill



'scholē' as time made free for this

[3] SUSTENANCE

supporting students to stay with the world
and with themselves

THE EXISTENTIAL WORK IS NOT AN 'EXTRA'

**IT IS NOT A HOBBY OF PEDAGOGUES
OR A LUXURY FOR 'POSH' SCHOOLS**

**THE STUDENT HAS TO BE 'IN THE ROOM'
EVEN IF THE FOCUS IS ON QUALIFICATION OR SOCIALISATION**

**THE STUDENT CANNOT BE 'BRACKETED'
BECAUSE IN THAT CASE NOTHING WOULD HAPPEN AT ALL**

**yet although students are 'in the room'
they are being bracketed
and are even asked to engage in 'self-bracketing'
[but that's a topic for next year ...]**

CONCLUDING COMMENTS (1)

I have explored the possibility of a distinction between 2 educational paradigms which may or may not map onto the difference between Bildung and Erziehung but is very difficult to articulate and theorise in English

I have made a case for the necessity of the distinction

the paradigm of education as cultivation is incomplete and leads to the Parks-Eichmann Paradox



overcoming this paradox requires the existential educational paradigm

CONCLUDING COMMENTS (2)

the main implication for research



PARADIGM A allows for research into connections, forces, impact, and even intervention-effect relationships

in PARADIGM B there is ‘spooky action at a distance’

this cannot be ‘grasped’ by paradigm A research, but is nonetheless crucial in light of the PE Paradox and the interest of education in the humane existence of the human being

it either shows the educational limitation of all paradigm A research or calls for different modalities of research

THANKS
for your patience!

gert.biesta@mu.ie
www.gertbiesta.com