

Mathews: What really affects people is a discovery they make within themselves about themselves. These are almost always prompted by seeing or hearing different views. But, by themselves this produces nothing. So, we have to challenge ourselves to think about how the communication engages people. They have to come to discover something in themselves. So, it is not here is a name you didn't have before. It is that this insight or name resonates with something I already knew. Effective communication is to set off a sympathetic vibration. This means you have to know your audience. Communication is something intimate.

Looking back on a long career, concerned with a personalistic understanding of education, one that puts the student at the heart of the matter, I must ask myself some painful questions. What happened to the expectations of my youth? I entered the serious study of education as a graduate student at Columbia University in 1962. Lawrence A. Cremin, a distinguished historian of education, had just won the Bancroft Prize. To those a generation younger, he communicated a conviction that education was a pervasive, human phenomenon, pervading society and the world at large. Complicated configurations of educators, formal institutions of instruction, the press and the media, the pulpit and the publishers, entertainment in many forms, libraries, advertisers and the persuasion of the market and its minions on Madison Avenue, politicians, social convention, parents and peers, were educating everyone, everywhere, all of the time. His challenge was large: let us get them all aware of their concerted power, and with that power, their pedagogical responsibility; let us challenge them to fulfil it with a higher sense of purpose. Working together they could create a markedly better world.

How naïve these expectations now sound, but then, despite the obvious worries of nuclear Armageddon, people were more hopeful, less fearful, more willing to cooperate, sharing expansive visions despite diverging narrow interests. Educational action, understood very broadly, seemed to have both point and power. As always, present realities were highly checkered, but people were willing to imagine stirring futures and to work towards their fulfillment. Expectations were different than now.

Many were forming broader, more inclusive convictions about human dignity, inspired by the movement for civil rights. The Cold War, proclaiming that we stood for the best of all possible

ideals, provoked in many of the young an expectant aspiration for the practice of those democratic ideals fell short and obviously deserved fuller realization, both at home and abroad. Having formed a sense of national purpose as “leaders of the free world,” no small-minded responsibility, Americans engaged in vigorous self-criticism, less as a fit of self-denigration, than as a call to doing better. People felt self-consciousness about American power in the world, reflected in best sellers like “The Ugly American,” asking what do we stand for, not in word, but in the deeds done in our name. Embarrassment over the realities of poverty, want in the midst of abundance, moved a broad political spectrum to try to distribute the goods of life more equitably throughout the whole society, using abundance as a common base of resources supporting an ever-broadening realization of humane potentials in each and all. All this communicated an intimation that transforming public sensibilities, engaging in the education of the public, promised to be a meaningful agency for human betterment.

These expectations informed how some of us then coming of age, each in a distinctive way, defined a sense of what we wanted to further through our life work. We sensed that many of the shortcomings in our world had arisen because civic effort had become fragmented into numerous self-contained specializations, with the public increasingly hamstrung by all the specialties and compartmentalized efforts working at cross-purposes. The challenge, a feasible challenge, was to knit those specialties back together, and a good place to start some of us felt was with the prevailing notion of education. Hence, our big project would unify educational effort by showing how a common idea of human self-formation informed how all the different educators of the public went about their separate activities, enabling them to concert their work into a coherent configuration of effort. Needless to say, such expectations have not worked out as we had hoped.

One of the feelings behind this book is recognition that we haven't seen the flourishing and realization of that idea of education in the past 50 years, rather this world gets further and further away. The key question I begin with is to observe in that world how education and schools, education and institutional actions by formal instructional agencies has progressively been conflated in the public consciousness.

I want to make that conflation clear and challenging. I've heard it in this morning's discussions where some of the time the discussion has been about what I'd call “education,” and at other times “institutional action on others,” the world of instruction. David earlier used the phrase of the importance of people discovering something about themselves from within

themselves. That is a very good definition of what we should mean by education. When we think about what we've had to discover about ourselves from within ourselves in each of our life courses, we'll see that that process of self-recognition, what one values and how one is placed in the world is a continuous process of discovery about ones self from within one's self. The educational experience of the person is this process of discovering what one can do, how one can control oneself in the world as an agent doing what one decides is important to do, and doing so from an inner commitment from within. That has always seemed to me the essence of educational experience and yet we incessantly talk about what our institutions are going to do to people. What we really talk about is curriculum, organization of the institution and we don't do enough of what Brad talked about of saying to you, "This is something that if you are going to discover what is within yourself, you may want to think about."

So, the book is really about why we confuse this education from within with the action of institutions "on." I have gotten old enough, and my diatribe about educational research got distributed and I made the mistake of telling others what was wrong with their behavior. Now I simply ask why do people make this confusion. What in our lives makes it so seductive to think about this inner process as something done "to us," or by others on us? The book is an effort to think through answers to that question. This is an effort of what Max Weber called "begriffbuldung," concept formation, laying out in a clear but engageable way various concepts that help us understand this conflation of education and institutional action.

The genius of modernity from 1500 to the present has been to refine the power of causal explanation in all sorts of different aspects of the human world. Because we are very dependent upon refining our understanding of causality, we look for opportunities everywhere. This leads us to try to make education a set of causal actions on other people. This is why, while it's been around as long as people, there is another way to think about people, as a series of interactions, reciprocal, simultaneous. Out of that there are many things emerging from interactions. Almost as an aside, the challenge that the Kettering foundation has is that it's an effort to mobilize reciprocities and interactions in a world hooked on causalities. Most of the time people will hear one talking about reciprocities and interactions and emergence from people doing things together even unconsciously as kind of unpredictable and without clear payoff. An example is the stuff about the "business plan." Reciprocity is a source of emergent change and for an historian this is very important. This is what makes the world second nature to us today that 1000 years ago would have been

entirely unfamiliar. Interaction in historical time has a lot of effect in compressed historical time.

We need to be alert to these and to encourage the conditions that may help them be humane and truly fulfilling, rather than destructive. I try to cultivate a utopian consciousness that is realistic not in a causal sense and not leading to chaos, but in a holistic sense.

I want to contrast what we mean when we speak about justice in our world and several meanings of it, not to argue one is superior to the other, but that a full discourse requires both. When we speak of justice with respect to education we speak of distributive justice, of education as a public good that gets distributed either to the very rich who can pay for it, or we will devise various mechanisms that broaden access to those public goods. This is very, very important and I don't mean to lessen its importance, but it is not very pertinent to the question of what goes on when we discover something about ourselves within ourselves. It is pertinent to what resources our society provides for us to work with in that process of self-discovery.

But what kind of justice pertains to the process of self-discovery? I argue the key is formative justice, a problem of justice that each of us, every organization has. That is, if we understand justice as a principle for making constrained choices in the real world of mortal humans who must choose between goods with reason. Formative justice is a problem that comes into being because we are always facing more possibilities and potentialities, all of us and all the groups in between, than we have the energy, intelligence, wisdom, the capacity to bring to fulfillment so we have to make choices about how we are going to deploy those capacities for things we begin to discover for ourselves. This catches my attention at the same time as that. How will I direct my attention and energy each day among the many different possible goals we face? This is a problem of justice of making constrained choices that we each engage in and in the process of which we form ourselves, as do all institutions, making an agenda of its being in the world.

Meetings such as this are a discussion of potential institutional commitment, an example of formative justice in operations, informing the agenda each member of the community builds for itself and in the long run that of the community as a whole. This is a discourse or set of concerns we as educators do a poor job of projecting to other people. You don't really hear discussions directly with students about their dilemmas, about how they want to allocate their energies in their lives, what goals are most important. Perhaps it happens in dormitories or when professors and students go out for beer – outside of formal

instruction, but the whole society needs much, much more of this.

Yesterday, David put questions about how Kettering communicates with its various constituencies and to me it raised this question of how you, as an educator, you speak to the realities of formative justice in the specifics of other peoples' lives and the urge always is to inform the teacher about the student, and that in a sense is not terribly useful in the self-formation of the student. The student learns the most from learning about the full humanity of the potential teacher. When we internalize a role as a teacher, whether to teach this or that, or be this or that way, to say I am in my classroom now and what I do outside is my business doesn't tell students very much. People learn by observing the being of others in the world, yet so much of the educational process puts a shell on all of that messy humanness. Really, this is enough. I try to imagine a world in which people are less self-defensive and self-assertive in a selfish way and how that might lead to a great interaction of the potential people have. In order really to interact well we have to be willing to disclose ourselves and say what is on our minds and speak forthrightly, not to try to cause this action, but to engage with others who are also willing to disclose themselves. This is the one great point of optimism to me – the Internet and all of the new communications systems are interactive, not causal, media, ways of amplifying the potentiality of interaction people have, and to learn how to control ourselves within that is one of the great challenges of the future and I hope you all do it well.

I feel these ideas are very pertinent to the agenda of Kettering. My book is essentially self-published on Amazon. We need to engender a lot of interactive talk and action around real issues where all sides to the party consider themselves not trying to predict the outcome of the interaction causally, but to enter into it as an open possibility, to discover together what might come out of it.

Hal: Two weeks ago, we had a multinational group in the room. A lot revolved around the keyboard as promoting the kind of interaction you are talking about, but the primary focus was whether you can do the kind of education you speak of, that is bringing whole human beings interaction with other whole human beings, and whether you can do this other than face-to-face.

Rob: I think that the great use of interactive digital technologies is to facilitate the convening of different kinds of meetings, on-line and face-to-face. One of the most interesting social software items is a program called "Meet-Up." It uses

digital technology to facilitate the spontaneous convening of common interests. It is meetup.com. It is very interesting simply to note the topics on which people are trying to convene around. Without such a program, such meetings would hardly take place. So, I don't see it as a digital world going to undercut face to face.

Bob: When you began you spoke specifically about the 15th century, the awareness of causality and therefore reciprocity and so on. So, I wonder what in the 15th century made that happen – accidents of history, development of print, variations in religious authority, or why was the pursuit of perfection there? Really, I am asking what is it about the 21st century that makes that a good example? What should we be including?

Rob: Your question is very important and it is important to not get pulled into giving a causal explanation in response which would lead into an endless regressive argument. There are many things, for instance Bacon pointed to the compass and print as very powerful inventions in that initial period. The way of speaking I'd like to nurture changes the spectrum of possibilities. It doesn't determine what will happen, but may shift the feasibilities of experience, what kinds of interactions will take off and which won't.

On the 21st century, digital technologies are one. The constraints that arise from recognition that on a global scale human interaction is feeding back on the feasibility of human life. The exhaustion of the principle of enclosure through institution building, while historically powerful, as in all forms of life, may be coming up against their limits, forcing people to think there must be better ways to do things.

Randy: When you described education, I have been forever stuck using that lens regarding one of our longest-running experiments, that is with issue forums, but seen as an experiment in providing settings where people can learn from the experience with other people together addressing the challenges they face in the world. This can be seen as discovery of what one values. Part of it is individual discovery of what one values, but also the discovery that what one values contains multitudes of things often in tension and thus choice becomes political, within each of us. That can emerge in these things. The challenge is how such a setting can be created so that that challenge can emerge.

But, that is not always how those things are used. Another way to see what those forums are, and it is a related but different goal, as a setting to discover what citizens want and then to

report it to other. There has always been tension in that, including how can such settings be supported by issue guides, the roles of moderators, etc. That has always intrigued me, at least those two tensions, but there are also other motivations for people using these guides. Thinking about them as experiments in trying to set up educational experiences as you describe them could really be helpful. But, the tension between that and the idea that this is about choice, not education. David said that if this is seen simply as people talking together, then its political import may not be recognized. I find this an intriguing tension.

Rob: If one looks at what goes on in all kinds of very directive political settings, the raw materials are not that much different from the issue books. They are people trying to provide information about the issue, perhaps more tendentiously, but it is basically the same information. There is a specifiable difference in the skill with which that is done – possibility, not prediction. The politician tries to use the information to predict how the person being communicated with will act.

When Kettering and Public Agenda introduce issue forums, they are not trying to predict what should come out of the engagement. They are saying it is possible this group will come up with a sound consensus through deliberation and such a consensus will be of value and enlightening to the larger public. Entering in to the engagement believing there is an outcome that is possibly valuable and attainable, rather than predictable. This is a difference between faith in the possible and reach for the predictable.

One of my beefs with the academic world is that it's totally dependent upon and reaching for predictions, scientifically provable, rather than trying to nurture self-discovery.

Ray: You say something in your article about the educational world of 2162.

Rob: As an author, I tried to take a distant perspective not to make predictions, but to free myself and others from thinking that that world will be a straight-line extrapolation of our world today. One can imagine all kinds of worlds. I tried to imagine one that would be hospitable to things I value. Economically, it would be one in which the market is recognized as a flawed instrument and an intelligently guided commons is recognized as a better way to allocate resources.

Educationally, our institutions as we know them are actually much more effective as disseminators of basic skills than they are given credit for today. I would envision in a future world that comes to a “soft landing” that those will be much like today.

What I would like to see different is to put real pedagogical pressure on all the other powerful agencies of communication in our society. It is an outrage to look at the commitments with any standard of truth or decency understood basically humanely that our mass communications systems and political discourse takes as legitimate. It would be important to put increasing pressure, some political, some economic, some from within, to make less manipulative, to diminish the causal power of some of these extraneous educators. Under this idea, the dissemination of basic skills would be the prerogative of everyone and more fruitful to each in a society much more committed to the full humane development of all its members, rather than manipulating all kinds of features of it to gorge some of its members.

The goals of a well-understood distributive justice will come about with a more forceful and vigorous commitment to formative justice.

Alice: In our work with cooperative extension which traditionally simply disseminates knowledge has muted into some people putting their whole selves into this work, but their institutions are incapable of recognizing this due to the ingrained nature of current paradigms.

Rob: The ideas and commitments of something like the Reformation has a long life in medieval times, but they were repeatedly frustrated. Under shifting circumstances, the same commitments can become very powerful. An alertness to the possibilities of such shifting give one hope to stay the course.

Derek: I want to pick up on Alice's point and challenges in our work in general and pose a question inspired by Rob. I was thinking of the ecology of democracy idea, the idea that education is all institutions and professions, that they can't do their work by themselves, that they all function in a larger ecosystem. I guess where I think a common challenge in reaction to some of the readings and discussion today is what are the practical implications of this? We work with people in schools, journalism and elsewhere. If this is our notion of democracy and we work with people trying to push democracy, what should we be looking for? I'm not sure we have a good answer for that.

Randy: As we pose questions about how institutions may align their practices with citizens, one way to think about this is about how democracy should be, a normative claim. A better way is to state it as a fact – have you noted the impact what you do has on others? Often when people use “ecology” as a conceptual framework, it sounds to me as a normative idea, but then you

get stuck. We aren't saying to school administrators that you "should" see yourself as in community – you are in community. In communicating these ideas this distinction has implications for the sorts of conversation involved.

Derek: But if it is a descriptive claim, the answer may be you have nothing to do as democracy will evolve on its own.

Rob: If one were to take as a case problem of the school administrator, I'm not sure whether it would be normative or empirical, but it is close to an empirical observation that the current denigration of the effectiveness of schools is dysfunction, operating to deflect them from many of their proper purposes. What happens if people from Kettering say that is what we observe. Is it your perception on the ground? If it is an important perception, what do you want to do about it. From that, you can formulate ways in which you can help them do something about it, rather than coming with a pre-formulated position.

What I was saying earlier about disclosing what we really think, I don't know about the rest of the world, but I know the academic world is organized and functioning in such a way most academics don't feel they can say what they think, irrespective of tenure. They have reputations to defend. We are conscious that the Soviet world suffered from conformism, but our world now is deeply involved conformist structures that prevent people from going to others and saying this is what I see, these are problems. I think that that is short-cutting our ability to solve problems together because we can only talk about them through very constrained filters that impose a grievous unreality on us.

Paloma: Ernesto Duval does a lot of theater work to reveal repressing in society, working in authoritarian societies. When he say the same thing in democratic countries, the phrase he used was the internal censor.

The notion of finding fulfillment, how to deploy our energies, cuts to the core of what we are about. There are faculty seeking to unite public purpose with academic life. My young friends see this as part of moving from one age to another. College was supposed to be the route to fulfillment, that the job you get would be fulfilling, but it is even more difficult when you don't go that route. I grew up the child of parents of the 1960s believing that life is going to get better. I am married to a Cuban born the year of the revolution in 1959 that encapsulated the idea that people can change.

To one degree, you seem to be saying that if we only shared our collective grappling, change would happen. If we as a society

are trying to work with young people and help them think about deployment of energies, in a utopian sense, that is necessary, but it rubs harshly against realities – financial obligations, the work required to survive. This rub is what I personally struggle with and also a tension as we work in higher education.

Rob: That gets at a basic tension. Habitually, as a useful shorthand, we use phrases like “find a job that will be fulfilling.” For me, the problem of formative justice is that one is always faced with multiplicities and it’s one’s own problem not to find the outcome that is more fulfilling but to make decisions that in and of themselves will be more fulfilling than alternative decisions one might make, so that in real time we are allocating our energies to things that we value but some more than others. That doesn’t do away with the problem you speak of, but it is a way of situating our inner dialogue.

Phil S:

Keith: If I am a student at Teachers College and want to know what to do. I hear a persuasive critique, but what should I do. For the past 50 years there have been many species of alternative schools. Are there particular models that you affirm as something like the direction you are pointing and affirming in your book.

Rob: Yes and no. There is Chris Higgins who’s published *The Good Life of Teaching*, the argument of which is we don’t want to subject teachers to strict accountability. The best teachers are fully developing their own potentiality as humans and are committed to interacting with young people as such. A preparation of teachers that tries to say this is an altruistic commitment where you must sacrifice yourself to do it well leads to the desiccation of the teaching profession. My short answer is not that great teaching is not going on in all kinds of institutions, good and bad. It is very important to encounter some really powerful teachers, but someone who only encountered such would probably emerge very neurotic and mixed up. A lot of our educational life takes memories of those rare encounters and mixes them with good and bad encounters. This is an important reality for each child. So, my question is how can we, almost in a sense, randomize the possibilities in such a way that everybody gets a good shot of stimulus and lots of stuff to meditate about and reflect upon? Today, some get a whole lot and others not much. We are putting too much external pressure on both students and teachers for them to do their work. We don’t trust them to do their work, in a deep sense.

Randy: It sounded to me earlier that you had suggested, if you

think of education as disparate, on-going outcomes, would one implication being that public schools should do much less. You might say, schools should do what they can do – that is teach basics, and quit thinking of them as places where they learn civic or sex education, and focus on places where these can be better taught.

Rob: If you want to look at what real schools should be like, then hang out at very good schools for very rich kids with the resources to do what should be done. Their programs are not just the basics, but it also is the basics in a full and firm sense. I don't see why a society committed to realizing human potential that that kind of education cannot be offered to everyone. It is a matter of political will. When economic elites send their kids to the best private schools but then argue that class size and complexity doesn't matter, they are selling a bad bill of goods.

Randy: There you are talking about distributive justice, right?

Rob: We frame too many issues as distributive justice, but if you formulate the same issue as one of formative justice you have a lot better chance of ending up with something in the interests of each and all and we don't do that enough.

John: This discussion is enormously fascinating. I have a comment. If I listen to your argument, you are in part involved in an archaeological discussion about democracy. At some point around 1500 a kind of reasoning emphasizing causality, and along with that forms of representative democracy and the politics of "zoo-keeping." IN that, politics is the activity of some group ratified by others at intervals, in which politics allocates goods. What you are doing is recovering elements of a rich democratic and public tradition which reminds us that poitics is deeply experiential. Second, you did not use the word "dialectical," if I look at this history, what you are talking about is often called dialectic, where possibilities emerge from the coexistence of difference. Causality rules out this dialectic thinking. IN this emergent paradigm of politics contesting representative politics, people are saying interests are not fized and we have to think of democratic politics as open-ended, having more possibilities then we can realize. Politics is open-ended but constrained. So, I value your bringing out these alternative to causality.

Peter: I am interested in economic justice. We talked about institutions and who owns them and how do people decide that "we" own them in a culture where private property has certain rules. So, how do we change universities and change an economy into a democratic economy. I am chewing on that.

Melinda: This has been so stimulating. A while back, you were talking about how we don't trust educators to do the work they do. This made me think of a Facebook post I saw this morning. A high school friend of mine now teaches science courses. She said she feels under so much stress she is considering another profession. My assumption is this is about what it is to be a high school teacher today. I am very interested in knowing why she feels this way. She pointed out she'd be giving up financial stability by leaving. This links to our finding that many students want to know how to get a job but also how to be a contributing member of society in the work they do. I too want to pick up your book.

David H: As an editor, I express my appreciation for the term "pundits of public pusillanimity."

Your point about educational research struck me. As a journalist I watched a lot of public discussion about educational reform which led to bad outcomes. At the beginning, much of this was pushed by citizens who saw bad things in the schools, but I never saw any meaningful contribution by educational researchers, as if they had abandoned that field, but then afterwards, educational researchers were free to decry the outcome. This suggests that educational research is not useful to citizens who have legitimate concerns about the functions of schools and the education of young people. Is this fair?

Rob: I've lived in a number of places regarded as dangerous, but the reality was very different. I've been in lots of schools publicly conceived as dangerous and failing schools, but a lot of constructive is going on in them. A lot of things get started. Real perceptions are not always accurate. Somewhere there we need to address this genuine problem of communication that activates all kinds of issues based upon false perceptions. The passivity of people who know better is itself a false perception. Higher education has all sorts of structural problems but many other of them are misperceptions. It is not the press' fault, but in part the press is an agent in this. How to make our realities clear is a challenge.

On John's point, again, it is a calibration question. This is called "Enough," because we need to think seriously about what is enough to sustain the lives we wish. We have to think about this globally as well as personally. Personally we often commit ourselves to not doing highly fulfilling things in pursuit of "more" without asking what would really be fulfilling. Being able to consider seriously what is neither too much nor too little is challenge, but we often are unable to perceive what is "too much."

David: We talk about “arresting” questions and this was an arresting question. Such questions cause you to see yourself. Something tells us you are saying the same as us but it sounds different, so it is arresting.

In the 1920s, Columbia was the largest university in the country. It was set upon by intellectuals in the city, including W.E. B. Dubois. But, eventually they got in and by the 40s and 50s they were streaming out of Columbia into neighboring centers, one was Union Theological Seminary, and the other was this institution dedicated to this institution dedicated to teachers. Columbus began to build bridges between these places. But, it was possible for those of us enrolled in the Graduate School of Liberal Arts of Columbia and we were allowed to cross these streets and go into Union College and Teachers College, but we were not educators. John Dewey actually built those bridges. So, for a brief shining moment, there was this outpouring from Columbia to these other places. In time, the professionals in the school wanted to talk about their things and they wanted answers to questions. They were into causality, so only a few were left, and Robbie was the last of the Mohicans in Columbia.

But, it was a heady time. Keith worked with Amatai Etzioni. On the strength of this, I asked Robbie to talk to HEW. We had brown bag lunches and he drew a young crowd of folks, to the annoyance of the older folks.

Let me try to connect what Robbie said to our work. We are talking about “choice democracy,” not deliberative democracy. The latter is no longer about choice rather feeling good. Choice is at the heart of politics. What is important about choice politics, in Robbie’s language is that it is not just about moving the village, but it creates not just the personal self but also the collective self.

Now, on Homo Erectus, they live in us through out gene pool. We think we are small creatures dropping from trees and learning to walk erect. The Savannah would burn and we learned that consuming protean was good and eventually we learned that we could use fire and create a hearth, learning causality, knowing that the fire makes the meat more tender and digestible. Causality was and still is very important to survival. But, the ultimate lesson was that human beings cannot control everything. This gave rise to religion to help us deal with lack of causality. So, the ultimate in politics is to try to exercise as much control as we can, knowing that ultimately we can’t control everything. It is in making choices to try to control that we, in fact, constantly reform ourselves collectively. It is this reformed self that allows us to see reality differently. What we capture from choice work is what these reformed people now see

as policy choices. Yet, the ability to form is totally dependent upon the recognition of tensions. This is why in our new framings we have to concentrate on the tensions between possibilities. The tensions are formative, over what is most valuable to us, about the things that make us secure and free and resilient. This is absolutely crucial if the choice work is to be formative.

Institutions are the descendants of causality. We built institutions to capture what we know about causality. If you do X, then Y will happen, in medicine, military and so forth. We don't want to give up on causality. But, what we've done here is to arrest the proper bent toward causality by introducing the reality that ultimately we cannot control, so we build interactive relationships where we can continue to reform ourselves, for practical reasons.

This is why one of the most regrettable things in higher education is that all of this outreach and community development lacks intellectual rigor. It is that their ability to hold one another accountable is lacking. We lack the absence not of professional philosophers, but the absence of philosophizing.

To sum up, we are properly appreciative of a conversation that has arrested us, and perhaps in some way Robbie as well.

End of meeting