Predictability and Liberty

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Abstract

Predictability tends to elicit a clear behavioral response and hence, for humans, it is a basic need in both their physical and social environment. However, the liberty inherent in a democratic society makes life essentially unpredictable and, in this sense, may create a sense of unease in its citizens who then may strive for stability in dogma. Dogmatism, however, is antithetical to democratic liberty. Once we take up this Janus focus of democracy, i.e., that it can lead to the best of times and the worst of times, it becomes clear that, to preserve democracy, we must educationally invest in anchoring predictability in the individuals rather than in the environment in which they subsist, and that we can achieve this (i) by explicating clearly to young citizens that the chaos of reasons doing battle is fundamentally different from the chaos of persons doing battle, and (ii) by shoring up what Charles Taylor (1989) calls strong evaluation, i.e., shoring up the ability to confidently and independently judge the worth of any proposed action and how it reflects on one's ideal self. We will argue, perhaps counterintuitively, that this confidence in the predictability of one's capacity for independent thought can best be achieved through an education that affords frequent engagement in "truth-seeking" interpersonal inquiries of the sort frequently utilized the practice of Philosophy for Children, but one that is buttressed by reinforcing the belief in Truth and, as well, by exposing participants to "truth-seeking" interpersonal dialogues that are focused on genuine, relevant, and difficult moral quandaries.

Keywords: predictability, liberty, strong evaluation, Philosophy for Children, democracy, reasoning.

1. Introduction

Predictability tends to elicit a clear behavioural response and hence, for humans, it is a basic need in both their physical and social environment. However, the liberty inherent in a democratic society, though to many an ideal state, makes life essentially unpredictable and, in this sense, may create a sense of unease in its citizens who then may strive for stability in dogma. Dogmatism, however, is antithetical to democratic liberty.

This paradox, that liberty on the one hand seems like a basic goal for most humans but, on the other, brings with it an environment that is anathema to many, may ultimately undermine the viability of democracy, particularly, again paradoxically, when that democracy is not under external threat, since an external threat creates a clear predictable call to arms. This

itself gives birth to a further paradox and that is that, though conflict with an external power is clearly unpredictable, the internal matrix of the society in times of conflict is stable.

On the assumption that most democracies do not want to depend on an external invasion to stabilize their internal matrix—though Irshad Manji wonders if we should pray for intergalactic aliens to storm Planet Earth so we can all act together in fear of the new "them" (2019, p. 130)—we suggest that educators take seriously the unease citizens often feel when subjected to democratic chaos, and that they recognize that the battlefield tactics often used to bring everyone in line in such situations are, at their core, a yearning for predictability. On the assumption that such battlefield tactics undermine the possibility of democratic dialogue and hence the viability of a democratic way of life, it will be argued that the goal of educators ought to be twofold: (i) to explicate clearly to young democratic citizens that the chaos inherent in a democracy is essentially different than chaos *per se,* i.e., that *reasons* doing battle is fundamentally different from *persons* doing battle in that, while the outcome is unpredictable, the process ought not to be, and (ii) to assuage the need for predictability by relocating it internally, hence dissipating the urgency to create external predictability through attempts at forced conformity while at the same time, arming young citizens with the necessary tools to engage in democratic often chaotic dialogue while avoiding battlefield tactics.

Here it is being suggested that shoring up the predictability of an individual's internal environment requires an education that nurtures what Charles Taylor (1989) calls *strong evaluation*, i.e., the ability to confidently and independently judge the worth of any proposed action and how it reflects on one's ideal self.

While it may initially seem counterintuitive to some, we will argue that this ability to confidently and *independently* judge the worth of any proposed action and how it reflects on one's ideal self requires an education that affords frequent engagement in "truth-seeking" *interpersonal* inquiries that are focused on genuine, relevant, and difficult moral quandaries in which participants have something at stake. These are the sorts of inquiries that frequently transpire within the context of Philosophy for Children[1] that utilized the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (Kennedy & Kennedy, 2011), as it prime pedagogical format. However, we suggest, in addition, (i) and in concert with the unlikely ally of Michel Foucault, that internal predictability requires a special emphasis on *truth*, since truth will be the guiding light that affords the sense of predictability, and (ii) that the topics under inquiry are specifically focused on *genuine, relevant, and difficult moral quandaries in which participants have something at stake,* since participants will need frequent practice in changing their minds in the face of "truthier" options so that, in the real world, they do not become disoriented when reason requires that they toss tried and true assumptions and opinions into the dustbin.

2. Predictability is a basic need

For all organisms, predictability is a basic need. Being able to model the environment in way that affords a clear response is crucially important because it maximizes our chances of survival and the pursuit of desirable ends. Gardner, in her article, "Education in the context of Uncertainty" (2023), refers to this need for predictability as the "will to stability" and notes that,

> "as anyone with any knowledge of animals will tell you, lack of predictability is the source of extreme anxiety. Better to know that that is a predator, then to not be sure. A clear stimulus elicits a clear response. Ambiguity can leave us paralyzed" (pp. 166-7).

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1 https://www.icpic.org/.

Humans, however, are in a more dire predicament than nonhumans. Aside from always being on the lookout for what supports or hinders *bodily integrity*, humans also need to be on the lookout for what supports or hinders what might be termed *self-integrity*. Thus, Charles Taylor, in his book, *Sources of The Self* (1989) argues that,

> "the difference between humans and non-humans is that the former live within a framework or horizon, i.e., that the question arises as to the worth of your life, that you live in a public space and may be spotlighted with respect or contempt" (p. 25).

Taylor argues that predictability within the human *evaluative* environment can, aside from the physical environment, likewise be considered a basic need. He claims, for instance, that an "identity crisis" results when people feel they occupy a space of radical uncertainty, when they "lack a frame or horizon within which things can take on a stable significance, within which some life possibilities can be seen as good or meaningful, others bad and trivial" (p. 27). Adding to this is Erich Fromm's (1941) observation that in addition to meeting their physiological needs, humans need a sense of belonging and stable relationship to the social world in which they live (*Escape from Freedom*, p. 15). When individuation is pushed to its limits, primary ties are severed and the individual feels isolated, anxious, and paralyzed (p. 17, 20).

3. Democratic chaos gives rise to "A will to dogma"

When Alexis de Tocqueville (1835) spoke about the democratic atmosphere in his book *Democracy in America*, he used the choice words of "disorder," "agitation," "conflict" and "confusion" (p. 21). Twenty-four years later, John Stuart Mill (1859) published *On Liberty in* which he argued that, despite its often-unpleasant nature, democracy—and the conflicting ideas it gives rise to—are the very foundation of freedom, and what allow us to test the stalwartness of our ideas.

If Mill is correct in his assessment regarding the importance of this conflict quagmire, this fact does nothing to downplay or mitigate the psychological pains experienced by those in the midst of it. In his (1941) book *Escape from Freedom*, Erich Fromm argues that most peoples' experience of democratic freedom is exhausting and agonizing rather than liberating because it severs primary ties, demands that one take responsibility for their choices, puts one into conflict with others in pursuit of their own ends, and is often rife with unpredictability (p. 17, 21). As he puts it, "Freedom, though it has brought [man] independence and rationality, has made him isolated and, thereby, anxious and powerless" (p. 9). In response to this angst, Fromm argues that ideological dogma and authoritarianism appear as welcome havens and sources of reprieve (p. 131, 134). As Fromm writes, by allying oneself to such forces "One also gains security against the torture of doubt" (p. 134).

Similarly, in his 1999 book *Maps of Meaning,* psychologist Jordan Peterson argues that the temptation to surrender one's individuality and freedom is ever-alluring because it presents itself as the promise of certainty and security (p. 378). The inclination to not take any unnecessary risks is evolutionarily advantageous for one's bodily integrity, but evolutionarily disastrous for one's self-integrity, as it saps one of their creativity, foments resentment, and, as the next section will outline, predisposes one to danger brought on by willful blindness.

4. But democratic chaos is a safeguard against dogmatic blindness

Democracy only works if agents take responsibility for critically evaluating the actions of the society in which they live. This critical evaluation, from persons of different political persuasions and convictions, helps to create a cross-elimination of error (Surowiecki, 2004). In

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the absence of such rigorous evaluation, a society is left vulnerable to ideologies, i.e., myopic and rigid misconceptions of the world that oversimplify and misassign value.

In his book *Beyond Order* (2021), author Jordan Peterson argues that one must be wary of ideology because it puts one at risk of serious miscalculation and error. In Peterson's words, ideology is a "fatal attraction" because it "hypersimplifies" existence (p. 169). The antidote to ideology, in turn, is to treat problems at the right level of focus with the care that they deserve. In other words, we must abandon thumbnail images for highly-pixelated renderings if we are to adequately understand and address the problems polluting our social environment.

Democratic debate, of the right kind, helps ensure that issues are pushed beyond a superficial rendering and adequately explored and discussed. This, in turn, helps minimize the blindness that ideology and dogmatism give rise to because democracy allows for the cross-elimination of error through falsification and perspective-exposure. This is not a new point, and one that harkens back to Socrates, Plato and others who pointed out the power of logos to illuminate the right way of living. Most poignantly, John Stuart Mill (1859) articulated this idea in his work *On Liberty*. Mill writes,

> "He who knows only his own side of the case knows little of that. His reasons may be good, and no one may have been able to refute them. But if he is equally unable to refute the reasons on the opposite side, if he does not so much as know what they are, he has no ground for preferring either opinion [...] Nor is it enough that he should hear the opinions of adversaries from his own teachers, presented as they state them, and accompanied by what they offer as refutations. He must be able to hear them from persons who actually believe them [...] he must know them in their most plausible and persuasive form" (p. 36).

Mill's point takes aim at the false sense of confidence and security many have in views not yet challenged or exposed to critique. Importantly, this preference for one's own views is not rational, as the strength of any position can only be determined by testing it against the viewpoints of others. This, crucially, is why democracy is so important: it provides the environment in which the process of error-elimination can transpire.

While the process of exposing one's viewpoints to others feels tumultuous, as it is inevitably accompanied by cognitive dissonance (Heine & Proulx, 2006), insecurity (Peterson, 1999), and doubt (Fromm, 1941), it is ultimately in the best interest of the selves, as it helps ensure they have ridded their maps of inaccuracies and tested their ideas through dialogue. The alternative, to this course, though often not articulated, is to learn what ideas are sound and misguided through pain and disaster.

5. The difference between democratic chaos and battlefield chaos

Democratic governance is chaotic in the sense that one can never be sure of the outcome when people of different persuasions engage in dialogue, nor, of course, can one be sure of the results of any given election. On the other hand, it needs to be recognized that democracy is not intended to be chaotic in the same way that chaos *per se* reigns, for example, on the battlefield since in the former, it is presumed that the battle is fought with reasons, unlike the latter in which the battle is fought between persons.

However, it is critical that in order for *reasons* rather than *persons* to do battle, participants must recognize the fundamental difference between the two, and the mark that participants have indeed recognized that this is a battle of reasons and not persons is, at least according to Stephen Darwell (2006), that they engage with one another in what he refers to as "the second-person stance"; that in making claims and demands of one another, they presuppose that they share a common second-personal authority, competence, and responsibility simply as

free and rational agents (p. 5) and in this sense, they show one another reciprocal respect (p. 21); that they accept that the reasons they offer are grounded in something that is independent of their stance, that they are believer-neutral (p. 56); that they recognize that this process is *fundamentally different from coercion* in that it seeks to direct the other through her own free choice and in a way that recognizes her status as a free and rational agent, with the goal, in other words, being to *guide rather than goad* (emphasis added, p. 49). It is, thus, in this sense that, while the *outcome* of "democratic chaos" may be unpredictable, the *process,* at least insofar as it remains under second-personal authority, ought to not to be.

However, according to Darwell, there is a distinct downside to this form of interpersonal negotiation and that is that we must give up on focusing *how we want the world to be* and instead recognize that what is important is *how we relate to one another* (p. 38). And to Darwell's claim it might be added that we ought to give up focusing on trying to *persuade* the other on what we *know* to be the case, and instead recognize that, in gaining a glimpse of how it is possible—curiously—that another reasonable being sees the issue in a completely different way, we will thereby gain a significantly *deeper understanding* of the issue at hand—like talking to others each of who have access to different parts of the elephant.

But, wanting the world to be x or not-x and wanting others to see the world the same way we do sometimes become so overwhelming that "so-called" reasoners revert to battlefield tactics of ad hominem attacks and outright falsifications with such force that democratic chaos regresses into battlefield chaos which, in turn, instigates widespread fear of the unpredictability to which it gives rise, thus instigating a negative feedback loop. In the process, individuals lose their own agency as critical reflectors and evaluators and become, instead, dogmatic propaganda factories seeking forced agreement.

6. Relocating predictability internally through educating for strong evaluation.

For democracy to survive, clearly it is imperative that democratic citizens be educated so as not to fear democratic chaos. Such an education, we suggest, must focus on helping young citizens understand that they do not need a predictable external environment as long as they have absolute confidence in the stability of the internal environment, i.e., in their capacity to evaluate and respond effectively to the questions that their lives ask of them (Frankl, 1984). As Fromm (1941) writes, "the real aim of education is to further the inner independence and individuality of the child, its growth and integrity" (p. 209).

In describing this capacity, Charles Taylor, in his book *Sources of the Self* (1989) describes the human predicament as "a space of questions" (p. 29) and he argues that being able to confidently answer these questions is necessary to provide "the horizon within which we know where we stand, and what meanings things have for us" (p. 29).

What is particularly interesting about Taylor's analysis is that he says this "horizon" is one that made up of strong evaluations (p. 29) and that this framework of strongly valued goods is necessary for agency (p. 31). In other words, we don't have selves in the way that we have hearts and livers. We are only selves only insofar as we move in a certain space of questions, as we seek and find an orientation of the good (p. 34).

Elsewhere, in his book *Human Agency and Language* (1985), Taylor argues that the goal for each self is to become a "*strong evaluator*" (p. 23), i.e., an individual who can envision alternatives through a rich linguistic matrix, and so decide the best course of action utilizing a *vocabulary of worth* (p. 24), as opposed to one of *simple desires*. This is similar to Harry Frankfurt's (1971) notion of accessing second order desires, i.e., having the capacity to make qualitative characterizations of desires as higher and lower, noble and base.

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It is important to note that, when Taylor describes the goal of selves is to become *strong* evaluators, he is not saying that we need to *strongly* stick to our own values. On the contrary. A strong evaluator is someone who remains strongly committed to the *process* that results in the emergence and continual honing of the values that guide their decisions and choices. It is a form of practical reasoning which he describes as

> "reasoning in transitions. It aims to establish, not that some position is correct absolutely, but rather that some position is superior to some other. It is concerned, covertly or openly, implicitly or explicitly, with comparative propositions. We show one of these comparative claims to be well founded when we can show that the *move* from A to B constitutes a gain epistemologically" (Taylor, 1989: 72).

The nerve of the rational proof in practical reasoning thus consists in showing that this is an error-reducing move (p. 72).

In focusing on the dynamics of practical reasoning in interpersonal space, a process described by Habermas as communicative action (1992), it is important not to overlook that Taylor is also making the claim that having a rich linguistic matrix is equally vital for becoming a strong evaluator since it enables us to see the world through high-value glasses. That is, instead of viewing potential motivations entirely in terms of the attraction of their consummations, motivations are also judged in terms of the kind of life and the kind of subject that they properly belong to (Taylor, 1985: 25). A strong evaluator thus asks, "In doing this, what kind of person do I become?" It is seeing the world through this additional dimension that such reflections take us to the center of our existence as agents (p. 26).

In summary, then, an education for withstanding, indeed embracing, democratic chaos requires that young citizens have extensive practice in utilizing, withdrawing, and reworking strong evaluative predicates within the context of hard-nosed interpersonal practical reasoning about issues in which they have something at stake. It is only in this way that they will develop the confidence that, regardless of the interchange, they can predict that they will be able to hold onto the rudder that points to the best versions of themselves. And, as long as they have a strong sense of predictability in their practical reasoning, they will be less inclined to try to force predictability onto the environment in which they move.

We suggest that an education that enables young citizens to maintain their bearings within democratic chaos can emerges within the practice Philosophy for Children.[2] However, in order to strongly anchor the sense of internal predictability, we suggest that it ought to be buttressed with two educational pillars. These pillars, we would argue are:

1. A belief in truth,

2. Practice in engaging in "truth-seeking" interpersonal dialogue that are focused on genuine, relevant, and difficult moral quandaries.

We will deal with these in turn.

7. Two specific educational pillars for internal predictability

7.1 *A belief in truth*

Clearly even animals depend on truth. They develop all their learned responses because of their innate belief in the truth of reality. For humans, however, this anchoring dependence is threatened, on the one hand by the contemporary cynical relativist notion that truth

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[2] https://www.icpic.org/.

is just a matter of power, and on the other by an absolutist notion that truth is an ironclad concept, and since truth is always changing, there can be no truth.

But if there is no truth, there is no possibility of believing that there is any point in engaging practical reasoning. This is so because believing that practical reasoning has any worth is dependent upon the unshakable belief that through *error-reducing* second-personal dialogue, we are better able to decide which of competing alternatives is the least-worst (Gardner, 2000: 28-31) and so move ever closer to a more adequate understanding or "truthier" position.

To those of a post-modern bent, the claim that we ought to have an unshakable belief in our capacity to journey *toward* truth may seem highly contentious, even ludicrous and to think otherwise is heretical. However, Bruce Moghtader, in his book, *Foucault and Educational Ethics* (2015) argues that, contrary to contemporary assumptions, Foucault, the standard bearer of post-modernism, was passionate about truth.

Foucault, of course, did indeed worry about truth claims, but his critique was aimed at our lackadaisical attitude toward truth claims, i.e., that we tend to be happy to let others do the heavy lifting and thus, are often content to just accept what others tell us is true. But the biggest problem for Foucault was that, in terms of truth, we are looking in the wrong *direction*, i.e., for Foucault, our most important task in life is to see the truth about *ourselves*, rather than primarily focusing on the truth about what's out there.

Thus, Foucault differed from Kant in that he suggested that "a critique" should not be a critical philosophy that seeks to determine the condition and the limits of our possible knowledge of the object, but a critical philosophy that seeks the condition and the indefinite possibilities of transforming the subject, of transforming ourselves (Moghtader, 2015: 20); that the main interest in life and work is to become someone else that you were not in the beginning (p. 36): that the pivotal question that we ought to face is how we move from being determined by others and cultural practices to being self-determining (p. 36).

This movement toward self-determination, according to Foucault, requires that we engage in a process of problematization—a process that poses rather than answers ethical questions (Moghtader, 2015: 72), and, in so doing, we come to set rules of conduct for ourselves (p. 72) in recognizing our moral obligation as members of a human community (p. 73). According to Foucault, this process, requires a severe form of self-discipline or *askesis* (p, 73, p. 77), something that is best developed under the direction of a teacher who helps us to self-examine our day-to-day conduct and nudges us towards self-mastery (p. 81). This teacher must be a *parrhesiast* or one who uses frank speech—a truth teller, who does not *show* the other self-awareness but *leads* the interlocutor to *internalize* the parrhesiastic, i.e., the truth telling, struggle (p. 83).

Parrhesia, as the activity of telling the truth, hearing the truth and establishing a relationship to the truth, is an educational practice that evokes care and curiosity in studying (Moghtader, 2015: 100), so that one may think differently again and again in steady transformation. This "care of the self" (p. 102), this "subjectivation" (p. 73), is an avenue of forming and reforming the truth about ourselves (p. 102).

This notion of parrhesia of forming and reforming the truth thus mirrors Taylor's (1989) description of the strong evaluator as reasoning in transitions; as aiming to establish, not that some position is correct absolutely, but rather that some position is superior to some other; as concerned, covertly or openly, implicitly or explicitly, with comparative propositions; as knowing that one of these comparative claims is well founded when the *move* from A to B constitutes an epistemological gain (Taylor, 1989: 72).

In understanding this notion of parrhesia, of forming and reforming what ought to be counted as true, young democratic citizens will be able to not only appreciate the fecundity of democratic chaos, but as well, will be able to maintain their bearings in what may seem like

democratic pandemonium. They will also be armed with dealing with the relativist, the arch enemy of predictability, who might say, "Why should I listen to you? Afterall, everyone's opinion is as good as everyone else's. In any case, there is no such thing as truth."

Such comments, though seemingly innocent on the surface and apparently democratic in orientation, are, in fact, dangerous, damaging, and destabilizing since the assumption that everyone's opinion is as good as anyone else's signals that success in dialogue can thereby only be a function of force and deviousness. It thus serves as a call to the parapets and forecasts the inevitable unpredictability of battlefield chaos.

In understanding the nature of truth, the parrhesiast can redirect the energy of the relativist's comment by responding that "of course, you are right, I cannot know 'Truth' when I see it, but I can most certainly detect when the reasoning that supports any position is faulty. Absolute Truth is like absolute cleanliness. For all practical purposes there is no such thing. However, from that admission, it does not follow that we therefore should not engage in "truth-processing" any more than it means that we should not wash" (Gardner, 2009: 35-6).

7.2 Practice in engaging in "truth-seeking" interpersonal dialogue that are focused on genuine, relevant, and difficult moral quandaries in which participants have something at stake.

Engaging young people in "truth-seeking" interpersonal dialogue is what Philosophy for Children (P4C) (and its pedagogical touchstone the Community of Philosophical Inquiry (CPI)) is all about. And many practitioners have argued that a good question is pivotal to a good inquiry (Cam, 2006; Turgeon, 2015; Worley, 2015; Weber & Wolf, 2017). However, we would like to add that not sufficient emphasis is being put on subjecting young people to genuine, relevant, and difficult moral questions.

That this hasn't been recognized as a necessary condition is hardly surprising. Since one of the ways that P4C first gained prominence in the 1980's was through its accurate claim that it promoted good thinking skills (Shipman, 1983), it has tended to focus on questions that seem ripe for gathering multiple responses without too much tension. Thus, the following sorts of questions are often considered not only adequate but often superlative since these are the sort that are often tackled in the parent discipline (note: many of the questions below come from IAPC manuals).

What is art?

Is the ship of Theseus the same ship at the end of the voyage as it was at the beginning?

Can you step into the same river twice?

What is time?

Was electricity discovered or invented?

What is thinking?

What is the difference between wishing and hoping?

Are words things?

Is possible to "hear" colours?

What is the difference between an ordinary tree and a beautiful tree?

Are numbers real?

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All of the above are fascinating questions and may lead to lively discussions that may foster good thinking skills. However, we would suggest that they are less than they could be because participants don't really care what the answer is, and hence don't really mind which opinions seem strongest. For that reason, they won't feel the difficulty of having to leave an old and trusted opinions behind. But having practice in dealing with this feeling of uncertainty when an old and trusted opinion is left behind is precisely what is necessary for them to recognize that they can still have faith in their capacity to move boldly forward even if they change their minds.

We need to remember that old opinions are like old furniture in your mind. They provide a reliable compass for negotiating interpersonal interactions. Thus, giving up on one of these reliable friends is a lot like moving the furniture in a blind person's home: it can signal lack of predictability.

But students need practice is tolerating this kind of unpredictability so that they can more easily engage in its trigger, i.e., changing their minds, even when it seems that "what seems like" their wellbeing is at stake. If young people are frequently faced with such question as, e.g., Are you a coward if you don't say anything when a classmate cheats on a quiz? Are you unethical if you try to convince your teacher that you ought to have a higher grade on an assignment? Are you unethical if you buy more than you really need? Is it wrong to bring your cell phone to a dinner table? Are you being unethical if you don't volunteer to do chores at home? Are you unethical if you don't always do your best in your academic pursuits? etc., they will not only be more inclined to be invested in the inquiry, but they will also, with practice, not become disoriented when reason seems to pressure them to change their minds.

In their book, *Philosophy with Teenagers: Nurturing A Moral Imagination for the 21st Century* (2009), Hannam and Echeverria argue that:

> "In the old ways of learning, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, we were preparing young people for a different kind of world. In the old ways of learning young people were being prepared for working in factories, where they needed to be able to follow instructions. . . (But) In the new globalized world there will be many uncertainties; there will be a need to develop new kinds of skills and competences" (p. 60).

They go on to argue that, in such uncertain times as ours, when there are conflicting messages and sometimes, even conflicting moralities, it is not always clear which way we should go but that, with a participatory democratic education that is afforded through participation in communities of philosophical investigation, young people can develop the skills needed to bring about another kind of shared understanding where all can flourish (p. 61); the confidence that they will be able to refine and renew of the world's problems and the ongoing changes in all societies (p. 62). They argue that this is not only good for society but also for the individuals as it is through the *process* of thinking philosophically "that we can grow and develop into moral beings capable of grasping the future" (p. 62).

We concur with the above message but would add that, for the process of thinking to anchor predictability, and hence for young people to the grow and develop into capable moral beings, they must have frequent exposure to facilitated communities of inquiry that focus on genuine, relevant, and difficult moral quandaries anchored in the unshakeable belief that they have the capacity to move toward truth.

8. Conclusion

We are certainly not the first to suggest that a certain kind of education is necessary for the maintenance of democracy. John Dewey (2007) famously argued that "fuller, freer, and more fruitful association and intercourse of all human beings with one another must be instilled

as a working disposition of mind" (p. 76) if we are to expect democracy to survive. It should be noted that this claim comes immediately after his comment that "It is not enough to teach the horrors of war and to avoid everything which would stimulate international jealousy and animosity." The juxtaposition of these two assertions, interestingly, suggest why Dewey's admonition that education for more fruitful dialogue was rarely taken seriously. Given that most of the 20th century had democracies experiencing "the horrors of war" (both hot and cold, both weaponized and economic), it is not surprising that educators have been more focused on ensuring that democratic citizens are equipped to do their part to ensure the survival of their nation through being superlative economic contributors, and so would tend to completely ignore Dewey's warning that they ought to "beware of disciplinary training rather than personal development" (p. 73) or that "Education in a democracy cannot be justified solely by its potential for material output" (p. 93).

None of this is to suggest, of course, that we ought to denigrate "material output." While clearly capitalism has many faults (Hellwig, 2021), that it has produced the kind of material output that has hitherto kept most democracies safe should not be overlooked. However, we suggest that our concern about the viability of democracy like our concern for the maintenance of predictability, is over-focused on what is happening on the outside. The liberty that we so treasure must be buoyed by an education that renders its citizens worthy of that liberty—a message echoed by Victor Frankl (1984) who suggested that a Statue of Responsibility be built on the west coast of America so that a deeper meaning can be given to the Statue of Liberty on the east coast (p. 156).

Citizens who have confidence that they can reason objectively and know that they will not lose their bearings if they change their minds as a function of the strongest reasons, even on issues in which they have something at stake, will rarely become disoriented when the landscape (either external or internal) becomes unpredictable. Such citizens will be able to shoulder the responsibility of being effective participants in a democratic setting—a social environment that is essentially unpredictable.

Educators who value democracy must see it for what it is—a Janus social environment. Looking at it one way, the liberty that democracy affords makes it seem like the best of all possible social arrangements. Looking at it the other way, democracy's essential unpredictability makes it the worst of all possible social arrangements, particularly for beings who abhor unpredictability.

Once we take up the Janus focus, it becomes clear that we must invest in anchoring predictability in the *individuals* rather than in the *environment* in which they subsist, and that we can achieve this by linking predictability to *process* rather than *product,* by offering an education that embraces democratic chaos utilizing the practice Philosophy for Children that is buttressed by reinforcing the belief in Truth and exposing participants to "truth-seeking" interpersonal dialogues that are focused on genuine, relevant, and difficult moral quandaries.

In this way, we will nurture the capacity for strong evaluation, and so, in the process nurture both strong moral individuals—parrhesiasts—and strong moral democracies—where parrhesiasts flourish. Indeed, the core of what we "truth-seeking folks" are suggesting, and in so doing channeling Foucault, is that democracy will falter if its education system does not focus on producing parrhesiasts.

Erich Fromm (1941) makes a similar point in writing: "We forget that, although each of the liberties which have been won must be defended with utmost vigor, the problem of freedom is not only a quantitative one, but a qualitative one; that we not only have to preserve and increase the traditional freedom, but that we have to gain a new kind of freedom, one which enables us to realize our own individual self; to have faith in this self and in life" (p. 91).

If we hope to preserve the liberty of society, in other words, it is in our interest to ensure the "process of the self" is a predictable bastion to which we can reliably return.

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