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To The Reader

This inaugural issue of *Action, Theory and Criticism for Music Education* is devoted to papers presented at the interdisciplinary colloquium held June 11-15, 2000 in Helsinki Finland by the “MayDay Group” of musicians (MDG) and the “Artist, Work of Art, and Experience” group of artists (AWE). These proceedings were originally published in the *Finnish Journal of Music Education (Musikkikasvatus)*, Vol. 5, No. 1-2 (2000). With the permission of that journal, they are now made accessible to the international community of music education scholars. Two lectures by Professor Richard Shusterman, a leading pragmatist philosopher who has concerned himself centrally with the arts, were arranged by AWE to coincide with the colloquium and produced two interviews by Lauri Väkevä of the University of Oulu, Finland, the second of which is published here for the first time. Thanks are offered to Professor Shusterman for his contribution to the colloquium and for granting permission to publish the interviews.

By way of background, the MayDay Group (www.maydaygroup.org) is a group of international scholars from a variety of disciplines in music and music education. J. Terry Gates, SUNY Buffalo and Thomas A. Regelski, SUNY Fredonia (both now emeritus) created the group in 1993 to consider mounting challenges facing music educators and the status of music in society. Its analytical agenda is to interrogate traditional and status quo conceptions of music and music education from the perspectives of critical theory, critical thinking and research from all relevant disciplines. Its positive agenda is to inspire and promote action for change, both concerning how music and musical value are understood in the contemporary world of music and in the institutions responsible for music in society, particularly music education. The AWE Group (<http://triad.kiasma.fng.fi/awe/WRITINGS/index.html>) includes artists from several disciplines associated with several art schools and universities in Finland who share mutual interest in applying Pragmatism to important issues in art and art theory. Finnish philosopher Pentti Määttänen, a specialist in John Dewey and Charles S. Pierce, has been informal leader of this group.

MayDay colloquia are held once or twice a year, and each explores one of the seven “action ideals” posted on the Group’s website. The Helsinki meeting focused on Ideal Five: “In order to be effective, music educators must establish and maintain contact with ideas and people from other disciplines.” A joint meeting with artists was, therefore, very apt and produced much of mutual value. As a prelude to the colloquium, Professor Claire Detels, a musicologist at the University of Arkansas and a MDG member, agreed to produce a “study paper.” This was drawn directly from her book *Soft Boundaries: Re-Visioning the Arts and Aesthetics in American Education* (Bergin and Garvey Publishers, 1999), a critique of how single-disciplinary specialization and scholarly and pedagogical insularity within and between art and music departments of universities and schools have produced negative consequences for the effectiveness of arts and music education. The study paper was not read at the colloquium; but because it was addressed directly by several papers and other participants, it is also included with the proceedings.

Given the commitment of the AWE group to pragmatism and a strong interest on the part of several MDG members in music and music education as *praxis*, a Pragmatist theme evolved that addressed distinctly post-modern, post-analytic and post-structuralist perspectives on art, music and music education. In contrast to the hegemony of modernist aestheticist accounts of art, music and music education, the pragmatist-praxial tone of these proceedings exemplified for the arts a trend in other disciplines that has recently been called “the practice turn.”* In contrast to the “linguistic turn” of analytic, common language and formal language philosophy that occurred early in the 20th century, this newly burgeoning *practice theory* is concerned with human actions that are organized around praxis and pragmatic values, and that involve shared and embodied understanding, skills and know-how—where, in short, meaning arises in situated conditions of use.

Heidegger, Wittgenstein and a wide array of notable post-analytic, post-modern and post-structuralist philosophers, as well as second-generation critical theorists such as Habermas, have influenced the growth and direction of practice theory. It incorporates recent social philosophy and cultural theory and, in distinction to the rationalist bias of analytic theory, draws on empirical findings from the social sciences and cognitive studies, including neuroscience and consciousness research. The relevance for the arts and for music and music education in particular of this new emphasis on embodied praxis should be obvious; at the very least it offers the promise of new directions for thinking and research regarding the challenges facing music education. Thus, this collection of papers presents a variety of fresh and sometimes competing perspectives that otherwise have been overlooked, minimized, or even denied in many status quo discussions of music and music education. This new and sometimes provocative research is offered in keeping with the MayDay Group’s agenda to facilitate and disseminate new ideas, to continue to promote analysis of and open-minded dialogue about both old and new ideas, and to help effect change for the betterment of music education and music in society.

* Theodore R. Schatzki, Karin Knorr Cetina and Eike Von Savigny, eds. *The Practice Turn in Contemporary Theory*. Routledge: 2001.


Thomas A. Regelski, Editor.

Of Knowing What What We Do Does

Reactions to the MayDay Action Ideal No. 5 and the Colloquium Papers

Marjut Haussila

Music education - the field, in theory and practice - should be seen in broad terms: as a socially and culturally critical endeavor, accepting the nature of music, teaching, and learning, as a many-faceted phenomenon that transcends the boundaries of psychology, sociology, philosophy, and economy, and polity. The profession, hence, needs a broad operational framework, that would embrace various elements that contribute to the breadth and depth of our globalized,

 fragmented, conditioned, and mediatized enterprise.¹

If the past is “sedimented into the present, only the social assumptions are more compelling as the social histories of schooling are obscured by our contemporary discourse” (Popkewitz 1987, 21), we do indeed, as Detels suggests, need soft boundaries and multidisciplinary perspectives. And as Ojala so well points out, we are at the crossroads of various routes of evolving thought, basic and applied. If we host our half-way saloon well, we are, potentially, entitled to cash on knowledge and understanding reached in other fields, because “the most important issues are being lost in the cracks between the rigid boundaries of the disciplines” (Giroux 1988, 147). Problem-based inquiry and rigorous thinking may save us from routine ways of doing things, and secure multiple horizons,

through which our version of ‘truth’ can be delineated on the basis of competent practical judgement, or, *phronesis*, as Regelski suggests.

I am, however, reminded of the Foucaultian analysis of the nature of power and truth. Foucault suggested, in a pragmatist fashion, that one should strive to become a master of the consequences of one’s actions. He is quoted saying:

”People know what they do; they frequently know why they do what they do; but what they don’t know is what what they do does” (Dreyfus & Rabinow 1982,

187). Philosophical literature on music education has addressed the ‘whats’ and

the ‘whys’, but the latter consequential half of music education has been less

examined (cf. Plummeridge 1999). Our professional discourse, I suggest, should

now broaden to the areas of socio-historical inquiry, and the contemporary

criticism of critical theory, pragmatism, and post-structuralism addressing matters

of knowledge, power, and educational practices in the world of pluralistic cultures

and visions, reformed identities, and socially reconstructed truths. This would

mean moving beyond “philosophical or macro-sociological analysis towards a

detailed historical investigation of the motives and actions underlying the

presentation and promotion of subjects and disciplines” and the particular



interests of “factions within the subject” (Goodson 1987, 10-11).²

I take the first “what” of this compound to refer to the very call of this colloquium, mindlessness, or what Greene (1973, 1978, 1995) calls “taken-for-grantedness,” of the handed-down habits or norms that keep reproducing practice. I take the second “why” to mean, that the rationale of the normative

practice is placed under scrutiny. Following the three-part Aristotelian structure, we then have our big 'but': an implication of insufficient competence, lack of rigor, and low standards of professional ethics. 'What they don't know' suggests an insight, that calls for going beyond the safe assumptions about our practice and methods of studying it. Otherwise we may miss the point of problematising the consequences of 'what what we do,' actually, 'does' to us, our students, our communities, our profession, our nation, or the human kind.

We should ask, I think, is it a song that celebrates humanity? And we should examine, as we have started to do, the ontological and epistemological justification and the various ways of being in and with music. I would like to explore this professional ethical quest of great importance from the point of view of curriculum.

The Postmodern Curriculum

The contemporary "postmodern" discourse on curriculum has grown out of so called reconceptualist movement and the critique of the Tylerian curriculum rationalism (e.g., Pinar ed., 1998, 1975; Pinar, Reynolds, Slattery & Taubman, 1995).³ Addressing concerns of dignity, identity, and caring, it is conducive to economic, ecological, environmental, and educational equilibrium that affect our human lives (Slattery 1995), by promoting elements and approaches that are

- 1) cultural, i.e., the perspectives of race, gender, and ethnicity;

- 2) historical, i.e., the perspective of which is contextual, multidimensional, ironic, proleptic/anticipating, contingent/accidental, evolving, autobiographical;
- 3) political, i.e., addressing the problematic of reproduction and reconstruction and the power of knowledge, and thus hovering between the neo-Marxist and Habermasian projects and post-structurally informed postmodern discourses;
- 4) ecological, i.e., concerns of global interdependence and ecological sustainability; aesthetic, i.e., exploring qualitative, aesthetic, and humanistic inquiry and ways of knowing “for the reconstruction of the self” (208); and,
- 5) theological, constituted by “a holistic process perspective”, committed to theological inquiry and hermeneutic interpretation of texts, language, relationships.

The list is long, and the challenge of making qualitatively different curricular and didactic moves, serious. Faced with blurred boundaries of identities, teachers, who by the very essence of their work, are “forever involved in constituting meanings” (Greene 1973, 272), are asked to engage in acts of ethically informed, cultural criticism (Giroux 2000, 1988). We do need to cross numerous boundaries, if we are to answer this call.

Multicultural education, most populist of topics, provides a case to think of. Token efforts – theme days, new content, casual visitors etc. – do not make the difference; rather, the call is out in democratic societies for transformative acts

and political commitment, if we want to take into account critical voices that speak for the ‘Other’ in the name of race, gender, and class, in order to ameliorate social differences, inequity, and inequality (Banks 1997, 1996, 1994; Torres 1999, 1998).

Empirical evidence of an integrated pilot project with South African music educators and students in a Finnish upper secondary school in December 1999 (Haussila 2000a, 2000b; Sibelius-lukion vuosikertomus 1999-2000) indicate, that for a socially concerned curricular action group only their imagination, pedagogical expertise, and civilian courage set the limit in addressing troubling contemporary issues, the study of which are of great relevance to students (cf. Cherryholmes 1988).

A Philosophical Fandango

Regelski offered an excellent account of the Habermasian philosophy and how such inter-subjectivist paradigm could serve us in developing our practices. In this theory, subjects are not oriented to success, as in strategic action, but towards reaching a mutual understanding by way of reason-giving practice, making claims of validity and opting to redeem such claims, which, in turn, can create a possibility for a peaceful coordination of social action (1987, 1984). Through my interest in action research as a means of studying curriculum, I was thrilled of the idea of emancipatory interest (Carr & Kemmis 1986), and quite recently wanted to base my presentation at the ISME 2000 Conference titled “North South Encounters” on the Habermasian concept of communicative action.

Lived experiences and further readings in social theory, however, advised me to



caution in reference to ideal speech situations and communicative rationality.⁴

Jürgen Habermas and Michel Foucault, as major figures in the contemporary political and philosophical discourse, offer insight for pragmatist criticism of social inequalities, the nature of which is “aesthetic and artistic as well as intellectual and political,” (Cherryholmes 1999, 38).

Within the normative frames of national curriculum frameworks, our actions are situated and contextualized, and this framework constrain our actions that we take as morally responsible educators. Does this framework support acts of emancipation? Or is it a structure in which technologies of power suppress our efforts towards autonomy?

Habermas’ version of critical theory appeals to many. And indeed: wouldn’t it be a nice philosophical frame within which people from North and South, multinational corporations and ordinary workers, traditionalists and vanguards, ecologists and consumerists, lovers of music and whose passions lie elsewhere, could settle their various disputes? However, recent literature (e.g., Ashenden & Owen 1999; Cherryholmes 1999,1988; Kelly, 1994; Hoy & McCarthy, 1994) alleges, that he sought to justify and complete the project of modernity and overcome the defects of Enlightenment by further enlightenment and critical reason. To this end, Morrow and Torres posit, that he only ended up with the “paradox of a theory that seeks to be comprehensive, but cannot fully include its own meta-critique” (in Popkewitz & Brennan 1998, xi).

In education, critical studies inspired by Foucault make use of his genealogical analysis – or “performances of a historical pragmatics” (Ashenden &



Owen 1999, 7)⁵ - of ‘knowledge’ and ‘power’ and the related concepts of ‘governmentality’ and ‘technologies of self’ through which acts of power are exercised and discourses of truth constituted (e.g., Popkewitz 1991, ed., 2000, 1991, Popkewitz & Fendler, eds. 1999, Popkewitz & Brennan eds., 1998; Cherryholmes 1999, 1988; Goodson 1997).

Central to his thinking is the context, in which power is being exercised: “there is no power [or ethical] relation without a correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power [and ethical] relations” (10). Foucault, hence, reverses the traditional belief that knowledge is power and looks for power as a way of disciplining individuals in their everyday lives. In this perspective, the concept of power is productive: it circulates “through institutional practices and the discourses of daily life” and produces “systems of ideas that normalize and construct the rules through which intent and purpose are constructed in action” (Popkewitz & Fendler 1999, 5-6).

“Educational knowledge” is thus seen as a “social practice related to issues of power” which yield “policy and pedagogy as governing practices through which the rules and standards” are applied in educational settings (Popkewitz 2000, vii). Educational knowledge, thus, constructs the “objects” that constitute particular issues, problems, and governing practices. Curriculum, hence, is seen as

a "discursive field through which the subjects of schooling are constructed as individuals [who are challenged] to self-regulate, discipline, and reflect upon themselves as members of a community" (Popkewitz & Brennan 1998, 13).

Popkewitz (2000) uses concepts such as 'hybridization' and 'scaffolding' to address discourses that "join the global and the local through complex patterns that are multiple and multidirectional." He uses 'indigenous foreigner' for considering the relation of international heroes and heroic discourses, that function to produce national imaginaries or "fabrications of the citizen and nationess" (4-11). Such "foreigners" are immortalized in national reform efforts, and their "names appear as signs of social, political, and educational progress in the national debates." Dewey constitutes such icon of longevity; more contemporaneous heroes, who "appear in the discourse as if they were indigenous or universal," include, e.g., Habermas, Foucault, and Freire. When such narrative is examined, it turns out to be "without specific historical reference and practices," a discourse "*empty of history*" with no social mooring to the interpretations and possibilities of action, as they do in the specific circumstances in which they were created. An indigenous foreigner, thus, effects the power, the national discourses of policy and research, which embody "multiple historical trajectories as principles for governing action and participation. (12)

Soldiers of a Fuzzy Field

In music education, I think, Foucauldian concepts could provide valuable means to analyze inherited patterns, normative structures, and handed-down practices. Such theorizing could take us away from the *cul de sac* of professional

reflection and provide us with the tools to think about various challenges of the contemporary globalized world. Foucault's post-structural criticism could help us to study inter-national concerns and drastically belated comparative investigation of policies addressing state practices in conjunction with larger sets of political, cultural, and economic relations that exist among nations. We could thus think of music education in the context of larger issues: e.g., why do the Finnish speakers, in this gathering, build on an American pragmatist tradition, whereas the interest of critical American curriculum thinking is in continental philosophies? And wouldn't our understanding grow if we were able to understand the story behind the index of state involvement in curriculum reforms in different countries?

Thinking of where we stand at the moment, I feel weary. Global reality bites, and makes me wonder, what good can our reconstructive efforts and communicative acts ever make, if domination hides in social structures and mechanisms, and we, victims of Foucauldian technologies of power and self, are bureaucratized, administered, and governed by social institutions, practices, and language. At the same time, however, the good old idealist teacher in me waves the flag for the sanctity of human life and the possibility of the modern dream of self-actualization and empowerment explicated in the curricular narrative. There is also *telos*, and a philosophically grounded need to reach beyond objectivism and relativism, towards critical and dialogical communities (e.g., Bernstein 1983; Greene 1978, 1995).

To my growth as a music educator, the studies and encounters at Teachers College, Columbia University in the late eighties were crucial: John Dewey's

spirit guided my study of child and curriculum, experience and nature, art and experience, reconstruction in philosophy and how we think, and democracy and education; grounding on the traditions of American pragmatist and European phenomenological, existential, and critical philosophy; Maxine Greene invited me into ‘doing philosophy’ and thinking about questions of freedom, underlining the significance of subjectivity and partiality of perspective; and, Lenore Pogonowski, whose assistant I was for courses in comprehensive musicianship and in contemporary methods of music education, exemplified new methods of teaching and learning. This extended exposure and a study of curriculum history and theory in three countries revealed that ours is a “fuzzy field” (Eräsaari, Lindquist, Mäntysaari & Rajavaara 1999) which we need to evaluate, perceptive of power which ”substitutes many times for authoritative foundational texts that we do not have” (Cherryholmes 1999, 110). If we want to discuss music education and develop our practice in global terms, by means of a critical, trans-national and cross-cultural evaluative study, we have to maintain our sense of “positionality,” which ”coexists with our ethnocentrism” (111) and acknowledge structures and the conditioned, the contingent, and the contextual, that confine, but upon scrutiny may also reveal ruptures, in which agencies can develop and work towards a new pedagogy of music constituted by sonic “material that happens over time and in particular ways” and acts as a medium for diverse purposes (DeNora 2000, 158).

“We are the Soldiers in Song and Dance” sings a South African troubadour Vusi Mahlasela, inspiring us to test whether universal human values have real



purchase in the global village of open markets.⁶ This we cannot do – as Rorty points out - without adhering to various ways of knowing about our being in the world, informed by the “post-structuralist rejection of false dichotomies, awareness of the unknowable, understanding of the limits of rationality, and an awareness of the dangers posed by both, and the terrorism of closure of monology” (Slattery 1995, 205).

Notes

¹ Cf. , e.g., Giddens (2000, 1994, 1991), De Nora (2000), Spivak (1999), Denzin (1997), Hall ed., (1997), Fornäs (1995), Fullan (1991), Hooks (1990), McLuhan (1964).

² Studying curriculum in Finland, the U.S., and England , I have pointed to the fact that no analysis of this kind exists in the field of music education (e.g., Haussila 1992, 1997/1994, 1998). Goodson (1997) and Popkewitz (2000), reporting studies in other subject areas, acknowledge the importance of inter-national collaboration in studies addressing histories of school subjects and continuities and discontinuities of social purposes explicative of the political climate and academic resonance of it.

³ Reconceptualists claimed that curriculum was not only a practical matter of development and management, but called for a theoretical understanding of pedagogical activity and educational experience. Such theorizing built on European hermeneutic, phenomenological–existential and critical traditions, directing attention to “what truly matters” and introducing a Husserlian concept of *Lebenswelt*, a situational interpretive world, in which knowing is meaning making by intersubjective and intrasubjective construction (e.g., Schütz, Gadamer, Ricour, Merleau-Ponty, Heidegger, Habermas, Sartre). In the German and Scandinavian educational theory a widely used term without any pejorative connotations ‘didactic’ would cover such considerations (Haussila 1997/1994, 1998).

⁴ The post-apartheid South Africa, hosting the ISME '98 World Conference in Pretoria, provides empirical evidence of such possibility by its policy and the intended national empowerment. This inspired me when I, as the chair of the national section of ISME, initiated a development cooperation project of ISME Finland in 1998.

⁵ Foucault adhered to Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, but did not aspire to the status of global or systematic theory in his work. He found philosophical study “ludicrous,” if it tried “from the outside, dictate to others... in the language of naive positivity,” and favored self-critical, genealogical exploration of “what might be changed, in its own

thought, through a practice of a knowledge that is foreign to it.” His oeuvre is thus anti-disciplinary nature, which makes it elusive and difficult to integrate to the conventional disciplinary structures.

⁶ Published in 1994 on an album ‘Wisdom of Forgiveness’ on BMG/CDSHIFT(WL)55.

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