EDUCATIONAL THEORY

THE PEDAGOGY OF "AS IF"

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Abstract. In this paper Johan Dahlbeck sets out to propose a pedagogy of "as if," seeking to address the educational paradox of how students can be influenced to approximate a life guided by reason without assuming that they are already sufficiently rational to adhere to dictates of practical reason. He does so by outlining a fictionalist account, drawing primarily on Hans Vaihinger's systematic treatment of heuristic fictions and on Spinoza's ideas about how passive affects can be made to strengthen reason. Dahlbeck suggests that such an account can help us overcome the problem of assuming that reason needs to be enlisted as an instrument in the educational endeavor to live according to the guidance of reason. The reason this is so is that fictions can use passive affects that are prosocial and that thereby strengthen the sense of community necessary for laying a cooperative foundation for successful joint striving. Dahlbeck suggests further that exemplary teachers are crucial to this endeavor insofar as they can offer educational fictions as imaginative and temporary placeholders for the truth, allowing students to act "as if" they were already guided by reason.

Key Words. fictions; "as if"; guidance of reason; exemplarism; Spinoza; Hans Vaihinger

> All our learned schoolmasters and tutors are agreed that children do not know why they want what they want. But no one likes to think — blindingly obvious though it is, in my view — that grown-ups too, like the children, totter around on the earth and, like the children, do not know where they have come from or where they are going, act no more than children do for any true purpose and are just as governed by biscuits, cakes, and the rod.
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> — Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*

Introduction: On Getting Started

How does one start something without knowing where one will end up? In one sense or another, of course, we never know precisely where we will end up. Yet we presumably need some sense of direction or push from a directed movement in order to get anywhere at all. How does this work? Taking a cue from Hans Vaihinger's[1] fictionalist account, the simple answer to this question would be that we act "as if" we knew where we were going all along. The same, then, goes for writing a paper I suppose. In a way, I have no clear sense of precisely where this paper will end up as I begin writing it. But I will nevertheless act "as if" I do, and because I act "as if," I hope to be able to gather enough momentum to end up somewhere meaningful in the process. My underlying assumption is that this also tells us something important about educational processes and that exploring the relation between not yet knowing, not yet being able to, and acting "as if" we already knew or were able to is potentially illuminating if we want to further our general understanding of education and the dynamics of the teacher-student relation.

1. Hans Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of "As If"* (London: Routledge, 1924/2021).

I will start off by supposing a few things that I hope will get us moving. I will simply call these starting points. They serve to raise questions rather than to answer them, and they will be posed in a way that assumes that they are of considerable importance for determining where we will eventually end up. It seems worth pointing out that these starting points are not selected at random. Instead, they betray my own orientation as a philosopher of education, having grappled with certain questions and having worked within a particular theoretical tradition. In this way, they are convenient because they allow me to work with what I have, so to speak. But they are also considered insofar as they depart from a sustained engagement with Spinoza, where I have endeavored to tease out educational implications from different aspects of Spinoza's philosophy. Part of this project has involved investigating the interplay of reason and affect in relation to moral education and civic education, and part of that has involved investigating how the use of fictions can play into the education of reason.

The first starting point says that we ought not to underestimate the influence of emotions and affects when we think about how people can be made to live according to the guidance of reason, which I assume to be a valid educational aim. This, of course, raises questions about how affects and reason interact and to what degree, and by which means, emotions and affects can be made to support reason. I will suggest that Spinoza can provide theoretical resources that are very helpful for addressing these questions.[2] As indicated above, I turn to Spinoza in part because I believe that Spinoza's engagement with the interplay of reason and affects is promising for the development of a fictionalist account of education insofar as it resonates well with Vaihinger's conception of the philosophy of "as if." The second starting point proposes that fictions are necessary tools for overcoming a cognitive limitation that is part and parcel of the human condition and that prevents access to an unrestrained path for reason in the first place. It raises questions about what fictions are productive for this end and how Vaihinger's notion of "as if" can help us figure out how educational fictions can be put to good use. The third starting point asks for practical ways of conceptualizing how a pedagogy of "as if" can be conceived through the use of exemplars that are not necessarily (or primarily) taken to be supremely admirable in a moral sense,[3] but rather as cognitively and

2. References to Spinoza's *Ethics* are to Curley's translation in Benedictus de Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza Vol. 1*, trans. and ed. Edwin Curley (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985). These are abbreviated according to the following standard method: Ethics (E), axiom (a), corollary (c), definition (d) before proposition, demonstration (d) after proposition, lemma (L), proposition (p), postulate (post), preface (pref), scholium (s), explanation (exp). Example: E2p7s = Ethics, part 2, proposition 7, scholium.

3. Linda Trinkaus Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

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emotionally accessible.[4] These exemplars are conceived as teachers who address students "as if" they were already transformed; the idea is that by doing so they can create an imaginative bridge (in the guise of an educational fiction) allowing them to act "as if" they were already living according to the guidance of reason. As will become clearer below, I am relying here on Spinoza's understanding of the guidance of reason as an ethical and pedagogical aim to strive for.

Having established these three starting points, I will then spend some time looking at a practical example in the form of a personal memory of a teacher. I will suggest that Mr. Möller, a former junior high-school teacher of mine, acted as an exemplar in the sense that he offered subtle transformative gestures to his students. These gestures, I will argue, allowed his students the opportunity to act "as if" they were already transformed (while knowing that they were in fact not). As such, Mr. Möller's gesture will help me illustrate some of the inner workings of the pedagogy of "as if." To conclude this paper, I will then return to the three starting-points — keeping the example of Mr. Möller in mind — hoping to be able to show how fictional assumptions may prove educationally valuable even if they are contradictory and less-than-fully rational. Turning to the memory of Mr. Möller's gesture allows me to do two things. It allows me to show how the pedagogy of "as if" can be identified in the smallest of pedagogical gestures, and therefore it can illustrate how possible entry points for working within a fictionalist framework can be found and developed. It also allows me to try out a fictionalist move, where my own recollections make for the starting point of a theoretical investigation. In this sense, I take my memory of Mr. Möller to be an expedient fiction (grounded in a fragmented recollection) that I can use in order to pursue a pedagogical and philosophical inquiry without being able to guarantee its outcome.

Before launching into the discussion of the first starting point, allow me to say something brief about the fictional nature of the present paper. To me, this paper itself marks an experiment in the pedagogy of "as if." The starting points I offer are neither self-evident nor necessary. They are rather conceived as practical ways of getting started without necessarily being able to guarantee anything beyond that. They are educational fictions, and as such they are intended to play a double role of illustrating how educational fictions function and how they can be set up to initiate pedagogical processes geared at cultivating a better understanding. When I offer my own practical example toward the end of this paper, this becomes a way of trying out an educational fiction that both makes sense of a pedagogical transformation I have undergone myself, but also offers an imaginative starting point for thinking about the pedagogy of "as if" in terms of getting started rather than following a ready-made map leading to a preconceived goal.

4. This means that efficient exemplars are taken to be perceived as relevant, relatable, and attainable rather than extraordinary. See, for example, Hyemin Han, Jeongmin Kim, Changwoo Jeong, and Geoffrey L. Cohen, "Attainable and Relevant Moral Exemplars Are More Effective Than Extraordinary Exemplars in Promoting Voluntary Service Engagement," *Frontiers in Psychology* 8, no. 283 (2017): 1–14.

First Starting Point: Living According to the Guidance of Reason

A basic assumption of this paper is that living according to the guidance of reason (in the sense that I will soon explain) makes for a legitimate aim of education. I take this to be uncontroversial.[5] To be fair, living according to the guidance of reason is only one out of several possible aims of education. It could certainly be argued that there are other, equally central, aims of education. For the purposes of this paper, however, where part of my argument hinges on the notion that the pedagogy of "as if" stands to offer viable bridges between affects and reason, the aim of reason (however contingent) is a necessary starting point.

An alternative, yet strikingly similar, way of conceiving of the aim of living according to the guidance of reason is in terms of autonomy. For David Bakhurst,

> the idea that autonomy is the end of education coincides with the idea that learning aims at knowledge of what to think and do, not just because knowledge is necessary for making informed judgements and choices, but because the power to make up one's mind in light of reasons *aims at* knowledge. Knowledge is, as it were, its ideal.[6]

The beginning of autonomy as an educational aim is for someone to be made to act according to the guidance of reason even when this does not make immediate sense. As such, "if a learner initially lacks the conceptual resources to find her way in the domain at issue, the first step is for her to be brought to behave in ways that conform to correct practice in the domain."[7] Education, then, is thought to be organized in accordance with "a movement from a non-rationally secured conformity with correct practice, through increasing knowledge of correct practice, to a state of rational command of the grounds of correct practice."[8] Reason, in this conception, is not restricted to describing abstract principles for acting rationally; it is embedded in a complex relational understanding of autonomy where what begins as an outside influence can gradually become a matter of increasing self-governance through the interplay of reason and affects. As such, "[r]eason can grow in the child only on the basis of a commonality of being, shared by the child with those around her, and agreement that is not itself secured by reason."[9]

To become autonomous, on this account, is for a person to move "from reproducing *what* is required of her, to knowing *that* it is required of her, to acting out of an understanding of *why* it is required."[10] This can be thought of in terms of an educational model of conceptual development that assumes that

5. Readers interested in an informed yet relatively brief discussion about the general value of reason as an educational aim are referred to Emily Robinson, "The Value of Reason: Why Not a Sardine Can Opener?," in *Philosophy of Education: An Anthology*, ed. Randall Curren (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2007).

6. David Bakhurst, *The Formation of Reason* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), 137 (emphasis in original).

7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 138.

9. Ibid., 139.

10. Ibid., 137 (emphasis in original).

theoretical concepts must be made to align with practical experience for them to gain any real cognitive and emotional traction. This is so because ways of reasoning, whether framed in terms of practical or theoretical reasoning, "are not powers of pure intellects, but of human beings, finite and embodied, whose manner of responding to reasons cannot be understood without appreciating the way their lives are informed by sensibility and emotion, personality and mood."[11]

The challenge, as I see it, is to account — in a meaningful and non-trivial way — for the process leading up to this aim. There is, of course, a corresponding discussion in the context of ethics at large. It is one thing to arrive at a commonly held understanding of what the good life (or the supreme good) is, but quite another to be able to say *how* people are to (with some measure of consistency) approximate that ideal. The problem with assuming that living according to the guidance of reason is straightforward in terms of being an accessible aim to strive for is that people are typically not governed by reason in their daily lives. While I take reason to provide an overarching framework to relate to, insofar as the human social world is made manageable through rational institutions (such as the rule of law), I would argue that the way people respond to the world is more often than not grounded in emotions and affects. An important corollary of the first assumption, then, is that while living according to the guidance of reason is indeed a legitimate aim of education, it is not easily achievable simply because of innate challenges posed by the affective makeup of people in general. My assumption here is that people are much more liable to be moved by passive affects than they are to be persuaded by rational arguments.[12] Let us backtrack and unpack all of this a bit more carefully.

To live according to the guidance of reason may be understood in terms of the capacity to adhere to (and gradually internalize) a set of practical dictates. The notion of reason invoked here is therefore a practical one. It is practical in the sense that the purpose of adhering to the guidance of reason (thus understood) is to enable a good life. A good life — for the purposes of this paper — refers to an ethical life invoking a broadly construed *eudaimonistic* conception of happiness that is supported by, and not inimical to, other people's happiness. Practical reason, then, is taken to be action-orienting (i.e., it is inherently normative), and it assumes that if actions are aligned with principles of practical reason, then they are also aligned with the corresponding ethical ideal of a good life. Practical reason thereby affords us a sufficiently stable understanding of what we ought to do in order to approximate the ethical ideal of the supreme good (however we would construe this).

11. Ibid., 136–137.

12. My use of the concept of passive affects is grounded in Spinoza's theory of affects, where an affect denotes a change in a person's power of acting (E3d3). A passive affect entails "a change in the individual's power, the adequate cause of which lies not wholly in the individual itself, but partly in external things" (Sanem Soyarslan, "From Ordinary Life to Blessedness: The Power of Intuitive Knowledge in Spinoza's Ethics," in *Essays on Spinoza's Ethical Theory*, ed. Matthew J. Kisner and Andrew Youpa [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014], 240n). A passive affect, on this account, is a change occasioned — to some degree — by external things.

The problem, of course, is that it is not helpful to assume that practical reason can dictate the direction of our actions unless we can be sure that we are sufficiently susceptible to rational arguments to begin with. This introduces a pedagogical dilemma of some renown. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, in his seminal pedagogical treatise *Emile*, notes the irony of the Lockean approach where "[t]he masterpiece of a good education is to make a reasonable man, and they claim they raise a child by reason! This is to begin with the end, to want to make the product the instrument."[13] The problem, then, is to figure out how to make someone reasonable without resorting to reason itself as a means. One could of course argue that it is the educator who uses reason as a means by which to draw out reason in the students. However, this does not explain how reason is cultivated in the first place (unless we assume that educators are people who are naturally prone to reason).

While this may appear to present us with an unsolvable paradox, it actually invites important questions about the assumed relation between reason and emotions and the role of affects in education. While we can (and ideally should) be guided by principles of practical reason in our daily lives, we are clearly also regularly pushed around and influenced by passive affects. Sometimes these affects may be (accidentally) aligned with what practical reason prescribes, but oftentimes they are not. We are typically pushed into making assumptions based on our emotional responses to external influences. If, for example, my morning train is delayed, my initial annoyance may provoke me to make assumptions about why the train is delayed (perhaps a glimpse of the train driver makes me think that the person is simply lazy or careless) without having access to the full causal picture explaining why, in fact, the train is delayed. We typically start off at the wrong end, so to speak. We begin with an emotional response and then we do our best to justify this response by construing explanations that seem to fit with it.[14] This is unfortunate because it can cause my initial annoyance to further spiral into debilitating passions such as anger and resentment.[15] It is a quite natural response, however, as we tend to lack crucial information that a fully rational response would seem to require.

In this paper I will interpret the general idea of principles of practical reason as corresponding with Spinoza's conception of the *dictates of reason* (as discussed in E4p18s). As Matthew Kisner notes, Spinoza's dictates of reason should be understood in terms of "practical laws, given by reason, for promoting our interests."[16]

13. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile: or On Education*, trans. Allan Bloom (New York: Basic Books, 1979), 89.

14. If left unchecked, this psychological mechanism can easily become a fertile breeding ground for conspiracy theories and widespread prejudices.

15. On Spinoza's account, passions such as anger and resentment are debilitating insofar as they diminish our power of acting, making us less self-determined and more causally dependent on external things.

16. Matthew J. Kisner, *Spinoza on Human Freedom: Reason, Autonomy and the Good Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 116.

Our interests, in this foundational naturalistic sense, are directly derived from our essence as human beings, which is to strive to persevere in being (including the striving for empowerment and for increasing our scope of activity) (E3p7). As Steven Nadler has recently pointed out,

> What the dictates of reason do is prescribe modes of thought and behavior that satisfy a desire that is basic in, even constitutive of, all human beings: to persevere in the best and highest sense. That is why one ought to follow them.[17]

Accordingly, Spinoza's practical dictates of reason are prescriptive and action-inducing, and what they prescribe (in brief) is that (1) we should always seek our own advantage, and that (2) the things that are truly advantageous for us are also things that we should desire for others who we take to be like us (as this is ultimately what will further our own striving for persevering in being, which, by extension, is why rational egoism and altruism collapse into being the same thing for Spinoza) (E4p18s).[18]

In education (or in any practical situation for that matter) we cannot simply assume that we will have access to all the information necessary to guarantee a stable adherence to the guidance of reason in any given situation. We can certainly endeavor to learn dictates of practical reason by heart (such as the dictate saying that we should treat others the way we would like to be treated ourselves), but there is nothing to guarantee that their affective impact will be enough to move us in any given situation. We might even subscribe to the dictate in question intellectually, but still find that we are unable to adhere to it in a specific situation in which we are put under emotional duress (i.e., we might find that we frequently suffer from *akrasia*). That is, it is perfectly conceivable that I could intellectually endorse the dictate saying that I should treat others the way I would like to be treated myself and still resent the train driver for the fact that the train is delayed (whether or not the train driver had any actual part in causing this delay). From a Spinozistic point of view, activities of teaching would be geared at soliciting affective responses that are aligned with the guidance of reason, making it relatively easier for students to align their will with dictates of practical reason. This is part and parcel of the exemplary role of the teacher and is bound up with the teacher's ability to enlist the imagination of students, to be discussed in more detail below.

This leaves us in a position where we cannot trust reason alone to get us out of the educational dilemma, but where we have to turn instead to the passive affects in question for help. In order to get a sense of how this might be done we could turn to Spinoza, who explicitly endorses living according to the guidance of reason[19] as a valid ethical ideal and educational aim (by E4p24), yet admits that

17. Steven Nadler, *Think Least of Death: Spinoza on How to Live and How to Die* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2020), 196.

18. For a discussion comparing Spinoza's dictates of reason with those of Aquinas and Hobbes, see Michael LeBuffe, *Spinoza on Reason* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 101–109.

19. For a good overview of, and critical investigation into, Spinoza's different uses of the concept of reason, see LeBuffe, *Spinoza on Reason*.

reason is not strong enough in itself to thwart powerful passive affects or to ensure that dictates of reason can govern our behavior (by E4p14). The upshot of this is that passive affects need to be enlisted to help support reason (as reason is not enough in itself) and that teachers are called upon to facilitate this process by offering students imaginative narratives that are affectively powerful while still being aligned with what the guidance of reason prescribes. The trick is to ensure that the passive affects enlisted do not spiral into ever more pacifying affects, but instead gradually help strengthen the tendency to follow the guidance of reason and to become increasingly active (autonomous) in the process.

Let us look at an example given by Spinoza. Passive affects like humility and repentance are, in themselves, not empowering. That is, in themselves, they are actually debilitating.[20] In relation to more harmful passive affects like hatred or envy, however, they might be preferable because they can be enlisted to forge a passive road gradually leading to a life under the guidance of reason in cases where reason is not enough in itself. Affects like humility and repentance are preferable insofar as they are relatively prosocial in comparison with passive affects like hatred or envy, which are inherently antisocial. This is what Andrea Sangiacomo has recently talked about in terms of setting up a virtuous (as opposed to a vicious) circle of affects, where rationality is taken to be fostered by means of passive affects that are conducive to social cooperation even though they are not (in themselves) aligned with reason.[21] In a key passage of part four of the *Ethics*, Spinoza writes,

> Because men rarely live from the dictate of reason, these two affects, Humility and Repentance, and in addition, Hope and Fear, bring more advantage than disadvantage. So since men must sin, they ought rather to sin in that direction. If weak-minded men were all equally proud, ashamed of nothing, and afraid of nothing, how could they be united or restrained by any bonds? […] Really, those who are subject to these affects can be guided far more easily than others, so that in the end they may live from the guidance of reason, i.e., may be free and enjoy the life of the blessed. (E4p54s)[22]

20. For Spinoza, there is a direct equivalence between empowerment/disempowerment, activity/passivity, and virtue/vice (see E4d8). As commentators have noted, this means that Spinoza's understanding of every finite being's natural striving for self-preservation and empowerment is also "what provides his ethical theory with a fundamental category of moral assessment" (Don Garrett, "Spinoza's Conatus Argument," in *Spinoza: Metaphysical Themes*, ed. Olli I. Koistinen and John Biro [New York: Oxford University Press, 2002], 127).

21. Andrea Sangiacomo, *Spinoza on Reason, Passions, and the Supreme Good* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

22. For an in-depth discussion of E4p54s and its implications for the endeavor to strengthen reason by way of passions, see Sanem Soyarslan, "From Humility to Envy: Questioning the Usefulness of Sad Passions as a Means Towards Virtue in Spinoza's *Ethics*," *European Journal of Philosophy* 28, no. 1 (2020). Soyarslan questions the value of sad passions, such as humility and repentance, to the practical striving for virtue (for Spinoza, acting virtuously is the same as acting according to reason [E4p24]) as implied in the quoted passage, arguing instead that joyful passions are needed to actually strengthen practical reason. For the purposes of this paper, it is enough that passive affects, in whatever form, can be used as a support system for reason, and so I will not engage in the debate concerning the value of specific passions.

Since living (reliably) according to the guidance of reason requires a more or less completely rational understanding of the world, this is not something that can ever be assumed in education.[23] This seems self-evident unless, as Rousseau reminds us above, we want to make the end into the means for attaining the same end. In seeking to avoid this paradox, Spinoza offers a way of using passive affects to gradually approximate an ideal that is ultimately conceived as active rather than passive. While this may seem counterintuitive, it builds on the assumption that cooperation is a precondition for living according to the guidance of reason, and that while rationality cannot be passively induced as such, social cooperation can be. Social cooperation, then, becomes an important stepping stone for living according to the guidance of reason, even while this ideal seems distant and unattainable for individual people. Hence, passive affects can be made to support reason indirectly, insofar as they support sociability and promote cooperation. This still raises questions about how the leap from being governed predominantly by passive affects (i.e., being determined to act by external causes) to being guided increasingly by reason would be conceived practically (i.e., how exactly are prosocially inclined passive affects to be enlisted in educational settings?). This is where fictions and the power of the imagination come into the picture.

Second Starting Point: The Necessity of Fictions in Education

For Hans Vaihinger, fictions perform an expedient function, helping us temporarily overcome (or at least side-step) knowledge gaps that are part and parcel of the limited cognitive perspective of being human.[24] Fictions allow us to move ahead practically and heuristically even when we lack sufficient rational explanations for why or how we should. Fictions are not illusions, however, since they can be recognized *as* fictions without losing their affective purchase.[25] The educational reward of fictions is precisely that they can be acknowledged as such while still allowing students to benefit from them in terms of being effective heuristic devices. The predicament here is well-known, fundamental, and essentially Kantian: there is an unavoidable gap between the nature of things and our limited ability as humans to encompass and process this mass of information by way of our crude senses. In order to navigate successfully in the world, we therefore need some kind of epistemological shortcut. For Vaihinger, this is where the primary

23. On Spinoza's view, most people live their lives guided by vague hopes and fears about what the future might (or might not) hold for them. The only way of escaping this taxing mental condition is to gain a stable enough understanding of things so that one's hopes and fears are transformed into certainty and thereby removed. As Spinoza states in E4p47s: "[T]he more we strive to live according to the guidance of reason, the more we strive to depend less on Hope, to free ourselves from Fear, to conquer fortune as much as we can, and to direct our actions by the certain council of reason." This, in essence, is what education should ultimately strive for, and so it seems contradictory to posit it also as its point of departure.

24. Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of "As If."*

25. Influential accounts of illusionism, such as Saul Smilansky's *Free Will and Illusion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), typically assume that for an illusion to remain effective, people need to remain in the dark with regard to its apparent falsity.

value of fictions lies. Fictions can allow us to act even though we lack sufficient information to ground our actions rationally. They can get us started imaginatively when we find ourselves in a standstill vis-à-vis the external demands on rational motivations for our actions.

It is obvious from the above that using fictions, for Vaihinger, is an inherent feature of our sense-making. We make use of fictions all the time. We accept scientific fictions — such as the graphical representation of an atom — to allow us to move ahead in our fragmented (and perpetually incomplete) mapping of the material world. We accept practical fictions — such as belief in an unencumbered free will — to allow us to retain a sense of agency when going about our daily business, in order that we may judge whether our behavior is to be deemed moral or not. There is no end to the fictions we invent and employ. All is not fiction, however. Vaihinger makes important distinctions between hypotheses, fictions, and dogmas. While this may risk taking us too far afield, I believe that briefly outlining Vaihinger's distinctions between hypotheses, fictions, and dogmas can serve to give us a clearer conception of just what it is that heuristic fictions can do in education, but also can serve as a note of warning about their limitations and thereby alert us to possible pitfalls.

Hypotheses, fictions, and dogmas can all function by facilitating action in that they offer us a sense of direction in which to begin moving. They do this in very different ways, however. Whereas fictions serve a purely heuristic function, offering us a starting point in relation to an assumed goal without necessarily claiming to be able to explain the intermediate steps in any rational sense, hypotheses make assumptions about something that is real and that may even be verifiable. In an endeavor to illustrate the rich philosophical history of fictions, Vaihinger turns to Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, arguing that Kant's Ideas of reason correspond with his own theory of fictions. He points to the fact that Kant distinguishes between Ideas and hypotheses in the same way that Vaihinger would distinguish between fictions and hypotheses. Here, Vaihinger explains that hypotheses are "assumptions of objects which stand in an eventually demonstrable connection with empirical phenomena and thus serve to explain and complete our fragmentary experience."[26] Kant's Ideas, on the other hand, are

> rational concepts without objectivity, mere thought-entities that simply serve to guide our reason in certain respects; and are therefore not an assumption of something real such as hypotheses are, but of something unreal with the consciousness of this unreality — "heuristic fictions."[27]

Fictions and hypotheses are therefore both to be understood in terms of provisional ideas, compensating for a lack of knowledge that may come to result in a foundational sense of doubt; a doubt that could easily become incapacitating. Because the incompleteness of both fictions and hypotheses can prove straining on the psyche,

26. Vaihinger, *The Philosophy of "As If,"* 263.

27. Ibid., 263.

there is a tendency to try "to rid itself of the uncomfortable condition of tension" by turning these into dogmas.[28] Whereas fictions allow us to act "as if" something was a provable fact (all the while knowing that it is not), hypotheses turn the "as if" into a genuine "if." Dogmas, however, turn both of these into a false "because" and "so that," allowing for some sense of action, yet at the same time cementing a provisional idea into a seemingly stable construct of mind. Whereas fictions and hypotheses can be either discarded or replaced when they have served their practical purpose, dogmas tend to transform from facilitators of action into cumbersome obstacles to thought and action insofar as they deny their fictional origin and to simply assert themselves as self-evidently true no matter how self-contradictory.

Having established that out of the three different kinds of ideas (epistemological shortcuts) at our disposal in the face of fundamental doubt — hypotheses, fictions, and dogmas — only fictions allow us to act while acknowledging that the grounds for our actions are fundamentally uncertain and even theoretically contradictory, Vaihinger continues to interrogate the practical value of fictions. The heuristic value of fictions is most obviously evident, Vaihinger claims, in the cases where we refer to practical reason without having a sufficient theoretical understanding to match it. In these cases, Vaihinger argues, practical reason ultimately hinges on a moral world order put in place by something assumed to exist apart from and external to it. While this is theoretically contradictory, it nevertheless functions by enabling an effective social order based on a nonnegotiable conception of Good and Evil. Vaihinger explains,

> In following this command of practical reason I am, in strict theory, acting irrationally, for my theoretical reason tells me that such a moral world-order is merely an empty, even if a beautiful, concept. But I do actually find within me the command of practical reason to do good, and this command impresses me as though it were something sublime.[29]

Acting in line with practical reason, then, (without having access to a fully rational explanation for why) is the same as acting "as if" on Vaihinger's account:

> [F]or to act morally means, in contradistinction to the empirical conditions, to act *as if* the good had an unconditioned value, *as if* it had the power to extend into a super-empirical world in which a supreme ruler provided for the harmonizing of good and evil.[30]

From Vaihinger's point of view, we see that acting "as if" is intimately bound up with our everyday conception of acting morally, or our desire to flourish in relation to a shared assumption about the supreme good. Accordingly, a heuristic fiction is at its foundation conceived as "a conceptual aid useful for ethical purposes."[31] Since educational transformation, in its widest sense, is difficult

28. Ibid., 115.

29. Ibid., 283.

30. Ibid., 284 (emphasis in original).

31. Ibid., 265.

to divorce from such ethical purposes,[32] it seems likely that practical, ethical fictions would play an important role in education, insofar as teaching is concerned not only with introducing students to various fields or traditions of knowledge but also with setting up viable cognitive and emotional connections between a broadened understanding of the world and an ethical trajectory allowing for a sustained striving toward a good life.[33] From the point of view of the teacher, offering heuristic fictions that can allow students to make such connections seems to be an important aspect of how teachers can influence students to relate their increased understanding to the broader ethical aim of a good life. This, however, raises the question of how students' imaginations relate to the teacher's intentions.

The teacher, in this conception, can make intentional use of students' ability to imagine scenarios that may allow them to explore (and sometimes reconsider) their previously held beliefs by way of fictions offered by the teacher. Imagining, on Kathleen Stock's account, is connected with the ability to try out general truth claims by way of fictional scenarios.[34] Stock gives an example of someone imagining a scenario in order to explore a belief about a moral fact held to be true:

> [S]he imagines a scenario, the concrete details of which she believes false, which nonetheless intentionally exemplifies some general claim she believes true (as where an author creates a fiction about made-up characters exemplifying some general moral point she believes true).[35]

This conception of imagining as propositional seems deeply educational insofar as the purpose is "to engage with a particular fiction for some further end."[36] The end in question may be to validate a previously held belief (making it justified), but it may also be to allow for what Stock calls "counterfactual imagining." To imagine something, in this sense, is not necessarily concordant with believing something, since "imagining can be explained in terms of the fact that usually, imagining, unlike belief, is an activity oriented towards the obtaining of particular goals and is sustained by intention."[37] This makes propositional imagining educationally useful insofar as it can be intentionally exploited for some purpose, whereas with a belief, "whatever 'goal' there is, if indeed it can be characterized that way, is always the same and is one over which one has no deliberate control: to believe

32. Richard S. Peters, *Ethics and Education* (London: Routledge, 1966/2015).

33. I understand this to be in accord with Peters's general contention that "[t]o be educated is not to have arrived at a destination; it is to travel with a different view" insofar as education as initiation does not merely entail being initiated into various established traditions of knowledge, but into an overall ethical way of life. Richard S. Peters, *Education as Initiation* (London: University of London Institute of Education, 1964), 47.

34. Kathleen Stock, *Only Imagine: Fiction, Interpretation and Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

35. Ibid., 187.

36. Ibid., 190.

37. Ibid.

what is true."[38] Stock holds that imagining is different from belief in that "one can imagine that *p* and *q* are true together, where one also believes that *p* and *q* are an impossible combination."[39] Our ability to imagine may of course be constrained by the beliefs we hold about the world, and so a person may let "relevant beliefs and experience guide what she would count as the relevant scenario."[40] Hence, we imagine "under a supposition" constrained by beliefs, but we can also depart from our beliefs by imagining things that are deemed "useful in their contribution to information about counterfactuals."[41]

In an educational context, the teacher may then present a fictional scenario that "instructs the reader [or in this case, the student] to imagine certain things, and the intentions which inform those instructions determine fictional content."[42] The fictional scenario presented can allow for an imaginative exploration of beliefs held about the world. This exploration is intentional insofar as "[p]ropositional imagining is revealed to be a flexible action which can be directed at various valuable ends."[43] It is flexible in that it can be geared at establishing justified beliefs or at alleviating counterfactual imagining. The core assumption that propositional imagining is geared toward valuable ends makes it relevant for an exploration of a Vaihingerian understanding of heuristic fictions in education, insofar as the purpose is fundamentally practical.

A convenient way of looking closer at the role of fictions in education would be to look at how fictions are employed as action-inducing influences in exemplarist models of education. Exemplarism in education is a broad and ever-growing field of study.[44] While exemplarist discussions typically begin from a broadly conceived Aristotelian conception of exemplarism, I will approach it from the point of view of a more Spinozistic understanding, where exemplars are not conceived of as morally infallible and where the focus is generally placed on affective attunement rather than admiration-emulation.[45] As a third starting point, I would therefore like to propose that exemplars are potentially important resources in education, not so much because they can offer ideally moral behavior for students to admire and

38. Ibid., 191.

39. Ibid., 195.

40. Ibid.

41. Ibid., 196.

42. Ibid., 208.

43. Ibid.

44. See, for example, Angelo Campodonico, Michel Croce, and Maria Silvia Vaccarezza, guest eds., "Moral Exemplarism and Character Education," special issue, *Journal of Moral Education* 48, no. 3 (2019), for a selection of papers addressing exemplarism in moral education.

45. For a selection of papers exploring the pedagogical promise of Spinoza's brand of exemplarism, see Johan Dahlbeck and Morten Timmermann Korsgaard, guest eds., "The Role of the Exemplar in Arendt and Spinoza: Insights for Moral Exemplarism and Moral Education," special issue, *Ethics and Education* 15, no. 2 (2020).

emulate, but because they allow students the opportunity to act "as if" they were already transformed through education.

Before moving on to the third starting point, however, let us first briefly address the question raised toward the end of the previous section: How exactly are prosocially inclined passive affects to be enlisted in educational settings? Insofar as the previous section assumed a necessary transition from being pushed about by various passive affects to being guided increasingly by reason, it raised questions about how this transition can be induced by way of prosocial fictions in an educational setting. As we have seen in this section, fictions also serve a heuristic function, allowing us to act "as if" even when we, in actuality, fall short of the mark. In education, the role of the teacher is to offer imaginative starting points for the students to act "as if" they already know where they were going. Because students actually do not — an cannot — know where they are going (as they have a limited understanding of themselves and their future lives), this set-up is necessarily provisional insofar as a teacher can only ever offer possible starting points that point in the general direction of the guidance of reason without being able to guarantee the connection between reason and affects. This seems to be precisely what is needed in a situation where we must take a leap from responding primarily to external influences (whether joyful or saddening) to acting according to the dictates of practical reason identified as one's own. Before being in a position to actually live according to the guidance of reason of their own accord, students need to be encouraged to act "as if" they already did so by someone capable of illustrating what this looks like without being perceived as either unattainable, irrelevant, or unrelatable.

Third Starting Point: Exemplars That Help Us Act

In a recent empirical study, Hyemin Han and colleagues found that (1) "college students felt more inspired by fellow alumni than historical figures known for their extraordinary moral actions," and that (2) "stories seen as more relatable elicited more motivation to volunteer or donate to charity."[46] Looking for ways of promoting prosocial behavior in practical contexts such as education, these authors also found that "role models will be more effective, and less likely to backfire, when relatable (and perhaps when their good deeds are not especially demanding)."[47] This sets up a tension in relation to mainstream exemplarist theories, such as Linda Zagzebski's influential theory, where successful exemplars are taken to be supremely admirable figures, and where admiration of supremely moral behavior is taken to be the main driving force behind effective behavioral modification guided by cardinal virtues.[48] Indeed, one of the limitations of Zagzebski's model

46. Hyemin Han, Clifford I. Workman, Joshua May, Payton Scholtens, Kelsie J. Dawson, Andrea L. Glenn, and Peter Meindl, "Which Moral Exemplars Inspire Prosociality?," *Philosophical Psychology* 35, no. 7 (2022): 966.

47. Ibid., 965.

48. Zagzebski, *Exemplarist Moral Theory*.

has been identified as the inability to sufficiently account for and respond to crucial social-psychological dimensions such as relatability and attainability.[49]

It seems that a conception of exemplarism where the exemplars selected and presented are more attuned to the affective makeup (*ingenium*) of students could help address the potential problems of *unattainability* and *unrelatability*.[50] It is not enough, however, to simply posit exemplars as being relatable and attainable, unless we can also assume that there is something directing the student's transformative experience in an ethical sense. This is where Spinoza's virtuous circle, where passive affects are enlisted to help promote a life guided by reason, comes into the picture. To the extent that teachers can take on the role as relatable exemplars vis-à-vis their students, they can perhaps also stimulate their imagination so that students are enticed to act "as if" they were already well on their way to living according to values that they have yet to understand the full meaning of. In this sense, they are affectively but not intellectually moved to act in accordance with reason.

This connects with what Douglas Yacek has recently discussed in terms of an *aspirational* model of transformative education.[51] This model assumes that what exemplary teachers do is to address students not only in terms of who they are presently, but also in terms of who they might become should they strive to become their aspirational selves. Yacek offers an illuminating example from his own experiences as a student in high school. Yacek's former physics teacher, Mr. Kirmani, is described in terms of a teacher who succeeded in setting up an aspirational classroom, where his particular way of caring for the aspirational selves of students — addressing them as being physicists rather than novices — had a transformational effect on at least some of his students (Yacek included). Yacek describes Mr. Kirmani's teaching in a way that clearly resonates with my own understanding of the pedagogy of "as if":

> In addition to caring for our current selves, he [Mr. Kirmani] cared for our *aspirational* selves, for the selves he knew we could become. He cared for our aspirational selves when he encouraged us to "theorize" after gathering "our" data, as if we were already physicists.[52]

Recalling a particularly memorable class involving a physics experiment in an elevator, Yacek says about Mr. Kirmani that he "was able to frame our class

49. See, for example, Michel Croce, "Exemplarism in Moral Education: Problems with Applicability and Indoctrination," *Journal of Moral Education* 48, no. 3 (2019): 291–302; Michel Croce and Maria Silvia Vaccarezza, "Educating through Exemplars: Alternative Paths to Virtue," *Theory and Research in Education* 15, no. 1 (2017): 5–19; and Natasza Szutta, "Exemplarist Moral Theory — Some Pros and Cons," *Journal of Moral Education* 48, no. 3 (2019): 280–290.

50. For an in-depth discussion of exemplarism and attunement vis-à-vis the *ingenium* of students and teachers, see Johan Dahlbeck, "Spinoza on *Ingenium* and Exemplarity: Some Consequences for Educational Theory," *Studies in Philosophy and Education* 40 (2021): 1–21.

51. Douglas W. Yacek, *The Transformative Classroom: Philosophical Foundations and Practical Applications* (London: Routledge, 2021).

52. Ibid., 163 (emphasis in original).

activity, which could have easily become perfunctory and uninspired, so that we felt *as if* we were exploring profound mysteries of the universe in that rickety elevator."[53] While Yacek does not explicitly discuss the "as if" aspect of the situation, there is an obvious sense in which Mr. Kirmani's way of setting up the class is geared around the extent to which he can arouse the imagination of the students (via passive affects), thereby nudging them into desiring a more rational understanding of the world. The effect of this — which is fully in line with Vaihinger's conception of what heuristic fictions can do — is that the students are encouraged to act "as if" they were already guided by values that they have yet to acquire. As such, Yacek explains that Mr. Kirmani "*expected* us to have the values that he knew we would only be able to fully understand and embody much later, after we had moved much further along the transformative path."[54]

While teachers like Mr. Kirmani are not exemplars in the sense that they are moral saints, they still function as exemplars to the extent that they can appeal to their students' imagination, inviting or calling on them to act "as if" they were already transformed, using expedient fictions as an instrument. This is a conception of exemplarism that is not primarily driven by admiration of the exemplary (whether this is instantiated by the teacher him- or herself or an exemplar identified and pointed to by the teacher), but by the affective power of the image of an aspirational self that the teacher can help students conjure using their own imagination.

At this point I would like to offer my own example of how the three starting points outlined thus far — (1) the educational value of living according to the guidance of reason; (2) the value of enlisting (consciously entertained) heuristic fictions in education; and (3) the value of assuming that effective exemplars are relatable and attainable rather than morally superior — can come together in an educational setting. The example that I will offer is one that is shaped and reshaped by my own memories, and therefore it is also fictional insofar as it is carefully tailored to fit with the particular purpose I have in mind for it. (It is a separate question how memory, the reconstructions of our memories, and imagined enhancements to memory, interweave in practice.) It is important to remember, therefore, that I am not positing a scientific hypothesis, but a heuristic fiction that I hope will allow us to overcome some particularly cumbersome mental hurdles on the path to imagining a sustainable and enticing conception of education as a relationally constituted striving for a life guided by reason.

A Practical Example: Mr. Möller's Gesture

Recently, when asked to contribute a piece for a symposium on Yacek's book *The Transformative Classroom*, I was reminded of an incident that took place when I was approximately fifteen years old. As I recall it, on the day of my junior high school graduation, I was given a well-thumbed paperback book by

53. Ibid., 160 (emphasis added).

54. Ibid., 163 (emphasis in original).

my Swedish and English teacher, Mr. Möller. This was right about when the ceremony was ending. Mr. Möller stole up on me and slipped me E. L. Doctorow's *Ragtime* without so much as a word. On the inside of the cover, however, he had written: "To Johan — a book that has everything." In the piece I ended up writing for the book symposium in question,[55] I described the incident in terms of a transformative gesture, trying to find a way of approaching transformative education beyond what goes on in the classroom, to include the way that memories of past teachers' gestures can help transform us years after our formal bond with schooling has been dissolved. The only way to make sense of this, for me, was by way of the notion of an *educational fiction*.[56]

Mr. Möller's gesture was directed to me "as if" I was already transformed by the power of great literature (when in reality I was far from an avid book reader at that point in my life). In my commentary on Yacek's book, I compared Mr. Möller's gesture to that of the used bookseller in Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story*.[57] It is not so much that the bookseller encourages the young protagonist, Bastian, to read by persuading him to, or showing him how to — he is indicating the allure and promise of literature by simply leaving the book in plain sight for Bastian to sneak out and read for himself. It is a subtle gesture — much like Mr. Möller's — but, at least to my mind, it is all the more powerful for being quiet and indirect. It encourages us to use our imagination to rise to the challenge of acting "as if" we were already transformed.

It would of course be odd to attribute the fact that I now write essays and books about education for a living to the fact that I was once handed a used paperback book by a teacher of mine. This would seem to imply embracing a very romantic kind of predestination that goes against most of my philosophical intuitions. It makes more sense, then, to understand this memory in terms of a heuristic fiction that allowed (and to some extent still allows) me to respond imaginatively to a transformative gesture by trying my best to live up to the responsibility of answering Mr. Möller's subtle call for action. I do this all the while knowing that it is a fiction, and that it is retroactively constructed by me in collaboration with an exemplary teacher who appreciated the educational power of extending potentially transformative gestures without demanding to be there to witness their coming to fruition.

It would also seem strange to suggest that an exemplary teacher is one who succeeds in encouraging individual students to withdraw from the world, using

55. Johan Dahlbeck, "Transformative Gestures," *Theory and Research in Education* 20, no. 1 (2022): 105–111.

56. See Johan Dahlbeck, "The Educational Fiction of Agential Control: Some Preliminary Notes on a Pedagogy of 'As If'," *Educational Philosophy and Theory* 55, no. 1 (2023): 100–110, DOI: 10.1080/00131857.2022.2089978.

57. Michael Ende, *Die unendliche Geschichte* (Stuttgart, Germany: Thienemann Verlag, 1979). See also the English translation: Michael Ende, *The Neverending Story*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1983).

books as a means for doing so. This is not, however, how I understand Mr. Möller's gesture. Instead, I understand it as suggesting that there are in fact communities in the world that one may join and that these communities can help a person expand (rather than narrow down) one's perspective on the world by being on the lookout for others who are striving for similar things. Books are an imaginative means for being able to identify such communities (and for accessing propositional fictions that can allow for beliefs to be either deemed justified or subjected to counterfactual imagining[58]), but they are not enough in and of themselves. They can help one circle in on the things that are worth striving for, and thereby help one identify others looking for these same things as well. Educational fictions seem crucial here, because we do not know what is worth striving for (at least not with any degree of certainty) until we are already well on our way to attaining it. In order to bypass this foundational educational paradox, we need fictions that can allow us to act "as if" we already know, when in reality we can only ever hope that the path we are on will lead us closer to our common goal. We are greatly helped, however, if we encounter teachers who are adept at offering us fictions that are sufficiently relatable and affectively powerful enough to move us to act. This, I would suggest, was Mr. Möller's particular gift to me. And so it is in this sense that I take his gesture to be exemplary.

Journey's End: Some Concluding Remarks

The pedagogy of "as if" is intended to take seriously the fact that most of our basic starting points in education are in fact fictional in the sense that they reflect assumptions about the world that are heuristically and temporarily helpful in terms of getting us started, but not necessarily true in the sense that they provide a completely rational and non-contradictory understanding of the world. This is a broad conception of fiction and it is one that corresponds with Vaihinger's theory of expedient fictions. As such, it does not refer to the systematic deception of students (as might be the case with an account grounded in Saul Smilansky's illusionism[59]) but to the practical necessity of accounting for innate limitations in the epistemological scope of human cognition. It is not a case of deception, as it concerns fictions that are openly admitted to be fictional, and as there is no prior assumption stating that the teacher has access to anything beyond these temporary and expedient fictions when seeking to get things started. It is important to note, however, that fictions can be more or less helpful for getting things started and for keeping us moving in a direction that is helpful rather than debilitating in terms of allowing us to approximate ethical ideals and to reevaluate our personally held beliefs.

In this paper I have sketched out three possible starting points intended to illustrate how the pedagogy of "as if" can offer a pronounced direction along which to embark on the collective pedagogical journey toward a good life. The first

58. See Stock, *Only Imagine*.

59. Smilansky, *Free Will and Illusion*.

starting point stated that it is legitimate (and helpful) to assume that educational processes — in a broad and non-reductive sense — should assist in our striving for a life guided by reason. A life guided by reason was assumed to correspond with a life informed by practical dictates of reason stating that it is good to strive to further one's own perseverance (*qua* autonomy), and that this is best done in a way that aligns with (and supports) other people's striving for the same thing (i.e., it is prosocial rather than antisocial). A challenge facing us here is that practical dictates of reason only become directive if we can already appreciate the reasons for why this is helpful, and that this cannot be assumed to be a feasible starting point for education.

A second starting point was therefore posited stating that in lieu of a fully rational understanding of why we ought to follow the guidance of reason, we need expedient fictions that are helpful in that they can appeal to us affectively rather than rationally. What becomes important here is to make sure that the passive affects enlisted are not counterproductive to our striving, but can serve to strengthen the prosocial tendencies necessary to begin a process of striving for an ethical life together with other people. Because many fictions can easily lead us in a direction that runs counter to the collective striving for a life guided by reason, it was concluded that we would need a third starting point addressing the role of the teacher in terms of someone offering valuable fictions that will allow students to act "as if" they were already following the guidance of reason.

Accordingly, the third starting point explicitly addressed the role of the teacher in terms of an exemplar who would be sufficiently attuned to the affective constitution of the group of students to be able to offer them fictions with enough of an affective push to be able to move them to act "as if." Attainability and relatability were suggested as important dimensions of these expedient fictions, and the teacher's ability to address the students "as if" they were already well on their way to realizing their aspirational selves is a crucial feature of maintaining a dynamic pedagogical relation in this setting. The example of Mr. Möller's gesture was then proposed as an expedient fiction, useful for allowing the different key aspects of the pedagogy of "as if" to be connected in a sufficiently clear and helpful way.

Unlike morally superior exemplars conceived in terms of infallible moral saints, the example of Mr. Möller was meant to illustrate the importance of offering subtle gestures that may or may not carry enough affective weight to move one or more students in the general direction of a good life (depending on the degree of affective attunement). I offered Mr. Möller's gesture as an expedient fiction in order to illustrate how it lingered with me over time, and how it served as a useful touchstone for me when seeking to give shape to the aspirational self that he gestured at when offering me an inscribed book, thereby encouraging me to use literature to establish my own connections with the world (not knowing precisely what these connections might lead to) rather than to strive for a specific career or to pursue a particular educational path. The remaining challenge, of course, is to

connect the example of Mr. Möller's gesture with the three starting points already established in a convincing way.

My assumption is that Mr. Möller may have suspected that an inspirational talk on the value of reading, and of engaging with other people's perspectives through great literature, would have been less affectively powerful than to simply offer it up as a chance encounter or a vague clue to be deciphered and mulled over — as if he were inviting me to take on a mystery waiting to be solved. Again, I relate this to the bookseller in *The Neverending Story*, making an educational gesture appear to be an accident when in fact it was carefully prepared by the educator all along (much like Jean-Jacques's carefully planned encounters between Emile and his natural surroundings). Mr. Möller was never one to stand on the desk and proclaim his educational creed for all the world to hear. Instead, he was much more inclined to slip students these seemingly small educational gestures, assuming that some of them at least would take root and grow over time. Whether or not this was in fact his intention, I have decided to make his gesture into an expedient fiction, allowing me to explore the key features of a pedagogy of "as if." As such, it illustrates how an affective encounter can be set up, allowing a passive inclination (of being affected emotionally by the inviting gesture of a teacher) to latch onto a fundamental striving to understand the world better and to relate this understanding to other people who seem to be striving for similar things. It also illustrates how these encounters may be conceived as the mutual setting up of a starting point, pointing in the general direction of a good life, without claiming to be able to rationally explain the different steps leading up to this. In this sense, the fiction of Mr. Möller's gesture indicates that what was offered was in fact a fiction that would allow my student-self to act "as if" I was already well on my way to becoming my aspirational self (that is, the one addressed in writing by Mr. Möller). The ability of Mr. Möller to address my aspirational self speaks for his attunement to my affective constitution. It may not mean that this attunement stretched far enough to include all of his students, but then again that may be an unrealistic goal. Insofar as good exemplars are perceived as relatable and attainable, it may not be possible to offer exemplars with a more or less universal appeal. Mr. Möller was an exemplar to me, but he may not have been so for others. To me, this is not so much of a problem to overcome, however, as it is a reasonable starting point for understanding all educational relations.