

## Teacher as stranger : educational philosophy for the modern age

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Author	Maxine Greene
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- **Tags:**

- Education.
- Éducation Histoire 20e siècle.
- Éducation Philosophie.
- Education Philosophy.

**Notes:**

- 1a) "If indeed, for all its deficiencies and inequities, social mobility will be increasing upward in the United States, the aware teacher must come to terms with this idea as well. He must be as wary of romanticism and unthinking avant-gardism as he must be of the hollow pieties that blind so many educators to what is happening in their world. Again, he must identify himself and his principles; he must be clear about his values." (p. 204)
  - An educator must be clear about his values, especially amidst a changing world and changing policy.
  - It is important for a teacher not to get too swept up in new thought; he must come to acknowledge its existence, and potentially attempt to understand it, yet he must also stay resolute in his own ideals, especially when serving as an example to students.

**Tags:**

- change
- constant
- new thought
- stability
  
- 1b) "I would believe teaching needs at all times to be non-institutional; done along the streets, individually as Socrates did it or for that matter as Jesus did; or at the very most--organized in the poverty and intensity of the mediaeval [sic] beginnings of Universities; that any further organization and acceptance into society suffocated learning how to try to use the mind intensely and independently, i.e. how to become in certain senses a 'free' rather than a 'bonded' man; this latter being probably the first and maybe the only great obligation of teaching. If or when one has got some of this duty-of-independence, he may then much more safely go about becoming a scholar or whatever he pleases. -James Agee, Letters of James Agee to Father Flye" (p. 145)
  - Teaching should be done freely, so as to encourage others to learn freely and be thus free in thought and disposition.
  - Some of the best and most famous teachers in history (e.g., Socrates and Jesus) did not teach within the confines of an institution, but preached and taught in free environments.

**Tags:**

- bonded man
- free
- teaching as free
  
- 1c) "No matter how pessimistic the predictions, no matter how appalling the test scores, he [the teacher] must act *as if* his students are free agents, responsible for choosing themselves." (p. 149)
  - Teachers must be encouraging of their students, regardless of the students' background, circumstances, or stereotypes.

- Even if the situation seems hopeless, one must remember that thoughts are mostly free; in this regard can an individual be free to choose himself.

**Tags:**

- choose oneself
- encouragement
- freedom
- individual
- 1d) "To be equipped for inquiry is to be equipped to engage in a process through which objects and events can be seen in connection with other objects and events in the experienced world." (p. 158)
  - It is not enough to simply learn about one's own world and environment; one must also be prepared to ask questions and seek additional answers.
  - Inquiry involves formulating connections and experiences in the world, and thus learning from those associations.

**Tags:**

- connections
- inquiry
- inquiry as stance
- 1e) "To cope with the moral crisis of our time, the teacher must perceive as many facets as he can and see their thematic relevance for his personal life." (p. 208)
  - Coinciding with the general theme of Greene's book, it is imperative to perceive a multitude of views and perspectives, especially if one is to survive and thrive in an ever-changing world.
  - Educators could be examples of a constant in a changing environment, yet their steadfastness should not stand in the way of acknowledging new ideas and conflicting thoughts in a constructive manner.

**Tags:**

- change
  - multiple facets
  - perspectives
  - views
- 3) The author's main argument is that teaching should not be confined to a single set of constructs; on the contrary, one should consider a multitude of perspectives. At the same time, though, it is important for an educator to develop a set of values, so that he is not so easily swayed in the face of radical change in society. Educators can frequently come into conflict with moral, intellectual, philosophic, and humanitarian dissension of thought. It may be difficult to choose what is "right" and "wrong," yet it is possible to teach regardless of such conflicting circumstances.

**Tags:**

- main argument
- 4a) Greene would say that the responsibilities of an educator lie predominantly with entertaining a wealth of knowledge. It is not enough to simply adopt one view of the world. However, it is also important to maintain one's values; teachers should therefore be responsible with establishing a set of ideals and dispositions with which to guide an understanding of the world. A teacher's role is that of a philosopher, a thinker, a rationalizer, even a stranger, as evident by the title of the book and the final chapter.

**Tags:**

- responsibilities
  - roles
- 4b) It is possible that Greene would largely agree with Costa and Kallick (2013) with regards to dispositional thinking. Greene states, "No matter how stimulating the environment he [the

teacher] creates, he will necessarily have in mind dispositions that seem to him more desirable than others; and this constraint, in itself, is a limitation." (p. 176) In a way, this quote unites the thoughts of Greene with that of Costa and Kallick. Greene believes that one should not simply adopt one set of thoughts; it is important to incorporate a multitude of them so as to more fully view the world through a variety of lenses, thus embracing other frames of thought. Costa and Kallick, in turn, believe that it is important for an individual to develop a well-rounded set of dispositions so as to better serve society. It is possible that Greene could disagree with Costa and Kallick on the notion of having a set number of dispositions. Costa and Kallick have emerged with their Sixteen Habits of Mind (2008). Greene, on the other hand, would argue that an individual would not only have sixteen habits of mind, but potentially an infinite number of habits of mind. Additionally, she would argue which of those habits lie in philosophy, which in science, which in the question of Man, and so forth.

**Tags:**

- Costa
  - dispositions
  - Greene
  - habits of mind
  - Kallick
- 
- 5) From reading this text, I have learned that it is important to maintain a constant set of values, even though I am naturally inclined to want to see other perspectives and potentially alter my views in light of them. This is not necessarily a negative thing, yet I could see the destructive potential with giving in to certain lines of thought. For instance, my ideals and values tell me that it is important not to drink and drive under the influence of alcohol or other substances, because my safety and the safety of other on the road is at stake. It is important for me to maintain this value, and not give in so easily to the thought that perhaps drinking before getting behind the wheel is not necessarily a destructive thing if I am careful; other people may engage in this

thought, yet I know through my education of the world that such a view could be destructive in the long-run. It is important to distinguish what constitutes as "good" versus "negative" thinking in society; it is subjective according to the society one lives in. Yet Greene also brings in the question of Man and what he is, and whether he really is such a direct product of social construct. Greene does not fully offer a conclusion to these issues, yet perhaps that is not the point. The real point in reading her work is in constructing our own views, to be our own advocate, to formulate our own thoughts and opinions in an ever-changing world with discordant ideas. "What the known demands" (Chapter 7) is to be known. There is neither right nor wrong; only what is.

**Tags:**

- driving
- Greene
- learning experiences
- own opinion