A Philosophical Perspective on

'The Parent -Learner- Teacher Triad'

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*Abstract:-*This essay re-emphasises the necessity and the significance of what can be considered as the 'holy alliance' in an Educational set up. A disjointed Education is one in which the symphony, the synchrony and the harmony are undesirably missing. The worst disjunction that can ever happen in pedagogy is the disconnect among the Teacher, the Learner and the Parent. This essay uses basic analysis to reaffirm the necessity of the relationships among the teacher, the learner and the parent for Educational ends, and that such relationships are not only Philosophically founded but practically justifiable.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Parent-Learner-Teacher relationship is inevitable in the Educational process because it is intrinsically intertwined to the Multi-dimensionality of Education. That Education is a multidimensional activity is a fact, at least in the view of Njoroge and Benaars. It can either be normative, creative, cognitive or dialogical. Among these dimensions, Normative and dialogical dimensions squarely place Education at a social pedestal, and in so doing, it makes it a social activity while Creative and cognitive dimensions point to the being of the individual learner. The social nature of Education facilitates the adaptation and the acculturation into society through interaction (Dialogical-dimension) and enforcement of values (normative dimension). On the other hand, creative and cognitive dimensions anticipate a child who will be fully functional, productive and reasonably independent. Consequently, Parents, Teachers and Learners are not spectators in instilling and in the enforcement of the assimilation these different Education processes. Behind these dimensions and pedagogical relationships are Philosophical underpinnings, both at metaphysical and pragmatic levels.

II. METAPHYSICS OF UNIVERSALS AND PARTICULARS AS THE PREMISE OF SOCIAL AND INDIVIDUAL DIMENSIONS OF EDUCATION

Social dimensions of Education, comprising of dialogical and normative aspects, and individual dimensions of Education, comprising of Creative and Cognitive aspects, correlate with Metaphysical blueprints of Universals and Particulars. The Philosophies of Universalism and *Particularism* form some of the most ancient of Philosophical problems that remain unsolved to date. According to the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Universals are "...a class of mind-independent entities, usually contrasted with individuals (or "particulars"), postulated to ground and to explain relations of qualitative identity and resemblance among individuals. Individuals are said to be similar in virtue of sharing universals". Consider whiteness; Whiteness is an entity that is shared by other individual entities without diminishing its nature or value. For instance, a particular table X being white wholly depends on whiteness for its existence, and the fact that one million tables are white, whiteness does not(and cannot) decrease or become weak. Furthermore, while a white table x is entirely dependent on whiteness for its existence, Whiteness does not depend on the table. Whiteness being Universal is commutable to society, or society-ness while the individual human, being a particularised entity is commutable to Individuality.

Further distinctions between Universals and Particulars can be made Psychologically, Ontologically and Logically. Psychological distinction is based on the fact the Universals are concepts, or rather objects of the acts of conception as in the afore-stated case of *Society-ness* while particulars are percepts or objects of acts of perception, like this or that designated learner. Society is not a perceivable reality on its own, but it expresses itself in the life of individual members who correlate with the particulars. Socially oriented dimensions of Education (Dialogical and Normative) are thus based on the ontology of Universals while individuated dimensions like cognitive and creative dimensions are pegged on the ontology of particulars. Further, Ontological distinction is based on the correlation between Time and space. Traditionally, Metaphysics especially Ontology has pre occupied itself with the discussion on the meaning and nature of time, whether time exists and how it exists, and how it can be manipulated.

One of the general understanding is that time is the instantiation of eternity (timelessness). As an instantiation[1] , it is thus a particular while that which it instantiates (eternity) is beyond time, and is thus a 'Universal'. Percepts exist in time (they are temporal) while concepts do not exist in time because they are *atemporal.* In Education, 'Normativity' and 'Dialogics' express the Universal social aims of Education, for the simple Philosophical and anthropological fact that all humans without exceptions are *zum politikon*[2] (Aristotle)

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[1] Making the Universal Particular
[2] Social being(Aristotle)

Alternatively, as stated in Ubuntu Philosophy " *Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*"[3]. Without social skills, it is indeed impossible for humans to exist as humans. However social skills are *defacto* promulgated through the instantiation of skills of cognitive nature and creativity which happen within time but extrapolates to out-of-time in the society. According to Bertrand Russell, Space is another pedestal for distinguishing Universals and particulars. He observes that in terms of space, things can be divided into three, namely those which are not in any place, those which are in one place at one time, but never in more than one, for example, relation, and those which are in many places at once for example whiteness. Norms in Education are things not in place, for one cannot point out in space where morality is empirically located. It is like mathematics and numbers. However, it can be instantiated in a person who is a 'Particular' in one place at a time manifesting the self in plurality in many places all the time. Logical Distinctions postulate and relate Universals and particulars in terms of Non-relational Entities and relational entities. Relations: Non-relations are particulars or properties of particulars while relations are Universals. In Education, Dialogical and normative dimensions are logically relational activities while Cognitive at its behest are non-relational entities, although cognitive dimension thrives well in a social milieu. This is not tantamount to saying that the school makes a child intelligent; it only provides the environment for nurturing it.

III. PRAGMATICITY OF THE PARENT-LEARNER-TEACHER TRIAD

Having observed that Metaphysics of Universals correspond to Social Intricacies manifested in Education as Normative and Dialogical dimensions and that Metaphysics of Particulars correspond to Individual components manifested in Education as Creative and Cognitive dimensions, the most logical step is to determine the practical Philosophical side as manifested in the teacher-learner -Parent relationship.

Child as the central Focus

The critical subject and object of Education in a learning environment is the child. In other words, the Educational activity and theory revolve around the learner who is first of all a human being. The child is an active ontological participant in the universality of humanity. However, the child leaves the comfort of the home which is composed of experienced adults, to seek for Education in a school-composed of strangers with whom he/she is supposed to relate individually. The relationship in school is both horizontal and vertical, in that the child being a social being interacts with fellow children, but most significantly the child being socially and intellectually less experienced is mentored by other experienced persons into an authentic person both in social and individual skills. However, the vertical relationship is accentuated by a proper horizontal relationship between the child and his/her colleagues. The child, both at home and school, is an enfolding entity with an already existent potency of social and individual skills. As a matter of fact, the child goes to school not to be wholly under the tutelage of the teacher but also to unfold his or her self. He/she is a miniature adult with all capabilities only that these capabilities need to be tapped, and their latency to be awakened. The dialogical skills, normative skills, creative skills and cognitive skills are not taught at first in school but at home. The child is a particular entity that receives its universality through the process of education first at home then at school. Besides, as a particularised entity, the child is a unique individual, with unique talents, requiring education in time(partially programmed). The child also exists in their own space at a time and should thus be treated as a spatiotemporal being. The environment for learning thus plays a significant role in the education of the child just as proper timing and programming are necessary. From a logical perspective, it is only fair that teaching methods be inductive and built on past experiences of the child.

The Teacher must have multiple competencies to relate Educationally

One of the reasons conservative Education emphasises the teacher is because the teacher was expected to be an all-around adult; one who had assimilated all skills that a child needed. When conservatives, Essentialists and Perenialists talk of the authority of the teacher they mean that the teachers are so versed in all dimensions of Education, not just in paper but in multiple skills. A teacher can thus be defined as a cognitively, dialogically, creatively and normatively competent adult ready to sacrifice his time, resources and efforts on the altar of Education. A teacher is *ipso facto* a Universal force instantiating itself on the learner. When the child leaves the family, he is handed over to other parents outside the family, also known as teachers. Teachers act in *loco parentis*[4] but also in *loco societas*[5]. He/she transits the child from particularity to universality. The teaching method used by the teacher should be such that it is a double-edged sword dissecting individual skills and at the same time sharpening social skills. The Philosophy of the teacher is such that its projected outside to the society. Creative and cognitive aspects expounded by the teacher are servants of *dialogics* and *normativity*. It is also vital to note that when a teacher acts in loco parentis, he/she must, first of all, possess the qualities of an ideal parent like compassion, firmness, sacrifice, concern, empathy, maturity and wisdom while maintaining a consistent and healthy relationship with the child and the parent of the child.While acting in *loco societas,* the teacher must at least be construed as an ideal member of the society, one who willfully contributes to the social course outside the school set up. The probability that the child will meet the teacher in social functions like church services, funerals, weddings,

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[3] South African Nguni saying. Literally translated as" A man is a man because of (other) men

[4] In the place of the parent

[5] In the place of the society

fundraising should be high. It is this way that the child observes and desires to be like his/her teacher in matters of social responsibility. An introverted and egotistic teacher, may therefore not be the best teacher.

Furthermore, the teacher comes into the class with their knowledge, skills and attitudes which are supposed to be in sync with the values of the home and the society. They are adults who accept the children with the differences they come into the classroom with, which consists of the intellectual giftedness, motivational levels, social, economic backgrounds and conflicts of interest. Although they are expected to execute the services for which they were employed, they are a myriad of factors that either deter or enhance their noble function ranging from their competencies, grooming, communication ability to their classroom management.

Parent as a teacher

A Parent is mandated by the society and by the laws of nature to *nature,* to nurture and to nourish their children. Through conception, they not only reproduce themselves, for a child is an image of the parent but also transfers their genetic heritage like intelligence, mannerism to the child. So, in other words, a child in the school relives the parent's past years in school. However, a child is not purely a genetic product, and this is where particularisation come in when parents having known their inferior points, purpose to nourish and nurture their children for Educative purposes such that children become better than their parents. An ideal parent should see into it that their children become better than they are in life. They have the responsibility of guarding and protecting their children even in school. As such a parent is a friend of the teacher but also a teacher at home.

IV. CONCLUSION

Annotation from Bronfenbrenner's theory

Bronfenbrenner's biological theory of human development underscores the process-person interrelatedness in the development of human beings, which consists of an intertwinement of the Microsystems, Exosystem, and Macrosystems. This significant triad is captured and confined in the Microsystems and the Mesosystems. The two segments capture the on-goings in the school and home set-up. The principal tenet is the interaction among the influencing entities and their impact on the individual, in this case, the child who is the current or future learner, the key performer in the school room. This acquiesces that the Parents-Learner-Teacher triad as a dissectible but inseparable trinity.

Visual Summary

Finally, the diagram below visually summarises the premises and the processes of the Parent-Learner-Teacher relation as a pointer to Holistic Education.
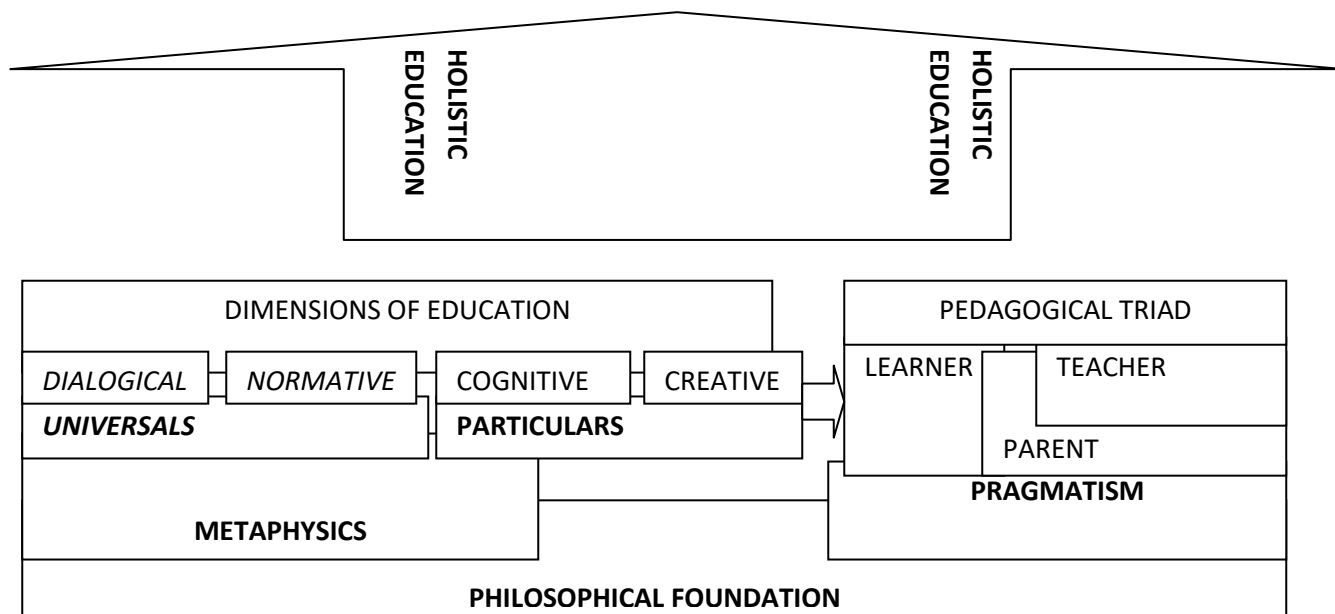
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