The School as a Philosophical Field of Consciousness and Criticism: The Establishment of the Moral Mind and the Critical Self

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Abstract

In light of the profound transformations that the contemporary world is witnessing, the school becomes more than a space for receiving knowledge, as it is heading to be a living field of awareness and the moral formation of the individual, where educational experiences intersect with critical thinking and self-education on moral and social responsibility, and therefore this intervention raises a central problem related to how to achieve a balance between the learner's freedom to practice critical thought and the need to adhere to common values in the school space, especially in light of the challenges that the digital age and globalization impose on the independence of the mind and its process In this context, the research relies on an analytical, critical, philosophical approach that combines the study of classical and contemporary educational philosophy with the analysis of practical experiences that confirm the possibility of the school in establishing a conscious mind and a morally liberated self-capable of reflection and accountability, and aims to highlight the school as a philosophical laboratory of consciousness and study the dimensions of the relationship between knowledge, ethics, freedom and discipline, and to present a modern vision for critical and ethical self-education in a way that keeps pace with the challenges of the age and promotes conscious societal action. Through this perspective, the school becomes a space for re-establishing the critical mind and building a balanced moral self, making education a real philosophical experience that is effective in shaping future generations.

Key words: School ، a living field of awareness ، Critical Thinking ، of the ethical formation of the individua| ، the digital age ، Philosophy of Education

Introduction

At a time when cognitive and social changes are accelerating and digital globalization is intertwined with the requirements of modern education, the school becomes more than just a space for indoctrinating information, it is a living philosophical field for shaping awareness and building the moral and critical self. In this context, a central problem emerges that imposes itself on every educational project: How can the school establish an independent critical mind in the learner while maintaining common values and social discipline in light of the challenges that the digital age imposes on freedom of

thought and self-responsibility? This intervention aims to highlight the importance of the school as a philosophical laboratory of consciousness, capable of activating the critical mind, developing the moral self, and building the conscious and responsible learner, which makes education a real philosophical experience that affects society as a whole.

First: School as a Space for Establishing Critical Awareness

Throughout history, the school has been more than just an educational institution, it is a philosophical and social space in which the stakes of knowledge, power, and freedom intersect, and since Plato in the "Republic" made education the pillar of justice, the school has been considered a field for the formation of the human being, not only in its cognitive dimension, but also in its moral and ontological dimension, and in the age of digital globalization, where the learner is surrounded by an endless flow of knowledge and information, the school is no longer able to be satisfied with the role of indoctrination, but has become required to establish a critical mind capable of Sift through knowledge and build a philosophical consciousness that establishes freedom and responsibility at the same time. Hence, the main problem arises: how can the school be transformed from a traditional educational institution into a philosophical field of critical awareness and moral self-formation in the face of the challenges of the digital age?

1- From indoctrination to the production of independent thought

The school in its traditional form has long relied on indoctrination as the only way to transmit knowledge, but this model soon revealed its limitations, as it produced learners programmed to reproduce what they received instead of thinking about it or questioning it.[1] This model leads to the abolition of the thinking self and transforms education into a mechanical act that lacks the human dimension and existence, and on the other hand, the establishment of critical consciousness requires that the school become a space for the production of independent thought, where the learner is trained in the skill of questioning and the ability to analyze concepts instead of memorizing them, and Kant expressed the essence of this transformation in his famous call for enlightenment, where he said: "Enlightenment is the exit of man from his shortcomings that he has committed against himself"[2], and this exit can only be achieved if the learner is freed from the constraints of indoctrination and into the space of criticism and creativity, and from this perspective, the learner is no longer just a negative future of knowledge, but becomes an active self that contributes to its production, and this is what makes the school a philosophical field par excellence, as it puts the self in front of itself and makes it responsible for its awareness and ways of thinking

2- Philosophical Education as a Method of Free Thinking

If philosophy is in essence "thinking without guardianship"[3] , in Kant's words, its integration into the school as an educational curriculum guarantees the learner the experience of free thinking, and here we do not mean to teach the history of philosophy as ready-made knowledge, but rather to practice philosophy itself as an exercise in mental freedom, and Matthew Lippmann, the founder of "Philosophy for Children", stressed that the introduction of philosophy into the classroom is not a cognitive luxury, but a democratic necessity because "a society that does not train its children to think critically, prepares itself for blind obedience"[4] This vision places the school at the center of a humanitarian battle aimed at building a citizen capable of discussing and making his decisions consciously and responsibly.

[1] Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, Continuum, 2000, p. 72

[2] Kant, What is Enlightenment?, translated by Imam Abdel Fattah Imam, Madbouly Library, 1994, p. 18

[3] Kant, Critique of Pure Reason, Cambridge University Press, 1998, p. 9

[4] Matthew Lipman, Philosophy in the Classroom, Temple University Press, 1980, p. 42

In the Arab context, we find Muhammad Abed Al-Jabri stressing that philosophical education is the best tool to reconstruct the Arab mind, as he says: "Without a critical mind, it is not possible to talk about a renaissance or modernization"[5], the integration of philosophy in school education therefore means the establishment of a mind that is self-aware and has the courage to think outside the mainstream, and therefore the school is not just a channel for the transmission of knowledge, but a laboratory in which the free philosophical mind is made, where the learner learns that criticism is not a negative behavior but a constructive act Leads to Meaning Creation and Self-Formulation.

Second: School and the Formation of the Moral Self

If critical consciousness frees the mind from the captivity of tradition, then the school is also required to educate the moral self that balances freedom and responsibility, for man is not only an abstract mind, but a being living within a community and must control his desires according to higher values that guarantee the possibility of coexistence. It is a workshop to form a new humanity that is aware of itself and anticipates its destiny, and from this perspective, philosophy within the school becomes a civilizational bet to renew the collective identity and revive a renewed national project.

 Based on the above, philosophical thinking in the civilizational bet is one of the most important problems facing contemporary Arab and Algerian thought, as the philosophical question is no longer just a theoretical preoccupation or a logical abstraction, but has become a tool to understand the fate of societies in a time when civilizational forces and intellectual references are struggling. Values, i.e., the school is not only a space for the accumulation of information, but it is a moral institution par excellence, as it is

raised on the values of responsibility and freedom in the framework of coexistence for him: "The moral self is not formed in isolation, but in constant contact with the other within a collective space that imposes its rules and values"[6], hence the importance of considering two basic dimensions:

First, philosophy as a bet for civilizational identity

 Second: Philosophy as a Tool for the Renewal of Algerian Thought

These are two complementary dimensions that highlight the ability of philosophy to move from theoretical reflection to active participation in the making of civilizational meaning

1**. Philosophy as a bet for civilizational identity**

Civilizational identity is one of the most complex issues in contemporary Arab thought, where history and religion intersect, language and culture and modernity intersect with tradition Zoroukhi believes that philosophy is not just an import of Western intellectual models or a reproduction of an ancient heritage, but rather a critical act that allows Algerian society to regain its place on the civilizational map through an authentic self-awareness.[7][8]Philosophy in this sense represents a tool to re-narrative the Algerian self and liberate it from cultural and intellectual dependence, i.e., philosophy within the school becomes a means of teaching the pupil how to narrate himself in relation to his heritage and his future aspirations. for identity.

This perception can also be compared to the position of Mohamed Abed Jabri, who called for the "rationalization of heritage" through what he called the "critical Arab mind"[9] , but Zerroukhi goes beyond the purely heritage character to enter identity into a transformative global horizon that forces its constant reformulation, and perhaps vivid examples of this are

[5] Muhammad Abed Al-Jabri, The Formation of the Arab Mind, Center for Arab Unity Studies, 1989, p. 15.
[6] (Zarroukhi, Philosophical Writing and the Civilizational Staggering, National Book Foundation, 2019, p. 102)

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[8] Ricœur, Soi-même comme un autre, Seuil, 1990, p.142
[9] Al-Jabri, The Formation of the Arab Mind, Center for Arab Unity Studies, Beirut, 1984, p. 22

manifested in the debates on education and language in Algeria, as philosophy, in his perspective, is what makes it possible to overcome the "Arabization/Frenchization" dichotomy to establish a cognitive identity capable of opening and rooting at the same time From an Arab perspective, Taha Abdel Rahman believes that philosophy in our context is not just a clone of the West, but rather "a value creation that establishes a spiritual and moral[10] renaissance", and therefore invoking this dimension makes the Algerian school in Zerroukhi's vision an arena for the revival of civilizational identity on both critical and moral foundations

A2- Philosophy as a tool for the renewal of Algerian thought

If philosophy in its first dimension is linked to civilizational identity, its second dimension is manifested in its being a tool for the renewal of Algerian thought. It can only build its civilizational project if its school engages in the production of authentic philosophical thought that re-reads its history and identity in the light of universal values.

The Algerian idea, as Zerroukhi sees it, is not just national statements or ideological slogans, but rather a living critical project that clashes with the questions of the age such as freedom, justice, coexistence, and human dignity. A cohesive democracy[11]", which is in line with Zerroukhi's vision that emphasizes the need to integrate philosophy into the school as a dialogical practice that teaches young people how to negotiate meaning and identity.

The renewal of the Algerian idea of philosophy does not mean a break with heritage, but rather a re-reading of it in light of the challenges of the times, and this is what makes the school a space for the education of a collective morality that understands that freedom can only be achieved through responsibility, that identity is only

complete through openness, and that philosophy is not just a theory, but a practical bet to build the new Algerian man. In this context, Zaroukhi gives the school a foundational role that goes beyond the pedagogical function to the philosophical function in building the moral self and the national project

Third: Contemporary Challenges and Redefining the Function of the School

In the age of digital globalization, the school is no longer just a traditional space for the transfer of knowledge, but has become a direct confrontation with open worlds with no boundaries of information and contradictory values. Rather, how do we teach man to think and live with dignity in a rapidly changing world? The biggest challenge is to preserve the school as a space of meaning, not as a mere echo of digital chaos or a tool for reproducing consumption, and therefore the school faces a fateful choice of either surrendering to the power of the screen or rising as a civilizational bet that establishes a critical and moral mind capable of facing the challenges of the age

1. The Impact of Digital Globalization on Educational Values and Mind

Digital globalization has created a new knowledge space that has made the school face a fateful challenge: how to maintain its educational mission in the age of "fast information"? This is where the danger of the educational mind disintegrating into a superficial consumer mind that treats knowledge as a commodity emerges[12], and from this perspective the school is required to regain its role as a space for the production of the critical mind and not just a mediator between knowledge. Freire, who believed that "education is either a tool for the liberation of man or to consecrate him in the circle of dispossession"[13], because if the school is content with indoctrinating ready-made knowledge, it

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[10] Taha Abdel Rahman, The Spirit of Modernity: An Introduction to the Establishment of Islamic Modernity, Arab Cultural Center, 2006, p. 57

[11] Habermas, Moralbewußtsein und kommunikatives Handeln, Suhrkamp, 1983, p. 112
[12] Castells, The Rise of the Network Society, 2010, p. 45
[13] Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed, 1970, p. 72

contributes to the reproduction of digital dominance, but if it adopts a dialogical approach based on questioning and criticism, it establishes an awareness capable of resisting dispossession

2. School as a civilizational bet to build a society of responsible thinking

The redefinition of the function of the school goes beyond the pedagogical dimension to take the form of a civilizational bet. John Dewey has emphasized since the beginning of the twentieth century that the school is the institution that enables society to "democratically renew itself through education"[14], while Habermas added a complementary dimension when he considered that educational spaces should be built on the communicative mind, where mutual recognition between selves takes place through dialogue Unconditional freedom of domination[15], and thus the school becomes a laboratory for the practice of ethical communication, not just a device for indoctrinating information.

In the Algerian context, Draghi Zarroukhi believes that the school is not a technical device for the transfer of knowledge, but rather a philosophical and civilizational project to renew Algerian thought so that it contributes to building a collective mind capable of resisting cultural appropriation and facing the challenges of globalization[16]

For him, the school is not only a reflection of its time, but also a means of redirecting time towards a renewed national project

The challenges that digital globalization imposes on the school can only be met by re-establishing it as a philosophical space based on:

- Liberation of consciousness (as in Freire)
- Renewing democracy through education (as in Dewey)
- Building the communicative mind (as in Habermas)
- The national civilizational bet (as in Zerroukhi)

Thus, the school is transformed from an institution of indoctrination into an inclusive civilizational stake, where the critical mind and the moral self are formed at the same time

Conclusion

Through this intervention, we have tried to show that the school is not a neutral institution, but rather in its essence a philosophical and moral bet related to the establishment of critical awareness, the formulation of the moral self, and the face of contemporary challenges created by a transformative world dominated by digital globalization. The second axis highlighted that the school is not only a space for the liberation of the mind, but also a workshop for the formation of a capable moral self On the balance between individual freedom and social responsibility, and in the last axis, it became clear that the school is facing a fateful test today on how to remain true to its civilizational bet in light of the challenges of digital globalization, which can only be achieved by integrating multiple philosophical approaches of liberation in Freire's case, communicative in Habermas, democracy in Dewey, and stagnant in Zerroukhi. How can the school be transformed from a space of indoctrination into a civilizational bet that establishes the moral mind and the critical self? I found some answer by linking the school as an educational institution with the school as a philosophical field. The real bet is not to stuff minds with knowledge, but to form minds that improve the accountability of that knowledge

There are a number of comments that we have come up with, the most important of which are:

- Renewing the curricula of philosophical education: making philosophy a living part of the school curriculum not as a material for memorization, but as a way of thinking practiced through dialogue and free debate
- Enhancing the moral dimension in education: not by indoctrinating ready-

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[14]Dewey, Democracy and Education, 1916, p. 89.

[15] Habermas, The Theory of Communicative Action, 1984, p. 86.

[16] (Zarukhi, Philosophy and the Civilizational Gamble, Dar Houma, 2015, p. 121)

made values, but by involving the pupil in daily practices that establish a spirit of responsibility and coexistence

- Rebuilding the relationship between school and digitalization: transforming digital media from consumption and distraction tools to critical tools for analysis, understanding, and accountability
- Training the teacher as a philosophical actor: The teacher is not a transmitter of knowledge, but a facilitator of intellectual dialogue, and a guide for building a critical and moral self
- Activating the role of the school in the national project: so that it is not just a reflection of social crises, but an active in the renewal of the Algerian and Arab identity, by instilling the values of responsible thinking and critical citizenship.

The school we are betting on is not the school of the past or just an echo of the present, but a philosophical project for the future, and if we can redefine it in this sense, it will turn into the driving force that makes philosophy a part of daily life, and of education as a horizon for the renewal of man and society together.

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