

Towards Rational Education

Towards Rational Education explores how education can become rational by serving character building, rational thinking and the common good. It uses evidence-based psychology, philosophy, sociology and political science to support transforming education and provides a brand-new framework for effective universal education.

This book endorses Rational-Emotive Behavior Theory (REBT) and rational education philosophy theories as main vehicles paving a viable set of rational education values and practices. Collective wisdom, rational living, freedom, mental health, altruism, solidarity, equality and fraternity are seen as the foundational values for shaping already existing schools of the world become more rational and in establishing Rational Education Communities (REC) and Rational Schools (RS). Calling for a philosophical and socio-political shift in education values and practices, the book cites principles, tools and practices that rational educators, philosophers, psychologists, other related scientists-practitioners and people have offered us as a legacy for building a more rational and positive education for all people universally, without sacrificing cultural sensitivity and expressivity.

This book will be of great interest for the general audience and a special interest for academics, researchers and post-graduate students in the fields of the philosophy of education, positive psychology, educational psychology and educational policy.

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Contents

[Acknowledgements](#)

[Introduction](#)

PART 1

[Rational education values](#)

[1 My vision for education](#)

[Problems of contemporary libertarian education](#)

[A fundamental proposition](#)

[2 Fundamental values of rational education](#)

[Rational education value: \(on the road to\) collective wisdom](#)

[Rational education value: rational living](#)

[Rational education value: freedom](#)

[Rational education value: mental health](#)

[Rational education value: \(cultivation of\) altruism](#)

[Rational education values: solidarity, equality, fraternity \(SEF\)](#)

[3 Education vs. educational system](#)

[Rational education: the most positive form of education](#)

[Rational education: a problem-solving method](#)

[Conclusion to Part 1: answers to fundamental questions](#)

PART 2

[Rational education practices](#)

[4 Existing schools: towards more rational education](#)

[Rational education content: presentation of two examples](#)

[Rational education structure: integration of rational and other social-emotional learning in schools](#)

[5 Rational schools: an elegant form of rational education](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Historical account](#)

[Why is rational education historically important in today's educational reality?](#)

[6 Rational education in the 21st century](#)

[Rational education practices in the 21st century: the Rational School](#)

[7 Fundamental practices of rational education in the Rational School](#)

[Mental health practices](#)

[*Rational living practices*](#)

[*Examples of curricula for the Rational School*](#)

Freedom practices

Altruism practices

[*Solidarity, equality and fraternity practices*](#)

[8 Why rational education values and practices are really not established in schools:
an essential commentary and the call for rational schools](#)

[Instead of an epilogue: on healthy utopia](#)

Conclusion

References

[*Index*](#)

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Introduction

I miss rational education.

Not as an *extra* in the school curriculum. As *the* curriculum.

I can “smell”, see and understand educational progress.

Schooling and education are not authoritarian any more (with minor exceptions).

I can see what Steven Pinker suggests: more reason, more science, more humanism, more progress (Pinker, 2018). True, gradually.

I don't look for absolute ideals. But people can do more about education and schooling if they believe that this is the key for a better future of humanity.

Despite social and educational progress (I would not want to live in past times), education remains technocratic and unequal.

Even some progressive social-emotional curricula from specific educational systems (see Finland, Holland, Australia, several USA and Britain schools) do it “for the country”. Or, at least, for the students of this country without essential efforts for universality and the common good.

In most cases, social-emotional learning works as an extra or a balance to academic or “mainstream” education whose main goal remains “knowledge”.

Usually, parroted knowledge or knowledge related to a specific skill and a specific job in the future.

I miss instruction in the development of personal character and personality, in the relationships, in the management of personal and career development, in the raising of children, in the pursuit of friendship, in the approach to mental health, sex and death.

Not as a social-emotional curriculum. As *the* curriculum.

Why a “standard” curriculum anyway? Who decides that? Mostly, governments. There is no real participatory democracy yet, despite all the voices raised about holistic learning and education.

The educational world is becoming more rational but in a more disciplinary and elite way.

Children and adolescents are filled with knowledge but they are not taught (some of them “scream” but are not heard) that character, rational thinking and facts of social life come first.

Parents and teachers strive to instill “performance” and “success” into the children and youth but when they react to the educational systems, and propose (or imply) something educationally progressive (they want to pave their own way their way), they are misdiagnosed with a disorder and are subject to services because of their “ADHD” or “dyslexia” or “conduct disorder”.

OK. The mental health problems of children are still out there. And they will always be there, given their frequently innate nature.

But school culture and environment largely trigger or reinforce students' mental health problems while stakeholders ask for *more* tolerance and acceptance on behalf of students, pressing them for relentless “school success and performance” more than ever.

I also listen to talk about “alternative” education and other forms of (home)schooling.

Divisions, still there: mainstream vs. “alternative” education.

“Kudos” to mainstream education: numerous children (more numerous than reported and you imagine) find their element outside mainstream education when they grow up.

Many object that all I write here is just a political, an educational or individual problem.

Divisions over divisions, still.

As I shall show, it is a mostly political, social *and* financial problem, not only psychological, individual or strictly educational.

First and foremost, it is a confusion of socio-political, financial and educational values problem which, ultimately, leads to confusion over which is the appropriate, if any, education for children.

It is not only an individual problem as many believe.

We are all (humans) in the same boat and it’d be better, despite the richness of expression and diversity, to strive for common principles in education.

Striving for the common good.

For a better society at the universal level, not just the individual or country level.

This is still not the case. It was once, but not now because pre-constructed “progress” and “happiness” have paved the way.

Which progress, though? Liberty, mostly. Freedom, still not: educational freedom to curve (new) horizons and actions.

I am not a utopianist.

My belief in utopia drives me towards progress though: not my conventional school, undergraduate and postgraduate education.

This book is about rational education as an emancipatory means for progress.

Emancipatory from prejudices, superstitions, distortions, irrationalities, systems, hierarchical relations but also education with active components of universal or contextual solidarity, equality (in terms of access to educational goods) and fraternity.

We have achieved individual autonomy. Positive and wellbeing psychology are stronger than ever but people are still not unconditionally happy.

Many people have diplomas and goals but they don’t know what their values or principles are.

They lack clear life practices.

They lack values and practices to do common good.

They are mostly preoccupied with themselves. They only remember others in crises or pandemic phases.

But, no. People are not these egotistical beings that many still want to believe (despite exceptions).

They are not the positive only being others want to see through either.

Rational altruism is the main point here: education is missing its panhuman use.

Coming back to divisions: body and mind or soul (it’s final: the brain is out of the human body!), good and bad, state and church, school and career, science and practice or science and art, academia and profession, education and work, medicine and psychology, philosophy and policy, reason and emotion, means and ends, theory and practice and the story goes on.

Dualisms everywhere.

General semantics is crucial at this point: governments, organizations, almost everybody, strive for more rationalism, not rationality.

I have better: capitalism, socialism, communism, extremism, atheism, pantheism. The kingdom of -isms.

Etymologists of the modern languages suggest that each word ending to an -ism represents a corrupted or declined version of the meaning of the word.

This book presents how education can become rational in terms of rationality (the essential meaning of the word including individual development *through* social development) and not rationalism (easily becomes a movement with hierarchical and impersonal relations among its members whose individual development includes *exploitation* of social development).

The former is a step towards meaningful education.

The latter talks about “rationalization” of existing (liberal, socialist or other “free”) education ending through conservation into social apathy or regression.

None of a change. Just “re-inventing the wheel”.

Thus, I present how rational education (not something new) can

- a. be integrated to existing mainstream education and
- b. stand-alone through rational schooling and educational communities.

First of all, I draw on a proposed rational education values framework to answer fundamental questions of life:

- Why is the time ripe (again) for rational education?
- What is a healthy human being?
- What is a good life?
- What is an efficient philosophy of life?
- What education do we really want?
- What is a rational philosophy of life?
- Why is rationality the most exciting ingredient of education?
- What are the most important rational elements of education?

Throughout the book, I shall be highlighting why rationality is a process based on innate individual *and* social values. And, why education walks full speed ahead rationality despite conventional decisions of today’s educational systems (with minor exceptions).

I am not a purist but I believe in action: there will never, ever, be the perfect rational education.

Yet, the sane, still fiery, ideal of rational education, which has survived across the centuries is, I believe, the missing link for the fulfilment of human beings.

In a world of constant globalization and yet more-than-ever diversity, common rational grounds organized at a communitarian level can light the beacons of cultural richness and mutual education.

Unfortunately, some people believe that this could be done through the technological revolution or related advancements but, you see, even technology and gadgets are based on rational philosophy (and this fact has really been ignored).

And, this is not going to happen unless human beings free themselves from the

innate tendency of to, individually *and* socially, not disturbing themselves (and not being disturbed by others or situations): *irrationality reduction* and *rationality enhancement* (Dryden, personal communication, March 2016) are significant steps towards the establishment of rational education.

In other words: mental health is *the* regulator of rational education.

And, then, mental health leads to rational living and vice versa.

In a few words: humanity cannot get rid of its rational nature. This is the basis of optimism and progress in the world.

And, rational education is not only about individual progress but largely about communal and social progress.

With individual progress only, we cherish inelegant, stale happiness (mostly in the form of individual conservation of the acquired goods which leads to less mental health and non-solidary, unequal and non-fraternal values and practices).

With social progress, we cherish elegant, fuller happiness (mostly in the form of constant experimentation and free, but sane, spontaneous action in a context of solidarity, equality and fraternity).

Education is the best tool we have to prevent the former and accelerate the latter.

However, while today's education seems structurally better than ever, it doesn't work.

The car looks amazing but remains still. When it moves, it only cares about its appearance, impression and performance.

This is like legislation without action. Legislation about legislation.

Karl Popper's words appear at this point: "Remember to falsify your theories". Your social theories and actions, I'd add (pardon me the division).

Education is about social action based on the facts of life.

Schooling and educational communities should ideally act independently of the state and other "educational" bodies or organizations.

They should be self-governed to teach all people of all ages (not only young people) how to survive and how to live with less (to be sane and strive for more if they want to).

Knowledge comes after.

Rational principles, *in a solidary, equal and fraternal context*, come first.

The main point is: the development of self through community and development of community through self.

Another important one: performance does not equate with human worth. The former is a part of the latter and *not* the latter.

Education is here to reassure us that nobody will be educationless and/or jobless. Nobody.

So, I speak about the rational education of every individual in a context of solidarity, equality and fraternity, among other rational education values (collective wisdom, freedom, altruism).

In support of the above rational values, I present the philosophy and scientific theory of Rational-Emotive Behavior Theory (REBT), founded by Albert Ellis in 1955, one of the most rational theories of our times providing realistic, logical and pragmatic, mental health and rational living, grounds to apply individual and collective rational education values.

I also value Judith Suissa's brilliant book *Anarchism and Education: A Philosophical Perspective*: a book that elegantly and effectively brought forth the fundamental

question of “What do we do with today’s society and politics and what is the role of education in this”.

Through his REBT theory, Albert Ellis has provided us with fundamental mechanisms (preferential, anti-awfulizing, frustration tolerance and unconditional self-acceptance attitudes) to educate ourselves for *individual* human flourishing.

Through her sane philosophical perspective, Judith Suissa provided us with the fundamental mechanisms (solidarity, equality, fraternity) to educate ourselves for *communal* human flourishing.

This book aims to show how individual flourishing is based on the communal (and vice versa), why communal flourishing is still the next big step of humanity and what is the role of education in this step.

We mainly need *transformation* of education, establishing rational schools, not *reformations* of the existing systems. Reformations can help existing schools become more rational but this is not an elegant solution.

I additionally include various rational education practices regarding rational values in a non-exhaustive mode. *Content*-based practices include the application of existing rational education frameworks and materials to existing schools, shaping them to become more rational. *Structure*-based practices include the establishment of original rational schools, applying rational education values and practices from scratch.

The rational education values framework presented in this book can be applied to existing schools too but numerous difficulties and problems have prevented this project until today.

Throughout the book I extensively comment on these difficulties and problems. I do that by offering relevant comments, analyses and solutions on the philosophical, political, psychological, sociological and historical underpinnings of rational education and schooling.

Therefore, in this book I present:

- a. My vision on rational education and the complex problems that prevent it for becoming true in either existing or new forms of education and schooling.
- b. A rational education values framework including collective wisdom, rational living, mental health, freedom, altruism, solidarity, equality and fraternity.
 - I stress the catalyst impact of solidarity, equality and fraternity as expanding forces of rational education.
 - I offer answers to several fundamental questions aforementioned regarding the criticality of rational education values on people’s lives.
- c. The main tenets of Ellis’s REBT on the rational education values of mental health and rational living.
 - I stress the emancipatory force of REBT in the rational education process and the regulatory impact of mental health and rational living on the application of rational education values.
- d. The importance of already existing REBT-based and other social-emotional learning frameworks for helping today’s schools and agents (students, parents,

teachers etc.) augment their rational practices.

- e. The establishment of rational education communities and rational schools for the ideal dissemination and application of rational education values (including a historical account of rational education and schooling).
- f. Various rational education practices, per rational education value, which can be applied in the contexts of rational education communities and schools.

The message of this book is straightforward: although rational education can be integrated in various content forms into existing schools, it cannot be fully operated without parallel structural changes, transforming society into a solidary, equal and fraternal universal community.

We don't need more books in rational education. We need more action towards rational education operating in solidary, equal and fraternal contexts, either existing or new.

Rational education values in action! Onwards!

Enjoy!

Part 1

Rational education values

1 My vision for education

Education is the best way we have to help people reach the intermediate states of quality of life, wellbeing, wellness and happiness leading to the road to individual wisdom (e.g., *ataraxia*) as a temporary endstate on the road to collective wisdom (still not an endstate).

To achieve this latter wisdom, we need to maintain existing educational progress but accelerate some crucial changes. This book is about the changes that lead to my vision for education.

My vision for education includes the following three transitions:

1. To move from educational systems to education (from politically-based education to free-chosen education) where people, not political systems, decide for it.
2. To enrich and acknowledge more forms of education (school is one form).
3. To move from education to cultural cultivation (education as one element of human cultivation).

Some significant progress has been achieved. Education has been removed from its authoritarian past. Scientific and technological advancements have paved the educational way. Reason, science and humanism permeate most contemporary educational systems. Children have more access to educational goods, more choices of schooling, evidence-based research fuels education (including enriched academic curricula, social-emotional curricula, metacognitive strategies, accelerated curricula, meta-curricula). Universities and colleges (physical, online) are founded everywhere looking forward to helping complete the dream.

Yes, that's some more than significant progress. People can now be assured that their children can have a good education (schooling, college): that they can find the educational options they need despite global fluidity. People can better choose the education of their children. Education is more liberated than ever. Libertarian education is now the rule rather than the exception (in many countries of Africa and Asia too). Things are getting better and better and better. So, yes, that's the good news of globalization and diversity. It was about time to happen after so many war moments during 20th century (the First World War was the main cause for the momentary paucity of the rational education dream).

Nevertheless, libertarian education doesn't necessarily mean rational education. Liberty to choose and actualize education doesn't necessarily mean the freedom and pleasure to do it. There's a fine line between liberty and freedom. This is illustrated in the way we see the relationship between personal autonomy and community development. The way we see the interplay between the two.

I will highlight this line throughout this chapter and the different sections of the book. I will show why libertarian education, despite a partial overlap with rational

education, remains mostly technocratic and not substantial in terms of some critical human values and principles: technocratic in terms of a philosophy favoring the conditional freedom called “liberty” and not the unconditional one called freedom. Technocratic in terms of practices favoring “skills” and “strategies” instead of actions and endeavors.

Thus, a fourth part of my vision is:

4 To move from libertarian to rational education.

Before getting to what I mean by rational education, let’s have a look at the problems of libertarian education despite the real progress that has been achieved.

Problems of contemporary libertarian education

It’s easy to whine about the lack of progress and not celebrate the existing progress. This is not my case here, given the aforementioned benefits of libertarian education. Despite considerable progress in terms of educational access, mobility and advancement, the liberated educational world is missing important elements.

The main problem of libertarian education is that it is mainly bound to political systems. Naturally, education that is governed by political systems will end up with related educational systems.

So, now, we have educational systems versus education. There is a big difference between the two: the main difference is that the former is other-determined while the latter is self-determined. The former is mostly based on pre-constructed curricula, with less freedom of educational choices. The latter is mostly based on either free choice of pre-constructed material or on-the-spot, spontaneous, experimental learning (accompanied or not accompanied by curricula). The main problem here is the imposition of pre-constructed knowledge and not the curriculum per se. For example, an educational system reinforces convergent, and not divergent, thinking. This is fine with many people (the psychologist John Holland assessed many conventional personalities in this world who follow convergent thinking). Yet, most people do not have conventional personalities (the so-called “conventional” personalities carry many unconventionalities too).

The other major problem is the hierarchical relations developed among “directors”, “teachers” and “students”. Usually, directors are the ambassadors of central educational policies. Teachers follow these policies and their directors’ instructions, although with various degrees of creativity and initiative depending on the educational system (still under the rubrics of the system). Accordingly, students do not decide on curricula, materials, values and goals for learning. This is not participatory to me.

So, a crucial difference between libertarian and rational education is this: despite the many possibilities and educational “freedoms” offered by libertarian education (slogans like “impossible is nothing” or “be positive and everything will turn all right”), these are bound to specific, pre-determined educational routes that aspire to create the employer or the worker of the 21st century by promising a five-part career stardom: studies, work, family, volunteerism and leisure time.

Two sub-problems here: one is the division or labelling of life in five different parts; second is the cookbook of a pre-conceived and constructed life happiness—education

as a duty and a means for specific roles. Not education for the conquest of social virtues. This is why many people made their dreams come true outside mainstream education based on their personalities or others' help but not through mainstream education.

All in all: libertarian education puts knowledge first and foremost. Mainly canned knowledge. *Cognito ergo sum*, literally.

So, so-called progressive libertarian education frequently becomes static or regressive because it works as an “educational system”, differentiating means from ends, and not as holistic education.

Let's see some problems created by this. Macklem (2011) has provided us with an almost exhaustive catalogue of barriers to implementing mental health services in schools. These barriers illuminate what I want to stress here as problems of contemporary libertarian education under the auspices of political systems or governments (or other forms of institutional organizations).

Keep in mind that contemporary libertarian education promotes the idea of social-emotional learning (SEL) and holistic education in schools. That's the good news. I admire the work of the International School Psychological Association (ISPA), Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) and a wide array of organizations and ministries around the world for the dissemination and implementation of SEL. Unfortunately, these initiatives have faced many (still unsolvable) problems. As I shall show in this book, rational education may be the solution to these problems.

According to Macklem (2011) these problems are:

- Administrative issues, e.g.,
 - Many separate initiative and projects.
 - Delay of implementation or policy.
 - Liability concerns (central office).
 - Marginalization in policy and practice.
 - Do not hold staff accountable.
 - Schools should teach the basics, not social emotional learning.
 - Meeting needs of unidentified students is not mandated.
 - Discount the importance of evidence.
 - Attempt to demand change.
- Monetary and other resource concerns, e.g.,
 - Financial limitations.
 - Expense of programming.
 - Competing priorities for use of funds.
 - Counterproductive competition for sparse resources.
 - Limited time.
 - Capacity limitations (space/materials).
- Myths and attitudes, e.g.,

- Things cannot change.
 - High stakes testing is all that matters.
 - Power exists only at the top.
 - The situation is hopeless.
 - The family is the cause of the child's high-risk status.
 - Problems will go away.
 - The system will not allow progress.
 - The individual cannot make a difference.
 - Testimonials support the *program du jour*.
- Programmatic planning issues, e.g.,
 - Flavor of the month initiatives.
 - Focus on most severe problems.
 - Fragmentation.
 - The program that is needed does not exist.
 - Statistical versus practical significance.
 - Misrepresentation of target impact.
 - Adopting a fallback stance (if we can only reach one child, all is well).
 - Prefer local approaches to evidence-based approaches.
 - The program works for some students but not others.
 - The program works in other places but not here.
- School staff issues, e.g.,
 - Too many conflicting demands.
 - Staff do not always see clear benefits.
 - Administrators ask too much.
 - Low confidence in skills.
 - Professional development is needed in other areas.
 - Staff are isolated or “burned out”.
 - Reliance on specialized services.
 - Limited qualifications of staff.
 - Low fidelity of implementation.
 - Lack of trust in the administration.
 - Attitude that teachers have “no say”.
 - Discount of the importance of evidence.
 - Teacher unions protect the status quo.
 - High teacher turnover.
 - Lack of or inadequate training.
- Student and family issues, e.g.,

- Limited resources of families.
 - Difficulties with transportation.
 - Protection of student confidentiality.
 - Language and cultural barriers.
 - Feel isolated from decision-making.
- Other problems, e.g.,
 - The community does not support the program.
 - A program is already in place and it is good enough.
 - The person who was in charge has been reassigned.

This is a detail of the structural and attitudinal problems that contemporary educational systems propose, especially in the school context. These problems are main barriers towards rational education. Yet, as I later show, they imply a biased philosophy in favor of personal autonomy over educational and community/society development. As I later show, rational education doesn't differentiate between personal autonomy and community cohesiveness because it allows healthy development of the former over the latter and vice versa. Rational education doesn't differentiate between means and ends. Rational education is not in favor of such artificial differentiations because they strip meticulous study of the phenomenon.

Additionally, some other types of problems that hinder development towards rational education:

- Mental health problems remain a serious problem for 10–20% of the student population with attention deficits, cognitive disabilities, lack of motivation, anxiety, depression and behavioral disorders all adversely affecting full development of students at school (e.g., Schulte-Körne, 2016).
- Specialist mental healthcare is not sufficiently accessible at schools (e.g., Green, McLaughlin, Alegría, Costello, Gruber, Hoagwood et al., 2013).
- There is little or no awareness of available organized mental healthcare services with few exceptions in schools where evidence-based services and models of school psychology or psychotherapy are systematically followed.
- Children and parents experience uncertainty about whether the emotional or behavioral changes actually require treatment and what type of treatment is required.
- There are no more than 50 countries that have school psychologists in their public school systems (Jimerson, 2008).
- There are still gaps between theory, research and practice in schools (Shaw, 2016) which significantly hinder most school agents (parents, teachers, stakeholders) from helping students flourish and become independent and effective learners.
- Teachers, stakeholders and other school agents still fear of students having a mental disorder and being stigmatized despite all relevant policies and

image

not

available

values. This is a daunting task to afford because today's education seems more complicated than the world taxation system. For the eager reader, what I suggest below is that contemporary education, despite its many high-quality elements in terms of content, lacks eight fundamental moral values:

- (collective) wisdom
- rational living
- freedom
- mental health
- altruism
- solidarity
- equality
- fraternity

Let's turn our attention to the importance of these values. Let's see why they are important in terms of philosophy (in Part 1) and how can they be implemented in terms of practice (in Part 2).

2 Fundamental values of rational education

I divide this section into two parts. First, I am going to introduce the reader to the set of values necessary for rational education. Second, I am proposing the hypothesis that rational values cannot be implemented without three fundamental human values: solidarity, equality and fraternity. I also argue that the value of mental health is the critical regulator for the orchestration of all rational education values. It is exactly the combination of these four *and* the rest of values presented that differentiate rational education from libertarian or other “free” contemporary systems of education.

Rational education value: (on the road to) collective wisdom

Most of contemporary education is mainly expressed through educational systems. There are numerous definitions of education but if you notice carefully most of them end up like this one: “Education is the process of facilitating learning, or the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. Educational methods include teaching, training, storytelling, discussion and directed research”.

Many of you would say that this is a complete or representative definition of education. The problem is not completeness or representativeness. The problem is that this definition is not a definition of education but a definition of the *educational system*. A conditional definition, not an unconditional one.

The other problem of this definition is that it implies an artificial division between means (teaching, training, storytelling, discussion and directed research) and ends (knowledge, skills, values, beliefs and habits). By differentiating between educational means and ends education it is easy to fall into prejudiced social, financial and political decisions about the real purposes of education. Then education becomes a means to an end and not a purpose for life. Each time the end is met, it is easy for education to stop being a purpose for life. Although education may be refueled after reaching an end, education easily then becomes a *tool* for life and not a *purpose* for life.

Rational education proposes another mentality. In different periods of human history, people have seen *wisdom* as the absolute way to happiness. That was explicitly true in many sections of ancient Greece and other places throughout history. In Greece, especially, there were the seven wise men of the ancient world (not so wise though because some of them were real tyrants—wisdom is my point here). Socrates and some people before him believed that they could not reach the levels of wisdom of these seven wise men so they considered that they can be *philosophers* (from the ancient *phileo-philo*, in ancient Greek “φιλέω-φιλω”, which meant “α γ α πώ”, that is, “I love”) and not wise men. In other words, Socrates thought that what we can do is to love and strive for wisdom, and not be wise men by definition, because we cannot reach wisdom at an absolute status as many people before him believed.

So, that was the first shift: from wisdom to philosophy.

Then, Plato, a student of Socrates and the first professional philosopher of ancient

times, founded the first professional school of ancient years. Through his teachings, Plato put an official, educational, “gravestone” to the goal of reaching wisdom: we can only love wisdom by being philosophers but we can’t become wise in an absolute way. While this viewpoint is rational, it had an amazingly bad consequence in the collective mentality of this era: *it eroded people’s engagement in their belief to continue trying towards the end of happiness*. Technically, Plato was right: we cannot become absolutely wise. We don’t need to. And we can’t. What he was not right, though, was that, naturally, people want to *believe* in something to continue striving for it. They don’t need to absolutely believe in that or reach it. They just want to know that this may be possible if they believe it is.

These developments significantly removed utopia from people’s heads. Not utopia per se (most people should know that utopia is a myth) but the natural right to think and strive for it in realistic, logical and pragmatic social grounds. Some would say that the road to wisdom is individual responsibility. Yet, as I showed before, individual responsibility is tremendously affected by the context. And, many people back then, individually speaking, chose to fall back and started believing in individual philosophy and not in the struggle for the best possible individual *and* social wisdom. They lost faith to the rational potentialities of the human mind in the societal level mostly honoring individual self-sufficiency.

But the story doesn’t end here. Aristotle, student of Plato and his best student in the Platonian school, outperformed his teacher and established scientific philosophy. While Plato was the first professional philosopher, Aristotle was the first scientist-philosopher to systematize all existing philosophical systems of the time. Today, he is fairly considered as one of the first panscientists.

In Socrates’s era there were “philosophers” called sophists or casuists who were teaching philosophy as a paid service in diverse settings (I would name them philosophers by profession and not philosophers by life purpose). Socrates disputed with them, arguing that philosophy cannot be “taught” but imparted to people through their constant struggle for self-knowledge. Plato was somewhat in the middle on this but Aristotle, although he was not obviously in favor of sophists, finally promoted the idea that human beings are mostly political beings, turning the page from philosophy to policy. Of course, that was an influence from Plato’s book *Politeia* [*The State*] where Plato said that “politeia” is best governed by philosophers, not politicians. Politicians, said Plato, should have philosophical knowledge, but they are not as wise as philosophers in making decisions for the state. That was not the case for Aristotle: Aristotle believed that virtuous politicians, according to his theory of virtues, can responsibly govern the state.

Aristotle went further and said that democracy is best served by people who possess the art of policy, although unavoidably he still had a philosophical approach to policy. He was convinced at the time (given the much corruption in the Athenian democratic system since Pericles’s era) that a state needs politicians who know how to govern by applying Aristotle’s inductive, deductive and abductive scientific methods. Thus, Aristotle offered the platform for a future paradigm shift from philosophy to policy that tremendously influenced the then status quo of human history and how people should be governed in a democratic state.

As expected, people took this Aristotelian idea and made the shift from philosophy to policy. But, then, people legalized an older natural habit of the human being that soon became another shift: the shift from policy to *politics* (and then micro-politics or

fake news in the contemporary world).

All this initially started by the shift from wisdom to philosophy (people getting paid for teaching the “wise skills” of philosophy). Then philosophy became serious policy. And, then, policy became unserious politics and micro-politics. It is an overstatement to say that Plato and Aristotle, among other great philosophers, were not directly responsible for these shifts since their theories described these phenomena. Future people distorted their meanings and did not succeed in applying them thoroughly in developing the road towards a rational, living society.

Education could not be uninfluenced by all these shifts. For wisdom, education is a foundation and constant struggle for *rational living in a social context of solidary, constant experimentation and spontaneous action*. For philosophy, education is a means to reach *happiness* (a part of rational living) at the individual level, not necessarily at the social level. For policy, education is an *institutional system* which guides people learn and acquire knowledge, skills, values, beliefs, and habits. For politics, the educational system is the means to achieve a (superficial) *status* for specific, conditional reasons (approval, achievement, comfort and control reasons).

Well, not such a rational route. Fortunately, we have been speaking about enlightenment for three centuries, hoping that we will return to the struggle-for-wisdom life. But we are still not there.

Obviously, rational education is about struggling for the opposite route: towards the road to wisdom.

So, the first rational value is the life struggle for, or the road to, wisdom.

By wisdom I mainly mean *ataraxia*. *Ataraxia* is not apathy. *Ataraxia*, according to Pyrrhonists, Epicureans and Stoics (philosophers that dared to apply wisdom in their lives, including some enlightened sceptics and cynics in the equation) is a lucid state of robust unperturbedness (imperturbability, equanimity, or tranquility) characterized by ongoing freedom from distress and worry at the *individual* level.

By *collective wisdom* I mean a *temporary endstate* defined as a specific pattern of collective imperturbability, equanimity or tranquility which is based on constant actions of solidarity, equality fraternity for the common, and not only the individual, good.

Caveat: As I suggest in this book, this imperturbability, equanimity or tranquility, either individual or collective, is not an endstate based on conservation, neutrality and apathy but a continuous life based on constant experimentation and spontaneous action. So, individual and collective wisdom, in the form of *ataraxia*, are defined as constant motion, experimentation, progress and action at the individual *and* societal level balanced with pleasure.

Philosophy is a good alternative to wisdom but not unconditional *ataraxia*. With philosophy it is easier to fall into speculative and conditional wisdom (many “philosophers” and New Age people selling the promise land through sloganized philosophies without taking into account the richness of human mind and societal processes). While it can be helpful on a daily basis, philosophy easily becomes dogma.

Also, policy and politics are not adequate ways to organize education. Education should be governed by people who pervasively acknowledge the rational living *and* societal wisdoms of human beings: and, finally, governed by all people on earth given that they strive to endorse rational living and wisdom for their individual *and* social life.

Let’s see what I mean by rational living which is the fundamental principle of