

## Afterword

### The pedagogue and/or the philosopher? An exercise in thinking together: a dialogue with Jan Masschelein

This conversation took place via email during the last months of 2013 and the early days of 2014. Given our very busy agendas it was planned as a non-pretentious and undemanding exercise. In fact it was just that, but something about it so attracted our attention and interest that it also it turned out to be an intense and touching encounter, through which not just the conversation but our relationship grew. Maybe because we were raising topics that turned out to be something approaching existential obsessions for both of us, or maybe for some other reason, we became deeply involved in what might be called (not without hesitation) a truly philosophical and/or educational dialogue.

**WALTER OMAR KOHAN:** After reading your characterization of educational research as having three main dimensions: a) concerning something educational; b) making something public; and c) leading to the transformation of the researcher, I found myself asking how this would be different from philosophical research. In your preface to the Brazilian Edition of *Pedagogy, Democracy, School* (Masschelein, J., 2014, in press), you respond to that question, affirming that true philosophical research is in fact educational research, and the other way around. I find this a fascinating topic. On the one hand, I also see philosophy as education and cannot separate the two, but on the other, I am not all that convinced that we shouldn't establish some kind of distinction between them—a distinction I am not completely clear about. But I would say that if the questions "what is philosophy?" and "what is education?" have different answers—and I think they have—then there should be a distinction between those two concepts. The issue can be also raised by focusing on the figure of the professor of philosophy, who in a sense is located between philosophy and education, and practices philosophy as education. I remember Foucault's last course on *parrhesia*, *Le courage de la vérité* (Foucault, 2009), where he gives some lectures on Socrates, and in one of the last moments of those lectures, he indirectly characterizes himself as a professor of philosophy. His tone is very supportive of Socrates and suggests a kind of identification: both are parrhesiasts, close to death, speaking a truth their societies do not want to hear. There, Foucault inscribes himself in the

tradition inaugurated by Socrates in which philosophy is not knowledge but a problematization of life, a way of living, a form of "giving reasons" (*didonai logoi*) for one's own way of life. According to Foucault (2009), Socrates as a professor of philosophy occupies a singular and paradoxical position: he takes care of himself by not taking care *ipso facto* of himself, but by taking care that all the others take care of themselves. So, in a sense, he does not care for himself literally but, in another sense, he is the one who takes more care than anyone else in the *polis* because he takes care of the care of everybody. This is, according to Foucault, what makes a philosopher an educator or Socrates a teacher of philosophy. In this sense, Socrates would be very far from the Platonic image of the teacher of philosophy as someone who confirms that the other is in need of the philosopher "to get out of the cave". I would rather say that "the inaugural gesture of philosophy" in a Socratic sense is rather "you need to care of what you do not care for" and this is what gives meaning and sense to a philosophical life, which needs to be at the same time an educational life. If Socrates educated the others it is because, after talking to Socrates, they realized they could no longer live the life they were living. In this sense, I think Rancière's critique of Socrates in *The Ignorant Schoolmaster* (Rancière, 1987) is interesting but at the same time partial and problematic. It is true if we take Plato's *Meno* as Rancière does, but in many other dialogues Socrates' position is much more complex and less arrogant and hierarchical, and Socrates acts as if the other is equally capable of engaging in a form of dialogue that promises to lead out of the cave. Here Socrates is saying something like: be attentive, you also can live another life, you also can take care. I wonder how you consider this way of thinking the relationship between philosophy and education. What do you think?

**JAN MASSCHELEIN:** Walter, allow me to start with recalling some points of what I wrote to you earlier. Just as a start. As I told you then, I forgot that Foucault called himself a professor of philosophy in that course. You know I listened to the recordings of these lectures for days and days in the beginning of 2000 and it was really a strong moment for me, since indeed in some of these (and especially in *The Hermeneutics of the Self* (Foucault, 2001), which I think is one of the great books of "philosophy as education" together indeed with the lectures on *parrhesia*) he shows us the possibility of a different and intriguing reading of Socrates (and some others) which, although he was inspired by Pierre Hadot (1993), was in various ways more interesting and challenging than Hadot's (including the way in which Foucault interpreted Socrates' last words, commenting on Dumézil's interpretation). And I agree with you that this understanding of Socrates is, so to say, different, even strongly different from the Platonic one. And just like you, in the courses in which I discuss Rancière I try to show how I think he is commenting only on a certain Socrates (amazing to see once more how close I come to your thinking), who of course is present in many of the dialogues, but that there is also another

Socrates, who one could indeed say is starting from equality—to use his phrase—and who, as you say, is much more complex. However, Foucault also tries to explain in his lectures (Foucault, 2009) how this Socrates is probably closer to the cynics, and how this line of “philosophy” (if we can call it this) has remained marginal and maybe ended up finally more in the arts (and maybe in some mystics) than in what is more commonly called “philosophy”. It is also the case that in the time of Socrates all these notions of “philosophy”, “sophism”, “poetry”, etc. were still very much unclear and struggled over. And maybe I am giving too much weight to the Platonic “beginning” of philosophy, not as a “doctrine” or a “theory” or “conviction”, but as a fundamental *gesture* (which in my thinking is always a remnant of some aristocracy), which finds its place in academia. In fact I have difficulties not recognizing this gesture in most philosophers. Of course, I like philosophy and also want to remain related to philosophy (and Foucault offered in a sense the direction in which such a relation might be established and maintained), but on the other hand, I think that it also often hinders us and makes us blind to the figure of the pedagogue and even leads us to despise that figure, whereas I believe more and more that the pedagogue (as the one that takes one out of the home to the school—he is in that sense an educator—and attends the school to make sure that it remains a school) is more important for democracy and for “humanity” (which are, I know, enormous words) than the “philosopher” so called, and that this figure of the pedagogue (which, I admit, is maybe also to be seen as a philosopher in a totally different way, but again: to go too quickly to “philosophy” make us forget other things too easily) offers a better starting point for developing a “philosophy of/as education” which goes beyond the recurrent move to derive so-called educational consequences out of philosophical thought. The more I think about it—and I must confess that this thinking has profited from my conversations with Maarten—the more I believe that in a certain way philosophy has been a way not only of taming democracy (which is in fact the source of Rancière’s hatred of democracy, but could also be related to Foucault’s reading of what happened to the Socratic *parrhesia* after his death), but also of taming the school, or to say it in a less provocative or aggressive way, to forgetting the school, and to neglecting its crucial public character (or to say it in a different way, with Maarten: school is the unthought of philosophy). Hopefully, we can understand this more clearly in our further conversation, although we will certainly need different sallies and approaches, and will end up now and then at dead ends. And I want also to keep in mind the studies which deal not with Socrates but with Isocrates, which try to show that in fact there was a argument going on about who could actually claim to be a philosopher, and what it meant—an argument which Isocrates lost, so to say, in the long run, in that he was more and more understood as a teacher/educator. So, let me take up what you wrote—that is, Socrates as the one who says: “you need

to take care of what you do not care for” and Socrates as an educator in that, after talking to him, people realized they could no longer live the life they were living. These phrases recall for me a wonderful book which you might know of, recently published by Peter Sloterdijk, called *You Must Change Your Life* (2013) (in German: *Du muss Dein Leben ändern*). He borrows these words from a famous poem by Rilke (1908), which he wrote after having seen an armless torso in a museum in Paris. What is interesting is that Rilke precisely seems to indicate that here there is a command coming out of the stone—an appeal that says that you can no longer live the life you are living, that you must change it. This command is not one that limits or prohibits, but nevertheless it sends a message that cannot be denied. As such it issues from a kind of authority that has nothing to do with a social position, role or function, but is both aesthetic and ethical (not moral) in one: Rilke says that the torso is perfect—“*volkommen*”—and Sloterdijk suggests that it works as a model, not to imitate, but nevertheless as an impetus. And although I think that of course you can speak of some educational experience here that produces a need to change and take care (of what you do not care for), this is for me in a way already too ethical a reading, or to say it differently: an ethical reading threatens to hide or conceal the educational reading and experience, which does not have the structure of an immediate command (you *must* change your life), but refers to the dis-closure of world and the dis-discovery of an (im-)potentiality (you *are* not un-able). For me these two aspects (dis-closure of world, i.e. making public, and dis-discovery of (im-)potentiality) are essential to an educational experience, and I am no longer sure whether or not the Socratic conversation contains these two elements. I don’t know whether this is understandable to any extent. Let us say that this is just a very first commentary on the idea that philosophy and education are different, a claim with which in fact I agree. My point is rather that a philosophical reading of education tends to discard an educational or pedagogical reading, and tends to take different experiences as its starting point. Maybe this is something we could develop further, related to the experience of wonder or stupefaction which many associate with philosophy (and study), whereas I think that there is an experience of being attracted and of being not unable which is associated with education. But, as I said, maybe I am already confused? What do you think?

**WOK:** Thanks for your answer, Jan, which is not at all confusing, quite the contrary, it’s very inspiring. You touch on a very interesting point about philosophy that has to do with it as a “fussy” kind or dimension of thinking, something that makes us feel we do not want to be out of it but at the same time does not allow us to feel really comfortable inside it; as if philosophy contains—at least in its dominant form—its own negation, that is, the non philosophical. And it is indeed ironic that this discourse speaks in the name of “real” philosophy, and condemns and excommunicates whatever does not speak its language—as if some power

were speaking in the name of philosophy in a voice that inhibits philosophy itself, at least that form of philosophy initiated by Socrates and affirmed, among others, by the cynics. This is probably why, as you said, it might be easier to find the philosophical in art than in philosophy itself, which is another dimension of its enigmatic nature. So even if it is true that in the name of philosophy, democracy, schooling, so many other important things have been tamed, forgotten and neglected, we can still question whether we need to accept this domestication as truly philosophical. But let's focus on your line of thinking when you question whether we could find in Socratic conversation the two aspects you propose—"dis-closure of world, i.e. making public, and dis-discovery of (im-)potentiality"—as both important and "essential" for an educational experience. I am tempted to answer your question positively but I would rather propose that we consider together a passage from the *Lysis* where, it seems to me, your line of argument is addressed. Socrates has been speaking first with Hippothales, pointing out how inconvenient his tactic of flattering his beloved Lysis is. When Socrates talks to Lysis himself (Plato, *Lysis* 207b ff.) he puts his own tactic into practice, opposite to the one of Hippothales, of *unflattering* Lysis by showing him that a real *philos* loves someone not because of his physical beauty but because he thinks accurately (*phronein*, 210d). And, interestingly enough, the way he proves to Lysis that he does not think accurately is by pointing out that he has a teacher (*didaskalon*, 210d). First he asks Lysis if his parents allow him to "conduct/govern himself" (*archein seautou*, 208c), to which Lysis answers negatively, saying that a pedagogue (*paidagogos*), a slave, does it, as you say, conducting him to the teacher. Now, it seems to me that both of your conditions are present in this conversation with Lysis. In his claim that thinking accurately and not physical beauty is what makes someone free, Socrates discloses a dimension of the world that Lysis has not paid attention to before, and in so doing, discovers an (im-)potentiality in Lysis, which he turns into such a potentiality that after talking to Socrates, Lysis vows that he is going to talk about what he previously ignored with Menexenus. This passage shows a clear defence by Socrates of the role of the teacher, which seems to be related to the need of the student to think accurately. This passage makes me think that when Socrates says he has never been a teacher of anyone—as in Plato's *Apology* 33a—he is not doing a critique of education from the outside—in the name of philosophy—but rather of a certain way of being a teacher, characteristic of those teaching in Athens at the time. In contradistinction to these, Socrates receives no money for dialoguing with others, he claims to teach no knowledge, and no one can say that they learned something different in private from him than they learned in public, as we read in the *Apology* 33a-c. In this passage of the *Apology* Socrates says that 1) he does not teach, and that 2) others learn with him, which implies at least two things: a) he is involved in an educational task; b) he does something

different from "normal" teachers, not teaching knowledge but teaching others to pay attention to a dimension of the world they do not see, as he does with Lysis, thereby empowering or potentiating others. At the same time, Socrates seems to be doing with Lysis what Rilke identifies with emerging from the stone—an appeal to change the way someone is living. Like Rilke's stone, Socrates does not speak from any particular social position or role but as an aesthetic voice, which also seems to carry an ethical commandment. I am not sure I would say "you must change your life", but at least "if you do not change your life, your life loses something valuable to the world and you lose your own potency/potential", to put it in your educational words. So, in a sense I would say it is both a pedagogical (educational) and an ethical/aesthetic presence in Socrates, which makes me wonder whether we really can separate the two. There is also an interesting passage in Plato's *Laches* where Nicias argues to Lysimachus that whoever encounters Socrates needs to give an account of the kind of life he lives and to be more careful for the rest of his life, and adds that it is quite familiar and pleasant for him "to rub upon the touchstone" (*basanizesthai*, *Laches* 188b) of Socrates. Again, here Socrates seems to be promoting a kind of energy directed toward changing and taking care of one's life, as you put it, and we see that both the educational and the aesthetic/ethical seemed to be addressed. I wonder how you read these passages, Jan. I haven't read Isocrates and would love it if you could dis-cover this im-potentiality in me by offering some texts that relate to how he conceived of this narrative. But I see Socrates—at least one of the many Socrates whom we can read in the *dialogues*—as an educator through his philosophical life, meaning someone who provokes in the other the impossibility of continuing to live as he was living before, in terms of a disclosure of the world and a potentiality in oneself. If I've given so much attention to Socrates here, it is not for the character himself, but what he allows us to think (or might I say how he still educates us in?) this relationship between philosophy and education. He seems to be affirming what you consider to be a philosophical and educational experience and, at the same time he is suggesting that we cannot leave any of them out if we mean to live a truly educational life. Is Socrates too much of a mythical, exceptional, unique figure? Or might he lead us to reconsider how we define the educational and the philosophical? I would like to read what you think about this. And concerning the *pathos* connected with this educational/philosophical experience, I suggest that you consider two words: *questioning* and *dissatisfaction*, both of which, it seems to me, are critical to understanding Socrates as philosopher and as educator. Am I too confusing now, Jan?

JM: Dear Walter, thank you very much for your wonderful reading and remarks. And certainly also for making me read this passage in the *Lysis*—I should say reread, since apparently I must have read it at some point (I find my notes in the text and I have even particularly marked

the section you refer to), but I must confess that I totally forgot, so that I couldn't even recall it when I read your response the first time. But, it is indeed a really interesting passage, which offers many possibilities for reconsidering the position (and valuation) of the "slave" and the pedagogue/teacher, and I can agree almost in all senses with the way you suggest reading it. Let me, for now, try to take up two or three points in your response.

The first is regarding "love". Your use of "*philos*" (the real *philos*) made me consider whether we could add another element to our discussion regarding this form of love. You state that the real "*philos*" "loves someone not because of his physical beauty but because he thinks accurately (*phronein*)". Immediately many things come to mind, and although they could carry us away from our issue, let me say a few things nevertheless. It is interesting that the combination you suggest here is not "*philosophia*" but "*philophronein*". Of course the issue of "*philia*" is important in itself (in these times especially it seems more than worthwhile to recall that education/philosophy has to do with a certain kind of love), but I think it is also important to consider the "object" (or "subject"—it is difficult to find the right word, since it also relates to the direction of the force that is at work here). This could be elaborated in different ways, but for the purposes of our dialogue it might be worthwhile not only to go into this distinction between *sophia* and *phronein* (nor would it be difficult to show how Isocrates is always questioning "Sophia" in relation to human affairs and proclaiming "*phronein*"—to which he relates his "school"), but also to consider the possibility of a "*philo-kosmos*". Let me try to be a bit more precise. As you know, Foucault explicitly refers to the *Alcibiades I* in order to argue that Socrates has a particular kind of love for his "student" (forgive me if I insert a thought that comes up now: maybe one cannot use this word in this context, it might be better to use "pupil" or .....?), explaining that Socrates is addressing Alcibiades not out of love for his beauty, for his body, for his wealth, etc., but out of love for "himself" (for, so to say, his soul)—and this is also what resonates in the passage of the *Lysis* to some extent. But now that you specify that he loves someone for thinking accurately, I would be interested in how you relate these two (I mean love for himself as such and love for thinking accurately—and one can probably understand this as someone who is taking care of himself): is the love conditional? Furthermore, there is the issue of the world. As you know, Hannah Arendt, who didn't want to be called a philosopher, criticised almost the entire philosophical tradition (including thinkers such as Seneca, to whom Foucault refers in his late works) for its "hatred" of the world—she herself always proclaiming an "amor mundi" ("*philo-kosmos*" if that translation could be made). In her famous text on the crisis in education (Arendt, 1958), she describes education as related to this double love for the world and for the younger generation (which I think is not the love for "my" son or daughter, but rather any "son" or "daughter"). I must say that I am still unsure whether or at least to what extent

the "*philos*" that Socrates is, is a "*philos*" of the world; and whether the *philos* is not first of all a *philos* of himself (implying that perhaps *philos* of *sophia*—but maybe not of *phronein*?—is finally also a form of self-love). You will recall that Rancière (1987) accuses the Socrates of the *Apology* of arrogance—at least towards the end: that he starts with the assumption of inequality, and that he prefers to save his own virtue, which you could interpret to mean that he loves himself (his own soul and "*sophia*") more than the world, and is disdainful or contemptuous of the others ("*le mépris*") (and it is interesting to note that Isocrates, in his fictional apologia, the *Antidote*, in defending himself before an imaginary court, is addressing the audience in a totally different way). Or, more directly related to the issue of "world-disclosure", I am not really convinced that this contempt is an issue in the passage of the *Lysis*. Of course, we can discuss what it means, but I have the impression that what you call "a dimension of the world" that *Lysis* had not paid attention to before is not so much a dimension of the world (some "thing"—in the Heideggerian sense of "thing"—outside himself), but rather a dimension of himself. I am aware that Foucault was always was consciously trying to connect care of the self to care of the world, but I must say that I continue to have difficulty seeing that at work in Socrates, although he often explicitly confirms his role (but is that also out of love?) in the *polis*. Of course he states in the *Apology* that he is taking care of the city, that he is a "blessing" for the city, but is that the same? I simply don't know or am not sure.

Nevertheless, I agree with you that this figure of the "touchstone" is very strong and remains fascinating, and yes, as you say, maybe there he is an educator (and yes, he seems also to reveal something, which has more to do with "*phronein*" than with "*sophia*"); but then the question comes up again, what is the difference between the educator and the philosopher, and are we maybe discussing two ways of conceiving of philosophy as education? Maybe we should explore a bit what you call "the philosophical" life, which, since it would offer a touchstone, would in itself be educational. I think this is certainly a very interesting idea (although I am still uncertain to what extent and in what sense it addresses the issue of "the world"), and it can be related to the kind of authority that Rilke was talking about. And maybe we should also think what the philosophical life has to do with school?

Let me leave it there for now, after just one note regarding Isocrates: I am not a specialist myself, and many things are unclear, disputable, contradictory, etc. (as is of course the case with many interesting texts and figures), but the little text "*Against the Sophists*" and his "*The Antidosis*" seem to me to be good ways to get into his thinking, which is concerned to reevaluate sophism and public speech—albeit, surprisingly, precisely by claiming the importance of writing.

**WOK:** Dear Jan, thank you for making me read Isocrates, which is really interesting and surprising! I followed your advice and read "*Against the*

*Sophists*" and "*The Antidosis*". His writing is very thoughtful and provocative. I particularly enjoyed the latter which has clear parallels with Plato's *Apology*, Socrates and Isocrates both identifying their prosecution as a prosecution of philosophy (*The Antidosis* 170), defending themselves in old age in the name of truth against "unfair" accusations (real, in the case of Socrates, fictional for Isocrates). Interestingly, like Socrates, Isocrates makes it explicit in the last part of the introduction that his speech will show the truth about himself. Even the accusations against him are very similar to those made against Socrates, not only in their content but also in the spirit of their rejoinders. Even the arrogant tone is similar (for example: "Now for this I deserved praise rather than prejudice", *ibid.*: 152). Isocrates is also very close to Socrates in one important way regarding our conversation: he puts himself in a superior position to all human beings, not because of *sophia* but because he considers himself the "cleverest" or "most expert" (*deinotatos*) and because he is a writer of speeches (*sungraphes ton logon*). He even identifies himself as naturally superior in speech-making and praxis (for Isocrates, it seems, nature comes before all else, *ibid.*: 189), and his feeling of superiority seems even stronger than Socrates'. In section 162 he gives reasons for this: "I thought that if I could acquire a greater competence and attain a higher position than others who had started in the same profession, I should be acclaimed both for the superiority of my teaching and for the excellence of my conduct." Note that the word for "profession" is *bios* and for "teaching", *philosophia*. So I do not want to pressure you to go back to Isocrates now, but I would very much like it if one day you could make it more explicit in what sense Isocrates addresses the audience "in a totally different way" than Socrates. This is not to neglect the differences: as you pointed out, Isocrates is writing his defence, whereas Socrates wrote nothing at all. Isocrates acknowledges having had many disciples (*mathetas*, *ibid.*, 87, 98) and unlike Socrates he describes himself as someone who teaches (*didasko*, *ibid.*, 89). He establishes some conditions for accepting students: natural aptitude, prior formation and knowledge of the sciences (*episteme*), and their practice (*empeiria*, 187). His understanding of philosophy is complex, but very different from Socrates', associated as it is with oratory. He seems to have a very specific and particular notion of philosophy. I am aware that I've performed a very superficial reading and could be talking nonsense but to be sincere, it seems to me that Socrates is much closer to your conception of philosophy as education than Isocrates is. Even "love" doesn't seem to play such a special role in Isocrates as it does in Socrates. Concerning your question about love, Foucault and the *Alcibiades*, I read Foucault as stressing that Socrates' love is not for Alcibiades himself but of Alcibiades' way of being in the world (if we can say that) as guided by care. In other words, the "object" (as you said, the word here is difficult) of Socrates' love is not Alcibiades himself but Alcibiades taking care of or being occupied with himself: with Alcibiades living a certain kind of life

or existence (see, for example, Foucault, 2001: 38). In the *Alcibiades I* Plato marked this love as a love of someone's soul, being the soul what most properly characterizes a human being (129e–130a). But as Foucault has also pointed out in some other *dialogues* such as the *Laches*, it is clear that Socrates was more in love with a way of life. As Alcibiades is not living this kind of life, Socrates' love has this pedagogical dimension in which the lover takes care of the beloved, cares for his caring, relates to him in a way that encourages him to take care of what he does not really care about. This is what Foucault calls the "pedagogical deficit" under which Socrates inscribes his task—in other words, this is philosophy as pedagogy, loving as the generative force of a kind of existence or life. Again, I am aware that Foucault distinguished two possibilities present in Plato's *dialogues* concerning the care of the self. In one case—*Alcibiades I*—the care of the self is understood as knowledge of the self and, more precisely, of the most important part of the self, which for Plato is the soul. In another case—the *Laches*, to which we already referred—the care of the self is understood as being able to give an account of a certain way of life. Foucault opposes these two possibilities because according to him they give birth to two different ways of understanding and practicing philosophy: one as cognitive or intellectual activity and another as the aesthetics of existence or *askesis*, as you referred to it before. His reading is very meaningful, and he sets the point of departure of this duality in Plato. In the case of Socrates, I think this distinction does not work so well. As a pedagogue or philosopher or *philophronein*, Socrates' love for Alcibiades is concerned that he lives a more caring life. Both dimensions seem to be present in his practice. It is not a matter of utility or aim but of meaning and sense. The sense of Socrates' philosophy and pedagogy is that others take care of themselves in their living together. The same argument could be made about Nicias in the *Laches*: in order to live a life that deserves to be lived, Nicias and all the others need to take care of themselves by thinking accurately. So the two possibilities differentiated by Foucault are not unconnected in Socrates, in fact one cannot work without the other. In this sense, I think the *Alcibiades I* and the *Laches* are just stressing two sides of the same philosophical or educational coin for Socrates, although we might suggest that maybe Plato needed to make this distinction. Nor is it a trivial fact that the context of both *dialogues* is the political life of Athens. Both Alcibiades and Nicias are, have been, or will be public figures, men of the city. So I do not see any self-task being suggested by itself or for its own sake, or any private domain disconnected from the public one in these *dialogues*, or in the *Lysis* either. I would still argue that in the case of Socrates, the self and the care of the self are always (or most of the time) living selves, i.e., both individual life and communal life are what Socrates seems to be worried about. The issue that you raise of love of the world, *philokosmos*, is really fascinating and I am not sure about it. I don't know. We might need to study it as it appears in both



Socrates and Isocrates. Also, the issue remains of what it means to live a philosophical life, and its relationship to school. Socrates is once again fascinating here, because he is a pedagogue and philosopher with no institutional school, or whose "school" is *scholē*—that is, a formalized experience of free time and space. He says this at the beginning of the *Phaedrus*: to do philosophy with others we need friendship and *scholē*. He doesn't meet the others in *scholē* to teach or to do philosophy, rather he creates or builds *scholē* while philosophizing, or in order to philosophize. My friend Giuseppe Ferraro (2011: 12) says it beautifully: it is not that we come to be friends because we do philosophy, but it is because we are friends that we do philosophy. Thus, this enigmatic and impossible figure of Socrates, paradoxical and self-contradictory, creates school (as *scholē*) while doing philosophy. Through his pedagogical and philosophical *askēsis* he opens life to school and makes school out of life or, to say it more provocatively, makes life a school. Meanwhile, if I'm lost in a Socratic *mania* don't hesitate to tell me! And I'm sure you will be able to help me think through this relationship between philosophical life and school.

JM: Dear Walter, as it has been some time before I could respond, I had to reread what we have written so far. And as is to be expected, there are many things we have touched upon and which would be worthwhile to continue with. I would like to take up only two or three things.

Let me start with Isocrates. I agree with much of what you write about these two texts (including the arrogance issue), and I would also agree that for Isocrates oratory (i.e. a kind of public speech where you are not addressing someone individually, but every-one, so to say) is much more important than for Socrates. I think that this difference is important, in that Isocrates addresses his audience starting from the idea that he can convince them, and as such they are equals; whereas the Socrates of the *Apology* seems to imply the opposite—albeit not at every moment, and of course Isocrates' defence in the *Antidosis* is a fictional one. I also believe that it is important that Isocrates, although he is close to the sophists, writes against them in the sense that he is radical in his conviction that there is no final truth to be gained about human affairs, and that their claims to be able to teach such truth (or wisdom) and to impart happiness are idle and false (what he claims he is speaking is *parrhesia*, again very similar to Socrates—see eg. *Antidosis* 43). Now, I must say that my understanding of the role of Isocrates in thinking about education (and school) is also influenced by the extended commentaries on his life and work by people like Takis Poulakos (1997) and Yun Lee Too (2003), and is not limited to the two texts that we're talking about here. It is clear that different readings are possible (as of course is always the case), but there seems to be an agreement among scholars that Isocrates is in fact himself constantly alternating between a conservative, rather aristocratic stance and a truly democratic one, as well as between a kind of Athenian "nationalism" (and an idea of the superiority of Athens) and a plea for "cosmopolitanism".

I don't want to defend Isocrates or imply that he is more "right" than Socrates, but I find it very interesting that he offers (at times and in some parts) a different view of the relationship between philosophy and education. Or to phrase it differently, there are some really interesting elements in his work that help me think not only philosophy as education, but also the role of education as such. It would take much more space than we have to elaborate this (and in fact we might envisage in the future some common seminar where we could enter this discussion), but let me sum up some of the issues.

First, his views on opinion and knowledge are completely contrary to Plato's (and probably closer to at least several of the various "Socrates"). As he writes in *Against the Sophists*: "those who follow their opinions (*doxa*) live more harmoniously and are more successful than those who claim to have knowledge (*epistēmē*)" *Against the Sophists* 8 (I'm using a recent translation by Mirhady and Too, 2000, but you'll find the other translation below)<sup>1</sup>. This is in line with his emphasis on the need for deliberation within democracy and the importance of opinion in making judgments. The starting point that "it is not in our nature to know in advance what is going to happen" (*Against the Sophists* 2) and therefore study/teaching "cannot make the young ... know what they need to do and through this knowledge ... become happy" (*Against the Sophists* 3). He emphasizes the role of debate and speech (speaking well) time and time again, but "teaching" the young in this context (which is always a "creative activity") is not "like teaching the alphabet": "while the function of letters is unchanging ... the function of words is entirely opposite ... speeches cannot be good unless they reflect the circumstances, propriety and originality ..." (*Against the Sophists* 12–13)<sup>2</sup>. The teaching is therefore not related to *epistēmē* but is the formation of *doxa* (related to sound judgment, which is creative with respect to the occasion) and this formation is also dependent on the exchange of speeches themselves—on deliberation. "These things require much study and are the work of a brave and imaginative soul. In addition to having the requisite natural ability, the student must learn the forms of speeches and practice their uses. The teacher must go through these aspects as precisely as possible, so that nothing teachable is left out, but as for the rest, he must offer himself as a model [*paradeigma*, and not *basanos* or touchstone—and maybe this is also something we could pursue]" (*Against the Sophists* 17)<sup>3</sup>. So, the first important thing for me is this emphasis on the formation of *doxa*, which implies a recognition of the importance of speech and the exchange of opinions. It means that philosophers cannot transcend or go beyond the realm of opinion (contrary to Plato), and that the philosopher is fundamentally a man of opinion<sup>4</sup>. And this opinion is about the governing of one's household, but also and especially about the commonwealth and the common good—about the affairs of the city: "those who learn and practice what allows them to manage well their own homes and the city's

commonwealth—for which one must work hard, engage in philosophy, and do everything necessary” (*Antidosis* 285).

This brings me to the second thing that I consider important: you have to work hard and *do* philosophy, which is “practice and study”. It is the importance of the formation of opinion (which enables one to participate) through philosophy, which is in the first place the practice (or exercise—often called “*epimeleia*”) and study of words (poetry, history, politics—which are the words not of gods, but of “men”) and not the study of (ideal) forms (mathematics, geometry), although Isocrates does accept the latter as a kind of preparatory work (see *Antidosis* 261–8). In this context, it is true that Isocrates also refers to “natural ability”, but I think one should not overemphasize this, since at some points it seems to imply not much more than the general statement that one has to be able to speak; and he writes that one can even downplay one’s own natural ability—which maybe echoes Rancière’s lack of self-respect—see *Antidosis* 244). I agree that there are also other passages where “natural ability” seems to be more than that (e.g. *Antidosis* 138) and even this general statement can be questioned, but I would prefer to point to his recurrent emphasis on “hard work” and “study” (or “labor” and “exercise”) which, at the end of the *Antidosis* he also claims to be necessary even for those who seem to be “naturally apt”. Moreover in 291 he writes: “I marvel at men who felicitate those who are eloquent by nature on being blessed with a noble gift, and yet rail at those who wish to become eloquent, on the ground that they desire an immoral and debasing education. Pray, what that is noble by nature becomes shameful and base when one attains it by effort? We shall find that there is no such thing, but that, on the contrary, we praise, at least in other fields, those who by their own devoted toil are able to acquire some good thing more than we praise those who inherit it from their ancestors” (Perseus translation). And in 292: “For men who have been gifted with eloquence by nature and by fortune, are governed in what they say by chance, and not by any standard of what is best, whereas those who have gained this power by the study of philosophy and by the exercise of reason never speak without weighing their words, and so are less often in error as to a course of action” (Perseus translation). So it seems to me, that Isocrates, although at some moments he seems to point to “nature” and “natural ability”, is much more emphasizing the importance of study and practice. And he explicitly calls this a form of “*epimeleia*”: in 290 he states that “if one is to govern his youth rightly and worthily and make the proper start in life, he must give more heed (*epimeleian*) to himself than to his possessions, he must not hasten and seek to rule over others before he has found a master to direct his own thoughts, and he must not take as great pleasure or pride in other advantages as in the good things which spring up in the soul under a liberal education” (*Antidosis* 290—Perseus translation). This is, I think, very close to what Socrates is saying to Alcibiades about “taking care of oneself”, but

Isocrates relates this “*epimeleia*” directly to study and practice, and to hard work and labor. And I think that this implies a rupture with the idea of a natural destination and a natural order (the archaic aristocratic order), as there seems to be no privilege either regarding “knowledge”—since there is no such thing when we speak of human affairs—nor regarding study—for if naturally apt in the sense of not being handicapped, everyone can practice and study. If there is superiority it is thanks to “being educated as have been no other people in wisdom (*phronesis*) and in speech (*logous*)” (294). Yun Lee Too (2003) also remarks that the fact that one could also get education/teaching (“free time”) by paying implied that the archaic aristocratic order, where only those who by privilege/nature had “free time” could do this, was disrupted. Of course we can also question this, and it is certainly different from Socrates (Plato) who explicitly states that he didn’t ask for any money for his teaching, but what is interesting for me is just this disruption of the archaic order and the invention of new ways of dealing with study and practice.

Isocrates emphasizes both teaching (*didaskein*) and care (*epimeleia*), and points to both the possibilities and the limits of teaching. The latter is not about (transmitting) knowledge, but about contributing to the formation of opinion through guiding and sustaining study and practice in order to get to *phronesis* and *eulegein* (speaking well). He thereby acknowledges that judgment and speaking are always part of a “creative process” related to the occasion, and that one needs actual (written or oral) expression in order to “complete” an opinion. The act of writing or speaking well is not just a recording of a thought/opinion which existed before, but its completion—and this always implies a “public/audience”. Moreover, teaching does not require us to leave the world of *doxai* to get to an enlightened realm of knowledge (to get out of the cave), but does require us to study that world, and especially the words (and the art of words) in their relation to issues of the common good. I think this is also an important point, because Isocrates is at pains to state again and again that the oratory he is interested in is not related to private affairs and the use of words in the context of juridical disputes, but to public disputes about the common good. Where the sophists mainly taught to sustain individual ambitions and were not concerned with the public good but with private influence and personal gain, and where the sophists were interested in psychological impact, Isocrates was interested in cultivating and deliberating as a practice, not in view of an ideal state, but related to “those public issues which are important and noble and promote human welfare” (*Antidosis* 276).

There are more things that make Isocrates interesting for me, but I can only point to them very briefly. One is that he was actually trying to avoid the tribunal as well as the agora, precisely in order to be able to study and practice (to form opinion). One commentator has remarked that Isocrates offered the “gift of time” to oratory. He did this by taking the words out of their immediate practical embeddedness (when one is defending

oneself or accusing in courts, or when one is arguing for a decision in the *boule*) and making them into an object of study (not only listening but reading, commenting) and practice as such, and he did this not only by instauring (maybe one could indeed say inventing) school as a formal frame, but also by making writing a central operation. In fact he himself was mainly writing speeches, not actually delivering them (if he is famous to some extent, it is not because of his oral performances like most of the sophists, but because of his writings), but also his study and practice were directly related to writing (he is the inventor of the school essay), which I think was also a powerful way both to “slow down” (to give time to the words of men, to read and reread) and to “make public”—and as I said before, I think this has also to do with his speeches not being addressed to a particular individual or collection of individuals, but with being public speech. He also is very clear about the fact that the purpose of this study of words is not just to know them and how to use them, but is also related to the formation of a good character (a “gentleman”) since “the man who wishes to persuade people will not be negligent as to the matter of character; no, on the contrary, he will apply himself above all to establish a most honorable name among his fellow-citizens; for who does not know that words carry greater conviction when spoken by men of good repute than when spoken by men who live under a cloud, and that the argument which is made by a man’s life is of more weight than that which is furnished by words?” (*Antidosis* 278).

I should also say that there are many passages in both texts (and certainly in the first part of the *Antidosis*) where I have plenty of questions and even feel uneasy; however, as I have already said, my point is not to enter into a debate about a choice between Socrates and Isocrates, but rather that if we seek to understand “school” and to think of education and philosophy starting from the school, there are very interesting elements to find in Isocrates. These may be closer than I am acknowledging to the ones you mention in relation to Socrates, but they are surely very different from Plato.

Now leaving Isocrates behind for the moment, let me again take up one of the main concerns we have been engaged in until now: the relation/distinction between philosophy and education (philosophy and/or/ of/with/as/through ... education). In this context, you mentioned at the very beginning of our “double dialogue with ourselves” (you see, from the moment I try to write something all kinds of new but related issues pop up such as the kind of exercise we both are engaged in and how we might conceive of it (I first thought to write “conversation”, but is that a good word, is it in itself philosophy?) And so on....—you mentioned that we might focus on “the figure of the professor of philosophy, who in a sense is in between philosophy and education and practices philosophy as education”. You referred to Foucault inscribing himself in the tradition inaugurated by Socrates, in which the professor of philosophy occupies a singular and paradoxical position: he takes care of himself by

not taking care *ipso facto* of himself but by taking care that all the others take care of themselves. Now what I was wondering was whether you could ever separate “being a philosopher or philosophizing as act” from “being a teacher/professor/master” in some way or other. In fact I have been rereading some other texts (Kant, Lyotard, Stiegler), which might be helpful here. Indeed, they all seem to imply that philosophy cannot be separated from teaching (or instruction). Stiegler (2008, chapter 7), who refers to the beginning of Plato’s *Hippias Minor*, 363a, even states “la première question que pose la philosophie, ..., ce n’est pas l’être, .... c’est l’enseignement” and adds “l’enseignement n’est pas simplement la première question de la philosophie: c’est la pratique de la philosophie” (2008: 195–6). And Kant, in the context of his discussion of the difference between the “scholastic concept of philosophy” and the “cosmic concept of philosophy” (in the last part of the *Critique of Pure Reason*) states that you cannot learn philosophy but only learn to philosophize, and that the cosmic concept has always formed the real foundation of that which has been given the title of philosophy. He writes: “The mathematician, the natural philosopher, and the logician, however successful the former two may have been in their advances in the field of rational knowledge are yet only artificers in the field of reason. There is a teacher, [conceived] in the ideal that sets them their tasks, and employs them as instruments, to further the essential ends of human reason. Him alone we must call philosopher” (A839/B867). His idea is that the ideal of the philosopher implies the teacher as the one who seeks to further the essential ends of humanity. So time and again we find the relation between the philosopher and the teacher (of philosophy?), and I am wondering more and more how exactly to understand this relationship. Can you be a philosopher without teaching? Can you philosophize without teaching? In his little book *Le Postmoderne expliqué aux enfants* Lyotard (1988) also encloses an “Adresse au sujet du cours philosophique”, in which he states that “philosophy” is always only “in act” (“en acte”) and has to be opposed to any capacity/power (“puissance”). He writes: “Je te confesse qu’éduquer et instruire ne me semblent ni plus ni moins des « actes philosophiques » que banqueter ou armer un navire”. Here he seems to imply that every act can be a philosophical act, but if I try to understand what he means by “actes philosophiques” it seems to me that these are philosophical because they are educational (that is forming, in the sense of problematizing). Thus he argues, “À première vue, donc, on n’aperçoit pas de différence de nature entre philosopher et enseigner la philosophie”.

Maybe you could help me out here? I’ve always had the impression that being a teacher is considered an additional feature of the philosopher (also implying, with Kant, that one is first enlightened through philosophy, then teaches), but maybe this is wrong—maybe we should think about teaching as an essential feature of philosophy in the sense that you cannot philosophize without teaching (in the minimal sense of exposing your knowledge and skills)?



I must confess that I am really confused about this matter, just as I am confused about the relation between philosophy and friendship. Indeed, when thinking from another angle about the relation between philosophy and education, and adhering to the oft-mentioned idea that there is no philosophy without friends, I was wondering how that can be combined with "childhood" and "children": can you say that there is no education without friends? Can we (as teachers) be friends who philosophize with children? And of course, dear Walter, I am confident that, as you are at home in "philosophy with children" (if that is an acceptable description), that you can help me out here.

Excuse me for this probably very disappointing finish, but I fear that I have already created too much confusion, such that a different perspective is needed to regain direction in our reciprocal writing.

**WOK:** Dear Jan, the time you took to respond is consistent with such a strong and thoughtful intervention. Thank you very much for the opportunity to share in your thinking in such a vivid way. Thank you so much also for letting me see a little more clearly why you find Isocrates so interesting. And thank you for the suggestion that we share a seminar on these issues. It would be a privilege and an opportunity to continue thinking together. Concerning Isocrates I can only say that I feel compelled to read him and his commentators more carefully. His stress on *doxa*, his conception of philosophy and/or education as study and practice, and his invention of new ways of study and practice as well—all this sounds fascinating and promising. His description of the teacher as a model or "paradigm" reminds me of Socrates' use of the same word in the *Apology* (23b) to refer to the way the Oracle has chosen him as representative of a kind of relationship to human knowledge: the wise man, he discovers through her choice, is the one who acknowledges that no one is really wise. This is why Socrates is a paradigm. It is interesting among other things because the context seems to be a pedagogical one; that is, the Oracle has taught the Athenians, through the example of Socrates, what it means to be truly wise. It is also interesting in that, as far as I remember, no distinction is present in the *Apology* between different sorts of knowledge, such as *doxa* and *episteme*. There is, however, still something in your presentation of Isocrates that does not convince me. Because he addresses his audience starting from the idea that he can convince them, I am not sure that he considers them as equals. I think that this is related to one of the interesting implications of Rancière's *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*: that a good part of the history of pedagogy could be considered to be based on the practice of stultification, as much on the part of those teachers who rely on their capacity to convince their students of something as not. But I really need to read more of Isocrates to be able to offer any kind of serious argument about his practice. And you have convinced me that that in order to understand "school" and to think of education and philosophy as practices starting from school, there are very interesting elements to be found in

Isocrates. The last two issues you pose are really fascinating and complex. I am tempted not to separate teaching from philosophizing—it doesn't make me any more comfortable to see the teacher as an additional feature of the philosopher than it does to see philosophizing as an additional feature of a teacher. I would not say it is wrong, but I would say that it does not recognize the power (for thinking and practice) that can be derived from the image of the philosopher-teacher or the teacher-philosopher. To say it in another way, a teacher who does not philosophize is not (and here the word is really difficult!) a true, real or genuine teacher any more than a philosopher who does not teach is not a true, real or accurate philosopher. As you know philosophy and education are multiplicities, and there are many ways to conceive of them and their relationship. In fact, if we go to the canonical history of philosophy we might find many philosophers who not only did not teach, but who considered teaching to be something very far from philosophy; nor would I say that they are wrong or that they are not philosophers because of that. But I would say that they are not truly, really, interestingly philosophers, if we think "philosopher" in a sense that we would certainly need to be more precise. And the same could be said of the history of pedagogy. Certainly a more thorough history of philosophy as education and a history of education as philosophy needs to be written, but this seems like a Sisyphean task. Anyway, there are so many elements here, and I thank you for the ones you have offered. The three examples you propose (Kant, Lyotard and Stiegler) are very meaningful, and it seems pretty clear to me from our conversation that we are now in a position to begin sketching out that history, at least from Isocrates and Socrates on. And let me suggest to you that even though he would not count as one of our favorites, I think Plato should also have a place in that history of philosophy as education or education as philosophy. Let me justify this inclusion—even though I can well imagine your expression of astonishment on reading these words—or let me try. Let's hypothesize that this history of philosophy as education was initiated by Isocrates and Socrates (and maybe some others too). And it seems to me that Plato was very dissatisfied with these philosophers/educators in the way their practice of philosophy/education contributed to the political crisis of Athens. The case of Socrates seems clear, and many of Plato's *dialogues* combine this mixture of admiration and complaint that Plato feels for his master. In addition, many commentators testify to finding Isocrates behind lots of the *dialogues*. *The Republic* is a clear example of this: philosophers (educators) are considered useless or perverse and they need to be resituated as philosopher-kings, as stated in book VII. Maybe Socrates is a good image of the inutility of the philosopher, while Isocrates is an example of one of its dangerous characters. In any case, the allegory of the cave ends with quite an antithesis to what Socrates affirms in the *Apology*. In the latter, Socrates is happy not to have taken part in the political affairs of the city, because if he had done so he would have been killed many years before.

In *The Republic*, Socrates asserts that the city will not find its true form until the king philosophizes or the philosophers govern. In other words, while for the Socrates of the *Apology* there is a hostile opposition between the practice of philosophy and political life, for the Socrates (Plato) of *The Republic* the philosopher can only fulfill his practice as a politician. And we might include Isocrates in this triangle as someone who, like Socrates, conceived of philosophy as a practice, so in a sense was opposed to Plato, but took a precise place in political life, as Plato—the disciple of Socrates—did. So that if both Socrates and Isocrates conceived of philosophy as practice (again, very differently one from the other), both Isocrates and Plato considered philosophy to have its place in political life. This is precisely what Calicles criticizes about Socrates in Plato's *Gorgias* (485d–486b) arguing that philosophy is good to practice in childhood, but not when one enters political life. And it is worth noticing that, in *The Republic*, the philosopher has no chance *not* to do what he is supposed to do: given that he has been educated by the city, he will come back to educate the whole city by governing it, whether willingly or forced to do so. So that for Plato, the philosopher is at the same time an educator and a politician, and cannot be a true philosopher without being both. We can disagree about how he considers each of these—philosophy as knowledge of the forms, pedagogy as liberation from the cave, and politics as an aristocracy in which everyone fulfills their natural function—but the relationship between the three remains very close, and in this respect Isocrates seems closer to Plato than Socrates, in that he considers philosophy as educational to be essential for political aims. Of course both seem to conceive of the nature of philosophy as education, but to conceive of its political aims very differently, as you have pointed out: Isocrates identifies philosophy as the study and practice of *doxa* in favor of opinion, judgment and deliberation within a democratic context, while Plato conceives of philosophy/education as true theoretical knowledge (*episteme*) in the context of an aristocratic order. What I am trying to suggest here, Jan, is that it could be there is not only one but several histories of philosophy as education, and that we need to consider philosophy, not only as education but as practice, and as occupying a given location in relation to the political order. If we consider philosophy as practice, one name that could play an interesting role in that history is Matthew Lipman, the creator of what he called “philosophy for children”. Lipman argued that the doing of philosophy, philosophical praxis, was essential to educational experience because of the way, in his words, it embodied “reasonableness”. Given that philosophy and education share reasonableness as the same goal, he concludes “all true philosophy is educational and all true education is philosophical” (1988: 43). Like Isocrates, he identified the practice of educational philosophy as essential to the development of the judgement of democratic citizens. From this side of the ocean another precious name in that history is Simón Rodríguez, the inventor of popular education in

Latin America. In fact, Jan, there seem to be names everywhere! We might need to (re)read Montaigne, Spinoza, and so many others. In any case, it seems to me that (re)writing the history of philosophy/education as practice requires the (re)writing not only of its practical history, but also of its relationship to politics (democracy), and from that perspective Isocrates and Socrates seem to inaugurate two opposite routes. Too ambitious for a seminar?! One other figure who could contribute to questioning this enterprise is Derrida, especially his *Du droit à la philosophie* (1990). Many of what he calls “Les antinomies de la discipline philosophique” touch on our question. See for example the third antinomy: “D’une part, nous nous sentons en droit d’exiger que la recherche ou le questionnement philosophiques ne soient jamais dissociés de l’enseignement. (...) Mais d’autre part, nous nous sentons aussi autorisés à rappeler que, peut-être pour l’essentiel, quelque chose de la philosophie ne se limite pas, ne s’est pas toujours limité à des actes d’enseignement, à des événements scolaires, à ses structures institutionnelles, voire à la discipline philosophique elle-même. Celle-ci peut toujours être débordée, parfois provoquée par de l’inenseignable. Peut-être doit-elle se plier à enseigner l’inenseignable, à se produire en renonçant à elle-même, en excédant sa propre identité” (1990: 518). Even though it might seem challenging, I very much like this passage and do consider that the task of philosophy is to teach the unteachable. And we could write a parallel antinomy, centred on education, affirming that on the one hand we might demand that every dimension of education should be submitted to philosophy, to philosophical experience; but that on the other hand there must be something essentially educative that is not subject to philosophy. Education might then be understood as philosophizing the unphilosophizable, thinking the unthinkable. So once again, philosophy and education are looking very much alike—in fact maybe this is where we are now in our dialogical journey. Hopefully, dear Jan, the difficulties we are facing in clearly thinking what we are trying to think have to do with the antinomic character of the relationship under discussion. Indeed, far from inhibiting thinking, this condition makes it even more necessary to continue looking for its place. Perhaps, like Heraclitus, we need to expect the unexpected. And yes, I have been engaged in taking the relationship between childhood and philosophy seriously for at least the last 20 years. At the beginning I was much influenced by Matthew Lipman, and since then I’ve gradually tried to develop my own perspectives on the field, which includes a problematization of the idea of childhood and a move from a chronological approach to a more aionic one—one that includes children but is not limited to them. While *chronos* is the time of institutions, of school and psychology, *aion* is the time of *scholē*, thinking and friendship. If *chronos* is the time of teaching the institutionalized discipline of philosophy, *aion* is the time of philosophy as education. So in this sense the practice of doing philosophy with children is a practice of making *scholē*, making free-time, aionic time out of the chronological time of school. Through philosophizing with chronological

children in pedagogical institutions, I have been moved to try to think an aionic childhood of philosophy as education, or a childlike education through the experience of philosophy. It is in this sense that I think friendship is a condition of philosophy. In my previous post I referred to Giuseppe's Ferrari inversion of the etymology of philosophy (wisdom of friendship or love instead of love of wisdom). For a certain Socrates, this is the only thing philosophy can know, it is in fact the only thing Socrates declares himself wise about (*ta erotica*, *Symposium* 177d). What I mean is that if there is something a philosopher can know about beyond his or her own lack of knowledge, it is about *philia*, because this emerges from the affirmative dimension of ignorance: while professing to not-knowing, the philosopher as educator is passionate about knowing, is a friend of knowing, is in love with knowing. So friendship seems to be at the core of philosophy as education, just as I feel we have practiced in this dialogue. Don't you think so, dear Jan?

**JM:** Dear Walter, although we have, of course, not solved any issue and have reached no end, I think we have taken a wonderful path, and have come to a point where we might look for a different way to continue our walk through (some history of) philosophy and/or of education. I like the remarks you make about the "triangle" between Plato, Socrates and Isocrates very much, especially the implication for politics that you are suggesting. I think we could take these remarks as a starting point for a seminar, symposium or colloquium; and since the second option seems also to offer the occasion for some commoning of "food" not limited to food for thought, we might consider that one? What if we were to arrange it for sometime and somewhere in the coming months? Meanwhile, let me make a very brief last comment related to this element of "politics" in our musings, as I think it might help us further explore the relationship between philosophy and education, and to avoid the danger of what I would call an "ethical" or even "moral" colonization of the practice and theory of education (which, it could be, is to some extent related to our philosophical inheritance). At the beginning of our exchange you wrote that what Socrates is doing is to provoke "the impossibility of continuing to live as one was living before", and I have been relating that to Rilke's commandment that emerges from out of the stone torso: "you must change your life". Well, let me suggest that this "imperative to change" and the discourse about change more generally (and maybe also about "transformation"), to which I myself am also attracted time and again, is indeed always leading us towards such an ethically (morally) "colonized" understanding of education, in which "changing your life" is always involved, and therefore always includes a kind of judgment as its starting point (i.e., that something is in whatever way "wrong" or "insufficient" or in need of "light" or "clarity", and that change is wanted, needed, looked for, aspired to, suggested, required, desirable. But what if education is not about change, at least not in its first impulse, or to say it more

precisely: of course change occurs or can occur and is involved in the process of education, and is probably even its result, but education is first of all about "adding" ("giving", "offering"—"receiving") something—an adding which is a form of enabling and that is not based on an assumption or attribution or revelation of "lack" (however we understand "lack") and not a simple accumulation. Maybe this could be related to the wonderful thing you've just wrote about "philosophizing" as "creating school" or "making school while doing philosophy", because it seems to imply clearly that both (philosophizing and making school) are not the same, that you can philosophize without "making school" and that "school" is adding something—and that "thing", I would suggest, is added by the gift of time. Turning to politics, although it could lead us into other versions of "colonization", might help us to explore the issue of "things" or of "world", an issue we have already touched upon before. Let me conclude on my side by expressing my profound gratitude for this most wonderful experience and the chance you gave me to engage in this great "correspondence", which I think, upon a suggestion made here in Leuven by Tim Ingold, is the best word for it. Co-responding *with* each other, but also and for sure *with* philosophy and/or education.

**WOK:** "the adding of some thing by the gift of time"—what a nice and strong way of saying what education (and/or philosophy?) is about! I very much agree with your comments about the risky and colonizing dimension of the "lack-change" discourse, and I think you have stated very clearly what seems to be our path for continuing to think a politically non-colonizing education and/or philosophy. And as I write this, I remember another risk and I am tempted to write "a non-colonizing and (at the same time) non-conservative education". I am aware that this word "conservative" needs more careful consideration, but I am trying to focus our attention on a path that gives origin to philosophy and/or education. Let me try to put it more clearly. Usually, the feelings associated with the origin of philosophy are wonder, doubt, and perplexity, and the consciousness of being lost (as stated, for example, by Jaspers, 1959). But I also think that dissatisfaction or discontent with our common world, with the way we live and think and relate in common or in community is a feeling crucial to the birth of philosophy as school—to doing school through philosophy or to philosophizing as education. And if it is true that this originary impulse has given place to a politically colonizing, dominating discourse in education and philosophy, it is also true that it might find its place as an origin of a non-colonizing philosophy as education. There is a lot to think about dear Jan, and I really thank you for such a wonderful opportunity of co-correspondence, as Tim Ingold has magnificently worded it. And thank you for adding, offering, and giving birth in me to a new word, "commoning"—such a nice way of indicating the act of putting something into a common space, which in a sense symbolizes what philosophy as/and education is about. In fact it brings us back (or forth) to Heraclitus

in at least a couple of senses (in fact we might need to go back to a little before Socrates, Plato and Isocrates!), particularly his emphasis—with words like *xynos* and *koinos*—on the common as a mark of the world. And I now remember a few more words from Heraclitus, with which I will finish: first, his brilliant fragment 103, “In a circle, beginning and end are common (*xynon*)” (2001, translation M. Marcovich), which makes me feel that the ending of this correspondence is also the beginning of other, new correspondences; and second, the old proverb “*koina ta ton philon*” (common, things from friends), which in a sense symbolizes not only our correspondence, but what education as/and philosophy is about: a unique experience emerging through the words of friends who are noticing, realizing, and giving full attention to the world in common, to the common life. That’s probably why it is so difficult to end a correspondence like this, because in a sense it is like ending a path in thinking—unless we realize that an end is always a beginning in our commoning the world. Looking forward to the symposium!!!

## Notes

- 1 “that those who follow their judgements are more consistent and more successful than those who profess to have exact knowledge”
- 2 “For, excepting these teachers, who does not know that the art of using letters remains fixed and unchanged, that we continually and invariably use the same letters for the same purposes, while exactly the reverse is true of the art of discourse.... that oratory is good only if it has the qualities of fitness for the occasion, propriety of style, and originality of treatment.”
- 3 “These things, I hold, require much study and are the task of a vigorous and imaginative mind: for this, the student must not only have the requisite aptitude but he must learn, the different kinds of discourse and practise himself in their use; and the teacher, for his part, must so expound the principles of the art with the utmost possible exactness as to leave out nothing that can be taught, and, for the rest, he must in himself set such an example of oratory.”
- 4 Moreover, Isocrates was close to the sophists where they were materialistic, refuting mythical explanations—see also his defense of Aanaxagoras and Damon in *Antidosis* (235).

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