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An Adequate Education in a Globalised World? A Note on Immunisation Against Being-Together

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The article starts from the questions: what is it to be an inhabitant or citizen of a globalised world, and how are we to think of education in relation to such inhabitants? We examine more specifically the so-called 'European area of higher education' that is on the way to being established and that can be regarded as a concrete example of a process of globalisation. In the first part of the paper we try to show that the discursive horizon, and the concrete techniques and strategies that accompany the establishment of this space of higher education, invite the inhabitants of that space to see themselves as entrepreneurial and autonomous entities. In the second part we show how this specific kind of subjectivation (this production of subjects), related as it is to this globalised space, involves what we call an immunisation that also affects our thinking and our ideas in and about education. To refer to this as a kind of immunisation implies that globalisation could in fact be considered a closing or enclosing rather than an opening up. We argue, therefore, that this immunisation needs to be refused in favour of the invention of other kinds of subjectivity, other ways of speaking and writing about the world and about education, such that we relate to ourselves in a different way.

This article could be read as an answer to the question 'what is an adequate education in a globalised world?'. We want, however, to approach this question from a specific perspective, one that entails a kind of displacement. Indeed, we will not go directly into the question whether we really live in a globalised world and how this could possibly affect us and our idea about education. We want rather to ask what it says about who we are that we consider ourselves — or, better, that we are expected to consider ourselves — members or participants or inhabitants of a globalised world. So, the question from which we want to start reads as follows: who are we or who are we supposed to be, who are we invited to be, who are we *interpellated* to be, in Althusser's phrase,[1] as

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inhabitants or citizens of a globalised world? What kind of people are supposed to live in this world? And, of course, how are we to think of education in relation to these inhabitants?

We cannot answer this question here in detail. We propose, therefore, to look at what might count as an example of this so-called globalisation: we shall refer to this as 'the European space of higher education'. This European space of higher education (which is related to the Bologna declaration) is now on the way to being established, and we can assume — or, rather, it *is* assumed — that this space is part of a larger development towards what is called a 'knowledge' or 'learning society'.

The Bologna declaration, a joint declaration of the European Ministers of Education convened in Bologna on 19 June 1999, considers a 'Europe of Knowledge' as an 'an irreplaceable factor for social and human growth and as an indispensable component in the consolidation and enrichment of European citizenship'. In order to develop such a Europe, a 'European Higher Education Area' is indispensable, and this should be focused on 'international competitiveness', 'mobility' and 'employability'. Furthermore, there are six characteristics of this Area: a system of easily readable and comparable degrees, a system based on two cycles, a system of credits, promotion of mobility (for students, teachers, researchers . . .), promotion of co-operation in quality assurance and promotion of the necessary European dimensions in higher education. Related to this declaration is the message from the Salamanca Convention of European higher education institutions (29–30 March 2001) in which the necessity of a 'European higher education area' is recognised, and in which the institutions 'call on governments, in their national and European contexts, to facilitate and encourage change and to provide a framework for coordination and guidance towards convergence'. These and other comments and recommendations (of the Convention of European Students) were dealt with during the meeting of European Ministers in charge of higher education in Prague (19 May 2001), resulting in 'further actions following the six objectives of the Bologna process', and stressing the idea of lifelong learning, the involvement of higher education institutions and students in shaping the area, the promotion of the attractiveness of the area and a continued follow-up of the process.

In the first and main part of this article (Section I), we shall try to show that the inhabitants of this society, or more specifically of this space (of higher education), are invited to see themselves as what are now increasingly called 'stakeholders' and, more specifically, 'entrepreneurial individuals', standing in relation to schools and other institutions that in a complementary, though in significant respects parallel, way are to regard themselves as 'autonomous', 'responsive' and, of course, entrepreneurial.[2] In Section II we show how this specific form of *subjectivation* (this production of subjects), which is related to the totalisation of this global space, involves what we would call a kind of *immunisation*, and that this also affects our thinking and our ideas about education. To refer to this as a kind of immunisation implies that this globalisation could in fact

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be seen as a closing or enclosing rather than as an opening up. We should, we argue, refuse this immunisation and try to invent other kinds of subjectivity, other ways of speaking and writing about the world and about education that encourage, or at least allow, us to relate to ourselves in a different way. This will involve perhaps our being singularities within a community of singularities — this will be argued in Section II.

I WHO ARE THE INHABITANTS OF THE EUROPEAN SPACE OF HIGHER EDUCATION?

Our starting point is that the elaboration and construction of a 'European Space of Higher Education' as part of a 'learning society' is accompanied, on the one hand, by the installation of a specific discursive horizon — that is, by a certain way of speaking and writing — and, on the other, by the development of a whole set of strategies and techniques. Together — both the horizon and the techniques and strategies — interpellate us, ask us, call upon us to see ourselves (as persons but also as schools), to objectify ourselves and others (and our relations to others) in a certain way, to problematise our thoughts and actions according to a certain rationality, that is, to govern ourselves in a certain way. Our description of this discursive horizon and these techniques will necessarily be confined in certain respects, but we assume that the horizon and techniques are in any case familiar enough. Indeed, although we certainly do not pretend that these are homogeneous, we do assume that the elements we present here constitute a central part of the horizon in which we think and act today in the context of higher education (and probably also in other contexts). The horizon and techniques are in this sense all too 'real' and palpably operative in the world that we live in, but this does not mean that they are well understood in terms of truth and falsity. For example, when we state that we are asked to see (and evaluate) ourselves as entrepreneurial selves, we do not contend that we 'are' entrepreneurial selves or that we 'really' or 'ultimately' act and think in this way. This discursive horizon and these techniques and strategies rather install and develop a certain regime that determines what can be seen and what can be said; they imply that we are positioned in this space and this society in a certain way.[3]

Autonomy and technology in a learning environment

First, we would like to draw attention to the fact that psychology, and more specifically the psychology of learning and instruction, is playing an important role in the shaping of this discursive horizon. These disciplines are the sources of a large part of the vocabulary, instruments and procedures with which the individual who is the 'subject' of education is produced and with which we speak and reflect today about education (and the relations and activities it entails).

Reflection, speaking and writing on education are predominantly inspired by psychological concepts of learning in which learning is

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understood as much more than transmission: it is considered to be a construction of knowledge, with constructionist and social-constructionist theories assuming major importance. According to these conceptions, learning has to be performed by the learner herself. Knowledge and competence are not transmitted or absorbed but constructed. Such construction does not start from scratch but from the already available knowledge structure. Moreover, learning, understood in this way, is strongly dependent on contexts and situations—that is, on the environment in which it takes place. This concept of learning is complemented by a concept of teaching where the activity of the teacher is no longer orientated towards the transfer of knowledge but geared towards the provision of environments that facilitate and stimulate learning. These environments, we are told, present the conditions for autonomous and self-directed learning. The starting point is the individual's learning needs and learning potential, and these can be diverse. Hence, there is here a further reason why we need to construct learning environments that allow learners to find their own way and construct their own knowledge, to develop their own potential through their interaction with this environment. Such environments should then be oriented towards a flexible use of knowledge.

Learning therefore is not to be determined from the outside. Being a matter of the individual's (re)construction of inner worlds, it should be self-directed and not other-directed. The learner is at the centre, and it is she herself who must (self-reflexively) direct her learning. In this conception the part of the learner in the activity of the learning process has altered from being largely passive to being active or even hyperactive. A further consequence of this change is that responsibility for the learning lies with the learner herself. Of course, there is interaction and exchange between the 'I' and the environment, but the 'I' is thought of as autonomous and self-responsible for its learning and acting.

It is important to note that learning and teaching of this kind are possible only on condition that the psychology of learning, in tandem with its related pedagogy, at the same time develops new techniques, procedures and instruments of assessment and evaluation that match the learning activities to individual learning needs and skills. Hence learning and assessment become integrated. As Filip Dochy and Gert Moerkerke put this,

> Rather than requiring individuals to adapt to means of instruction, the desired objective is to adapt the conditions of instruction to individuals to maximize their potential for success. This objective can be realized only if learning can be designed to take account of an individual's profile of knowledge and skills (Dochy and Moerkerke, 1997, p. 424).

New techniques for self-, peer- and co-assessment are, therefore, developed that demand 'skills in self-appraisal, self-evaluation, self-observation, self-criticism', 'showing students their strong points, their weaknesses and

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their growth'. These techniques will help, we are told, to stimulate the competence to learn and the development of human capital.

Let us mention more specifically one of the techniques that is propagated, namely, the use of so-called learning agreements between the learner, on the one hand, and the teacher or the education-delivering institution, on the other. Learning agreements of this kind are typically required to contain (or to pretend to contain):

- a precise and transparent formulation of the conditions and requirements that have to be fulfilled by the students (at the beginning and the start of the learning process — start and end competences);
- a description of the instruments (for example, the assessment tools) through which the student can evaluate whether or not she meets these requirements;
- and finally an indication of the kind of support that is offered by the institution and the teachers, and to which the student has a right.

This would mean that education results from a professional planning process, that we can clarify the different steps in that process, and that we can make them transparent and justify them. It is expected that learning agreements of this kind will come about through a process of negotiation between two independent and autonomous partners, who each have their own needs and demands. To give a central role to the students in the learning process also implies a drastic change in responsibilities. The student is no longer an 'object of teaching', but a self-determining, emancipated or empowered partner who is responsible for herself. So too the teacher or the education-delivering organisation is an autonomous, independent partner, having needs, potential and goals, conditioned by the given environment.

On the evidence of this first small fragment of the discursive horizon, we want to maintain the following: learning is an activity that has to be performed in an autonomous way by the learner herself; where the learner is someone who is positioned in an environment, and who directs her learning on the basis of her individual needs and potential — needs and potential that can be made visible and knowable through certain procedures, instruments and techniques; and where this making visible is undertaken increasingly by the learner herself. The learner therefore is responsible for her own learning and for the development of her capital, but does this through contractual agreements with others (teachers, institutions) who act as providers of the learning environment that allow her to develop and augment her potential and capital. With regard to the kind of people who are supposed to live in this context, we want to stress two main elements. First, it becomes clear that we are dealing with an individual who is confronted, on the one hand, with needs (her own and those of others) and, on the other, with potential and capital; she is someone who is obliged to do something with her capital or potential in

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order to meet those needs; and this means — and we shall return to this point without delay — that the individual subject is expected to develop a productive and entrepreneurial relationship towards itself. This applies, as we shall see, equally to schools and to teachers. Second, strong emphasis is put on the autonomy, the independence and the responsibility of the individual.

These elements can now be further elaborated on the evidence of other fragments of the discursive horizon and of the techniques and procedures that are developed within this globalised, European space of higher education. We wish to draw these together with the now familiar heavy emphasis on the necessity of investing in human capital, with the stress on self-management and the management of social relations, with the obsession with quality, and with the urge to promote 'learning competence' ('learning how to learn'). This will allow us further to clarify how people are interpellated within this space.

The capitalisation of life

First, let us begin with the emphasis on human capital and the definition or description of human behavior that it presumes. The starting point, as clarified by famous economists and Nobel prize winners such as Theodore Schultz and Gary Becker, is that to explain economic growth it is necessary to take into account the factor of human capital, and more specifically skills and knowledge.[4] Conversely, investment in human capital, and therefore education, is of major importance. From this economic perspective, education is considered not as consumption but as investment: 'Much of what we call consumption constitutes investment in human capital' (Schultz, 1971, p. 24). Becker states that we should analyse behaviour traditionally seen as consumption from a production model. This model makes it possible to conceive 'all human behaviour' from the perspective of entrepreneurship (Becker, 1976, p. 14). Enterprise is defined as choosing scarce resources (time, goods, services) to produce a commodity in order to maximise the satisfaction of preferences. Because satisfaction is produced, it is possible to analyse consumer behaviour within the model of enterprise (*ibid.*, p. 137). In this way schooling appears as an enterprise behaviour: people invest time in schooling because they expect that the profits will be greater there than in other things they might choose. The same goes for marriage and divorce, as for that matter for anything else: 'producing' children is investing in children; so too engaging in crime, voting in a democracy, migration and mobility, healthcare, genetic manipulation . . . all manner of things are to be judged in terms of profit and loss; they concern the production of commodities to satisfy preferences, to produce satisfaction of needs. According to Becker, all human behaviour can be understood as enterprise, both in the market environment and in places traditionally defined as social. Human beings, therefore, have to be considered as agents operating in an environment, choosing scarce resources and producing commodities that maximise the satisfaction of

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their needs. Changes in the environment (or, rather, 'environmental variables'), or new information about the environment, will influence the choices of the enterprising subject.

So the term 'enterprise' refers not simply to a kind of organisational form — to isolated units in competition with one other — but to the kind of activity that characterises organisations (such as universities, schools, hospitals, etc.), to individuals within such organisations, and to persons in their daily lives.[5] The entrepreneurial self is a new identity. Individuals appear in the light of the fact that each of them is trying to live his or her life as a kind of enterprise, striving as we shall see to increase the quality of their lives and that of their families through the learning they accomplish and the choices they make in the marketplace of life (Miller and Rose, 1995, p. 455).

Managing the entreprising self and its social relations

It is necessary to say more about what could be meant by the idea that one should be an 'entrepreneur' of oneself (Gordon, 1991, p. 44; Rose, 1996, p. 150 ff.; Lemke, 1997, p. 250). Behaving in this entrepreneurial way implies an understanding of people's lives such that they are taken to be the results of (informed) choices that individuals make and of the commodities they produce. Life, here, is about making choices every day and everywhere, making a project of oneself, working on oneself, on one's relations and on professional life, and choosing, of course, one's 'lifestyle' (see Rose, 1996, p. 157). People are responsible for the 'production' of their own well-being, and therefore a specific kind of self-knowledge and self-mastery is required — opening the way for the 'experts of the self' (the therapists) to sell their expertise. The entrepreneurial self is an active, counting and calculating self. It counts with itself, it keeps its own account and is accountable. It adopts a critical-objectivating attitude towards itself. In order to survive and to get along it is necessary to know one's resources, to use and develop them, to put forward and constantly adapt to strategic goals, to look for improvement on the basis of permanent evaluation, to take initiative and not only to react, to be flexible and to be responsive to the changing environment. This means that entrepreneurial selves have to manage themselves:

> The idea of one's life as the enterprise of oneself implies that there is a sense in which one remains always continuously employed in (at least) that one enterprise, and that it is part of the continuous business of living to make adequate provision for the preservation, reproduction and reconstruction of one's own human capital (Gordon, 1991, p. 44).

Moreover, in order to be manageable we need knowledge about ourselves, knowledge that produces a certain individuality. The individual is not something invented by philosophy or given by nature; individuals enter the world through ways of speaking and writing, and through concrete techniques such as observation, registration, documentation

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and inscription in the framework of specific forms of problematisation. One of the most prominent ways is, of course, the individual file and profile that we, as students and teachers, are increasingly expected ourselves to compile. This also means, let it be clear, that we can now take individuals into account, and that all manner of government activities indeed take them *into account*. And this is to be understood in the most literal sense: people are becoming calculable—not least calculable by themselves—and in this way become manageable and governable, not only by the government of the state or of the school but also by themselves. They govern and manage themselves in a certain way, they manage their lives, their careers, their learning, their relations, because their very individuality comes to be understood not as something outside the scope of knowledge but precisely as something to be mapped, evaluated, described and documented in all its aspects (see Rose, 1996).

This self-management or self-government is not directed towards a normative ideal of personhood but towards the norm of individuality itself. This norm of individuality shows itself mainly in the belief in the almost unlimited capacity of the individual to shape her life according to her own project, according to the leading image of the autonomous, self-directing self. We are interpellated to conceive of ourselves as oriented towards self-determination and self-development in response to our needs. It is not only the case that we are confronted with the freedom to choose ourselves: this freedom is imposed upon us, and we are expected to understand our lives in terms of choices, and to understand it as a project. Our past is to be interpreted and our future is to be planned as if they were the results of past or future choices. Such choices are to be seen as the expression and realisation of our personalities; as the realisation and satisfaction of our needs, they are also, therefore, our responsibility. Even if today great emphasis is put upon democratic values and ethical pluralism, this does not prevent this democracy and this pluralism from operating according to the *a priori* of individual choice on the basis of needs. This is an *a priori* of the autonomisation and responsibilisation of the self (cf. Rose, 1996, p. 157).

This is not to say that this regime of the entrepreneurial self is an anti-social one. On the contrary: relations towards one's friends and loved ones come to be seen as useful, indeed crucial—for personal happiness, for social effectiveness, for the well-being of nations.[6] But the recognition of this dynamic nexus of interpersonal relations does not prevent their being understood as starting from individual needs (for affection, love, etc.): it is not only that the individual has the opportunity to manage and control these relations; this becomes a task. The individual should work on herself to acquire the skills to develop her relationships in such a way that they come to fit the expectations and needs of herself and others. It is in this way that the quality of life is improved. The individual should, therefore, emancipate herself from her dependencies, or at least make these transparent so that she can control and manage them in the context of her life project. We are interpellated and called upon to conceive of our social relations, such as the educational

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relationship between student and teacher or parent and child, as calculable and calculating relations, as relations in which a transparent and reciprocal communication is central. Social relations understood in this way rest ideally on a contract or agreement and on negotiation between equal, autonomous and entrepreneurial subjects. Such relations exist on the basis of individually chosen motives — now epitomised perhaps in the kinds of relations developed in the globalised world of the Internet (Gordon, 1999). The classical distinction between economic and social relations becomes obsolete since the social relations are themselves seen as results of enterprising activities.

The permanent quality tribunal

As we have explained, the individual's needs (which are made visible through certain techniques) constitute the point of departure, and this is also the case for learning and teaching as entrepreneurial activities. The aim is to develop the skills and competencies for an entrepreneurial coping with these needs. Good teaching, like good learning, or for that matter the good life in general, is guaranteed through a permanent linkage between the supply side (of activities, skills and competencies, of teaching, learning, living), on the one hand, and the demand side (of needs on the part of the client or customer), on the other. I can, moreover, be the customer of myself — which is to say nothing more than that I have my own needs and that I have to take them into account, I am myself a demanding party, set *apart* from others. This link is the link to quality.

It is precisely this relation to the customer, this subjection, that we might call, in Michel Foucault's phrase, the permanent economic tribunal.[7] This tribunal requires that we meet needs and respond to the environment, and thus judges us according to the laws of entrepreneurship and competition. Such a tribunal installs the permanent obsession with quality.[8] In the most general sense, 'quality' refers to 'fitness for use', where this means that the product has the characteristics that meet the needs. (And we should perhaps repeat: these needs can be very diverse.) The entrepreneurial self is not only directed towards efficiency and effectiveness, then, but also towards quality. In the absence of quality, all care for efficiency and effectiveness is pointless. The will to quality is, then, inextricably bound up with entrepreneurship. The first question that the entrepreneurial self must ask is: 'What is quality?' (see Simons, 2002). This means that the pre-occupation or obsession with quality, and with what quality is, rather than being a response to an external demand, is already an attitude of the entrepreneurial self.

Moreover, it is the same tribunal, the permanent economic or quality tribunal, that ensures that the learning process is itself objectified and understood as an important characteristic of entrepreneurship.

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Entrepreneurship and the learning force

Regarding what is to be learned, strong emphasis is put upon the skills and knowledge (the 'communication', 'thinking', 'interpersonal' skills) that will allow the individual to live as an enterprising self. And to the extent that entrepreneurship requires a kind of informal coping with a variable environment, learning to learn comes to be seen as crucial. This learning to learn is directed neither towards the creation of a common world nor towards the shared acquisition of knowledge but towards the development and stimulation of the learning capacity as such (a learning force is like a labour force) — a learning capacity relatively independent of any particular concrete content. Its productivity and value reside precisely in its capacity to process many different contents. It is the capacity for renewal and responsiveness to change. In other words, it produces the survalue that constitutes the capital and richness (cf. Masschelein, 2001).

Learning strategies and skills for problem solving are objectified as fundamental for living and learning in a knowledge society. It is these that enable the individual to deal entrepreneurially with learning needs in a changing environment. Living and learning, therefore, are closely related, and lifelong learning becomes a necessity: 'In a knowledge society, school and life can no longer be separate. They have to be linked in an organic process in which the one feeds back on the other. And this continuing education attempts to do' (Drucker, 1968, p. 324). An economy and society based on knowledge in this way needs education that is not confined to traditional schools. Lifelong learning must enable the learner to become someone who can deal autonomously with changes in society, and thus to become an entrepreneurial self. But, at the same time, continuous retraining is understood as necessary to link people with the changing needs of the production process.[9] Since life for the entrepreneurial self is a production process, the process of learning becomes a matter of managing oneself as an enterprise. To live an entrepreneurial life is to be positioned in a changing environment; it is to be responsible for the production and learning process in such a way as to meet different needs in service of 'the quality of life'. Investment in learning not only contributes to self-actualisation but at the same time delivers competencies that enable people to operate in their labour environment and in society as a whole. Thus, Stewart Ranson can claim that 'the good (learning) person is a good citizen' (Ranson, 1992, p.78).

Schools in this context emerge as enterprises implicated in the production of the enterpreneurial self. They must recognise that they have customers, just as the enterprising teacher must recognise that she has customers. They are, therefore, interpellated to look in a particular way at what is going on in the school and the classroom: they are required to submit their activities (their production and output) to the quality tribunal — that is, to the demands of teachers in general, of the director, of parents and students.

Institutions of education — schools, colleges, universities — come to appear as enterprises that produce learning, whose product or service is

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human capital, while parents (and students, as they come to govern themselves) select this product as a kind of investment. To enable this enterprising choice, information on the quality of the providers is needed so that they can select the school that best fits their needs. And government has to create the conditions for such enterprenerial schools to develop, conditions for individual self-realisation but also for social welfare and the economic growth of society. The creation of the European space of higher education as a concrete attempt to shape a globalised world is orientated towards the establishment and protection of an environment in which schools, teachers, students, parents, etc., can behave in an entrepreneurial way. It is the creation of a market environment.

And, of course, as we all know by now, this means that persons and schools are positioned in a very specific way: they are 'isolated' or individualised in order to subject them to comparison, assessment and evaluation against norms of quality in order to enable entrepreneurial, autonomous choices. We quote a small passage from a very recent report from the Dutch Commission for the Accreditation of Higher Education (2001). Its first lines run:

> You and I certainly inform ourselves well about the quality of products and services we are likely to buy. The person who is choosing a certain kind of learning wants to compare what is offered by the different providers of education: he or she wants to compare the quality. The battle for students is more and more conducted around the quality of education, the specific attractiveness of the provider for the student. Therefore, the quality should be made more visible and transparent. We should arrive at a Europe-wide transparency. In this context accreditation is an important tool to increase the autonomy not only of students but also of schools, since autonomy is not possible without responsibility towards society. Society has the right to control how providers operate and with what results (*Accreditatie Hoger Onderwijs*, 2001, p. 1, authors' translation).

Our survival and the significant other as a collaborating or competing other

What the reality of the discursive horizon tells us is that a human life conducted in a globalised world — that is, one that is required to be so conducted — is a life lived not so much in a world as in an environment. The proliferation of the word 'environment' is striking indeed. This is an environment that contains opportunities and constraints to develop human potential and capital, one that is understood as turbulent and constantly changing. Reality is not allowed to appear *as a world*, and as such has nothing to say to the learning person or the entrepreneurial self; it does not speak to her. Things receive their meaning from their function in the framework of projects and in relation to needs; in this they constitute an environment. In this environment an entrepreneurial relationship towards ourselves (as individuals or as organisations, as schools, countries and so on) is said to be vital for our survival. This means at least two things.

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First, what is at stake (the final stake of the stakeholders) is survival. We are called upon to be entrepreneurial and to participate because this is an absolute necessity. We are, of course, free; our condition is the result of an interpellation, not imposed on us by force; indeed nobody is forced, but if we want to survive, we are thus obligated. A passage from the Bologna declaration is instructive here:

> It [the declaration] is a commitment freely taken by each signatory country to reform its own higher education system or systems in order to create overall convergence at European level. The Bologna declaration is not a reform imposed upon national governments or higher education institutions. Any pressure individual countries and higher education institutions may feel from the Bologna process could only result from their ignoring increasingly common features of staying outside the mainstream of change (The European Higher Education Area, 1999).

And second, this also means that as an entrepreneur or enterprise, one is always positioned in relations of competition (or collaboration). Indeed, a consequence of this relation to the self, and of judgement by a permanent economic tribunal, is a relation of competition towards others. Enterprising qualities can be defined only by reference to other enterprising individuals (or groups, organisations and so on) and not in relation to any stable norm. The dictate of comparison is, therefore, part of the development of entrepreneurship (see Bröckling, 2001).

Conclusion to Section I

In the discursive horizon of the European space of higher education—more generally, we believe, within the discursive horizon of the globalised world—we are addressed and spoken to as entrepreneurial, self-responsible selves, with individual needs that present us with the motive of our entrepreneurial actions and learning, and that themselves create a permanent tribunal to which we are subjected; we are addressed as entities somehow separated from each other and exposed to a mode of comparison and competition in which our survival is at stake. We are, thereby, asked to conceive social relations as the result of entrepreneurial choices, as relations existing in principle between equal, autonomous, independent subjects on the basis of individually chosen motives. Social relations such as those between teachers and students are then to be seen as exchange or service relations, as matters of calculation. They are to be entered into as agreements or contracts in which mutual expectations and responsibilities are defined with transparency. Social relations, therefore, presuppose individuals who are able to make transparent their expectations, needs, values, skills and competencies. It is an objectivating, calculating relationship that is required towards these needs, values, skills, competencies.

This interpellation to be an entrepreneurial self, an interpellation also to be the entrepreneur of oneself, functions then as a paradox, one that has become all too familiar in education. On the one hand, this appeal

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appears with an authority that knows what is good for those to whom its is addressed. On the other, it feeds a distrust towards this authority since it resounds with the message: be yourself, become the entrepreneur of yourself.

Of course, this entrepreneurial, autonomous self does not exist. This self is not an empirically identifiable entity but rather a direction in which individuals are asked or invited to transform themselves. It is something that has to be enacted. The entrepreneurial self is not something that one is but something one must become. It is interpellated or prescribed. We should, however, take cognisance of the fact that this interpellation does not amount only to an appeal to us to act in this way or that; it at the same time activates those forms of knowledge, the very idiom, in which the individual is enabled to speak the truth about herself, in which regulation and calculation techniques are developed, in which practices of working on and governing herself are fostered. Autonomy, self-responsibility and entrepreneurship together constitute something that we should have (they provide our norms), something we cannot have enough of (they constitute our *telos*), and something to be understood in terms of learnable competencies. Such an interpellation, so we shall argue in Section II, is now working as a kind of immunisation.[10]

II THE REGIME OF IMMUNISATION AND BEYOND

Immunisation and the simple fact of otherness

In order to clarify why we speak of immunisation, let us start from the fact that, as we have tried to indicate, we are asked to see ourselves as members, that is, as stakeholders in this globalised space or society, a space or society in which all have a stake. This society or space is defined by what its members have or should have in common: enterprising capacities, communicative and learning skills and competencies, the ability to define and come to agreements about needs and about what should be done, and finally the ability to *part*icipate (society being conceived as the 'unity of units'). As Roberto Esposito argues, the assumption upon which this conception of human community relies is that individuals have something in common, something that at the same time allows each of them to be unique individuals (Esposito, 2000, p. 16). For example, insofar as one shares a communicative or entrepreneurial competence with others, one is able to express one's own most individual aspirations.

As Esposito points out, however, the original meaning of *munus* (void, debt, gift) in *communus* is exactly the opposite of this conception. According to him, community is not a matter of 'having' something in 'common', something that we share with others, but of the opposite: it is not a matter of 'having' but of 'lacking'; not about 'something' but about 'nothing'. This void or lack refers to what we owe to others; it means that we have obligations towards others, despite our being unable to define precisely what these obligations are. The 'I' or the 'you' is

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caught up in a network of obligations that it cannot master. The subjects of a community are united by a common obligation in the sense of 'I owe you something' (not 'you owe me something') (*ibid.*, p. 20). The subjection to obligations involves the experience of the other (the void) in myself, a void that I cannot take into account. The very notion of community includes an infringement of subjectivity and individuality. We might speak, on the strength of this view, of the subjectivation that we described above in terms of a continuous 'im-munisation', that is, a filling of the void between people, a means of protecting them from a possible threat to their subjectivity. Immunisation, therefore, involves defining what we have in common and what we owe to each other, transforming every social relation into a transparent rule, norm, contract or agreement, and seeing every task we undertake within an economy of calculable exchange. Immunisation is not, however, only about transforming human subjects into discrete individuals, individuals whose social relations are arranged by common juridical, moral or political rules; immunisation is in addition a shield against the passivity and void within the subject itself.

The concrete form of this immunisation becomes most evident in the transformation of social relations into contracts, the insistence on agreement and consensus in communication, the necessity of accountability, and the view that human beings, as autonomous entrepreneurs, have the ability to express their needs and to solve problems (in other words, 'to learn'). Interpellation of this kind is a making immune in the sense that, for all the importance of interaction with the environment and with others in this environment, individuals are addressed in the first place as separated and isolated from each other. Indeed this is what it means to be individualised, and so the constitutive dependency of others is obfuscated.[11] What is obfuscated is the fact that our individuality can truly be conceived only in terms of alterity, that it necessarily entails our being captured in relations of dependency and obligation. Rather than being calculable or manageable, such relations show that we are irreducibly connected with others, in ways that escape any notion of the entrepreneurial self as surely as they elude the possibility of transparency and objectivation.

In fact we could say that in a certain sense anyone involved in an educational relationship (teachers, students, parents, children) knows very well that it is not possible to speak about these relationships only in terms of agreements, because they imply obligations and claims that can never be rendered transparent. We owe something to the other — and this other can be the student, the pupil, the child, the father, the mother, the teacher, but also the subject matter, or the culture, and so on; but we can never know exactly 'what' we owe (see Readings, 1996). This fact, that we do not know this and cannot know it, does not prevent us from feeling responsible; it does not prevent us from engaging in the relation. It shows precisely that such relations are not dependent upon our knowledge, or, at least, are dependent on something other than specifiable knowledge of demands or needs. That we owe something to the other

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does not mean knowing the exact nature of our debt, or what exactly the demand is: our debt towards the other does not depend on knowledge.

Moreover, a social relation cannot be described simply as a relation between autonomous persons, and to see the obviousness of this we need think no further than the relation of speech itself. In this relation there is also always the position of the addressee, of him or her who is addressed, who is spoken to, the position of the listener. And this position is structurally different from the position of the speaker. The position of the listener is not simply the position of the one who is temporarily not speaking (or not yet speaking) but is in principle able to speak. Being a listener, being an addressee, means that one is not in a position of control, of autonomy; one does not have the power to decide what is said or to decide what one receives from the other. Being a listener involves precisely one's being addressed: one owes an answer; one is positioned in a network of obligations (towards the other person, the language, and so on), a network that one is not able to master. And this means that I will not be able completely to pay my debts. Even the supposition that I might be able to do so, that it would be possible to calculate exactly what I owe to the other (for example, to my father or to my son or my teachers or students), would itself be unethical. It would mean that that in principle I might be able to absolve myself of these relations, to get rid of them, to pay my debts (see Readings, 1996).

It is also impossible, therefore, and unethical, to say exactly what good education consists in. The very attempt to do so predisposes one towards an account in terms of autonomy and mastery—and, worse, towards skills and competencies within a learning economy of contractual relations—in a way that quite obscures the otherness that should be at its heart. The simple fact of others and of otherness (like the fact of language, for example) means that our relation to the other or to otherness always remains a question, and this has to be understood not in the trivial sense that we will always be able to do better, but in the fundamental sense that our autonomy is irrevocably impaired. It means that we are involved or implicated in obligations and dependencies from which we should not emancipate or free ourselves.

Being-with, being-exposed and the idea of education

It is important to stress that the notion of 'the other' or of 'otherness' is used generally in such a way that it is encountered as secondary: it starts from the viewpoint of a sameness, or of an enclosed or pre-given self, and from there it is understood as a kind of negativity. To think of it in terms of negativity, however, always leads, according to Jean-Luc Nancy, to a point where either the otherness is turned upon itself and affirmed for itself, or where it is understood in an absolute sense as outside the individual and the world (Nancy, 1996, pp. 31, 101, 115). The result is precisely that it loses the force of address and becomes reconfigured as an answer, as a component in the economy of exchange. It is as such that it is held to be valuable; it is hypostatised as a truth or as substance.[12]

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Once more, this is a kind of immunisation for it tells us what this otherness is all about, it explains it away and tells us how it should be dealt with or dispensed with. In contrast and following Nancy (and others), 'others' and 'otherness' for us refers to a division or dis-position and to the fact of the *cum*- or 'with'. To live with others and otherness is not something we should undertake to do (as a discrete task), but what life itself is about. Hence, being is divided and always a matter of *being-together-with*. It is to be understood as a com-munity in a specific sense. It is not a community in the sense of something definite, a kind of identity or a kind of value. The fact of being-together-with implies a community in which each and all are exposed as such, are in contact — a pluralism of singularities beyond particularism and universalism.[13]

Moreover, language is the hallmark of the being-together-with of singularities; it is the epitome of community. What is exposed in language, then, is not something beyond language — a substance, a subject, a secret, for example — but this being-with as such. In talking we are first of all exposed to others and otherness; we always talk with (and do not just talk to), just as we walk with, live with, sleep with others. It is in language above all that we are first of all exposed to our being-with, in the very passage of meaning or communication. Hence it is possible to reformulate the idea of experience itself. Experience is neither something originating in myself, nor something that simply comes from outside. In a certain sense experience is an experience of the outside. As there is always otherness and a circulation of meaning between the 'I' and the 'me', experience has to do with this outside, with being exposed to this outside. In other words, experience originates precisely from our being-with-others, from our being exposed in a community of singularities, from language as a circulation of meaning. For this reason, experience as being-with-some-other (something or someone) has the power to confront our individuality and subjectivity, and to rend the discursive horizon of our immunised world. At this point we might say that immunisation forgets, or forfeits, community, and entails the cessation of our exposure to experience.

Our critique of this immunisation is as a eulogy to the values of community life or of relations to others. Being-together-with (which might serve as our translation of community) is not to be conceived as a value (a positive or conservative or traditional value) but as a condition of our existence. Taking this condition seriously requires the refusal, as Foucault pointed out, of the type of individuality or subjectivity that is imposed upon us; it requires us to invent other and new forms of subjectivity and of being-together (Foucault, 1982, p. 232). One of the pressing questions today, we believe, a question that is taken up in fact not only by theorists but in practical initiatives, is the question of how to think and develop our subjectivity starting from this condition: that is, starting from the condition of being-together-with, of being-exposed and in contact. This requires a genuine experience of the outside (and this may not be pleasant but rather a kind of burden). It enjoins reflection on what it means that our being is a being-together-with.

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This perhaps is an opportunity to rethink and reformulate the idea of education. On the strength of the discussion above, we might argue that what is at stake in education is exactly our being-together-with-others, our being exposed and being in contact with others. And in this sense the relation to children might be understood as one of being exposed: it is the experience of an outside—requiring a relation to something that is not first and foremost an object of knowledge or study, in a relation that involves something other than exchange. In a certain sense, we might at this point turn back to the notion of the *in-fans*, of the being without language. Since we are animals without a natural language, this language has to be given to us, and before we can learn anything else we have to learn to receive that language (see Agamben, 1989). In this context, and as a first step, our plea is for the continuance of the conception of education and teaching as a relation of transfer or transmission—although not simply a continuance as this must also involve reformulation. Perhaps, better, it is a relation of giving and receiving. We speak indeed of giving words or giving a language. But the giving of a language, giving words, means that we do not know, and that we cannot know, exactly what we give and what we receive. As the Argentinian poet Antonio Porchia so beautifully put this, 'What the words say does not remain. It is the words that remain, that endure, because the words remain the same, but what they say never remains the same' (Porchia, 1989, p. 111). This means also that we must find out what the words are asking from us, what we owe them, what they say to us. This we believe is what we have to do today: to think again about what the word 'education' or its idea might mean.[14]

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NOTES

1. For the notion of 'interpellation' we draw on the work of Bröckling and his interpretation of Althusser's use of this term (see Althusser, 1971). It helps us to understand the process of subjectivation as a constitution of subjectivity in an appeal and prescription. In fact we consider that the discursive horizon and the related strategies and techniques are not obliging or forcing us to act or think in a certain way. They are operative rather in the sense that they are appealing and prescribing (because they contain promises as well as a threats). Acknowledging this appeal/prescription and becoming a certain kind of subject can be conceived as one and the same process (Bröckling, 2001, p. 3).
2. The rethinking of the very notion of institution, and specifically of the educational institution, is one that shadows our main topic throughout this paper.
3. For this approach (and for a specific attitude towards the present) we draw on Foucault—broadly on his so-called 'governmentality studies'. Of particular interest here are Foucault's lectures at the College de France, and especially *Sécurité, Territoire et Population* (1977–1978) and *Naissance de la biopolitique* (1978–1979) (not (yet) published, but accessible in *Centre Michel Foucault* at *IMEC* in Paris). See. Foucault, 1978, 1979, 1981, 1982; Gordon, 1991; Lemke, 1997. With regard to the 'governmentality studies', see Rose, 1999; Dean, 1999; Bröckling *et al.*, 2000.
4. Again, as with psychology, we do not want to argue that the discourse that we try to analyse here is simply an application of the economic theories of human capital, but rather that it is the other

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way round: such theories offer some help in clarifying the nature of the subjectivity that is supposed to be ours, and this is useful in a space where so much emphasis is placed on human capital. We do not want to contend that the theory of human capital is 'true' (as if it were not contested) or for that matter 'false'. Rather, we take it simply to be an indication of elements that constitute the discursive horizon.

5. With regard to entrepreneurship within organisations, reference could also be made to management discourses on 'intrapreneurship' and competition within the organisation (see Pinchot, 1985; Halal, 1986, pp. 139–144; for a critical analysis, see also DuGay and Salaman, 1992).
6. Part of the reformulation of 'the social' along with the capitalisation of life is the notion of 'social capital': 'Whereas physical capital refers to physical objects and human capital refers to properties of individuals, social capital refers to connections among individuals — social networks and the norms of reciprocity and trustworthiness that arise from them' (Putnam, 2000, p. 19). To have an idea of how the notion is being used, a recent report of the OECD is very instructive. It examines the effects of both human and social capital on the well-being of nations, and defines social capital as 'networks together with shared norms, values and understandings that facilitate co-operation within or among groups' (OECD, 2001, p. 41). From this perspective, social life, relations of trust and civic participation are regarded as kinds of capital and in need of investment.
7. Foucault uses this expression in his lecture of 21 March 1979 (see Gordon, 1991, pp. 41 ff.; Lemke, Krasmann and Brökling, 2000, p. 17; Bröckling, 2001, p. 4).
8. The 'obsession with quality' is also one of the main characteristics of the 'excellent enterprises' as decribed by Peters and Waterman: 'The best companies are pushed around by their customers, and they love it' (Peters and Waterman, 1982, p. 194).
9. For a more detailed analysis of lifelong learning, see Donzelot, 1991, p. 273; Rose, 1999, p. 160 ff.; Masschelein, 2001.
10. In using the term 'immunisation' we follow Esposito, according to whom the project of modernity can be described as a project of immunisation (Esposito, 2000, p. 27).
11. Hannah Arendt speaks of the concept of 'isolation', the very absence of this constitutive dependency, to describe a main characteristic of totalitarianism (Arendt, 1979).
12. According to Nancy: 'Today the undecidable is to be found everywhere as an answer, one which would like to substitute for the old answers to this or that question of truth, or to the question of Truth itself. . . . The signs of the decomposition, dislocation, and dismemberment of the system — that is, of the entire architectonics and history of the West – which, for example, are called . . . . "text" "signifier," "lack," "derivation," "trace," etc., have been converted into values; they have thus been erected as truths and hypostatized as substances' (Nancy in Agamben, 1999, p. 113).
13. In *La création du monde ou la mondalisation* Nancy is questioning actual (economic) globalisation from the viewpoint of being-together-with and considering how it is our task to *create* a world *ex nihilo*. However, *ex nihilo* does not refer to a divine act, but to our condition of being-with as such, in a world without foundation or reason. According to Nancy, it is our task to create a symbolisation of the world, not from a position or model outside the world nor with regard to an end, but from our being exposed within it to each other and otherness, in a community of singularities. The *nihil* is exactly this condition of being-with (Nancy, 2002, p. 59). This creation of a world might be understood as a globalisation without immunisation.
14. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the 2002 Gregynog Philosophy of Education Conference in Wales. We are grateful to those present on that occasion for their comments and response. Paul Standish is thanked for his contribution to the revision of the present text and for helpful editorial suggestions.

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