

**school experiences:
an attempt to find a pedagogical voice**

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introduction

How do we speak about education today? Perhaps the question itself is not framed adequate since we increasingly tend to speak about learning instead of education. How then do we speak about learning? It is referred to as a process, and hence approached in terms of having a beginning and having an end. The end is commonly framed in terms of knowledge, skills, attitude or competences. The process itself is regarded as a force of transformation, or increasingly also as a construction or production process. Learning then is often regarded as a *process of change*, and depending on the approach the change process is differently conceptualized. From a psychological point of view learning processes are essential development or growth processes. From the economic perspective of human capital theory learning is about accumulation of capital. From a sociological point of view learning is about habituation, reproduction, appropriation or acquisition processes which are functional for establishing or changing (existing) orders. From a biological or neuroscience point of view learning is about processing information and about adaptation, connecting and associating. Education or school are than the organizational or institutional arrangements to make these learning processes possible (to stimulate, foster, elicit or facilitate them). One could say that in these approaches education and learning itself is always approached from an *external* perspective, it is functionalized or instrumentalized implying in some way or another learning in itself to be something 'natural' which can be conceived without taking 'artificial' schooling into account. Moreover, from these external perspectives schooling is increasingly criticized as an inefficient and non-functional institutional arrangement.

Philosophy of education or educational theory often criticize the psychological, economical, sociological or biological perspectives on education and learning. But it is striking to notice that they too mostly stick to an external, functionalizing or instrumentalizing perspective. In this contribution we want to address this omnipresent perspective of philosophy of education showing, on the one hand, how it repeats in fact the way in which master thinkers in philosophy and social and political theory tend to treat and actually to tame education and learning and we attempt, on the other hand, to offer a different *internal* pedagogical perspective that approaches education by relating learning explicitly to 'artificial' schooling. Or stated differently, we want to attempt to speak pedagogically about what is at stake in school learning. Instead of narrating about the (good, bad, great, sad) experiences of learning at school, this pedagogical language seeks to give voice to the experience while school learning.

Our contribution is structured in five parts. We will start (1) with a typical recent case of a master thinker that is explicitly dealing with 'change' and refers thereby to learning: Peter Sloterdijk. We will then (2) further distinguish between various kinds of philosophy and (social/political) theory according to the 'metaphor' (or example) they mobilize to conceive of the meaning of learning and we will indicate how this always comes down to an instrumentalization or marginalization of education. We will then (3)

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indicate how philosophy of education itself runs the same risk of instrumentalizing and marginalizing education and naturalizing learning. Taking distance from this we want (4) to point to the importance of the artificial milieu of the school in order to present a pedagogical voice that proposes to think about learning as crucially and intrinsically a school experience. In the conclusion (5) we suggest some reasons why philosophers (including philosophers of education) often (like to or tend to) forget that they too went to school.

1. a case to start: peter sloterdijk's treatment of education

If education is about change, how can we think of this change that is involved in education. We could take as a point of departure Peter Sloterdijk's recent work. Sloterdijk refers to Rilke's commandment that emerges from out of the stone torso 'you must change your life' in his book with the same title (SLOTERDIJK, 2014a). In this book, which clearly echoes the work of Nietzsche, Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault on the art of existence and practices or technologies of the self, Sloterdijk writes a history of the often forgotten techniques and ideas about how and why to change one's life. Clearly, in his book he addresses also education, and particularly modern school education, as the time and space where 'life change' is being organized, but he immediately seems to understand and disqualify these 'change practices' as being institutionalized, normalized or state governed. He fails to acknowledge the proper educational operations that are involved in these practices. As such it reveals that his concern and interest is not in the first place educational, but foremost related to ethics and aesthetics, and hence judging educational change and school education with standards of ethics and aesthetics.

In his book *Die schrecklichen Kinder der Neuzeit*, published in 2014, the focus is not on individual change but on intergenerational change, and how, gradually the preoccupation with a disconnection from tradition – parents, common culture, norms and values – has become the leitmotif of modernity (SLOTERDIJK, 2014b). He traces back the roots of modernity to Greek Antiquity but also to early Christianity where, for instance, the focus is not so much on the family and the figure of the obedient son or daughter, but on the figures of those who liberate themselves from family life – and tradition as a whole – in order to dedicate their lives to a future that is not just the continuation of a given past. Jesus, or the figure of Jesus, is according to Sloterdijk clearly an embodiment of this anti-genealogical movement. It is not the logic of the heir or the inheritor, but the logic of the bastard. Although the roman catholic church later on clearly tames this logic, here lies, according to Sloterdijk, one of the origins of the modern free individual and currently, perhaps, the figure of the entrepreneur. For these figures genealogy, tradition, generational transmission and passed norms and values refer to something that one has to transgress, or appears at least not as something that could give meaning and orientation to one's life and the future of society. These figures are, so to speak, change agents. While before modernity only a few had the occasion or courage to act as 'bastard' while disconnecting themselves from their homes, families and communities, being a change agent has become, according to Sloterdijk, a common mode of existence for many afterwards.

We will not go into detail regarding the pessimistic – or perhaps, realistic – conclusions of his book, but we want to draw attention to how Sloterdijk approaches the issue of change from a particular perspective. While one could argue that what he describes – the interruption of history, the idea of leaving one's home or the movement of distancing oneself from one's parents as offering an orientation from past to future – is actually what education precisely is about, he rarely addresses education as such. He focuses on culture, politics and religion instead, with one exception, however. In the introduction of his book he shortly and rather enigmatically refers to "learning", as the

"most neglected notion of current times." He seems to suggest that we should consider the notion of learning much more carefully today, even cherish and celebrate it, and – at least that is our interpretation – to hope that it is 'learning' that somehow will save us from the postmodern condition where we no longer trust the past (as in pre-modern times) but also do no longer believe the futurist optimism of modernity. However, these are just 3 or 4 sentences in a 400 pages book. Although his main concern, thus, is not about education he seems to expect everything from it. Suddenly, an educational vocabulary, while absent throughout the book, turns out to be required to lead us out the dark ages of postmodernism.

2. 'social learning', 'enfance', 'teaching' and 'game' philosophers

We take both recent books of Sloterdijk just as an example to show how often philosophers and social, political or cultural theorists discuss the issue of change, transformation and generations, while not really addressing in detail education, or at least, not explicitly trying to understand what kind of change is typical to education and learning. At the same time, educational vocabulary does play a role in their work; despite often written as marginal comments equally all hopes are invested in it.

Habermas (1981), for instance, is another case. In his social and political theory he seeks to understand social and political change and transformation, yet at the same time he has to come up with notions such as cognitive capacities and societal learning processes in order to 'explain' shifts from one world view to another. His point of view is sociological and political, but he has to draw on notions from the field of education to save or to finalize his sociological and political project. Similar to Latour (2004) who introduces the notion 'learning curve' in order to explain how a gradual change from one social constitution towards another comes about, without this change being imposed from outside (politics or policy) or from inside (morality and ethics). For Sloterdijk, but also for Latour and Habermas, education and learning seem to be notions that indicate a process of change, but always in one way or another these notions are postulated as needed to save or close their ethical, political or social intellectual project, that is, to explain how ethical, political or social changes come about. As such, educational change and the educational meaning of change is either being ignored or ridiculed. And if it is conceptualized, in one way or another, education is narrowed to a form of socialization (habituation, acquisition) or – in progressive circles – an attempt to counter-socialization. Ultimately, the social and cultural theories of these (social) learning-philosophers are theories about grown-ups, about how adults need learning but without becoming a child.

Along these lines it is perhaps also possible to distinguish such learning-philosophers from some *enfance/infancy-philosophers*, some *'teaching'-philosophers* and some *'game'-philosophers*. With the *enfance/infancy-philosophers* we want to refer to authors such as Jean-François Lyotard and Giorgio Agamben, and perhaps even Hannah Arendt. Lyotard (1988) specifically draws on the notion of 'enfance' or 'infantia' in order to address issues that are to be located beyond language or beyond the capitalist system, but that nevertheless play a key role or 'haunt' the system. Using the image of childhood – at least as *in-fantia* i.e. not-speaking – his ambition is to conceptualize conditions and events that do not (yet) belong to our common discourses and languages and, hence, is a kind of childhood that continues to play a role in adulthood. He refers to it as an initial lack, an absence of determination that is (can) never (become) filled up, and continues to take hostage of adulthood. For that, he draws on the one hand on Freud's ideas about the structure of the trauma and affect (always having difficulties to find an expression in language) and on the other hand on Arendt's concept of natality or the capacity to begin. In a similar way, Agamben (1982) introduces the 'enfance/infancy' or 'infantia' concept to

think about a condition of potentiality that is not yet actualized, and thus about the experience of being able to speak as such. More precisely, it is – according to Agamben – the experience of language itself as the experience of man being an animal that has language, being able to speak and hence also being able not to speak or to be silent. Without going into detail, and hence doing injustice to the complexities of the work of these authors, we do think their references to education and childhood often become *images* or *metaphors* to think about what is at stake in adult life. For them, education and learning is at least not the key concern. And if their thoughts are translated to (philosophy of) education itself, it is perhaps not a surprise that education runs the risk of being framed in therapeutic or ethical terms. The risk is a kind of personalization by putting in one way or another a dialogical or analytical relation between persons, that is the person of the teacher and the person of the pupil, central stage. The pedagogical key issue is not turned into an issue of socialisation or counter-socialisation, but becomes the act of ‘doing justice’ (to someone, or even to *enfance/infancy* itself) in terms of ‘opening up futures’ as ‘capacities to act and speak’.

In a different way, for sure, we can relate also some *teaching-philosophers* to this ethical framing of education. Although we also cannot render it in its complexity, we could point here for example to Levinas’ use of the *teaching* metaphor to describe the way the ethical demand is inscribed before the subject comes to itself (LEVINAS, 1998). It is a description which in the context of philosophy of education is often turned around so to say, to understand teaching as quasi identical with an ethical relation. An ethical framing of education which is very often related to an understanding of ethics in terms of being summoned before the ‘face of the other’ as the ‘Law’ beyond any law, etc. Perhaps another version of this ethical teaching philosophy is the work of Judith Butler (2005) on the decisive role of an act of interpellation in the constitution of subjectivity. In line with this, there is the interpretation of the act of teaching as working according to the logic of interpellation and focusing on the relational and performative dimension of the child’s subjectivity.

Furthermore, such *enfance/infancy-philosophers* and *teaching-philosophers*, perhaps, should be distinguished from *game-philosophers*. Again without claiming to make a final statement about the complexity of his work, we could think of Wittgenstein (1965), with his concept of language game being the most telling one. Probably here, the focus and concern is already much more on the practice of education, although the experience of education itself and the specificity of educational and learning events and relations, is much less outspoken. Education along these lines is not a matter of socialization or capacity to act, but a matter of initiation.

While all these philosophies and theories acknowledge that childhood and change through education is important and while they are postulating the existence of conditions of childhood and childish conditions, education and childhood is at once ‘instrumentalized’, be it as a temporary condition, a necessary evil, a logical factor in view of ethical, political or social change, or be it as an image or practice to conceptualize what is difficult to conceptualize in adult life. From the perspective of such adult or grown-up philosophies, and thinking along these instrumental lines, education and learning is often marginalized, ridiculed or – when acknowledged – celebrated as a unique case, example or metaphor.

3. the risk of/for philosophy of education

The risk of/for philosophy of education and educational theory is to be trapped in the same movement of instrumentalizing or even marginalizing education and naturalizing learning. The risk is that education and learning are considered to be

foremost a field of application for theories developed elsewhere and for other purposes, or to be a field of practice with a function or meaning that is only to be derived from other, non-educational practices. This risk is real not so much because educational theory and philosophy would draw on (developmental) psychology, economy (and human capital theory), biology or neurosciences. Explicitly taking distance from these disciplines is (still) to a large part central to its own self-understanding and self-definition. The risk is real precisely because philosophy of education and theory often tend to rely on master thinkers (including philosophers) such as Habermas, Wittgenstein, Latour, Levinas, Lyotard, Agamben, Rorty, Arendt, etc. While being often engaged in great efforts to disentangle the complexities of the work of these thinkers, philosophy of education equally often (implicitly or explicitly) turns education and learning into a field of application, if education and learning as well as a genuine educational concern is not marginalized completely by a political, social or ethical concern.

The ‘imperative to change’ – as put forward by Sloterdijk (2014a) – , but the discourse about change more generally, to which philosophies and theories of education are attracted time and again, is indeed often leading towards an ethically, politically, socially, psychologically or economically ‘colonized’ understanding of education. It is colonizing since the ‘you *must* change your life’ or ‘we *want* to change our – including your or their – life’ is always involved, and always includes a kind of judgment as its starting point. The change is motivated by a judgement or evaluation 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 or desirable. Change through learning becomes a matter of need or a necessity. Learning is motivated by an obligation or call (moral, ethical) or by new regulations or political responsibilities (political), it becomes a matter of socialization (and following the need for social reproduction), a matter of investment in human capital (and follow the need for capital accumulation and rates on return), or a matter of cognitive and affective development and growth (according to certain norms, stages and brain functions). This is change that is always motivated by an aim (a projected future or outcome: *we/you/they* want or have to get somewhere) or/and by a lack (*we/you/they* miss or need something).

In order now to develop a pedagogical (internal) voice or to give voice to pedagogical change, we suggest to reclaim the old distinction between initiation/socialization/development on the one hand and education on the other hand. In order to clarify why and how to make this distinction, let us make a short detour passing the meanwhile influential (but in fact equally old and traditional) distinction between qualification, socialization and subjectification (e.g. Biesta, Hasslöf, Ruitenberg). For Biesta (2009), for instance, these are three *functions* or *roles* of education, and often all three of them are playing a role. Clearly, Biesta wants to focus on the role of subjectification – and becoming a person, coming into presence by finding a place in the world not by inserting into existing orders but by interrupting or disturbing them –, against the often dominant roles of socialization and qualification. The critical question, however, is whether these are three roles or functions to be distinguished when looking at education indeed from a *pedagogical/educational* perspective. We think that this is not the case, and that Biesta’s rephrasing of an old distinction is the result of combining three different approaches which are all three external to education. It seems as if the qualification function pops up when looking at education from an economic perspective, while socialization (and the process of integration in social norms and values) is the key term when looking through sociological lenses. Subjectification, then, is what appears when approaching education either politically (in line with a *particular* reading of Rancière: becoming someone which is at the same time challenging the existing social order in

terms of equality) or ethically (in line with certain interpretation of Levinas: becoming someone which is always motivated by a call from the other in terms of doing justice). We want to argue that qualification, socialization and subjectification represent three versions of taming education; an ethical-personalising or political-equalizing taming of education that imposes ethical or political standards on change (subjectification), an economical one that imposes an exchange value or investment calculus (qualification) and a sociological one that tames educational change by imposing the rules of social and cultural reproduction – or in a progressive version – the rules of social renewal and change (socialization). Or to put it differently, the distinction between qualification, socialization and subjectification misses a *pedagogical/educational* perspective. Ultimately it functionalizes or instrumentalizes education and learning, it tames learning by imposing external aims or functions. In the next sections, we suggest a different, pedagogical perspective and attempt to indicate that from such a perspective education is about a learning (happening) without destination or inclination, it is about a being-in-the-middle which is always artificial.

4. artificial pedagogic forms

Our pedagogical perspective is not focusing on learning and education by revealing its true role or function, nor is it an attempt to reveal the true nature of learning by liberating it from its historical organizations. Our pedagogical perspective takes a somehow unusual point of departure; it wants to give a voice to the learning experience as being the experience of being-in-the-middle by focusing on the always artificial arrangements (called ‘school’ or ‘university’) that make this experience possible. In other words, we want to address the (radical) operations of what we call pedagogic forms and that (always artificially) allow learning and education to happen.

The pedagogical operations (to realize being-in-the middle) can be summarized as follows (see also MASSCHELEIN; SIMONS, 2014). (1) Operations to turn someone into a ‘student’ or ‘pupil’, i.e. suspending the ties of whatever family or state or any ‘past/existing community’ (this is to a certain extent referring to Sloterdijk’s bastard). It implies making that one can become part of any family/community-to-come. (2) Operations of suspension of the usual order of things, and hence putting their common usage and functions temporarily out of effect. Certain things (e.g. books, tools, words ...) can become study object, one can start to exercise with these things, precisely because their normal usage is put between brackets. (3) Operations of putting some-thing on the table (profanation) and making ‘free time’, i.e. the materialization or spatialization of *scholè*. In ancient Greece *scholè* signified the flight of undergoing from the determination of doing. It is about un-finishing, undoing the appropriation and destination of time, and as such a catalyst of beginnings. School in this sense puts someone in a position to begin. (4) Operations of making attentive, that is, forming attention relying on ‘pedagogic love’ for both certain things and the students. This is not just an matter of attitude or relation, but about using techniques and certain types of discipline to draw attention to something. Discipline, however, not as a moral or political category but as a practice of enabling.

Pedagogic forms refer, than, to associations of people and things arranged as a way to deal with, pay attention to, take care of some-thing – to get and be in its company – in which this care entails structurally an exposition since it is confronted with pupils, students. It is crucial to stress at this point that pedagogic forms are not in need of a projected political utopia or a normative ideal of the educated person (for which they would be functional), but are *in themselves* (in the actual and particular way they are gathering people and things) materializations of a utopian belief: *everybody can learn everything*. One could say that this is why the decision to bring children to ‘school’ is in

itself political, and not in need of an external/extra ideal or a projected political function. What pedagogic forms do, is enabling the ‘everybody can’ on the one hand, and the ‘everything’ on the other hand. In other words, there is no such thing as an utopian school. School learning itself embodies the utopian idea that *everybody* can learn *everything*. What the school as pedagogic form does is the double movement of bringing someone into a position of being able (and hence, turning someone into a pupil or student) which is at the same time an exposure to something outside (and hence, an act of presenting and exposing the world). Drawing on Michel Serres (1997), this double movement could be captured in the notion ‘ex-position’, and the strong experience of someone who learns to swim being in a condition where she is not yet able to swim, however, is no longer constantly looking for a safe haven or ground under his/her feet. It is a condition or experience ‘in between’ or ‘in the middle’, that is, the condition where one has left one’s safe home, lifeworld or house, and everything is (still) possible when confronted with the world outside. Our thesis is that this condition and this experience are an educational condition and experience, and are not to be confused by an ethical, psychological or political one. Moreover, our thesis is that this condition of exposition is what is enabled or prepared through specific, always artificial, pedagogic forms. It is what is at stake in ‘school’ learning, and what deserves to have a voice and is in need of a pedagogical language.

Indeed, instead of narrating about the (good, bad, great, sad) experiences of learning at school, a pedagogical language seeks to give voice to the experience while school learning. Not the experience of a condition where someone is not (yet) being able to, for instance, write or count. But also not the experience of (already) being able to write or count. School experience is what is experienced at the moment that writing or counting becomes a possibility; the experience of learning before actually being able to write or count, yet not just the experience of (simply) not being able to write or count. Think about the little child who learns to write. Before being able to write, the child experiences (probably) her not being able, but she doesn’t experience learning. When being able to write, perhaps she remembers herself learning, but she doesn’t experience learning itself. The learning experience is the experience at the moment that the ability to write (and hence, not to write) is experienced as such. School experiences refer to the experience of being-in-the-middle (of things), the experience of an interrupted course of life where new courses become possible, the experience of knowledge and ability after making a mistake. Or after being forced or invited to cross the river, “to split off from the so-called natural direction” (SERRES, 1997, p.8).

We want to stress again that from a pedagogical perspective ‘school’, including the university as a particular school, is not an institution or a kind of organizational shell but the always artificial arrangement of time, space and matter you have to go to for these experiences. As a consequence, the terms ‘school’ and ‘university’ are not used (as is very often the case) for so-called normalizing institutions or machineries of reproduction in the hands of the cultural or economic elites. There is reproduction and normalizing, of course, but then the school or university does not (or does no longer) operate as a pedagogic form.

The question, of course, is what is the role or aim of the school and university? At this point, we want to introduce the notions preparation and practice. The school is not about making students and pupils best performers – although that is often asked from schools and universities. The school is about offering young people the time and space to bring themselves ‘in shape’, to work on their (intellectual, physical...) ‘condition’, and of course, one may hope that this preparation and this shape or condition results in top performances or unique contributions, but making that possible is outside the school’s or university’s field of influence. This focus on preparation and practice, perhaps helps to

understand that schools and universities are also always the places where the coming generation actually appears as a new generation, and hence, where society can be renewed. Schools and universities, nor society can have control about this renewal or about how the coming generation actually uses its preparation and study. This seems to be typical to pedagogic change or renewal, and this kind of change is always the risk of a society that decides to organize or allows the pedagogic forms of schools and universities. These societies always give their future (and also the continuation of their past) out of hands or, formulated in another way, entrust pedagogical change to the coming generation (who might become a new generation). Such societies do not 'choose' for initiation or socialisation, but for school education. Or to be more precise: it is with school education that a society becomes in a particular way aware of itself which means that it is turned into a matter of concern. Probably this explains why there are so many attempts – both within schools and universities and within society – to tame schools and universities, that is, to give pedagogical change a specific direction, and hence, to *impose* psychological, ethical, political or social norms. Deciding for school education implies accepting that what is valued by a society (and its adults) can be fundamentally questioned and challenged, being put on the table. The school opposes all naturalising and sacralising claims, and all movements of conservatism and restauration associated with these claims. It is in that sense that it is indeed affecting society and as we stated before, so to say, intrinsically 'political'.

5. in conclusion: a pedagogical voice as a voice from the middle

We started with the tendency among philosophers and social theorists to instrumentalize education and learning, and hence, move education and learning to the margins of their adult theories and grown-up philosophies. We want to give voice to what is in the middle, and what – from the perspectives of these grown-ups – are probably only murmurs in the margins. As conclusion, it is perhaps worth reflecting on why education and educational theory or philosophy is often put aside, treated as marginal or ridiculed. We think (but are not sure) that it was Bernard Stiegler who once made the remark that philosophers often forget that they as well went to school, and they are not happy to be reminded about it. But why not? Why this forgetting, or marginalization and ridiculing? Before delving further into this, it is helpful to recall other manifestations of what is at least an ambivalent relation to (one's) education.

It is striking to notice that people – especially at moments when they celebrate their own intellectual or other achievements – are not happy to be reminded about their dependencies on schools or universities for what they have achieved. It seems as if one's educational past may cast a shadow on one's acquired state of adulthood, and the freedom and liberation that we associate with that state. And if we do recall the role of schools or universities and of studying and exercising in who we have become and in what we are able to today, we either stress that we came that far despite the school or the university (and reaffirming our independency) or we tell the stories of those rare, enlightened teachers or professors that, despite the normalizing school or university apparatus, were able to show us the real world and our freedom as it truly is (and hence, these grateful stories about inspiring teachers or professors are often also only about reaffirming one's present state of independency).

Another observation, related to the previous one, is that those who are working in or on education always have a kind of marginal position (one that in a way is disturbing the social order). Those who choose to become a teacher, for example, often in fact not choose to put their knowledge and skills at the service of productive and economic life, but at the service of the coming generation. It is a position in between, that is, in between the

family and society, the young generation and adult society, and hence, a position that is difficult to define and that remains ambiguous. There are tendencies of course, over and over again, to turn teaching into a regular job or even profession. But perhaps, because teaching always implies being out-of-position – somehow similar to the position of artists – these tendencies often fail, and have to fail, if education is about putting the world at the distance in order to study it. In that regard, we should perhaps recall the figure of the *pedagogus* – where our notion of pedagogue comes from. Often, this figure was a slave, but a slave with privileges for he was allowed to bring the children to school. In that sense, he was the liberated slave, that literally brought young people to free time, that is, to study and exercise. From the perspective of society and adult economic life, the position of teachers, and all those who are concerned with education (thus also educational researchers), are living a life in the margins. As marginal figures they are nonproductive, and hence, regarded as not really important. At the same time they are considered to be instrumental or functional for real life and the real productive world (that wants to reproduce itself). But we could also look at these roles and positions as exactly liberated and liberating, and hence, they are often also envied in that regard.

The question we should further explore is, however, the reasons for the ambivalence, if not straightforward ridiculing or marginalizing. A first reason could be: if education in the strong sense is indeed about changing oneself, and hence, always also becoming someone else, it is very difficult to remember who one was before (implying also that there is no stable 'one' that would experience the change). Or to put this in another way: it is always from the perspective of who one has become that one returns on one's past. There is a kind of irreversibility at stake, and hence, the educational experience and process itself is difficult to remember. Probably, when doing an effort, one could imagine who one was before one learned to write or read, and one could imagine who one was before reading and studying a particular subject, work or author. But that is always a projection of a state of not-knowing or not-being-able based on what is experienced today as knowing or being able. Probably there is this tendency to forget, exactly because it is just hard to remember one's learning in the strict sense. One could say that learning in this sense comes close to the structure of the trauma and the logic of the unconscious. But there is a fundamental difference; it is not about painful remembering but about joyful forgetting, and it probably does not need analysis and therapy, but celebration and gratefulness.

The second, possible reason is that schools always organize a 'fundamental disorder'; arranging a middle without direction and accepting that 'minors' and 'new ones' can really question and challenge 'adults' and 'natives'. The deep ambiguity of societies that 'decide' to have schools is related, one could say, to the fact that this is a generous act on the one hand. But that the act is accompanied by a strong fear (and non-acceptance) that what is actually valued and taken for granted becomes, indeed, actually questioned or objected by minors or 'immature', even without reasons or arguments. Something which is maybe for philosophers (or a least many of them) even more difficult to deal with. In sum, the ridiculing, marginalization and instrumentalisation of the school would be the result of a deep fear for the coming generation actually becoming a new generation.

More reasons are to be formulated, and some of them to be found in the famous text of Adorno (1971) about the 'taboos' of being a teacher. But in conclusion we would like to return to the instrumentalisation and marginalization that is central to most if not all philosophy and educational theory. If this is the case indeed, perhaps we should really take the challenge to reconsider a narrative that often is used to articulate what education is about: the allegory of the cave, and the story about the illuminated philosopher that wants to bring the caged or imprisoned people to light. Isn't this exactly a philosophical story

about education, about how the philosopher-teacher has to liberate the chained people, and shows that what they hold for the truth are merely shadows and representations? The story of the cave is a celebration of the status ethos of the philosopher – or at least, of a particular philosopher. It is about philosophy, a particular philosophical stance, but it is not about education. Perhaps we need an educational/pedagogical story for the experience of learning. It is a story about how to lead people into a cave, that is, into a school or university, and hence, about how to chain people gently in order to give them time and space to think, to study but also to present them the world and ask for its regard.

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