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Editors

Educational Research:

Networks and Technologies

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INTRODUCTION

PAUL SMEYERS AND MARC DEPAEPE

THE FRAMEWORK OF THE COLLABORATIVE PROJECT

This is the third book that resulted from the close collaboration within the Research Community 'Philosophy and History of the Discipline of Education: Evaluation and Evolution of the Criteria for Educational Research', established by the Research Foundation Flanders, Belgium (Fonds voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek – Vlaanderen).[1] From the beginning, the aim of the network has been to combine research concerning the history and nature of the discipline with the science of education. Clarification, evaluation and justification of the different modes and paradigms of educational research are thus taken into account. The academics involved in this network share the belief that there is a place within the discipline of education for so-called foundationalist approaches. This is not, however, to answer a need for a (new) foundation, but to systematically study a particular area from a discipline-oriented stance. The essays, published in 2003 under the title *Beyond Empiricism: On Criteria for Educational Research* (Smeyers and Depaepe, 2003), bear witness to the belief that educational theory cannot help but go beyond empirical educational research to provide a real understanding of education as a human practice. Educational research is discussed respectively as a social discourse, as a discursive practice, in relation to epistemological issues and in the light of questions of ethics.

During the meeting in 2004 it was felt that even more exciting work could possibly be produced if the efforts were combined and directed towards a particular goal. This was also a conclusion that emerged from the development of the philosophy of (social) science itself. It was decided that, in future meetings, we ought to concern ourselves with specific educational problems in particular areas. Moreover, we felt that it was important to consider what can be done in a particular social or scientific practice – clearly we should accept that science too is a cultural practice. A theme was chosen for the 2005 meeting. We started from the general feeling that while a particular empirical conception of statistical and quantitative research methods is supposed to identify what works in school, it may in fact work against school improvement and the quality of education. The 'picture' that holds one captive nowadays is one of output, of quality indicators, which is to some extent useful, but it obliterates other dimensions, which were and are seen by many as belonging at the heart of education. In the chapters published in the 2006 book (Smeyers and Depaepe, *Educational Research: Why 'What Works' Doesn't Work*) the focus is on an understanding

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of how particular elements clearly worked in the past. Then the question is raised over whether something similar may be said concerning what we experience regarding what works now. Evidently, in both historical contexts, attention is focused on factors that are to be held responsible for the fact that something did not work. This leads to observations, which go beyond a strictly means–end schema, and prompts us to take into account certain conditions or constraints, which operate on, and are highly significant to, our understanding of what is going on. Finally, what is possibly changing and what we need to do in the field of education (be it practice, theory or research) are highlighted. This refers to what surpasses the rather simple cause-and-effect rhetoric and thus transgresses the picture of performativity that keeps much of the talk about education captive. The collection was aimed primarily at educational research itself, in its many manifestations and the issues were approached from a historical and philosophical stance.

The theme of the 2006 conference was 'Educational Research/Networks and Technologies'. Papers relating to this theme are brought together in this collection. The research community focuses on changing aspects of educational research and on the idea of networks, as well as on the development of particular technologies which have made their mark on contemporary education. This is not to say that there were no technologies in place in the past; neither is it claimed that education is the only sphere in which technologies have an overall impact. But it is argued by many authors that ICT and networks make an important impact on how we understand contemporary education. Such authors show how technological developments determine (to some extent) the content of educational research and how such developments shape collaborative processes in this area.

NOTES

[1] For a list of the centres involved in this network see Smeyers & Depaepe, 2006, p. 16. The "Notes on Contributors" in that book and at the end of this volume specify further the research interests of the participating colleagues. A detailed description of the aims that this *Research Community* has set itself is given in Smeyers & Depaepe, 2003, pp. 9-16 and in Smeyers & Depaepe, 2006, pp. 1-10.

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CHAPTER ONE

PAUL SMEYERS AND MARC DEPAEPE

NETWORKS AND TECHNOLOGIES: ON THE CONTINUITY AND CHANGE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND PRACTICE

1. CONCEPTS AND THEIR HISTORY

Concepts have their own history, and this is no less true for educational research. A detailed examination of the volumes published over a number of years of scholarly (but even of popular) journals dealing with education or child rearing makes it clear that the language used in these publications reflects a certain set of conventions, styles and modes. Concepts become fashionable in a particular period or take on new meanings as a result of linguistic change. Among other contexts, in the German cultural tradition, such a historical consciousness has led to the development of autonomous disciplines such as the History of Concepts, which may offer interesting perspectives for educational science (see Bödeker, 2006).

Evidently, the development of a discipline's conceptual apparatus is to a large extent conditional upon the unfolding of the material culture. Inventions and technological (r)evolutions colour and discolour the metaphors used in educational discourse (see Lawn and Grosvenor, 2005). This undoubtedly applies to the debate surrounding information and communication technology (ICT), which has come to function as the model for sky-high expectations within the context of educational innovation. It goes without saying that this is not unexpected within a societal climate characterized by globalization, standardization, homogenization of the culture, secularization and privatization. Is ICT more than just another instrument in service of what has been labelled the growing 'educationalization' of society or does it have something in store along the lines of Illich's deschooling society? Moreover, the development of ICTs coincides with a particular 'technological' concept of learning and instruction and with its corollary stance concerning educational research to which even less attention has been paid.

In this sense, it comes as no surprise that a research community, which has made itself known in the recent past as a think tank for philosophy and history of educational science, finds itself discussing technology. Yet the rhetoric of so-called technological revolution, which has been announced with a lot of fuss, demands some

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form of critical investigation. Where else, except from these discipline-oriented stances, is one likely to expect such a fundamental discussion in the educational area?

One misunderstanding can already be eliminated. Many advocates of 'new techniques' will find this kind of approach implicitly threatening. After all, one often assumes that philosophers and historians, given their preference for interpretative and contextualizing research, are fundamentally 'against' such innovations. But philosophy and history of education are nonetheless not simply absorbed with 'moral' judgements about what is right or wrong in our society. Attempts to gain insight into the complexity of the space of acting in which educationalists (practitioners such as teachers and parents, but also theoreticians) have to operate is at the heart of these disciplines. Philosophy and history of education aim to create a critical distance vis-à-vis the commonplaces, the platitudes and the stereotypes that are dominant in this arena. Armed with these insights (whilst keeping a distance) it may be possible, in the context of the aforementioned stances, to deal with technology in a more considered manner. Just to give one example, the history of ideas referred to above can certainly profit from the 'technological' possibilities that are now available. As an increasing number of journals are published electronically, it is much easier to map with a simple search operation the use of a word or concept within a particular 'source' in order to produce a kind of diachronic overview. Mutatis mutandis, this can also be argued for the electronic opening up of particular history of education source material (see Friedrich, 1994). Such analyses can in any case help to trace and visualize certain trends in the terminology that is used. At the same time, they can signal continuities and discontinuities in terms of use and meaning.

With regard to the latter, besides raw empirical material concerning the 'text' (whether or not it is arranged in graphs and tables), an interpretation of the context always remains, and it is on this that the present collection focuses. Technologies in the area of education and child rearing are, after all, as old as the hills and do not necessarily have to be narrowed down to those of an electronic or digital nature. Examples that one would not expect to see, which relate to educational patterns of action concerning the development of sexual relationships, and also the practice of punishment in schools, are given below.

In fact, the same thing can be said of the concept of 'network'. Indeed, where ICT is concerned, the terms 'network' and 'technology' are sometimes used interchangeably. According to a recent article about the networks in the history of education (Fuchs, 2007), the term network finds its roots in the nineteenth century as a metaphor for technical infrastructures that interconnected society and for informal relations at the micro-sociological level, such as kinship. Universities, chairs, conferences, journals and other kinds of professional literature have traditionally developed knowledge networks. The historical backbone of this was certainly the institutionalization of the field together with the forming of social networks, which arose as the consequence of the arrival of new means of communication and transport (Hofstetter and Schneuwly, 2004). Yet it would be a mistake to think that none of this was around in pre-modernist societies. Arguments concerning Erasmus, which feature in one of the chapters of this book, may be seen as a paradigmatic case.

Yet, at least on first inspection, it seems that something 'new' has happened with 'networks' in the digital age. Networks are interpreted in relation to a set of key principles including communication, transparency, knowledge, innovation, regulation, accountability, ownership, citizenship and power. And it is argued that the dynamic of information is one of openness. For many thinkers, network theory is accompanied by a holistic and relational promise. It therefore poses a challenge to all forms of epistemological atomism focused on the individual as the basic unit of analysis, including of course rational choice theory. But does it really offer a coherent and convincing theoretical foundation for itself? Evidently, we have entered an age in which the material conditions for the formation, circulation and utilization of knowledge and learning feel the impact of the rise of both information networks and a media-based economy. This signals changes in the production and consumption of symbolic goods, and transformations in their contexts of use. For example, where learning is concerned, the digitalization of learning systems increases the speed, circulation and exchange of knowledge, highlighting the importance of information utility and digital literacy. Thus, an understanding of information and networks of knowledge and learning is essential.

In the mean time, it has generally been accepted that philosophical and historical research need not follow the patterns of technological thinking and acting (see Depaepe and Smeyers, 2007). On the contrary, by dint of their critical distance, they disturb the current, dominant discourse of efficiency and usefulness in which the analysing of networks as a 'research method' plays more and more an important role (see Rehrl and Gruber, 2007). Philosophical and historical researches have probably earned their unpopular position in the context of the 'business of science' due to the criticisms they have so frequently put forth. By deliberately leaving room for the expressiveness of the human mind, this collection of papers is somewhat, and inevitably, characterized by a certain casualness. It could be seen as a mark of postmodern irony that a number of the chapters published in previous collections by this group could possibly have found a place here as well (or the other way round, that a number of the chapters published here could have found their place in previous books), but as editors we have to take into account the historical developmental lines which everyone experiences. However, to conclude on this basis that a rationale is lacking here is certainly a bridge too far. Our arrangement of the material coincides more or less with the degree of abstraction. Starting from an examination of particular examples of networks (such as the World Wide Web and Wikepedia), the chapters probe the deeper scientific and educational relevance of technologies. Towards the end of the book some more detailed examples of particular technologies relevant for education are discussed.

2. ICT AND NETWORKS: KNOWLEDGE, UNDERSTANDING AND COLLABORATION

This volume starts with four chapters which discuss the way in which knowledge and understanding have undergone changes due to recent developments in ICT.

Bridges and Watts consider the extent to which the World Wide Web contributes to, and provides, the conditions under which knowledge and understanding may be effectively developed. Drawing on the long tradition of liberal democratic political thought of writers from Plato and Aristotle to Popper, Quine and Habermas, they address four social processes required for the development of knowledge and understanding as well as their socio/ethical conditions: (1) sharing or pooling of different information, understanding and perspectives; (2) conjecture, imagining and the development of interrogative frameworks; (3) critique, refutation and 'purification'; and (4) the mutual adjustment (perhaps negotiation) of opinion. They describe these processes and conditions and then ask to what extent the Web fulfils their requirements. Noting the contemporary and privileged limitations of the Web's success, they then turn to a consideration of the distinction between the 'understandings' of contributors to this vast repository and the 'knowledge' – in the honorific sense of belief or opinion which (on a conventional epistemological analysis) is true and for which there are good grounds – it stores. This distinction is illustrated through a series of web-based contributions that have commanded attention. Bridges and Watts argue that if the Web appears to render concrete the conditions that Habermas was looking for in his 'ideal speech community', it also exhibits some of the features, which Blake noted might render such an ideal 'unworthy of even partial emulation'. They conclude that it is, perhaps, too early to assess whether the 'network society' and its supporting technologies constitute a thoroughly radical innovation in social practice on a scale which disrupts earlier epistemological assumptions. However, they are ready to acknowledge that the possibility remains open.

Peters and Araya concentrate on the concept of 'network' itself. They highlight some of its key functions including the network's ability to unite some communities and practices (while excluding others) and to create entirely new social, political and economic practices. Starting from Castells, they argue that a more complex understanding of information and communication systems is necessary to fully appreciate the potential of networks. Unlike the tangible assets associated with the industrial economy, the knowledge economy is largely understood in terms of informational goods: research, creativity, design, innovation, administration and learning. Underlying all of these new forces of production is the information network itself. It is argued that if it is true that learning and information are the vital elements in a new political economy that links space, knowledge and capital, an understanding of networks is therefore vital to any theory of information politics. Moreover, it is becoming obvious, when trying to understand structures of power within a network society, that networks offer tremendous potential for social, economic and political collaboration. Thus, attention is paid to collaborative production or peer-to-peer production representing a strong example of open systems in economic production. The characteristics of these are dealt with and illustrations are given from a number of contexts using various examples. It is concluded that in order for educational institutions to effectively serve the needs of the twenty-first century, they will have to be transformed within educational networks.

The chapter by *Burbules* explores the characteristics of online networks, not as a *medium*, but as *spaces* and *places* that are changing research practices and relations.

As new forms of research collaboration and knowledge development take advantage of the distinctive qualities of networked, virtual environments, changes also take place in the identities, identifications and interactions among researchers. People tend to think of the online networked environment as a *medium* – a path of point-to-point communication. However, to the extent that it is a medium or pathway, the online networked environment is not *neutral* – it affects the form of information and the communication that occur within it. As many have noted, online text-based communication demonstrates features of both writing and speech; it is written, of course, but it is often spontaneous and unedited, like speech. These factors can affect the forms and outputs of research collaboration in various ways: the style of writing, the degree of familiarity or unfamiliarity collaborators feel towards one another, the ways in which research groups deal with conflict and disagreement, etc. The picture becomes more complex as we examine this phenomenon further. Burbules argues that it is useful to think of the online environment as a *space*, a continuous location where people spend time, interact, and *do* things – for example, collaborate with others on a shared project. Calling the online environment a space captures the idea of movement and activity within it, the possibility of discovering meaningful connections between elements found there. However, it does not capture the distinctive ways in which people can make a space familiar, make it *their* space – make it a *place*. A place is socially or subjectively meaningful. It has an objective, locational dimension: people can look for a place, find it and move within it. But a *place* also *means* something important to a person or a group of people. Furthermore, it has an important temporal dimension, because places emerge, change and develop diachronically: a space may be a place at one point in time, but not earlier or later; or it may become a different kind of place. Thus, the idea is developed that research collaboration is not only a process of co-writing text, but is also a process of communication, community building and co-construction of knowledge. These sorts of factors, in turn, often shape the *kind* of collaboration that develops: which voices are dominant and which are marginalized, how disputes are resolved, whether the knowledge produced is viewed as shared or proprietary, etc. A couple of brief examples illustrate how a particular technology provides an opportunity to reflect upon and question some of those more conventional methods and practices, and the social relations they implicitly entail.

Lambeir and Ramaekers continue this discussion in radical fashion, asking how *new* recent ICT developments really are. After a brief presentation of the dominant understanding of electronic reading and writing, the authors discuss whether the changes that new technologies are said to initiate are as profound as is generally supposed. They argue that the changes seem to be first and foremost instrumental in nature, and that philosophically speaking these changes do not seem to bring much new, or run into substantive, criticism. However, they recognize that at some point quantitative differences can become qualitative ones. What eventually turns out to be not so new is the capacity to put existing practices at stake, or to push our understanding of things into previously unimagined regions. They go on to demonstrate the implications of these findings for educational research and educational researchers. They show how words can slow you down, how the concept of ‘attention’ and

'authorship' are affected and how 'blogs' enable researchers to spread new messages, which is an interesting alternative and complementary way of publishing ideas a researcher wishes to share with a larger public.

3. THE PRACTICE OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

The next group of chapters focuses on discussions surrounding the roles of the researcher and theoretician in the field of education. *Coessens and Van Bendegem* define the changes that have taken place in society: firstly, knowledge is turning into an economic commodity; secondly, identities are being destabilized; and finally, socialization is becoming a more complex and uncertain dynamic. Educational research reflects upon these changes and is subjected to them. The authors develop a meta-analysis of the role of the educational theorist in the information age and question the educational theorist's underlying values and operating principles by asking how he/she will cope with its underlying concepts and create constructive networks. They start by looking at the complexities of the knowledge society. They go on to stress the need for responsible and reflexive intellectuals, who actively partake in the debate concerning educational settings and technological networks. The dimensions of the actors, the object and the context are mapped along the lines of the institutional space, the space of commodification and the space of everyday experience. They argue that modernity has offered (and still offers) various ways in which the capacity for reflexivity and self-reflexive awareness can be put to work. Moreover, in accepting the lessons of modernity they argue that researchers should become meta-modern artists. They thus want us to merge 'engineery' dreams with the 'bricolage' (the coping with the heterogeneity and the flexibility, contingency and irony) of society nowadays, of knowledge and responsibility, of creating discursive networks and re-imagining education under conditions of globalization, flexibility and technoculture.

The next chapter scrutinizes another aspect of educational research, the invisible homogenization of that research. It begins with the observation that the 'Standards for reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications' does not include guidelines for reporting on other forms of scholarship (such as reviews of research, theoretical, conceptual or methodological essays; critiques of research traditions and practices; and scholarship more grounded in the humanities – history, philosophy, literary analysis, arts-based inquiry). Thus, the authors question the assumption that only empirical research is *real research*. Smeyers argues that ignoring non-empirical forms of research, or glibly paying lip service to the relevance of such research, carries the overtones of familiar juxtapositions such as those of fact and value, objective and subjective, research and philosophy, theory and practice, and moreover that it seems to rely on a particular concept of how language operates, i.e. a particular relationship between language and reality. This chapter begins by looking at the limits of research focusing on the 'particular' and then questions the so-called rapprochement between quantitative and qualitative empirical educational research (exemplified for instance in the mixed theory approach). After this, it moves on to look

at how Wittgenstein and Cavell consider questions surrounding the use of words. Here, particular attention is paid to the 'perspicuousness of the ordinary' and thus the chapter arrives at some reflections on what philosophy is focused on. A discussion of the reference to new 'criteria' for the use of certain concepts points to the narrative and how stories can be conceived, and thus not only to what words call for, but also to the voice of the other. This chapter argues that the dominant modes of empirical educational research cannot deliver the goods. An example from the area of child protection is given as an illustration. The chapter concludes by arguing for an interpretative stance in educational research, in order to do justice to the nature of education and for an involvement of the researcher in the moral debate that is always and necessarily at stake. It thus reinterprets Wittgenstein's dictum to bring back words from their metaphysical to their everyday use, and opens up the sphere of being responsive to the situation the researcher and the practitioner find themselves in.

Hodgson and Standish continue this interest in the context in which educational research is practised by studying how training in research methods is becoming a requisite for those embarking on doctoral study. The breadth and contested nature of the field of educational research – with its internal demarcation disputes and with its various contributing, and often disarticulated, disciplines, in tandem with anxieties recurrently occasioned by this lack of unity – have tended to issue in a striking self-consciousness about methodological propriety, the adoption of somewhat dogmatic stances and more than a little confusion. In this chapter this malaise is discussed in relation to the prominence of networks and network thinking, as understood by Manuel Castells. Network thinking reinforces an orthodoxy that is maintained by a domestication of critique. Drawing on the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari the authors of this chapter seek out modes of thought (of practice, of being) that fall outside the structures that are criticized. Thus, *Hodgson and Standish* show how these modes of thought inform a training in educational research methods that encourages a more exacting kind of educational enquiry. They indicate the kinds of activity (the kinds of conversation, the kinds of engagement with texts and problems) that can assist our thinking within the context of educational research methods courses. Being 'defiantly prescriptive' they translate their ideas into practice offering 12 points of advice including 'Set the focus not on the problems you want to solve' and 'Remember that PhDs can come to easily'.

Cornelissen, Simons and Masschelein observe that the European Union (EU) has committed itself to become both a knowledge-based society and the most competitive economy in the world by 2010. As the most important resource of Europe exists in its human capital, Europe needs to become a world leader in the production and transmission of innovative knowledge. Therefore, research is regarded as a key factor in achieving this objective. For the coordination of research activities and the convergence of research and innovative policies at national and EU levels, the European Commission has established the European Research Area, which is expected to bring together all the endeavours and to build a space for innovation and research equivalent to the 'common market' for goods and services. It is obvious that universities are key players and thus many agree that they need to consider the doctoral training and the career development of young researchers. This chapter, which

focuses on doctoral programmes in the network university, begins by looking at what doctoral students are asked to be today and how they should see themselves. Mapping 'circulating knowledge', 'vocabulary' and 'instruments concerning doctoral research today' tells us that doctoral students are urged to strive for quality and excellence. However, this demand for quality is related to a particular type of individuality or self-understanding. This self-understanding as an 'ecological' or environmental self-understanding, in which one regards oneself as inhabiting an environment, is to be seen as a network. Here progress is understood in terms of adaptation to an environment, but has little to do with a particular orientation; it becomes part of the permanent adaptation and reorientation to the needs of the environment. Therefore, it is argued that the problematization of doctoral research in contemporary network universities differs in a fundamental way from the way in which it was problematized in the modern university. As a network infrastructure, it is a space that mobilizes doctoral students and asks that they display an ongoing preparedness to 'forget' the past and to constantly reposition themselves.

The next chapter turns to 'public space' in the network society and, in particular, to the growing interest, in philosophy and ethics, in education and daily life. Although a couple of decades earlier, philosophical dialogue was only recognized as an important educational instrument within particular educational initiatives, *Vansieleghem* argues that today, education and educational contexts are increasingly drawing upon principles and approaches taken from philosophy. Thus, the discussion about philosophy and education no longer seems to focus on whether philosophy should or should not play a role in education, but concerns the way it is given a place in educational debate. For instance, by opting for a philosophical dialogue when discussing citizenship in education, it seems that there is some 'real' interest in dialogue. In this chapter this new interest in philosophy, through which dialogue becomes an effect and an instrument of a specific regime, is problematized. This regime needs *a qualitative product*, *a tool* with which to fix our thinking and acting. It is argued that the philosophical self that embraces the philosophical dialogue is different from the self that philosophers such as Hadot, Foucault or Nancy had in mind when they spoke of philosophy as a way of life. For these authors philosophy does not conceive of itself as a possible solution to what has become problematic, but as an activity exemplifying life's vitality. The kind of speaking and writing it offers invites and inspires us to work on the transformation of the self, i.e. to take care of the self.

In his chapter, *Marshall* is concerned with the dramatic change in the ways in which idealists, academics and intellectuals have communicated. He draws a distinction between the wandering scholars and intellectuals of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and their counterparts in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. An example is taken from the era of the great European and humanistic scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam, and the chapter develops the notion of dissemination with the advances in the sciences in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. From the second era, the chapter characterizes a model of modern intellectual *transmission* of knowledge and ideas, not as information, but as reality. Fundamental to these changes is a shift from mainly ethical concerns, in the case of Erasmus and his concerns for education for example, to the mainly epistemological and IT emphasis of the last

four decades, as exemplified in the recent emphasis on knowledge that is *useful*. It is argued that there is little doubt that Erasmus would not have approved of the way one copes with information *as* reality nowadays. The uncritical adoption by universities of the tag *service universities*, attuned to non-'democratic' management structures and market forces, prompts a similar critique to that which Erasmus developed when railing against the established Roman Church and its institutions. He would have found the curriculum heavily orientated towards the 'hard' social sciences and insufficiently geared towards the humanistic and cultural objectives of European unity. Instead, unity seems to be pursued in Europe through economies and economic structures. The chapter concludes that though there is little doubt that IT has brought tremendous benefits, the theory and assumptions that have come with it about human beings also issue a warning about what might happen to individual persons. Knowledge *about* the self was not only improved through collegiality but knowledge *for* the improvement of the self was also advanced through it. In not seeking collegiality the solitary individual may lose a great deal.

Information technology – especially the personal computer and the Internet – is often blamed, *Smith* argues, for their addictiveness and for poisoning the minds of the younger generation. At the same time, there is a widespread temptation to imagine that the new technologies, in their ready availability, make it harder to grasp that there are truths that cannot be made explicit, and knowledge that is difficult and hard to achieve, knowledge that can only be approached indirectly. This chapter thematizes this temptation as a kind of forgetting and therefore draws an analogy with the image of Penelope in Homer's *Odyssey*, unravelling the shroud or web with which she keeps her suitors at bay. The chapter also considers other approaches to the importance of forgetting, drawing attention to the forgetting that is necessary for 'true remembering' – Plato's *anamnesis*. For Walter Benjamin the unravelling of Penelope's web stands for a different and more profound order of consciousness. George Orwell, whilst emphasizing the tendency of totalitarian regimes to manipulate the memory of the past, seems to posit a sort of redemption in memories that have gone so far below the surface of consciousness – that have been forgotten, as it were – that they are immune to such manipulation. Lyotard talks of the 'immemorial' as what is neither forgotten nor remembered. In this sense, Auschwitz and the Holocaust should neither sink into oblivion nor be represented by familiar images – they should haunt us. Derrida is suspicious of the temptation of desire for something that goes beyond text and representation. He warns us against the desire for something 'beyond'. A realm where the explicit and the readily available are transcended is always infected by traces of text. All our weavings are thus infected. This applies to both our attempts to technologize or archive and our fantasies of freeing ourselves of technology and returning to a state of philosophical and linguistic purity.

4. EXAMPLES OF PARTICULAR EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGIES

In the final three contributions to this collection, some more detailed examples of particular kinds of technologies relevant to education are discussed. *Smedts* argues

that today's parents feel uncertain and incompetent – some say even paranoid – when it comes to raising their children. The domestic issue of Internet usage provides her with a perfect example to demonstrate this problem and allows her to throw light on the main issue she wants to address: What does it mean to be a parent today? The topic – what parents have to do and how they should perform their 'paternalistic' role – is not new at all. Nevertheless, it has gained a new élan. Firstly, parents are infantilized more than ever before. Secondly, some actively engaged parents try to exact a break from this process by means of forums on the Internet especially designed for them. They search for others on the Net to share their experiences with. This call for the communication of individual stories urges educational research to question itself. Its mainstream technical reasoning does not satisfy these active and engaged parents; the normalizing picture, which is presented to them, is just not enough. Fine-tuning is needed to meet 'what it means to be a parent today'. She therefore concludes that experts' advice is formulated in means-to-an-end terms and follows the line of technical reason – that this technical reason normalizes parenthood and introduces (rather than reduces) fear because parents cannot live up to the advice they are given. However, some parents break through the normalizing tendencies by introducing the need for practical judgement. This means that they are actually doing what they are being asked to do: they are *learning proactively* how to cope with the situation. In an attempt to mirror the exact sciences, contemporary educational research tries to give clear-cut answers to problems. However, the chapter argues that educational researchers should engage themselves more *actively* in their research. This means they should participate in their research subjects' lives and give the participants the possibility to actively construct their own shades or nuances to their experiences. Thus, a lot of potential is seen in narrative inquiries, action research, inquiries into experience and so on, i.e. qualitative inquiries. The network that connects us all opens up a forum – in a literal sense – to converse on a more balanced kind of research and practice where technical reason and practical judgement fuse.

The chapter by *Black* argues that abstinence education in the form of the American True Love Waits or virginity movement can be understood as a technological *invention* in the context of a particular set of sociocultural beliefs, values and practices, and also as a significant technological *intervention* into the most intimate self. The first part of this chapter focuses on the way that power functions through the language of the movement to circumscribe and create a certain kind of self. The second part concentrates more on this educational intervention in context, asking questions about the relationship between virgin identities, the physical hymen, and the bodily history of an individual, assumed to be natural and given. In the light of Butler's insights into gender and the findings of this chapter, this situation can be problematized. Black concludes that we regard technology as humanly created; we make it, we shape it, we put it to our use. Technology may, however, also create us; it is impossible to imagine what life would be like without the car, the mobile phone or the personal computer, let alone advances in medicine or food production. Our lives and our selves are, in a real sense, shaped by technology, created and moulded by it. Likewise, we may regard virginity in a simplistic sense as a human creation

understood to be natural, given, related unproblematically to a specific body part. This creation, however, creates us. It creates our sexuality, it creates for us a boundary around that holiest of holies, heteropenetrative intercourse, as being the only thing that really counts as sex, and thus excludes other possibilities, other individuals, other lives. This entails a refusal, as Butler might say, of the possibility of cultural articulation. Virginity shapes and creates our sexual histories and our sexual narratives; in our culture, virginity seems a universally accepted milestone. This story telling, which involves the conflation of the hymen, real or imagined with the virgin identity, therefore providing the necessary background for taking the pledge, is wholly contingent. We make the hymen. We create virginity and then forget that it is a creation. We lose our creative and imaginary resources, so we cannot picture it being any other way. Through pledges, as much as through pornography, films, magazines, sex education and even our own telling of sexual stories, panicked virginity repeats its norms and they ossify in our selves.

In the final chapter of this collection, *Herman*, *Depaepe*, *Simon and Van Gorp* argue that punishment, and in particular the use of corporal punishment, within the educational process is not just the subject of a broad social debate in scientific, legal and political circles, but also makes itself felt in the public arena. A multitude of arguments are used. *In extremum* they generally involve the conflict between 'protecting the child' and 'protecting the punishment'. Closely related to this polemic are the highly divergent opinions on the extent to which a change in the general educational style has occurred over time. Rather pessimistic views (found in the preservation of the hard approach) are played off against rather optimistic ones – there has been a shift from command to negotiation. Some of these presuppositions – in particular the change to a rosier punishment regime – have taken on almost mythological proportions. They are transposed from educational discourse into reality without further consideration. Such a presentation of affairs possibly testifies to the naive belief in progress that can calm the educator's feelings. In this chapter, this modernistic discourse of great change towards a better educational regime is tested against what actually happened in the classroom during the twentieth century. On the basis of interviews, questionnaires, results from earlier research and data from various written sources (e.g. school histories) from a few key periods (1900, 1930, 1960, 1990) an attempt is made to break into educational practice in boys' schools in the (West) Flanders region (Belgium). The results refute, relativize, qualify and contextualize a number of the prevailing punishment stereotypes. The research demonstrates that the suggestions made to practitioners only filtered through to actual practice slowly, with difficulty and, in some cases, not at all. The technology – of school rule systems and punishment techniques – does not allow unilateral transformations or deformations. This finding undermines a number of widespread views relating to change(s) in educational style. Punishment techniques becoming more humane, such as the shift to a negotiation regime, were thereby reduced to their true nature: assumptions (instead of attainments). The reckless projection of the discourse onto reality and its subsequent ossification led to 'pleasurable' accounts of progress that are removed from reality. This prompted the qualification or even rebuttal of such interpretations (representations of discontinuity) in the attempt to bring the

account closer to reality. The excessive focus on discontinuity had to be supplemented with what was designated earlier with the concept of a 'grammar of schooling'. Rather than being a discontinuous phenomenon, punishment seemed to be the leitmotiv of an educational technology that is embedded in a wider pedagogical discourse. A policy of discouraging punishment ensued on a rhetorical level, but this preference for punitive restraint could not be directly integrated into teachers' pedagogical repertoires of action. Adhesion to the time-honoured 'grammar of educationalizing' prevailed, and punishment formed an unmistakable part of that. However, this did not prevent a slow but sure shift from physical punishment to more politically and pedagogically correct forms of psychological punishment.

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CHAPTER TWO

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1. INTRODUCTION

The question we are interested in exploring in this chapter is to do with the conditions under which knowledge and understanding are best, perhaps most effectively, developed and, more specifically, the extent to which the World Wide Web contributes to, or provides, these conditions.

We approach this question with some hesitation partly because of its enormity and partly because, though our interest is a philosophical one, it is clearly a question which also invites significant empirical enquiry; it sits astride the philosophy and sociology of knowledge construction. Our ambition is limited to indicating some of the philosophical considerations which might inform an answer or indeed to testing whether the question admits of a philosophical response at all.

There is a long tradition of writing in liberal democratic political thought and epistemology which appears at least to offer some promise. This draws attention in particular to what we shall refer to as four social processes for the development of knowledge and understanding. The literature also indicates certain socio/ethical conditions for this development. In this chapter we will describe these processes and conditions and then ask to what extent the Web fulfils their requirements.

2. SOCIAL PROCESSES CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING[1]

These processes can be usefully classified under four headings (and the sources of these categories will not be difficult to recognise): (1) the sharing or pooling of different information, understanding and perspectives; (2) conjecture, imagining and the development of interpretative frameworks; (3) critique, refutation and 'purification'; and (4) the mutual adjustment (perhaps negotiation) of opinion.

This is not an arbitrary selection of the means by which knowledge might be developed. As we shall illustrate, they all belong in traditions of thought which speak both of the epistemological requirements for what might count as the development of knowledge and of the politico/social conditions under which these requirements might be met. There are important links, for example, between these four categories and different theories of truth. Very briefly, in so far as truth is a matter of

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coherence, it requires means of putting ideas and information together and with a view to testing the inclusivity of that coherence. In so far as truth is understood as *hitherto unrefuted hypothesis*, it requires social mechanisms which allow and support at least attempted refutation. In so far as truth is thought to be understood by reference to the achievement of social *consensus*, it requires forms of sharing of understanding and negotiation around such understandings which can permit the achievement of such consensus. In so far as truth is supposed to be what emerges from *a free, market-like competition of ideas*, it clearly requires the protection of institution of such a market. Let us illustrate some of these traditions of thought in more detail.

2.1. The sharing or pooling of different information, understanding and perspectives

Most obviously we contribute to the process of both individual knowing and understanding and 'public' knowledge by bringing together and sharing what we know or think individually.

> There is this to be said for the Many. Each of them by himself may not be of a good quality; but when they all come together it is possible that they may surpass – collectively and as a body, although not individually – the quality of the few best. Feasts to which many contribute may excel those provided at one man's expense. In the same way, when there are many [who contribute to the process of deliberation], each can bring his share of goodness and moral prudence. (Aristotle, n.d./1952, p. 123)

It is this that provides at least part of the rationale for social processes such as the seminar or discussion group, and, in a sense, the literature review, the use of the library or searching on the Web. These processes may have other functions (see below) but the basis for all of them is that they allow those who are engaged in them to extend their knowledge through the contributions which others can add to their own experience.

As we have described them so far, their function is to provide for an enlarged aggregation of knowledge and understanding(s) – i.e. participants get more in total – but there is at least the suggestion in Aristotle of a process by which the rubbing together of individual knowing and believing contributes to a qualitative improvement in public knowledge and not just a lot more information.

This pooling of knowledge and its aggregation is fairly clearly a function which the Web fulfils perhaps more effectively than any other instrument or social process by virtue of its sheer scale – but more of this later.

2.2. Reflection, speculation, conjecture, imagining and the development of interpretative or explanatory frameworks

The development of knowledge and understanding requires more than the mere aggregation of existing information and opinion. It requires a generative activity

focused on what might be the case, how observed phenomena or assembled data might be interpreted or explained, theory building, the application of imagination and creativity – the 'conjectures' side of Popper's *Conjectures and Refutations* (Popper, 1963). Such theorising is the first of Popper's 'three requirements for the development of knowledge':

> What is the general problem situation in which the scientist finds himself? He has before him a scientific problem: he wants to find a new theory capable of explaining certain experimental facts: facts which earlier theories successfully explained; others which they could not explain; and some by which they were actually falsified. The new theory should also resolve, if possible, some theoretical difficulties (such as how to dispense with certain ad hoc hypotheses, or how to unify two theories). Now if he manages to produce a theory which is a solution to all these problems, his achievement will be very great indeed. (Popper, 1963, p. 241)

Great indeed – and not all activity which might fit under the category of activity we are indicating here will be quite so ambitious. Popper does, however, serve to draw attention to the point that there is more to the development of knowledge and the accrual of huge amounts of information, or even the scholarly search for empirical evidence. It also demands processes of imagination, of theorising, of the development of explanatory frameworks, of providing the narrative which gives meaning to information.

To some extent this activity may be private and individual, but there are social processes designed to stimulate or facilitate this kind of activity. Groups of people are taken away to new (mental) environments, given time to think away from the demands of daily life, brought together in unusual combinations, taken through 'brainstorming' exercises, placed in working environments which encourage interaction, drink and eat together – all in the interests of such generative activity. The Web has its devices – in Internet cafes and other 'meeting' places, in e-conferencing, etc. – for addressing this requirement. Our suggestion is simply that one of the criteria against which new technologies may be judged is the extent to which they can stimulate and provide environments which support this more creative and dynamic work in the development of knowledge and not just the aggregation of information.

> It is not the accumulation of observations which I have in mind when I speak of the growth of scientific knowledge, but the repeated overthrow of scientific theories and their replacement by better or more satisfactory ones. (Popper, 1963, p. 215)

This brings us to the function of critique and refutation.

2.3. Critique, refutation and 'purification'

There is a long tradition in epistemology and liberal democratic political thought which sees the advance of knowledge not just as it were in the collection of new true

beliefs, but as importantly in the refutation or attempted refutation of established ones and the 'purification' of error – the latter based in particular on empirical observation. Karl Popper is a relatively modern exponent of this tradition (Popper, 1963) – indeed he sees it as a pivotal feature of scientific enquiry – but it goes back at least to the Sophists, and, indeed, Plato's dialogue, *Sophist*, provides as good a statement as any of its characteristic mode:

> Stranger: They [the Sophists] cross examine a man's words, when he thinks that he is saying something and is really saying nothing, and easily convict him of inconsistencies in his opinions; these they then collect by the dialectic process, and placing them side by side, show that they contradict one another about the same things, and in the same respect. He, seeing this, is angry with himself, and grows gentle towards others, and thus is entirely delivered from great prejudices and harsh notions, in a way which is most amusing to the hearer, and produces the most lasting good effect on the person who is subject of the operation. For as the physician considers that the body will receive no benefit from taking food until the internal obstacles have been removed, so the purifier of the soul is conscious that his patient will receive no benefit from the application of knowledge until he is refuted and from refutation learns modesty; he must be purged of his prejudices first and made to think that he knows only what he knows and no more.
> Theaetatus: That is certainly the best and the wisest state of mind.
> Stranger: For all these reasons, Theaetatus, we must admit that refutation is the greatest and chiefest of purification (Plato, 360 BCE/2006, unpaginated).

Our own contemporaries may be left a little incredulous at the calmness and gratitude attributed to those whom the Sophists had thus humbled, or perhaps humiliated, but the point here is that, whether we like it or not, both our individual knowledge and our collective knowledge is developed not just through processes which add to our structure of belief but also, and perhaps less comfortably, by those which reveal the falsity, limitations or uncritical acceptance of such beliefs. Wittgenstein expressed his aim as 'to teach you to pass from a piece of disguised nonsense to something that is patent nonsense' (Wittgenstein, 1958, I, p. 464). If the metaphor of 'purification' and the requirements which the Sophists made for logical consistency have a somewhat old-fashioned ring, they have nevertheless their contemporary equivalents in critical theory, post-colonial research and deconstruction.

> The important, though not always easy, point to grasp here is that, whether by reference to individual or social knowledge, effective criticism and refutation are essential to the advance of knowledge and understanding. We are not interested in establishing scientific theories as secure, or certain, or probable. Conscious of our fallibility we are only interested in criticising them and testing them, hoping to find out where we are mistaken; of learning from our mistakes; and, if we are lucky, of proceeding to better theories. (Popper, 1963, p. 229)

For Popper and others in the liberal tradition, these epistemic conditions for the growth of scientific knowledge have social and political consequences. They require

a social and political environment in which people are free to investigate and put forward the counter-evidence and the counter-hypothesis (see below under the ethical and social conditions for the development of knowledge). It will be the boast of those who admire the functioning of the Web that it is unique in the *scale* of exposure to criticism and refutation (if not always of the scholarly variety) which it offers and in the *freedom* it allows for the expression of such critique, even in parts of the world where such freedom is not widely enjoyed.

2.4. The mutual adjustment (perhaps negotiation) of opinion

These processes are in a sense the most crucially social processes involved in the development of knowledge and understanding because they rely on extensive interaction between the parties involved. It is perhaps helpful to think of this in an analogy with the circulation of traffic around a busy junction like Marble Arch in London with perhaps an island in the middle. At any one time in a busy day a large number of drivers are circulating around this junction with different starting points and different destinations and – importantly – their mutually adjusted pathways between one and the other. They make individual decisions (without any central direction other than as to whether they should circulate clockwise or anti-clockwise and their maximum speed). For the most part, however, they manage to accommodate their routes to each other. Michael Polanyi in *The Logic of Liberty* draws a similar analogy with the way in which scientific enquiry proceeds and as part of his argument against centralised control. In this case the example given is of a team of people working on a jigsaw puzzle:

> The only way to get the job finished quickly would be to get as many helpers as could conveniently work at one and the same time and let them loose on it each to follow his own initiative. Each helper would then watch the situation as it was affected by the progress made by all the others and would set himself new problems in accordance with the latest outline of the completed part of the puzzle. The tasks undertaken by each would closely dovetail into those performed by the others. And consequently the joint efforts of all would form a closely organised whole, even though each helper would follow entirely his own independent judgement. (Polanyi, 1951, p. 35)

The effect of this sort of decentralised collaborative behaviour contrasts in Polanyi's view with an approach to the same task – or to more serious scientific enquiry – through a more centralised and controlled approach.

> All that a centralised administration would achieve would be to form all helpers into a hierarchical body and direct their activities henceforth from one centre. Each would then have to wait for directions from his supervisor and all would have to wait until a decision is taken at the supreme level. In effect, all participants except the one acting as head of the organisation would cease to make any appreciable contribution to the piecing together of the puzzle. The effect of cooperation would fall to zero. (Polanyi, 1951, pp. 35–36)

This same principle underpins Barnes and Todd's description of small group work in schools:

> One of the strengths of small group work is that it necessarily faces the learner with viewpoints different from his own. If a learner is to achieve anything more than a simple view of a topic it is necessary to take such other viewpoints into account, and from them to build a more complex model. Certainly, this is the strategy used by our more successful groups; instead of rejecting another person's point of view as irrelevant or 'wrong', they collaboratively utilised each other's opinions, not wholesale but with modifications, to become part of a shared understanding. (Barnes and Todd, 1977, p. 69)

Of course, one of the particular claims of the World Wide Web is not merely the scale but the complexity of the interchange which it permits. Cassells writes of the 'networking logic' which characterises the World Wide Web: '[T]he morphology of the network seems to be well adapted to increasing complexity of interaction and to unpredictable patterns of development arising from the creative power of such interaction.' (Cassells, 1996, p. 70)

We have considered in this section four different social processes which we suggest are central to the development of knowledge and understanding. These are summarised by John Stuart Mill in his Essay *On Liberty*:

> In the case of any person whose judgement is really deserving of confidence, how has it become so?
>
> Because he has kept his mind open to criticism of his opinions and conduct. Because it has been his practice to listen to all that could be said against him; to profit by as much of it as was just, and expound to himself, and on occasion to others, the fallacy of what was fallacious. Because he has felt that the only way in which a human being can make some approach to knowing the whole of a subject is by hearing what can be said by every variety of opinion, and studying all modes in which it can be looked at by every character of mind. No wise man ever acquired wisdom in any mode but this; nor is it in the nature of human intellect to become wise in any other manner. (Mill, 1859/1968, p. 146)

We have already begun to see that these requirements, these processes themselves require or start to constitute a certain culture, a moral and political culture – and it is to this that we now turn.

3. THE MORAL AND POLITICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

The kinds of processes that we have set out above require certain conditions to be in place before they can function properly in the service of the development of knowledge and understanding. Or to put the point slightly differently, their practice itself

starts to reinforce and create such a 'moral culture' (Bridges, 1979/1988). Without getting too fine-grained about this analysis, these are of two main kinds.

First, they require a set of dispositions which we might sum up under the notion of mutual respect for participants in the process. This is a necessary basis for the sort of collaboration which is described here, for the sharing of information and opinion, for the giving and receiving of criticism (especially if it is to be received in the spirit which Plato describes) and for the mutual accommodation and adjustment of opinion. We do not have to agree with other people but we have to have some level of respect for what they have to offer if we are to benefit at all from interaction with them. Nancy Martin and colleagues described a set of principles which they saw as critical to the development of classroom talk. These seem to us to reflect the sort of conditions necessary for the progress of learning and the development of knowledge and understanding in any circumstances:

> Fundamentally we see progress as depending upon the development of what one might call humanity, and certain social qualities and skills – concern, generosity, courtesy, humility:
> – being sufficiently interested in someone else to ask them questions and to listen to their answers;
> – being prepared to let someone have their head; allowing him time and space to formulate and reformulate an idea without interrupting him; and to support him with little encouraging noises;
> – being prepared to hold one's own point, or interest, temporarily in abeyance so that one can help someone else in his formulation; and so that the main thread of the discourse is not lost;
> – being able to participate in the formulation of a group construct to which all have contributed and now subscribe. (Martin et al., 1976, p. 42)

Second, the kinds of processes for the development of knowledge and understanding which we have identified require a freedom that embraces the freedom to be rebutted. The development of knowledge and understanding is impaired – or so the liberal theory of free discussion would have it – to the extent that people are prevented from freely giving or receiving of their belief, understanding or opinion. To those who sought to protect people from erroneous opinion by controlling or prohibiting its expression, Milton answered classically in his speech to the British parliament:

> So Truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licensing and prohibiting, to misdoubt her strength. Let her and falsehood grapple; whoever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing. (Milton, 1644/1958, p. 181)

Milton's confidence might be less easy to maintain in the light of later Marxist and, for example, Foucauldian analyses of the hegemonic structures which control the production and transmission of knowledge, though the possibility and actuality of such analysis is itself testimony to the penetrative power of enquiry and critique even in a social world constructed to stifle or distort it.

The combination of these principles of mutual respect and freedom from constraint bring us close to the conditions which Habermas refers to as 'an ideal speech situation' (Habermas, 1989) and which Blake summarises as follows:

> An ideal speech situation would require that anyone could participate in the given dialogue, that they could call into question any proposal, that any new proposal might be mooted and that all participants might express their attitudes, wishes and needs relative to the dialogue; nor ought anyone be hindered by compulsion from doing these things. (Blake, 1995, p. 357)

On Habermas's account, it is only under these conditions that rational deliberation and its participants can be guided by 'the force of better argument alone'.

We must, of course acknowledge that Habermas is here describing one kind of social process involved in the development of knowledge and understanding – one which is through discourse, i.e. through the social medium of language, and one which is or aspires to be rational. We would have to acknowledge that knowledge may advance on the back of other processes including private meditation, reflection and thought (though there is a sense in which this is merely an internalised form of social discourse and ultimately dependent on it) and also a-rational (if not irrational) processes of creativity and imagination (though the independence of these processes from reason can easily be overstated). But what Habermas is describing is nevertheless a central set of processes for the public development of knowledge. The principles which he associates with these processes may be demanding[2] but they nevertheless offer some standards against which we can judge the operation of these processes in, for example, scientific enquiry or, more pertinently here, in the processes of the Web.

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So, what we have tried to set up so far is some sort of account of what might be regarded as the social processes through which knowledge and understanding are developed and the moral or social conditions which are required for these to operate successfully (and which – to observe the converse – they themselves will tend to support). We may not have got these right, but our procedural point is that if we are to be able to evaluate the World Wide Web in terms of the sort of contribution that its own existence and modus operandi may contribute to the development of knowledge and understanding, we need to do so against some wider view of the processes and conditions upon which such development itself depends.

It is possible, of course, to investigate these processes, these practices, perhaps empirically, ethnographically and under the framework of the sociology of knowledge. We have, however, tried to illustrate the connection between the requirements for certain processes or practices in the development of knowledge on the one hand and epistemological conditions rooted in views about what might count as knowledge or entitle us to have confidence in a set of beliefs on the other. In so far as we can establish such a connection we can lay claim to this as a philosophical enterprise.

This ambition may itself prove spurious, but, undeterred by such pusillanimous thoughts, we shall proceed to look at what the Web offers against the criteria we have proposed.

4. THE WORLD WIDE WEB AS A DRIVER OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING

The World Wide Web has achieved a scale and level of importance as a provider of access to a vast range of information, opinion and other resources in written, visual and audio forms and channels of communication to huge networks of people which it is increasingly difficult to grasp. The resources which it can contribute to the development of human knowledge and understanding are quite overwhelming – and it will certainly be beyond our capability to deal illustratively with more than a tiny fraction of them. The Web is itself not in our terms a social process but an infrastructure which makes possible a wide range of processes that extend from resource banks and e-mails to chat rooms and virtual conferencing, search engines and data mining – some of them involving interpersonal communication, some private engagement with the resources and systems which people have created or made available.

There are some things we should acknowledge straight away in terms of the way in which the Web, generally speaking, measures up against our criteria.

There are a number of ways in which the Web (and its various constitutive resources) represents an extraordinary advance in our capacity to construct and share knowledge and understanding socially. In terms of the pooling of knowledge and understanding, it represents a resource on a scale that not only Aristotle but many people alive today would have found it difficult to imagine a few years ago. Aristotle might have been doubly amazed to discover that a Google search of the Web would provide the enquirer with 31,200,000 references to 'Aristotle' alone (though these will include references to Aristotle Onassis and no doubt Aristotle Papadrophenou's Kebab Bar!). The aggregative function of the Web in gathering 'knowledge' together and making it accessible to an enquirer is quite overwhelming.

There are (at least) three reservations to this success. First, there is a historical backlog of material such as that found in our great historic universities and in other archives, and which was not created in electronic form, which is only slowly and partially finding its way onto the Web. There is therefore a contemporary rather than a deeply historical assemblage of material and contributions even if this is being busily rectified through a plethora of archiving activities.[3]

Second, since the Web is largely constructed and contributed to by people who are themselves versed in the language and technology of the Web and with easy access to such technology, it also excludes (in effect if not by design) that large part of the world's population which lacks such access. Of course, this exclusion is not random: Web literacy is much more widespread among the young than among the older generation which did not grow up with computers. Even if this older generation has learned to access the Web as readers, in the totality of material available,

it is still mainly the younger generation who contribute to writing its pages. However, the user groups of specific fora may well have different demographics. More importantly, perhaps, it systematically discriminates against the voices of the poor throughout the world. It should be acknowledged, of course, that the Web is not alone in this – our universities and our publishing industry hardly provide greater opportunities for these voices to be heard – but it is a reminder that even the 'World Wide' Web remains for the time being a forum for a very selective portion of the world.

Third, and here we get closer to a philosophical observation, the Web is a huge store of information and opinion and what we might refer to as 'understandings' – of peoples' recorded perceptions and thoughts – but this does not mean that it is an equally large storehouse of 'knowledge' in the honorific sense, i.e. belief or opinion which (on a conventional epistemological analysis) is true and for which there are good grounds or warrant. It is both a strength and weakness of the Web that there is no quality control (although specific fora may institute such controls). It is a strength in terms of the principle of freedom indicated in the first part of this chapter, but also a weakness in that the Web (as a whole system) makes no attempt to weed out mischievously or maliciously erroneous opinion or information, the ravings of the deluded, unsubstantiated claims or complete and utter rubbish. All of these have an equal opportunity to occupy space on the Web and to command our attention. If the Web appears to render concrete the conditions which Habermas was looking for in his 'ideal speech community', it also exhibits some of the features which Blake noted might render such an ideal 'unworthy of even partial emulation'. For, as Blake observes:

> [W]hat seems to be enjoined is an almost anarchistic conduct of discussion. Anyone may speak, they may say whatever they will, and so on. Yet unstructured speech situations can kill rationality; and even in comparatively structured situations, a liberal attitude to the conduct of discussion can still bring difficulties. The selfish or plain narcissistic speaker can frustrate dialogue among others. The poorly articulate can lead us off the point and waste time. The strategic manipulator of discussion may prosper. It does seem that discussion needs careful management if it is to be fruitfully rational. It does seem to need constraints on speech. But if this is so, the concept of the ideal speech situation can offer us no guidance in deciding which constraints would be legitimate and worthwhile. For all that it implies is that any constraints would compromise the ideal. (Blake, 1995, p. 358)

The problem which Blake identifies here for Habermas is clearly also one for the Web – or at least for the Web as a whole. Inside the Web, both traditional and less traditional forms of quality control may operate.

Among the traditional apparatus – there are of course many sites (the most obvious of which in the context of this chapter are the online academic journals) which employ peer-reviewing systems akin to those of any academic journal – though like the editors of any journal these may be criticised for what they (in some views unfairly) exclude as well as for what they (in some views inappropriately) include.

Other sites place content firmly under free market conditions and expose content to some or other form of public (as contrasted with expert) selection. The most popularly used search engine, Google, invokes an explicitly political ideal in explaining on its Corporate Information site how 'Democracy on the Web works':

> Google works because it relies on the millions of individuals posting websites to determine which other sites offer content of value. Instead of relying on a group of editors or solely on the frequency with which certain terms appear, Google ranks every page using a breakthrough technique called PageRank™. PageRank evaluates all of the sites linking to a web page and assigns them a value, based in part on the sites linking to them. By analyzing the full structure of the web, Google is able to determine which sites have been 'voted' the best sources of information they offer. (www.google.com/corporatetenthings.html)

This appears, then, to be a popular equivalent of the citation index which excites (mixed) academic enthusiasm as a means of measuring research quality. Crudely, it draws searchers' attention to those web pages which get the most references in other web pages. It shares some of the same problems with citation indices. For example, neither distinguishes between items which are referred to because they are highly regarded or those which invite reference because they are controversial, perhaps, but extremely bad. Both, too, invite game playing. In the case of the Web, there are sites which offer, in return for payment, to ensure that your web site gets all sorts of cross references, which will pull it up in the order in Google searches.

Two slightly different forms of quality control are exhibited in the pages of the two web sites we now turn to: the BBC's Have Your Say (HYS) fora and Wikipedia. Contributors to HYS are invited to comment on topical issues and there are links to the relevant news stories. HYS is not a reference source but these comments are frequently statements generated from the contributors' own understanding (or misunderstanding) of events. Contributors to the Wikipedia are invited to both create and edit entries 'contributing knowledge as [they] see fit in a collaborative way' (Wikipedia homepages). Although they have different aims, both sites therefore generate, share and discuss 'knowledge'. Moreover, although both have their caveats tucked away, they both stake at least some claims to authority.

4.1. Have Your Say: 'Conscription, cowardice and confusion'

'Have Your Say' (HYS) is a moderated forum. Its postings are checked to ensure that they are 'civil, tasteful and relevant' (from the BBC's 'Have Your Say House Rules' site). The fora are typically open for comment for a week or so and remain accessible for at least another week. The rubric covers a number of listed requirements but accuracy is noticeably absent from the list. Thus, erroneous statements can be posted under the 'House Rules' and will remain on public display unless subsequently corrected. Similarly, claims can be posted as facts without reference to their complex contexts or the contingent conditions upon which they depend. Subsequent postings may continue the round of claim and counterclaim but they are not

always linked (not in the least because a word limit acts as a considerable disincentive to this). It would, we recognise, be a Herculean task to verify all the claims made in a contemporary debate forum, but the result is a mess of facts, falsehoods, contingent truths and opinion masquerading as facts and truths through which the initiated may pick their way with alarm and the uninitiated with confusion.

Two examples from a recent HYS forum on the decision of the UK government to seek a pardon for those British soldiers shot for cowardice and other offences during the Great War illustrate this. One posting commented that 'No Englishman was forced to fight for their country in the First World War they volunteered [sic]'. This is an erroneous statement as the Military Service Act, passed in January 1916, introduced mandatory military service. Once posted, this statement was refuted by several subsequent postings which made direct reference to the original. However, although corrected, this erroneous 'fact' remained on display in the public domain without any links to the subsequent corrections.

The second example is more complex because it depends to some extent on an interpretation of events. Several postings commented on the refusal of the military authorities to recognise the existence of 'shell shock' – for example: 'According to history shell shock was not even considered then as an illness.' Yet 'shell shock' was recognised and considered as an illness by some (but by no means all) in both the military and medical professions at the time (see, particularly within the context of this chapter, the Wikipedia entry for 'Combat stress reaction'). As a historically verifiable fact, then, the posted statement is false. However, as it was not universally accepted, both 'truths' – that it was and was not 'considered as an illness' – have validity. Several subsequent postings made reference to this original posting and others continued to offer both views without reference to it. It is possible to distinguish in these sorts of exchanges both cases of opinions which are demonstrably false and cases of opinions which are contrasting but consistent with the evidence, i.e. where different constructions of events can be legitimately advanced.

4.2. Wikipedia: 'George Bush's bitch boy'

The 'phenomenal but unreliable online encyclopaedia' Wikipedia (MacIntyre, 2006, p. 20) invites users to both create and edit entries 'contributing knowledge as [they] see fit in a collaborative way' (Wikipedia homepages). Anyone may edit, correct or improve on any existing entry subject to several 'house rules' which include the adoption of a neutral point of view and the requirement that information has to be 'verifiable with external sources' (op. cit.). Many entries note that citations are still needed. Editing is mostly carried out by the online community of users who correct mistakes and there are further rules to safeguard against 'revert wars' in which contributors edit and re-edit contributions. In an article for *The Times* newspaper, Ben MacIntyre explains:

> Wikipedia articles can be written and edited by anyone, on every subject at any time. Launched just five years ago [i.e. in 2001], Wikipedia is free, vast

> and evolving at an astonishing pace, with some 4.6 million entries at the last count. For many people, Wikipedia has become the first port of call for information. Increasingly, it is the engine creating instant, modern knowledge. (MacIntyre, 2006, p. 20)

He goes on to acknowledge, however, that while some 13,000 people actively contribute to Wikipedia with articles and edits, 'some of these are experts, but some, inevitably, are nutters' (ibid.). Unfortunately, they do not necessarily identify to which category they belong. Mistakes and malicious entries can be made. Amongst the former, entries have explained that Jack Straw, the then Foreign Secretary of the UK, was visiting Ilford (in East London) rather than Iraq, and that David Beckham was a Chinese goalkeeper in the eighteenth century. Amongst the latter, Tony Blair was accused of having posters of Adolf Hitler on his bedroom wall. However, few such entries survive for very long. Indeed, some entries rarely remain unchanged: in one week, the 19-page entry for Tony Blair was being changed at the rate of 25 times a day (Chittenden, 2006, p. 8).

One such entry had described him as 'George Bush's bitch boy' (Younge, 2006, p. 17) and the removal of this phrase invites interesting speculation on the knowledge generated by, and made available through, Wikipedia. It is not difficult to substantiate the quintessence of this comment and it differs little from Nelson Mandela's description of Blair as the 'US foreign minister' (a comment which, at the time of writing, remains in the entry for Tony Blair and is referenced to an article on the BBC's news web site). Wikipedia is not particularly squeamish about profanities (with both obvious examples having their own entries) and personal and profane comments have long been part of the political landscape. This is not a piece of action research and so we have not attempted to reinsert the phrase but we do question the grounds upon which this (crassly phrased) claim about Blair's foreign policy was removed. It does not contravene any of Wikipedia's 'house rules' which leaves us tentatively concluding that Mandela's cited comment was considered nothing more than a quintessentially identical but more 'acceptable' version of 'bitch boy'.

The point is, however, that as far as Wikipedia is concerned the conditions of liberty come without any accountability to principles of reasons, evidence or argument which normally provide a basis for the credibility of a narrative, account or opinion. Wikipedia offers an open door to those who want to contribute on the basis of malice, self-promotion, envy or a distorted will to misinform as well as a motive to educate or to present the best approximation one can find to the truth of the matter under consideration.

5. A (PRELIMINARY) CONCLUSION

The language and principles of social and political philosophy which we have invoked in the first part of this chapter can be called upon both to defend and critique the Wikipedia (as well as HYS) as a provider and generator of knowledge and understanding.

First, on the status of knowledge in the Wikipedia, MacIntyre writes:

> The internet has evolved a new form of information, a shallow, broad, fast, patchy and extremely useful reservoir that should be absorbed with caution and used only for specific purposes. Wikipedia has the same relationship with an encyclopaedia that yesterday's news reporting has with tomorrow's history book. Wikipedia is a first draft. It is not truth. But so long as it is understood and used in that way, it may prove to be one of the most spectacular inventions of the 21st century. (MacIntyre, 2006, p. 20)

And then, in terms very close to those which we used to describe the social processes involved in the development of knowledge and understanding, he goes on (our underlining):

> The online encyclopedia was a simple, brilliant idea, the latest flowering of the Enlightenment ideal of the *collective pursuit of truth*. By *pooling* our collective knowledge, gradually *weeding out the mistakes* and the myths, we would arrive at a 'repository of knowledge to rival the ancient library of Alexandria' a fantastic free experiment in intellectual democracy. (Ibid.)

Whether a process which allows you to remove from view what someone else has said and replace it with your own account constitutes a 'democratic' process is itself fairly questionable; nor do 'Wiki Wars' which break out when two or more people battle repeatedly to have their own text on the site have much resemblance with the ideal of democratic deliberative procedures. This is a far cry from the sort of rationally informed and rationally driven conversations which were Habermas's ideal.

Indeed, what the experience of some of these political experiments in the development of knowledge (for that is what they are) demonstrate is that even if these Web-based processes meet the requirements for equal access and unfettered freedom in what people say, i.e. the ideal conditions for the working of the marketplace of ideas in the way in which Polanyi, among others in the liberal tradition, might have envisaged it, this is not enough. As MacIntyre puts it:

> There is … a danger of what some critics call 'online collectivism', or 'digital Maoism'. Just because a majority of people happen to believe something does not authenticate it. History is littered with unpleasant moments when the collective voice, ignorant or misled, has drowned out dissent. Wikipedia gropes towards a consensus, but that is very different from truth. (MacIntyre, 2006, p. 20)

Righter is uncompromising in her judgement that 'In the wacky world of Wikipedia, the missing bits are these: accountability, authority, scholarly credentials, accuracy and scrupulousness'(Righter, 2005, p. 21).

Clearly, we have been focusing here on two albeit significant features of the World Wide Web among literally millions we might have chosen. They are, however, significant for our purposes because they reflect the social and political principles and practices which are in a sense the boast of the Net and those which in some eyes

position it as the apotheosis of the Enlightenment ideal of the perfectly free and accessible space in which knowledge can be democratically developed.

In some ways, however, our discussion points not just to some limitations on the application of these principles on the Web, but also to their limitations as a social/political/epistemological ideal. Habermas's ideal speech situation was indeed one in which different impediments to rational deliberation – the baggage of a person's background or personal situation, force, threats, ideological and psychological distortions, extraneous motivations – had been set aside. But it was also one of rational deliberation, guided by 'the force of the better argument' and aimed at achieving not merely any kind of social consensus but 'a rationally motivated agreement'. Real progress in knowledge and understanding requires, then, the engagement of competence in such rational argument and deliberation, the ability to judge 'the force of the better argument' and a commitment to doing so in the company of others. It is not adequately served by the mere aggregation of a vast number of undiscriminating bits of information (true or false) and opinion (rational and informed or ignorantly or maliciously wrong).

Such a view has two sets of implications. First, it indicates that if the informational content of the Web is to be deserving of attention, then it needs to be constructed or developed under such principles (or at least there needs to be a space on the Web which is recognisably protected for such development). This is a task, in particular, for the scholarly community. Second, it indicates that users of the Web – and that includes our children – need to be provided with an education which enables them to approach the enormous and rich sources of the Web with this sort of discrimination.

6. LOOKING BACK AND LOOKING FORWARD

In this chapter we have looked back to historic traditions of epistemology and social and political thought – and in particular the liberal democratic tradition – to provide a framework of expectation against which to evaluate the contributions of the Web to the development of knowledge. The legitimacy of this reference is in some measure reinforced by the references which contemporary enthusiasts of the Web make on its behalf. These, as we have illustrated, themselves include claims made in terms of, for example, its democratic character and the unparalleled freedom of expression which it affords. 'The only place where real freedom of speech is to be found', claimed one AOL television advert, 'is on the World Wide Web'.

We should, however, acknowledge finally that such reference itself may turn out to be historically and contingently located. If the social and intellectual revolution is on the scale that some would suggest, it is possible that it may change our very conceptions of what knowledge is, what might count as knowledge and under what conditions knowledge might be supposed to develop.

The possibility of such interference in what might be held by some philosophers as the strictly a priori territory of epistemology by socially contingent change is perfectly well anticipated in what has been called 'modern' or, in Quinean terms, 'naturalised' epistemology. We started here by suggesting that we might derive

(some) understanding of how knowledge might be developed from an understanding of the epistemological requirements for something to count as knowledge. Quine (among others) reverses that process – and at the same time challenges the necessary/contingent distinction – arguing that we understand knowledge when we understand the social justification of belief (inter alia, Quine, 1960, 1990; Rorty, 1980, p. 173) where such justification needs to be understood not as a set of a priori principles but as a particular form of social practice. From a similar perspective Everitt and Fisher explain that we may each of us have beliefs which we regard as a priori, as holding no matter what changes science or technology might bring. However, 'if we do take that attitude towards our beliefs, that shows only the limits of our imagination, not that our beliefs will hold true in the face of all increase in scientific knowledge' (Everitt and Fisher, 1995, p. 112). Further:

> Scientific findings are in principle relevant to philosophical claims. Hence, more specifically, the claims of the epistemologist are not immune to revision in the light of empirical information. More positively, they can in principle be confirmed or overturned by advances in empirical knowledge (Everitt and Fisher, 1995, p. 189).

All of this should open us to the possibility that changes in science and technology – in this case in the form of the technological infrastructure of the Web – might plausibly result in changes in the social practices by which knowledge is developed and through which knowledge claims are justified. In such circumstances, perhaps, our reference to established traditions of philosophical thought *might* become anachronistic. Cassells' analysis of 'the network society', of which the technological and informational infrastructure of the Web is a central component, is clearly represented as something 'transformational' (Cassells, 2000, p. 70), 'a qualitative change in the human experience' (op. cit., p. 508) – permitting exponential growth in the complexity of interaction and in 'the unpredictable patterns of development arising from the creative power of such interaction' (op. cit., p. 70).

However, even Cassells is inclined to withhold judgement on the net consequences of these developments, warning that it is 'essential to keep a distance between assessing the emergence of new social forms and processes, as induced and allowed by new technologies, and extrapolating the potential consequences of such developments for society and people: only specific analyses and empirical observation will be able to determine the outcome of interaction between new technologies and emerging social forms' (op. cit., p. 71).

Nor do networks necessarily contribute to freedom of exchange in the way in which we might suppose. Mulgan warns that networks are created 'not just to communicate but also to gain position, to outcommunicate' (Mulgan, 1991, p. 21), and Cassells, again, adds that the characteristic flexibility of the network 'could be a liberating force, but also a repressive tendency if the rewriters of the rules are always the powers that be' (Cassells, 2000, p. 71). In *The future of ideas: the fate of the commons in a connected world*, the US intellectual property lawyer, Lawrence Lessig, provides an impassioned warning against what he sees as the misappropriation of the creative and innovative potential of the Web:

> The forces that the original Internet threatened to transform are well on their way to transforming the Internet. Through changes in the architecture that defined the original network, as well as changes in the legal environment within which the network lives, the future that promised great freedom and innovation will not be ours. The future that threatened the emergence of almost perfect control will. (Lessig, 2002, p. xxii)[4]

It is perhaps too early to assess whether the 'network society' and its supporting technologies constitute a thoroughly radical innovation in social practice on a scale which disrupts earlier epistemological assumptions, and, indeed, most commentators including Lessig provide their analysis as a way of indicating strategic choices which remain to be made – but we are ready to acknowledge that the possibility remains open.

NOTES

[1] We draw here on some of Bridges' earlier work on *Education, Democracy and Discussion* (1979/1988).

[2] Blake suggests that Habermas's 'ideal' speech situation 'has been misunderstood to imply such extravagant forms of participatory openness that even liberal-minded enquirers have jibbed at its supposed impracticality, which may even betray a failure of seriousness' (Blake 1995, p. 356).

[3] These processes themselves raise interesting questions. Bridges is currently involved in an ESRC sponsored project which is setting out to archive historic qualitative research material, notably from a number of case study-based evaluations of educational programmes. The physical archives of some of these projects include, for example, copies of travel expense claims of the researchers and copies of three versions of the same set of notes with minor amendments made in someone's handwriting. Should all of this material go into the electronic archive? When is material relevant? When is there too much or irrelevant information?

[4] Ironically, in the light of our earlier reference to the AOL advertisement boasting of the unparalleled freedom of the Web, some observers see the big media and communications corporations as the biggest threats to this freedom. Lessig refers, for example, to Gordon Cook's assessment: 'The Internet revolution has come and gone. It has created a tremendous burst of innovation [a] burst that now looks to have been mismanaged. … [T]he people who did the least to advance the new technologies seem most likely to control them. We are left not with edge-controlled intelligence of the [end-to-end] network but with the central authoritarian control of the likes of AOL, Time Warner' (Cook, 2001, cited in Lessig, 2002, p. 267).

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CHAPTER THREE

MICHAEL A. PETERS AND DANIEL ARAYA

NETWORKS, INFORMATION POLITICS AND THE NEW PARADIGM OF SOCIAL PRODUCTION

1. INTRODUCTION

McCarthy et al. (2004) begin their Introduction to the *Demos* collection on *Network Logic* with the following:

> Networks are the language of our times. Think about Al-Qaeda. The internet, eBay, Kazaa. The mobile phone, SMS. Think about iron triangles and old school ties, No Logo and DeanforAmerica. Think VISA and Amex, the teetering electricity grid, the creaking rail network. LHR to LAX. Think about six degrees of separation. Think small worlds, word of mouth. Think about your networks. Your friends, your colleagues, your social circle. How new networks take shape through introductions at parties, over coffee breaks, via email. How your connections have helped you, supported you and hindered you.

One of their early conclusions is that 'Networks are the language of our times, but our institutions are not programmed to understand them'. The fact is, they assert, that we do not understand their logic. They assume, on the basis of strong evidence, that 'Networks embody a set of fundamental principles for the ordering, distribution and coordination of different components, whether chemical, natural, social or digital', and their aim is to understand the logic and principles of networks in order to use them for organization and decision making, and to make possible better forms of coordination and collective action. They proceed to interpret networks in relation to a set of key principles, including communication, transparency, knowledge, innovation, regulation, accountability, ownership, citizenship and power. They argue that the dynamic of information is one of openness, and suggest that the emergence of new communication networks permits an increased capacity for high-level coordination. They track out implications for regulation, accountability and ownership, and consider the rise of 'network citizens' that 'participate in the creation of new decision-making capabilities as well as understand their informal power and responsibilities'. As McCarthy et al. acknowledge, the hardest nettle to grasp is the changing nature of power in a networked society. Power, they suggest following Castells (2004),

P. Smeyers and M. Depaepe (eds.), Educational Research: Networks and Technologies, 33–42.

structures the contours of networks, determining the entry points and conditions that define structural advantage.

The new science of networks seems to offer strong methodological and epistemological promise across the social sciences, with an apparently easy application to education. This is particularly true with regard to learning networks in the context of *innovation* and a *knowledge economy*. Network science has also gathered a new fillip with the application of statistical modelling and developments in discrete mathematics to 'small-world' analysis of complex systems – a form of analysis that is described as 'new' and taken to depart in terms of its scope and power from traditional social network analysis. In short, network theory is pictured as attaining the status of a mega-paradigm in the social sciences, as a form of social theory and analyses that, in part, gains its epistemological status from the influence of gestalt psychology and European structuralism. In this sense, network theory promises a kind of empiricism that is both holistic and relational, and thus poses a challenge to all forms of epistemological atomism focused on the individual as the basic unit of analysis, including of course rational choice theory. Yet the tangled genealogies of the emergence of the field are difficult to describe and there is doubt over to what extent we might talk of the different strands of network theory as comprising a coherent programme or even sharing similar epistemological assumptions. Network theory has also been referred to as a 'new science' (Watts, 2004) characterized in terms of the mathematicization of method especially in relation to small-world analysis of complex networks. Yet it is not clear where formalization of methods, led by mathematicians and physicists, actually constitute a new science in the same way that any formalization of a discipline, say, for example economics, constitutes a *new science*.

At the same time, this first flush and 'infatuation' with networks in the social sciences has recently been questioned. Knox et al. (2006, p. 133) suggest that in the context of social network analysis, network thinking 'marks a critical engagement with mainstream social science's individualistic assumptions and championed a kind of structuralism', but in social anthropology, 'it marked a critical engagement with structural functionalism and signalled a recognition of fragmentation and complexity'. Their conclusion is that network thinking 'does not offer a coherent or convincing theoretical foundation for itself, and we should be cautious of attempts to suggest that it offers an easy interdisciplinary resolution to deep-seated disciplinary differences'.

What does seem clear is that we have entered an age in which the material conditions for the formation, circulation and utilization of knowledge and learning are highly impacted by the rise of information networks and a media-based economy. Information has become the vital element in a 'new' politics and economy that both links and transforms space, knowledge and capital. These mega-trends signal both changes in the production and consumption of symbolic goods and transformations in their contexts of use. In the context of learning, for example, the digitalization of learning systems increases the speed, circulation and exchange of knowledge, highlighting the importance of information utility and new digital literacies. At the same time, the radical concordance of image, text and sound, and the development of new information/knowledge infrastructures are creating new learning opportunities alongside

the emergence of a consumer-driven global media and communications network dominated by Euro-American media conglomerates. The question, therefore, of who owns and designs learning (and edutainment) systems is of paramount political and philosophical importance. From this perspective, an understanding of information in the context of networks for knowledge and learning requires a theory of information politics. This chapter will explore this new information paradigm and consider its political significance, particularly as it overlaps systems of education.

2. INFORMATION POLITICS AND THE RISE OF THE INFORMATION UTILITY

Over the last three decades policy discourse in advanced capitalist countries has increasingly focused on the economic needs associated with the 'learning economy' and the learning systems that nurture it. Unlike the tangible assets associated with the industrial economy – land, labour, capital and raw materials, the knowledge economy is largely understood in terms of informational goods: research, creativity, design, innovation, communication, engineering, collaboration, administration and learning. Underlying all of these new forces of production, however, is the network itself. If it is true that learning and information are the vital elements in a new political economy that links space, knowledge and capital, an understanding of networks is vital to any theory of information politics.

The concept of the network was first developed in the 1920s to describe communities of organisms linked through food webs and its use extended to all systems levels: cells as networks of molecules; organisms as networks of cells; ecosystems as networks of individual organisms (Capra, 1996; Barabasi, 2002). Recently, the notion of networks has been used to describe society and to analyse a new social structure based on networking as a new form of organization (Castells, 1996). While the network pattern is one of the very basic patterns of organization of all living systems (Capra, 2004, p. 29), the critical question is whether there is a basic unity that integrates biological, cognitive and social dimensions or whether there are significant and irreducible differences between biological and social networks.

On the strong view held by Capra, social networks are self-generating networks of communication that unlike biological networks operate in the non-material realm of meaning. Like biological networks, social networks develop through multiple feedback loops that become self-generating over time, ultimately producing a shared or common context of meaning that we call culture. Capra argues that it is through this networked culture that individuals acquire their identities as members of the social network. If we accept the strong version, we might say with Capra (2004, p. 33) that 'the key challenge of our new century – for social scientists, natural scientists and everyone else – will be to build ecological sustainable communities'. As he contends:

> A sustainable community is designed in such a way that its technologies and social institutions – its material and social structures – do not interfere with nature's inherent ability to sustain life. In other words, the design principles of

> our future social institutions must be consistent with the principles of organization that nature has evolved to sustain the web of life. (Capra, 2004, p. 33)

But what does it mean to build ecologically sustainable informational communities?

For Castells (2004, p. 222), the central issue challenging institutions and communities in an age of networks remains that of power. As he explains, even while 'the network society expands on a global scale' and 'networked organizations outcompete all other forms of organization', 'power continues to be the fundamental structuring force of [their] shape and direction'. He elaborates:

> Power does not reside in institutions, not even in the state or in large corporations. It is located in the networks that structure society. Or, rather, in what I propose to call the 'switchers'; that is, the mechanisms connecting or disconnecting networks on the basis of certain programmes or strategies. (Castells, 2004, p. 234)

It is here in this key function of the network – to *unite* some communities and practices while *excluding* others – that we locate the impetus for a politics of information. Yet, at the same time, it is in the potential of networks to create entirely new social, political and economic practices that we find potential solutions. As Castells observes, networks are fundamental to both the challenges we face and the solutions to those challenges:

> Networks matter because they are the underlying structure of our lives. And without understanding their logic we cannot change their programmes to harness their flexibility to our hopes, instead of relentlessly adapting ourselves to the instructions received from their unseen codes. Networks are the Matrix. (Castells, 2004, p. 224)

As Castells (2004, p. 224) concludes: 'This is why to counter networks of power and their connections, alternative networks need to be introduced.' This is an important point. It is precisely these alternative networks that we must begin to explore.

3. UNDERSTANDING THE POTENTIAL OF THE NETWORK

While Castells draws attention to the unique features of networks, a more complex understanding of information and communication systems is necessary to fully appreciate the potential of networks. Lessig (2002) in *The Future of Ideas* provides a useful model. Lessig has suggested that digital technologies have dramatically changed the conditions of creativity, essential to both new learning and the knowledge economy. For Lessig, the future of ideas and 'the fate of the commons in an interconnected world' (the subtitle of his book) is a question of *freedom* or *control* in relation to the development of the Internet. He writes:

> The argument of this book is that always and everywhere, free resources have been crucial to innovation and creativity; that without them, creativity is crippled. Thus, and especially in the digital age, the central question becomes

> not whether government or the market should control a resource, but whether a resource should be controlled at all. (Lessig, 2002, p. 14)

Lessig defines 'free' through the concept of 'the intellectual commons' and contends that creative production in real space does not permit the freedom that the Internet does – the space where films are made, books are written and discs are recorded. He demonstrates that the constraints of intellectual property that affect real-space creativity have been removed by the original architecture (legal and technical) of the Internet. The architecture of cyberspace and, more generally, the control of telecommunications worldwide are thus vital questions concerning learning, pedagogy and scholarship.

Applying Benkler's (2006, p. 23) notion of 'the commons' to the Internet, Lessig defines the Internet as a communication system comprising three discrete layers: first, the 'physical' layer made up of computers and wires linking computers to the Internet; second, a 'logical' or 'code' layer that makes the hardware operational, including the protocols that define the Internet and the software on which they run; and third, the 'content' layer, i.e. the material which gets transmitted across the Internet, including the digital images, texts and sounds. As Lessig observes, in principle each of these layers could be either controlled or free: 'Each, that is, could be owned or each could be organized in a commons.' He goes on to argue:

> The Internet was born on a controlled physical layer; the code layer, constituted by the TCP/IP, was nonetheless free. These protocols expressed an end-to-end principle, and that principle effectively opened the space created by the computers linked to the Net for innovation and change. This open space was an important freedom, built upon a platform that was controlled. The freedom built an innovation commons. That commons, as do other commons, make controlled space more valuable. (Lessig, 2002, p. 48)

As Lessig (2002, p. 35) observes, '*How a system is designed will affect the freedoms and control the system enables*' (emphasis added). For this reason, the question of freedom versus control is of central importance to understanding the precarious nature of various emerging production regimes such as open source, open access and the free science movements (see Peters and Besley, 2006, especially Postscript 'Freedom and Knowledge Cultures'). This is equally true for educational initiatives such as e-learning, distance learning, e-scholarship and e-publishing. To fully appreciate the changing dimensions of social and economic production, however, it would be helpful to examine these emerging production regimes in greater detail.

4. THE NEW PARADIGM OF SOCIAL PRODUCTION

Beyond the command-and-control structures characteristic of industrial production, information networks have begun to enable new, highly flexible modes of production. As Castells (2004, p. 222) elaborates:

> Networked organisations outcompete all other forms of organisation, particularly the vertical, rigid, command-and-control bureaucracies. This is how networks expand, for instance, in the business world. Companies that do not or cannot follow this logic are outperformed and ultimately phased out by leaner, more flexible competitors.

From the simple 'one-to-many' linear manufacturing underlying industrial production, network structures enable distributed 'many-to-many' production. As Benkler (2006) has suggested, information and communication technologies (ICTs) are making possible a third mode of production – beyond both state and capital market. For Benkler, the new political economy of information, seen for example in peer-to-peer (P2P) collaboration and the production of Open Source Software (OSS), fundamentally transforms the possibilities of socio-economic production. In his book, *The Wealth of Networks*, Benkler describes this emergent form of socio-economic collaboration as 'social production'. Exploring various examples, including Wikipedia, Creative Commons and weblogs, he highlights the collaborative nature of this 'commons-based peer production'. Beyond older centralized systems grounded in closed proprietary structures, commons-based production utilizes networks to harness the creative energy of large numbers of people in highly distributed ways. Unlike corporate collaborative structures, no single entity 'owns' the product or manages its direction. For Benkler, the key to understanding social production is that collaboration is not merely a form of mechanical cooperation, but a form of democratic cultural practice. While social production may depend upon the technological capacity of networks, it is ultimately configured by an emergent political structure grounded in open systems.

5. P2P AND DEMOCRATIC COLLABORATION

Like 'open systems' in nature, open systems in production operate according to different rules. In nature, it is the capacity of an open system to self-organize by exchanging matter and energy with its surrounding environment, which enables it to evolve. When this system permeability is translated into the context of collaborative production, it manifests in the mass importation of ideas and labour. Much as open systems in nature, open systems in production grow through free exchange with the surrounding environment. As free labour is absorbed into shared economic practices, the creative potential for self-organization (or *autopoesis*) is continually replenished.

As both an emergent technology and an emergent social practice, collaborative production or P2P production represents a strong example of open systems in economic production. The principle behind P2P is the voluntary participation between *equipotent* partners (Bauwens, 2005). Unlike the structural vulnerability of centralized command and control systems, P2P networks are highly distributed. Collaborating across networks, P2P communities form robust political and economic ecologies that eliminate the need for intermediaries. In distributed peer ecologies, such as file sharing, grid computing and instant messaging, any computer node can directly connect to any other. Unlike traditional client/server modes of networking,

P2P networks operate independently of any single Web server; all resources (including storage space and computing power) are provided by clients. As Berman and Annexstein (2003, p. 2) elaborate:

> At a basic conceptual level, P2P provides access to information without the need for a third party web server. Web servers often provide significant barriers since they are controlled by Internet service providers and third party administrators. The administration of web servers requires addressing many technical issues such as security, reliability, hardware, and software maintenance issues. In P2P technology there are virtually no management or administrative issues, since all system resources are maintained in a 'virtual grid' by individual users at the 'edges' of the Internet.

The success of peer production in the development of OSS has provided a dynamic model of shared production that has begun to influence many other fields. The collaborative online encyclopedia Wikipedia, for example, is emerging as a dynamic tool for researchers and layman alike. Carrying the slogan 'The Free Encyclopedia that anyone can edit', Wikipedia is the first collaboratively constructed encyclopedia built upon a democratic production regime. The basis of Wikipedia is a free authorship tool called a Wiki. Similar to HTML, Wikis are designed to permit multiple users to edit and link documents. Generating layered archives of changes made, Wikis allow for mass collaboration around continuously expanding production.

As an emergent mode of production, P2P not only 'flattens' the organizational pyramid, but it also creates a globally distributed ecology of exchange without recourse to higher authority at all. Moving beyond the one-to-many logic characteristic of industrial manufacturing, P2P introduces network logic. Ironically, it is this very feature that makes P2P so attractive to industrial organizations. Eager to benefit from the voluntary nature of P2P collaboration, business strategists are now struggling to integrate P2P ecologies within their development cycles. Internet companies like Amazon.com and Ebay, for example, have produced compelling business models by directly integrating participative feedback into their service structures. By supporting the contributions of 'prosumer' (producer/consumer) communities, private companies empower an army of volunteers to perform free quality improvement.

What makes P2P structures specifically different from other modes of production is that they do not rely on monetary incentives or fixed hierarchical organization. P2P is an isomorphic mode of organization in which an infinite density of point-to-point connections neutralizes the need for centralized authority. In P2P projects such as OSS, resources are contributed spontaneously. Formal authority is 'organic', emerging and receding with the domain-based expertise needed to complete specific tasks. In P2P production, authority does not disappear, but neither does it cohere in permanent structures. It is literally 'person to person', i.e. production which is dependent upon the voluntary participation of partners.

In both the public and private domains P2P has become an essential infrastructure because of its global reach. In the field of education, P2P is emerging as a promising framework as well (Berman and Annexstein, 2003). 'Helpmate', for example, is a Web-based P2P environment implemented by the Physics Department

at Coleraine University. Helpmate is designed to allow educators to share and modify documents in real time from anywhere in the world. 'Edutella', another example of P2P, is a software-enabled P2P resource for highly distributed query processing. Edutella is specifically designed to enable free collaborative support for a global knowledge-building community. In using P2P educational resources like Helpmate and Edutella, university instructors and students are able to voluntarily share their latest research across widely distributed regions of the globe.

Perhaps the most ambitious P2P project for academic collaboration is 'LionShare'. LionShare is an open source environment developed by Penn State University that uses a mixed open/closed architecture (LionShare White Paper, 2005). LionShare combines P2P file exchange with a user authentication system. The stated goal of the LionShare project is to enable students and researchers to participate in the worldwide exchange of knowledge. While 'PeerServers' are deployed for centralized support in LionShare, peer nodes are free to share files throughout the entire academic network. LionShare utilizes the same open source protocol as the popular file-sharing application 'Limewire', allowing anyone to contribute to the development of the LionShare network. In addition to Penn State, partner institutions such as Simon Fraser University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, are developing complimentary applications to expand LionShare.

The value of distributed P2P ecologies like Wikipedia, Helpmate, Edutella and LionShare is that anyone who cares to contribute to ongoing development can do so. Wikipedia, for example, currently has more than 2.5 million articles, in several languages and is constantly growing in size and quality. As the number of contributors to Wikipedia increases, the total capacity of the Wikipedia encyclopedia increases as well. To realize this same dynamic in the context of knowledge and learning could be hugely beneficial. The possibility of enabling shared customizable resources in support of collaborative learning communities could have revolutionary implications for education around the world.

6. TOWARDS A POLITICS OF INFORMATION

Let us conclude this paper by summarizing the ideas discussed above before considering what lies before us in our goal of constructing a politics of information. Information politics is crucial to understanding contemporary educational policy and indeed the shifting forces at work in the globalization of education; but it is also a form of politics that requires an advanced understanding of networks.

To understand the key challenges we face in the twenty-first century it is important to consider the nature of information, particularly the network infrastructure that underlies it. If it is true that learning and information are the vital elements in a new political economy that links space, knowledge and capital, an understanding of networks is vital to any theory of information politics. On the strong view held by Capra, human social networks are self-generating networks of communication that function in much the same way as open systems in nature. For many thinkers, the capacity for open collaboration provided by networks represents the emergence of

an entirely new mode of social, political and economic organization. As Castells suggests, it is in understanding the potential of networks to facilitate entirely novel practices that we come to construct a politics of information. In addition to the command-and-control regimes characteristic of industrial production, open networks make possible a third mode of production beyond both state and capital market. Much as open systems in nature, open systems in social production depend upon the free exchange of ideas and labour. As free labour and ideas are joined together in shared social, political and economic practices, the creative potential for self-organization is continually replenished. From the perspective of educational policy, harnessing this dynamic in the production of knowledge and learning could prove revolutionary.

Underlying all of these emergent changes in production is a democratic practice that is applicable to institutions of education as well. In order for educational institutions to effectively serve the needs of the twenty-first century, they will have to be transformed into educational networks. The key to educational networks is the use of a shared infrastructure. Without requiring the centralization of pedagogical tools and resources, P2P educational networks could enable institutions of education to collaborate together as educative communities. As ongoing projects in the educational sector already demonstrate, peer production is a viable architecture for an age of networks, and it provides a significant model for a politics of information as well.

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CHAPTER FOUR

NICHOLAS C. BURBULES

NETWORKS AS SPACES AND PLACES: THEIR IMPORTANCE FOR EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH COLLABORATION[1]

1. INTRODUCTION

People tend to think about the online networked environment as a *medium*; a path of point-to-point communication. The metaphors of wires or pipelines are used to suggest its means of transmission. And, in fact, many people use the network like a telephone or mail system to exchange messages, or to retrieve and download documents, web pages, and other resources, in one-to-one or one-to-many patterns. To the extent that it is a medium or pathway, however, the online networked environment is not *neutral* – it affects the form of information and the communication that occur within it. As many have noted, online text-based communication has features of both writing and speech; it is written, of course, but it is often spontaneous and unedited, like speech. Online communication is affected by whether it is synchronous or asynchronous. And it is shaped by the degree of anonymity provided by not being in immediate, face-to-face contact with one another; this can make people more frank and honest, perhaps, but also less sensitive to the effects of what they say upon others. This degree of impersonality can also make participants oblivious to irony, sarcasm, or intended humor. In all of these ways the online medium is not a neutral medium. These factors can affect the forms and outputs of research collaboration in various ways: the style of writing, the degree of familiarity or unfamiliarity collaborators feel with one another; the ways in which research groups deal with conflict and disagreement, etc. These point-to-point factors are significant, but the picture becomes more complex as we examine this phenomenon further.

2. NETWORKED SPACES

I want to argue here that it is more useful to think of the online environment as a *space*, a continuous location where people spend time, interact, and *do* things – for example, collaborating with others on a shared project. The fact that they inhabit a shared space shapes their collaboration in a fundamental way. I do not mean the medium/space distinction as a sharp or overly broad dichotomy; different online

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technologies are designed with one or the other sort of purpose predominantly in mind. Well-known social networking sites like MySpace or Facebook have elements of both. But to the extent that this is a useful distinction, it helps us see that the online, networked environment supports community-building, communication, and the sharing of resources in ways that are impossible to explain simply as a sum total of point-to-point exchanges. The system may be a network of connections; but we often experience that network as a continuous space of flows. When this online environment is seen as a space people occupy, and through which they *move*, new ways of thinking about it come to the fore.

First, start with the idea of mobility itself: movement defines, and is defined by, both space and time, transiting distance *d* in length of time *t*. Online mobility has a different character, since what 'moves' are electrons through cables, chips, wires, and screens – but what they carry (voices, images, information, etc.) often gives rise to a sense of *virtual* movement that defines, and is defined by, virtual space and time.[2] This is why 'distance education', for example, is becoming an anachronism: distance is not a primary factor in how such teaching and learning are accessed and experienced. The symbol '@' – normally transliterated as 'at' – is colloquially used as both a spatial ('meet Bob @ café') and temporal ('meet Bob @ 2:00') shorthand. But in the online environment, such as an e-mail address, '@' does not necessarily mean 'at': my e-mail address may appear to be 'at University of Illinois'; but someone else is not in the same sense 'at yahoo.com' (*where is* 'yahoo.com'?).[3]

The nature of our experience in networked environments is frequently of a *kind* of movement: the most obvious example is exploring the World Wide Web (Burbules, 2000). In following hyperlinks we do have a sense of moving across different semantic spaces: we can trace a kind of trail or pattern to our path; sometimes, we may feel lost. We might wonder, How did I get here? It is interesting, and significant in my view, that these links and pathways have both semantic as well as navigational characteristics (Burbules, 1997; 2002). An individual link may represent a point-to-point connection, but a hyperlinked space is a kind of rhizome (Burbules and Callister, 1996).

Here I want to foreground the question of mobility: we interact with these networked environments with the language, the subjective sensibility, and sometimes even the feeling of movement. In many networked settings this experience of movement is part of the pleasure of discovery. (Why else do we label web browsers with intrepid names like 'Explorer,' 'Navigator', and 'Safari'?) It is not just that one can be a virtual tourist and go visit web sites featuring the sights and sounds of sub-Saharan Africa; it is that even in looking for recipes or checking sport scores or sending birthday greetings to a cousin or reading an e-book there is a fluidity and flexibility to the way one can browse sites, or meander through texts, that feels liberating.

Second, online mobility is related to certain things that we can *do* in virtual space (and time): we can communicate, interact, observe, and even act upon objects 'from a distance'. The virtual, Paul Virilio writes, has the quality of simultaneity (Virilio, 1997). This idea of the extension of our senses and physical capabilities

suggests, to some, the emergence of a 'cyborg' self, a 'human + technology' entity that is both more and less than the fully enclosed and self-sufficient human self. This is not my main concern here, though I would point out that prostheses, pacemakers – or for that matter eyeglasses and telescopes – carried us over this bridge a long time ago. I am concerned with the experience of this extension as a transformation of space and time. When we look at a webcam, watching our child at play in preschool or checking the current weather in Lillehammer, Norway; when we turn off our coffee maker with a coded beep from our cell phone while we are driving toward work two miles away; when we have a synchronous ('real time', we like to say) conversation with a colleague from halfway around the world, discussing and simultaneously revising a draft book chapter we have posted in a shared writing space, we are, as I said earlier, doing more than just sending and receiving a series of electronic messages back and forth. We are inhabiting and doing things as actors in a virtual space (and time), and our *expectations*, our *habits*, our *relationships*, and our *values* are reshaped by the fact that we are actors in virtual space and time. 'Real' space and time do not disappear or become irrelevant; for one thing, they provide the experiences and the vocabulary that we carry over to the virtual domain as a way of making sense of it; furthermore, they provide a context that gives the sense of movement within virtual space and time part of its force (the fact that we *know* the colleague is halfway around the world; that the web sites we move between have been developed by people who never will meet each other; that we can 'fast forward' a video we are watching). But it is also true that for many people, their activities in virtual space and time provide a set of experiences and vocabulary through which they make sense of 'real' space and time too.

Third, our engagement with virtual space and time is linked to the fact of our embodiment (Boler, in review). We may have virtual identities and experiences, but these are not set against our 'real' embodied identities and experiences; on the contrary, our embodied selves, in interaction with a situation or set of virtual experiences, are *part of* what makes it seem or feel 'real' to us (e.g. how the field of view shifts as we turn our heads in a VR environment), the two domains cannot be understood apart from each other, or even less in opposition to each other.

Another way in which our bodies do not disappear or become irrelevant is that while our body's internal 'clocks', our needs for rest and for food, may move into the background of our awareness when we are in an immersive virtual experience, these needs have a way of intruding themselves upon us whether we like it or not – and, of course, without attention to such 'real' needs none of the rest would matter anyway.

This intimate connection is even more apparent with the growing interest in *haptics*: the use of touch and feel as the basis for a human/machine interface. Control gloves were one of the first areas explored in this domain: one can, wearing a glove containing sensors, move, pick up, and manipulate objects in a virtual world (remember the scene in the movie *Disclosure* where the character is rifling though folders in a digital file drawer); or to control robotic machines that translate one's movements into actions at another location (doctors routinely perform surgery now on patients in far-distant hospitals). One dimension of haptics is to strengthen the

sense of 'action at a distance': imagine being able to pick up a rock on the lunar surface, heft its weight, feel its texture, and so on.[4] Another dimension of haptics is to exploit the particular sensitivity of our sense of touch as the locus of experiencing a virtual domain, providing feedback not just through visual and auditory cues but through a tap on the shoulder, a vibration or change in temperature, or, for example, through a seat that allows us to 'move' through a virtual domain through movements of our body or shifts of our weight, while communicating back to us a subtle sense of movement or location that provides us with a way of orienting ourselves within a complex domain.

Finally, there are questions of embodiment and identity. For Sherry Turkle, the Internet is a zone of enormous creativity and experimentation in forming virtual identities (Turkle, 1995). Decoupled from the apparent one-to-one association of body and identity, participants online are exploring identities, perspectives, and modes of interaction that are not constrained by their 'real' selves: pretending to be a character of the opposite gender in a chat room, putting out provocative opinions that are not necessarily one's own, just to see where the discussion will take them, and so on. For many people these can be tremendously liberating experiments. These are not necessarily *false* identities; they may in fact involve exploring aspects or extrapolations of one's actual identity that cannot be enacted without disapproval, harm or other consequences in one's ordinary life. So, again, 'real' versus 'false' identities is too neat a dichotomy, which does not capture the ways in which these can be different *versions* of one's identity. People sometimes say that these virtual identities are in fact more truly who they feel themselves to be.

To be sure, these experiments in identity can be subject to abuses – where playing with an alternative identity can become impersonation or deception (the legendary 'Alex' affair, in which a male psychiatrist posed in a women-only chat room as a character named Joan) (Turkle, 1995, pp. 228–230) or where playful online interactions can have dire real-world consequences (a rape in cyberspace) (Turkle, 1995, pp. 250–254) or where participants cannot integrate their various selves into a coherent identity (i.e. a form of schizophrenia), or where they can no longer differentiate between the real and the virtual (Turkle, 1995, pp. 258–264).

An MCI commercial once said, when you are online, there is no race, no gender, no disability. This is not really true: all of these factors clearly impinge on who is participating online, who is not (the digital divide), and on how those who are online interact with each other – many assume they can identify race or gender just by others' speech patterns, for example.[5] People do not *lose* their embodied identities when they act anonymously or pretend to be other than what they are. But the relative anonymity of online interaction can suppress the effects of prejudice or discrimination. Others are forced to deal more with the content of what one says or does, not necessarily with what one looks like. It is important to remember that the embodied experience for many people is seriously limited: by disability, infirmity, illness, chronic pain, isolation, or a physical appearance that leads others to prejudge, ignore, or despise them. For many of these people, their virtual identities expand their opportunities and sense of efficacy.

In the end, it is not the existence of new technologies that has raised questions about the necessity of our bodies for our sense of identity; it is a much larger cultural shift that foregrounds the 'performative' rather than 'essential' character of our embodied selves. Every day people play at other roles in relation to gender, race, sexuality, etc., regardless of their 'bodily' facts. For others, I have tried to make clear, the embodied self is seen as an artificial constraint, falsely prioritizing *one* dimension of identity (which can itself be a changeable social construction) over others. For the different, the hybrid, the disabled, and others, it is experienced as tremendously liberating *not* to allow an embodied physical 'fact' to be so determining; and the online environment is proving a fascinating zone of experimentation in how people can move beyond these embodied physical facts, not necessarily for the sake of 'escaping' them or denying them, but for *changing what they mean to themselves and to others*.

But there is another stage of transformation. Eventually, the sense of inhabitance, familiarity, and comfort people feel in virtual space and time – especially when these are experienced in conjunction with the similar engagements of other people – achieve a further qualitative shift: from virtual *spaces* to virtual *places*.

3. NETWORKED PLACES

Calling the online environment a space captures the idea of movement and activity within it, the possibility of discovering meaningful connections between elements found there; but it does not capture the distinctive ways in which people can make a space familiar, make it *their* space – make it a *place*. This shift from thinking in terms of spaces to places reflects an important theoretical and practical difference. A place is a socially or subjectively meaningful space. It has an objective, locational dimension: people can look for a place, find it, move within it. But it also *means* something important to a person or a group of people, and this latter, more subjective, dimension may or may not be communicable to others. When people are in a *place*, they know where they are, and what it means to be there. Place also has an important temporal dimension, because places emerge, change, and develop diachronically: a space may be a place at one point in time, but not earlier or later; or it may become a different kind of place.[6]

We might not just visit a space; after a while we move in, start to rearrange the furniture, so to speak, and make it comfortable. Spaces are transformed by such activities. And, as I have mentioned, this is not necessarily an individual endeavor, but can be a collective one – indeed, it is often the quality of a space as a *shared space* that plays a crucial role in its development into a *place*. Things happen there, memorable things (whether pleasant or unpleasant, but *important*), which mark the space as a place ('this is where it happened'). Places become familiar, acclimated to us as we are to them. They become marked by various social conventions (rules, norms, customs, vocabularies). They become, in many cases, a locus of community. In all of these respects a relatively objective space and time, a pretransformative given, becomes something marked, signified, *important*: and in this both the space

and those inhabiting it are changed in relation to each other. A place is a special, important kind of space; but those occupying it also stand in a different relation to the space, and to each other, because they are there. This dynamic is true of spaces and places generally (a crossroads, a battlefield, a classroom, a lovers lane), not only online spaces and places.

It is possible to theorize more broadly what is going on here. There are two distinctive ways in which we turn spaces into places.[7] One is by *mapping*: by developing schemata that represent the space, identify important points within it, and facilitate movement within it. A map is never an exact replica (as the story goes, the only map that would be identical would be an exact copy of the original, which would be useless as a map) – a map always simplifies, selects, and schematizes the original, and it is the particular way in which this simplification, selection, and schematization occur that makes this version of the space a place. These are pragmatic activities; we make certain, and not other, choices because they allow us to do things in the space that are meaningful and important to us. There can be multiple maps, and in this sense they constitute different *places*, even when they refer to the same space.

There are also maps that represent patterns of use. Trails that are worn by many feet tramping through forests, or across campus greens, are maps of a sort. Again, they simplify, select, and schematize a space: they identify what is important to people, they mark out key places, they facilitate movement. They also indicate another important characteristic of maps: how their use can also shape and transform the space they represent. This can be seen at work in the World Wide Web, for example, through frequency indicators: page counters, for example, as well as ratings of 'most frequently visited' sites. Such representations tend to influence patterns of future use, because they influence how search engines pick out and identify sites, which sites get selected for indexes, and so on. Viewed pragmatically, the representation is not discrete from the thing represented; it acts upon and is acted upon by it.

Yet another kind of map is one showing relations of relative centrality and relative periphery, from some point or points of reference. The repeated use of 'relative' here is not accidental: there can be no absolute center of a space that is any more necessary than any other – in fact, it is as true to say that a center is *defined by* the map, as to say that the map begins from a center. And a more rhizomic map may have no single center at all. But a map of relative centrality and periphery can still provide a way of simplifying, selecting, and schematizing the pragmatic relation of what is more or less useful or relevant to a given purpose, or set of purposes. This sort of endeavor can be highly useful even though there is nothing necessary about this particular mapping, even if others would map it differently – indeed, we should expect this to be true in order for such maps of relative centrality and periphery to be useful to different people (because their purposes and criteria will differ). In sum, a map does two things simultaneously: it marks significant places; and it makes places significant by marking them.

The second distinctive way in which spaces become places is through *architecture*. A space becomes a place when we build into it enduring structures. Often we live in these structures, work in them, observe or admire them. We are changed

by these things we create as we change them – the relation runs both ways. Architecture here is not only the initial design or building, but the transformation of it over time; in this sense, we always help build the structures we occupy, and the structures are not fully finished until they have been used for a while (in one sense, then, they are never 'finished'). Here I do not mean architecture only in the literal sense of buildings and bridges; there are architectures also of language, of customs, of complex practices and activities (e.g. games); all of these can play a role in transforming a space into a place.

Architectures transform not only a space but the patterns of activity for those who occupy them. I think that these patterns can be viewed along five polarities:

1. Movement/stasis
2. Interaction/isolation
3. Publicity/privacy
4. Visibility/hiddenness
5. Enclosure/exclusion

These interrelated dynamics shape the ways in which participants operate within a space, and the particular constellation of them gives a space its distinctive character as a certain kind of place: for example, structures along the polarity of isolation, hiddenness, and privacy, versus those emphasizing visibility, interaction, and publicity.

1. Structures facilitate, direct, or inhibit movement. They anticipate the way in which people are likely to navigate a space, but by making this assumption they also tend to direct it. In an art museum, for example, this is reflected in choices such as what exhibits to put near each other, and where to put doorways. Where will people want to pause, and which paintings will they want to linger over? Yet there are substantive assumptions at work here as well: say one wants to learn about historical periods in art, but finds that the rooms have been organized by subject matter or styles of painting; all the information is there the visitor might want, but not in a pattern that supports the inferences he or she is trying to make. Which room to start with? Where to go next? The visitor's confusion and uncertainty may also be a kind of paralysis, even though the design of the museum is, on its own terms, quite clear and easily navigated.

2. The design of spaces also communicates assumptions and expectations about social interaction. Architectures, by directing movement, create avenues to bring people together or barriers to keep them apart. Where will crowds tend to congregate, for example? Architectures also make assumptions about the kinds of things people will be doing in a space, and whether they want to be doing it with others or alone. Again, these assumptions also shape behaviors: if a telephone booth is only big enough for one person, three girl friends cannot all talk to their friend at the same time; they have to decide who gets to talk first, which may start an argument.

3. Publicity and privacy constitute a slightly different issue, which is the extent to which an architecture allows or inhibits the disclosure of the participants' selves, their activities, and not only their words and ideas, to others (and vice versa). Are walls transparent; or are there walls at all? Can you be seen, or do you always know

you might be seen, and how does this tend to encourage or discourage certain things you might do? Can you *choose* when you can be seen, and when you do not want to be?

4. Visibility and hiddenness, here, refer to the transparency of architectures, to what they disclose or conceal within, and to what they disclose or conceal about themselves. This is not quite the same as publicity and privacy, because here what is exposed or hidden are characteristics of the architecture itself. Does a wall close off a room that only some people know how to get to? Where does this doorway lead, and who is allowed through it?

5. Architectures also operate through enclosure and exclusion; what (or who) is counted in and what is counted out. Some structures are intended to define a community made special in its own eyes by its privileged access and made to feel safe so that others viewed as less worthy will not interfere. The very attractions of such a partitioned space give rise to its limitations: the risk of complacency and numbing homogeneity. If we assume that certain kinds of change and development can only come from encounters with new and challenging ideas, this architecture of enclosure and exclusion may seem less like a protective shell, and more like a self-built prison.

There is much more to be said about architecture and the dynamics of shaping spaces into places; but here I have tried to indicate how specific design features express assumptions about social dynamics, about values, about knowledge, and substantive subject matter; in this, I have tried to enlarge the concept of 'architecture' to mean much more than just the design of rooms and buildings. Architectures reveal and conceal; they facilitate and discourage; they welcome and exclude; they direct and redirect and inhibit certain choices. In all this, architectures assume particular modes of interest, involvement, interaction, and imagination – and in these assumptions tend to bring them about (or to suppress other modes).

In summary, I have explained two different ways in which spaces become places. The first is mapping, which is in some ways a more reactive process; a process of representing a space in order to be able to move and work within it. A mapped space takes on the character of a place for those who understand and can use the map. The second way in which spaces become places is through architectures; enduring structures that reconfigure spaces. This is in some ways a more active process, in which the space is not only represented (mapped) but transformed. There are at least five ways, I have suggested, in which this transformation affects not only the configuration of space, but the activities of the people who operate within it. These dimensions determine the kind of place it is. I do not mean to argue that the activities of mapping and architecture are utterly unrelated or dichotomous: sometimes a map is prefatory to designing a structure (a blueprint is a kind of map, in fact); sometimes a large, complex architectural layout includes maps or directional markers within it as a way of helping people get around; trails, as I describe them here, have features of both. But the ways in which mapping and architecture influence navigation and meaning-making are different; and they suggest something important, I think, about collaborative research environments.

4. CONCLUSION: RESEARCH COLLABORATION IN NETWORKED SPACES AND PLACES

As mentioned, for most contemporary academics the networked online environment is a familiar facilitator of their research and collaboration: they may review previous literature and gather sources through online searches; they may write their articles on a computer; they may e-mail drafts to colleagues for review and feedback; they may cowrite a piece by sending it back and forth to others; they may post a pre-publication version on a web site; and they may submit it to a journal electronically, where it might also be published online. These are now commonplaces.

My interests here go farther. Research collaboration is not only a process of cowriting text, but a process of communication, community building, and co-construction of knowledge. Where a set of research relations develop over time, they inevitably entail the personal and social elements of identity – who people are; their affections, conflicts, and prejudices; and often their embodied identities as well. These are factors in face-to-face or online networked spaces; and in both domains, part of the collaborative dynamic involves creating shared *places* (socially meaningful spaces) that locate and facilitate the collaboration by shaping how (and where) these social dynamics work themselves out (what happens around the water cooler or coffee machine; how the conference room is arranged and furnished; what sort of video-conferencing technology is used, and so on). These sorts of factors, in turn, often shape the *kind* of collaboration that develops: which voices are dominant, and which are marginalized; how disputes are resolved; whether the knowledge produced is viewed as shared or proprietary; etc.

If this argument has merit, it could be carried even further: to examine more systematically the social 'architecture' of research collaboration, in other words, the ways in which the structure of spaces/places drives or encourages certain ways of working or interacting together (and subject to the polar dynamics of movement/stasis; interaction/isolation; publicity/privacy; visibility/hiddenness; and enclosure/exclusion discussed previously). These may entail conscious elements of design and organization (how the chairs around a table are positioned) or they may influence people quite unconsciously. At the same time, there are 'maps' of collaboration, individually or collectively formed patterns of understanding – which might be tacit, not explicit – that interpret or define the spaces/places where certain kinds of activity are expected to happen, where certain rules or norms that may apply elsewhere do not apply, where various motivations or discouragements come into play. Just as the dynamics of communication, community building, and co-construction of knowledge are central to research collaboration, it is important to see these as socially constructed and situated dynamics.

When we are dealing with online networked collaborative spaces, all of these same factors are operating. The lack of face-to-face contact, for example, does not mean that the factors of identity, embodiment, and place disappear – rather, that lack of contact becomes a condition of *this sort of* collaborative space. It facilitates some interactions, as it inhibits others; and it is not possible to predict generally what sorts of effects it will have. The relative impersonality of a non-face-to-face context is to

some participants liberating, to others alienating. The fact that visual or auditory cues may be missing can add to, or subtract from, the ways people focus on and interpret what is said or written by others. The real or virtual distance people feel may actually draw the group more closely together. I think it is important to get beyond conventional assumptions or expectations to recognize that in this new environment things often work themselves out in unexpected and even counterintuitive ways.

In closing, let me give a couple of brief examples. In one of the papers cited in this essay (Burbules and Callister, 1996), the current author and a coauthor developed a first draft of the text by pasting together a series of short e-mails they had written to each other over some time, examining the topic. These segments, each a paragraph or two in length, were preserved in the text to give the paper a dialogical quality. Since the paper was dealing with hypertext as a theme, the question of the sequencing of the sections, and the possibility that in a hypertext version of the piece they might have been accessed in a very different order, was itself a matter of concern for the content – as well as the form – of the argument. In this fairly simple example, the particular collaborative technology used tended to produce a kind of cowriting that was preserved in the architecture, if you will, of the final text; at the same time, it created a particular relation between the authors, supporting a more dialogical and equal mode of production that raised question with our usual ways of thinking about coauthorship and the convention of listing one author's name first; beyond this, it provided an opportunity to problematize the conventional linear form of text and argumentation, in favor of a more hypertextual mode. It is not my point that the technology created an utterly unprecedented kind of collaboration – indeed, the entire process could have been replicated in more conventional communicative and writing practices – but rather, that the affordances of this particular technology provided an opportunity to reflect upon and question some of those more conventional methods and practices, and the social relations they implicitly entail.

To provide a different example, imagine a collaborative research study between school teachers and university researchers, in disparate locations, coanalyzing video data gathered from cameras located in classrooms. The authors are not in the same location, but to the extent that they occupy this virtual collaborative space, they come to feel part of a research community; and the fact that they are observing and analyzing common video data provides an even stronger sense that they were all, virtually, 'in' the same classroom. Over time this gives the group a stronger sense of shared experience and common identity. Perhaps the events they witness and discuss are extremely dramatic, reinforcing this sense of community. Perhaps in this context they want to debate the issues of privacy raised by having cameras in a classroom. Perhaps they are using videoconferencing software themselves, raising further the same issues about publicity and privacy for themselves – perhaps someone raises the possibility of a third party accessing *their* interactions to conduct a research study on the nature of online research collaborations. Or, perhaps, they prefer *not* to use videoconferencing, in order to maintain some degree of anonymity and distance; and so, being in disparate locations, they might not know who among them are school teachers and who are university professors, alleviating the typical status imbalances and conflicts that typically characterize such collaborative research groups. Here,

again, methods, practices, and social relations are not only influenced and changed – they are also opened up for reflective questioning by the *possibility* of doing things in a very different way.

NOTES

[1] This argument is developed and expanded from a keynote address given at Lillehammer University, in Norway (Burbules, 2003), and from a longer book chapter (Burbules, 2005).

[2] This usage of 'the virtual' is developed at length in (Burbules, 2005).

[3] This issue is explored very perceptively in Kawash, 1997, whose work we draw upon in Burbules and Callister, 2000.

[4] This description may trouble some readers: '*You* aren't picking it up, but directing a robotic arm to do so in another location.' Apparently so. But imagine lots of cases that blur this distinction: what if I am using my prosthetic arm; what if I am using a clamp in my hand to pick something up that is hot – in such cases do we not say 'I picked it up?'

[5] An insightful analysis of this same MCI commercial was offered by Boler, 2001.

[6] On 'place' as an educational concept see for example Gruenewald, 2003, which includes an excellent bibliography; McKie, 2000; and Kolb, 2000.

[7] Some of these ideas were first explored in Burbules and Callister, 2000. See also Dodge and Kitchin, 2001.

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CHAPTER FIVE

BERT LAMBEIR AND STEFAN RAMAEKERS

THE ROLE OF ELECTRONIC READING AND WRITING IN NETWORKING AND IN EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES IT MAKE?

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. The word is spread

There is a strong consensus in literature on the subject, that the emergence of electronic texts, mostly though not exclusively understood as hypertexts, has led to a significant change in the practices of reading and writing and in related epistemological issues. It is worth investigating whether this also has implications for the manner in which educational research is conducted.

It is often argued that electronic texts have laid aside their materiality and have become ungraspable in multiple ways. They are commonly understood as texts, composed of blocks of texts, 'a series of text chunks connected by links which offer the reader different pathways' (Nelson in Landow, 1992). Other descriptions of hypertext also refer to its infinity and multiplicity: Barthes speaks of 'text composed of blocks of words (or images) linked electronically by multiple paths, chains, or trails in an open-ended, perpetually unfinished textuality described by the terms *links*, *node*, *network*, *web*, and *path*' (in Landow, 1992). Or, hypertext can be seen as 'a way of thinking, a way of writing, that contains multiple lines of association; that is organized not only linearly, but laterally; that follows, not a single hierarchical outline, but a labyrinth of continually returning, crisscrossing pathways' (Burbules, 2000).

A distinction is often made between hypertext and hypermedia, the former refers to text-based units, while the latter expands the notion of text beyond the solely verbal, including images, maps, movie fragments, diagrams, and sounds. In our text, we use the term 'hypertext' or electronic text to refer to the medium that contains both verbal and non-verbal information.

As one might expect, the profound changes in the nature of textuality coincides with the advent of a new mode of reading and writing. Traditional writing is depicted as originating from a more or less coherent figure of the author, who is responsible for the gradual unfolding of the text. Nobody argues that the writer knows in

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advance exactly what he/she wants to say, or that the line of the story is strictly linear and cumulative. Rather, it is argued that a text has a single (or at best a limited number of theme(s) and that a writer makes his/her way through the material, giving it a particular shape by making choices and by following certain routes while leaving others aside. In this model, the writer shows the reader the path through the text's contents and invites the reader to accept his/her interpretation.

It is often argued that Electronic writing, rather than attempting to expound an argument privileges the arrangement of topics. It loses its linear character as a consequence of cutting and pasting, inserting and deleting, and also through the exchange of small and larger text blocks. Bolter (1991) calls this topographical writing as it involves the mapping and charting of texts. It is notable that Bolter's description of this process emphasizes the visual aspects of the text. Technology enables us to give visual expression to our acts of manipulation.

Electronic texts are said to change the author–reader relationship: they are seen as the hinge of the 'shift from an author-controlled textual environment … to a reader-controlled environment, infinitely flexible and open to manipulation' (Peters and Lankshear, 1996, p. 62). The new mode of writing challenges the traditional conception of authorship in the sense that it grants the writer a kind of freedom not commonly associated with writing books. This is because the writer is no longer bound neither by the limited space of the book, nor by the focus concerning content, or the fixity of his/her product.

In the case of hypertextual writing, the writing process is, theoretically speaking, infinite. There is no beginning and no end. The insertion of additional text chunks, and the inclusion of new links, need never cease. When a writer includes active hyperlinks to other authors' material, the product becomes the result of co-authorship. We can imagine instances of hypertextuality in which it is hard to attribute authorship (or even state how many authors there are). In a sense, an author is liberated from the constraints of his/her authorship. We might even say that electronic texts herald the 'death of the author'.

Hypertext is a meta-text without centre that is said to contain at least as many nodal points as the reader can choose reading paths. It is multi-vocal – it does not propose or defend a particular perspective or narrative: 'The beauty of Hypertext is … that it propels us from the straitened "either/or" world that print has come to represent and into a universe where the "and/and/and" is always possible. It is an environment more conducive to relativistic philosophy and analysis, where no single account is privileged over any others' (Douglas, 1998, p. 155).

Writing hypertext is presenting a story that is all over the place – a *multi-story*, a collection of data, which allows for connections but not necessarily transparent ones. Instead of creating a work and placing it (by the list of references) into a network, hypertext realizes the creation and visualization of a web, of a network itself.

Heim (1993) focuses on the boundlessness of hypertext and of the hypertextual environment. Instead of seeing hypertext as just another form of traditional text, it is perceived as an informational environment that links ideas to one another in multiple ways. Electronic texts are said to be inclusive for they connect particles of multiple kinds of information. The amalgam of different modes of information is the first

expression of this inclusion. Hypertexts are inclusive in another sense as well: whereas a book or 'classical' text is understood as a closed entity, hypertext is valued for its inherent capacity to break down the traditional hierarchy within and between texts – it is difficult to identify a master narrative. Finally, a digital text cannot be perceived as an 'entity', a discrete unit separate from other units lined up on the shelf. It is radically connected.

Such a text is always unfinished, and remains open. There is always room for the different, the other, in the montages of this sort of text. By shunning a tyrannical voice whilst celebrating complexity, the hypertext cannot be rendered transparent.

Writing hypertext deconstructs an initial narrative, by attaching additional text units that undermine the dominance of the earlier perspective – it is (almost) contradictory breaking up reality by enlarging it infinitely.

1.2. Research and electronic reading and writing

As researchers in the field of education, we are already familiar with electronic modes of reading and writing. Think for instance of the way in which we write articles together with colleagues from abroad. Each contributor writes parts of the text, sends it back and forth and eventually the parts are integrated so that the puzzle fits together (this at least happens to a certain extent). This is exemplified by the way in which conference proceedings are distributed. For instance, the proceedings of the annual conference of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain, are sent to its participants on CD, or are published online.

Other examples include the emergence of e-journals and the tendency to publish on personal web sites, as well as the possibilities for publishing on the web sites of research centres. The latter options allow the author either to present unfinished material, or to adapt, change, and perpetually renew their texts.

2. WHAT IS NEW

How profound are these changes? It remains unclear whether these practices only differ from older ones on a superficial level, or whether writing, reading, and working together as researchers has fundamentally changed.

2.1. The changes are first and foremost instrumental in nature

2.1.1. The book versus hypertext

The difference between the book (as representative of 'the traditional text') and the hypertext – not uncommon in literature – is exaggerated. While such an exaggeration helps to highlight the typical characteristics of different media, it tends to overlook important continuities. One can read an entire poem on the Web, and find

the same poem while glancing through a book. There is no sharp distinction between the book and the Web, only important differences in degree.

As one might argue 'Perhaps technology shows us where we went wrong in reading books. Perhaps we always should have read books in a dynamic way.' Hypertext, with its salient visualization, resulting from the use of hyperlinks, clearly encourages 'glancing', 'reading through' the text, clicking from one page to another, without there being a 'need' to read the entire text. This does not imply however that, because of the obvious lack of such visualization in books, people did not (and do not) glance through books.

2.1.2. The fast and the various

Technological developments have caused reading and writing to speed up. The pace of finding relevant information, selecting useful parts [CTRL + F], writing texts (i.e. integrating ideas and text blocks), sending it around for feedback, adapting, and updating texts, etc., has increased tremendously. Reading especially can be seen as searching: skimming and glancing through the text in order to find that key word, that relevant passage, that missing link. The amount of information one has access to, the number of people one can contact and collaborate with, the number and kind of sources one can integrate in one's work, the amount of text one can produce and 'publish' oneself, etc., has enlarged no less.

Digital texts allow us to consult and to present material in a more carefully arranged, well-structured manner. Important graphics or tables can be hidden by means of links and pop-ups. One can have different pages on the screen at the same time, use search functions to structure the text and one can more easily and broadly link different texts to each other – either for personal use, or with an eye to publication.

The new media allow us to present any kind of text in an attractive and flashy way. Different colours, fonts, sounds, movies, or pictures have become an integral part of the reading and writing experiences. Indeed, presenting different texts, messages, and images simultaneously is a common publishing strategy. A plain text must almost certainly be dull and boring.

2.2. Philosophical issues

Philosophically speaking, these changes do not seem to bring much new, or they run into substantive criticisms.

2.2.1. Executing the author

Does what has been claimed about electronic texts differ substantially from what has been said about the 'nature' of texts in general? Has not the same already been said by Derrida in his writings concerning deconstruction? It has been argued in research reports that 'ordinary' texts have (theoretically speaking) no boundaries and are resistant to closure as meaning is always shifting (cf. e.g. Stronach and MacLure, 1997).

Many critics have also argued that, in a sense, the author is necessarily liberated: meaning is no longer an author's exclusive possession, but is in irretrievable ways crossed by the cultural, social, and historical conditions of the language he/she uses. The idea that an author is no longer the unique origin and bearer of the meaning of his/her text is not peculiar to the development of new technologies and 'new' modes of writing.

Authors are not always easily identifiable, even in the case of books. This is not something peculiar to either hypertexts or e-writing in general. Even in classical texts it is not always clear who the author(s) is (are); the *Iliad*, attributed to Homer, was passed on (and adapted) by travelling minstrels. The Bible would be another example. Perhaps every instance of co-authorship raises these questions.

McCarty's misreading of the 'death of the author' helps to shed some light on the area under discussion. Here is McCarty: '[I]t becomes difficult to see what might remain to ascribing a monograph to a particular author, with a particular biography, when concepts needed to underwrite the ascription, such as "plan", "intention" and "rational future", have been banished, as they are by Usher and Edwards....' (1997, p. 382). McCarty misses the point when linking the (postmodernist) critique of the 'plan', etc. directly to the (im)possibility of identifying (pointing at) an author. The point is rather that this identifiable author cannot claim exclusive possession of the ideas emerging in his/her writings (has an author ever been able to do that?). Furthermore, readers can attribute meanings to his/her writings other than the ones he/she had in mind.

The post-structuralist critique of the idea that an author is the unique origin and bearer of the meaning of his/her text precedes the related claim made on the basis of the development of new technologies and 'new' writing modes. Perhaps we should rather say that this development might be read as an exemplification of that critique.

In his novels *Foucault's pendulum* and *Baudolino* Umberto Eco purposefully plays with the loss of this type of authorship. Eco – as the identifiable author of this novel – has placed an enormous number of references (allusions, quotations, echoes from other works, jokes, etc.) in these novels. It is however not a precondition for enjoying the book that the reader should note all these references: 'There's no need to see *all* the references. That is actually quite impossible, for sometimes I make jokes for a very select audience. Sometimes I address only two people' (Eco, in Vanegeren, 2001, p. 174, our translation). Eco goes on to say that: 'The exact number of references in *Foucault's pendulum* is a mystery' (ibid.). The mistake is to think that there is such a thing as 'the meaning' that an author has put in his/her novel, and that one can only understand 'the point' of this novel when one has grasped that meaning. Not only is it impossible to notice everything that the author has put into a text; it is also possible that readers will 'notice' references the author did not intend to make.

2.2.2. Napoleon's figs

It has also already been argued, in the context of discussions about deconstruction-ism, that there are limits to the interpretations that can be made. The boundlessness

and unfinishedness of hypertexts and e-writing has its limits. Reader control only goes so far.

The limits of an interpretation are marked by the criteria that reside in the language the interpreter uses, hence shares, with others. Wittgenstein's question, 'Is the word ever actually used in this way in the language, in which it has its original home',[1] is helpful here. Words have their original home in a language. This 'original home' is not fixed once and for all, but it forms the background for our understanding of the world and of others. Interpretations (uses of words), which deviate from this background, can be imagined, but this only goes so far. At some point (which cannot be determined beforehand, but needs to be established at the time of the interpretation), an interpretation or use of language cannot be accepted. The following example by Umberto Eco can illustrate this point. The example is about a basket of figs, which also contains a letter, that someone finds on a deserted beach: '[T]he interpreter would not be entitled to say that the message can mean *everything*. It can mean many things, but there are senses that would be preposterous to suggest. I do not think that there can be somebody eager to say that it means that Napoleon died in May 1821; but to challenge such a far-fetched reading can be a reasonable starting point for concluding that there is at least something which that message cannot positively say.' Though not fixed, a language puts constraints on what can be reasonably said: 'No reader-oriented theory can avoid such [constraints]' (Eco, 1990, pp. 5–6).

2.2.3. Normal understanding

When it comes to writing, there is a normativity at issue that cannot be ignored.

2.2.3.1. Understanding science

No matter how articles are written, they need to contain an argument if they are to be considered as scientific articles. The normativity at issue here is one that is entailed by the demands of the scientific community, one of which is the demand for setting out an argument. As researchers in the field of education we do not, in all honesty, have the liberty to write in any way we like. One only needs to remember the still ongoing debate about the status of narrative research. Only some deviation from the norm is allowed – and even then a lot depends on the journal's editor and on how well you know her/him. To count in academia one needs to pay a price, and it is a price educational researchers are willing to pay.

In a sense this kind of normativity is only conventional. We do not have to conform; there are other ways of publishing one's papers, e.g. on one's personal web sites; it is only a matter, then, of being willing to suffer the consequences of this kind of decision.

We started e-writing this text. Or rather, we started doing something we thought could reasonably be taken for e-writing. We started writing this text in small paragraphs in electronic format; we each wrote some paragraphs, and sent these to each other for comments, again in the form of small paragraphs in electronic format.

Eventually we started ordering them, elaborating on some of them, constructing a more or less coherent text – it needs to be presented at a conference after all.

2.2.3.2. Understanding 'reading' and 'writing'

There is however a deeper kind of normativity at work here when it comes to writing and reading. It is the kind of normativity that is entailed in what Wittgenstein meant by agreement in judgements (Wittgenstein, 1953, pp. 241–242). This agreement pertains to the conditions of what it makes sense to say about writing and reading.

Here the concept of 'condition' is used in the sense pointed out by Cavell, who draws attention to its derivation, the Latin *condire*, talking together, which, as he adds, is connected with the public, the objective (Cavell, 1988, p. 39). 'Condition', in Cavell's understanding, does not point to some arbitrary condition or situation, in which human beings can or cannot find themselves. Rather, it refers to a state, which we cannot not find ourselves in. Agreement in judgements is not agreement 'about' something – as in convention: coming together to decide on some issues – but means already 'being in agreement throughout, being in harmony, like pitches or tones, or clocks, or weighing scales, or columns of figures'; it means being 'mutually voiced', 'mutually attuned top to bottom' (Cavell, 1979, p. 32). Condition, as talking together, points to what constitutes us as the human beings we are, and also, in its active sense, to what we are prepared to take responsibility for. As Cavell puts this, conditions are 'terms, stipulations that define the nature and limits of an agreement, or the relations between parties, persons, or groups' (Cavell, 1988, p. 39). They mark the boundaries of meaningful speech, and when we stumble upon them, we cannot simply overthrow them, but are invited either to accept them (and perhaps, from within this previous acceptance, try to stretch and, who knows, change them by using them in ways so far unexplored) or face the possibility of losing the ability to make oneself intelligible.

It is this kind of (post-conventional) normativity that the concept of writing (and the concept of reading too) is subject to as well. Thinking and speaking about e-writing and e-reading inevitably happens within the conditions that mark the boundaries of what can be meaningfully said about writing. Words are being used, connected in particular ways; sentences are used, connected in particular ways; paragraphs are used, connected in particular ways…

The normativity attached to the concept of writing can, for example, be read off from the way the literary world has been struggling with the latest novel, *Zwerm* [Swarm], by the Flemisch novelist Peter Verhelst. Everyone seems to at least agree on the fact that *Swarm* is a novel – obviously, because it was published as a novel, and because new work was expected from that author – and on the fact that a summary of the novel cannot be given; but that is pretty much it. Two impressions:

> *Swarm* is a novel that unsettles everything, the writer's position as well as the reader's one. (Retrieved from http://www.vrtnieuws.be/nieuwsnet_master/versie2/nieuws/details/AG_KUNSTEN_GOUDENUIL_verhelst/index.shtml, 12 July 2006, own translation)

> *Sampling*, *mutating*, these are concepts fit for *Swarm*. The book is not just a novel it also aspires to be at the intersection of an inexhaustible collection of secondary texts. The story is dense, but everyone has the liberty to make links to texts that can be found everywhere (read: on the Web) and that generate a new meaning for the whole of the work. Verhelst has thrown a big fragmentation bomb into literature. No wonder many readers scratch their head when they want to evaluate *Swarm*. How do you judge something of which you do not even know the boundaries? (Retrieved from http://www.goddeau.com/content/view/2295, 12 July 2006, own translation)

For an English review, see http://www.nlpvf.nl/book/book2.php?Book=486 though this does not seem to capture the lively debate it has provoked in Flanders.

Another example in which the struggle with the normativity of the concept of writing emerges, is the book *Educational research undone: The Postmodern embrace* by Ian Stronach and Maggie MacLure. In chapter 7 of that book the authors try to present a deconstructive reading of 'a "Teachers as researchers" project, a study of teacher action research in the context of award-bearing courses and research degrees in UK higher education institutions' (Stronach and MacLure, 1997, p. 116). In chapter 8 they return to this analysis from the genuine concern that an important problem might not have been addressed:

> [A] problem can be seen in retrospect – critique and deconstruction become 'stages' of reading, insulated from each other. In the following account, we set out to extend the reflexive reach of our deconstruction by reducing that insulation, unravelling some of the textual manoeuvres of the author in the previous chapter. Put simply, our questions here are: what is left undone when we undo? What excesses and undigested remainders plague our accounts of excess and remainder? Where is the 'blind spot' around which the text, like all texts, must have been organized, the 'not-seen that both *opens and limits* visibility. (Derrida, 1976: 163, our emphasis) (Stronach and MacLure, 1997, p. 132)

What is interesting for our discussion of e-writing and e-reading is that Stronach and MacLure present chapter 8 in the form of a dialogue. They hope 'that this textual device may begin to unsettle our writing, however, crudely, by forcing narratively what we aspire to theoretically – a space between, wherein deconstructive readings may emerge' (ibid.). This structural device represents an attempt to stand at a distance from ordinary, argumentative, linear writing, hence from ordinary, etc. reading. Nevertheless, it quickly becomes clear that an argument is being developed, or illustrated, however minimally, throughout the dialogue. Stronach and MacLure bump against the boundaries of language.

2.2.4. Responsibility

The abdication of authorship, which places the emphasis on the reader, raises questions about responsibility. Putting the burden of interpretation into the hands of the reader might represent a symptom of an author's desire to extricate himself/herself

from taking responsibility for a text. Or more generally, it might be the symptom of a cultural change. We seem to be living in times in which making judgements on behalf of the other is tolerated less, or at any rate, is less unproblematic than before. Making judgements seems to be hyper-personalized. In a sense this is quite understandable. Currents in philosophy such as feminism, deconstructionism, and post-structuralism have gradually inscribed an indelible sensitivity to difference, otherness, and the alien in our self-understanding to the very point that 'doing something' (such as initiating someone into a practice) has all but become synonymous with 'doing (somebody an) injustice' – in the sense that the action imposes 'content', or 'shape', or 'substance' on somebody or something. As a consequence of this, a 'suspicion about ourselves' (Nietzsche, 1974, section 346) is heightened to extremes. As it achieves self-understanding, our contemporary culture seems to be haunted by what we could call 'postmodern agony', an indefinite, underlying but disturbing suspicion that whatever we do always already involves 'too much of the self' and 'not enough of the other'. The abdication of authorship in the dominant literature about e-writing exemplifies this form of self-understanding.

Another example is the continuing search for something 'other', something deeper perhaps, something more 'personal', something that does more justice to the private, something beyond the said – something ever more transparent. When announcing that they have devised the chapter in the shape of a dialogue, Stronach and MacLure add in a footnote:

> We have set out, jointly, to sharpen both sides of these formative arguments in the belief that they are important for taking our understanding of deconstruction further, and that they have pedagogic value. They make available our 'working' on these problems in ways that might give access (and further deconstructive purchase) to the reader. (Stronach and MacLure, 1997, pp. 143–144)

The feeling that seems to lie behind this is a sense that words cannot convey what we want to say. In Cavellian terms, this might be taken as a denial of whatever transparency the language we share has to offer.

Taken from the point of view of responsibility, hypertexts reflect scepticism, as Cavell understands this term. We might say that (the) author(s) tries (try) to lock themselves out of such texts: 'I must empty out *my* contribution to words, so that language itself, as if beyond me, exclusively takes over the responsibility for meaning' (Cavell, 1996, p. 339).

An example of disowning responsibility is a web site called www.elsewhere.org/promo that autonomously generates articles. When opening the web site, a 'postmodernist' essay is generated, of which the web page explains that it 'is completely meaningless and was randomly generated by the Postmodernism Generator'. 'Reassessing realism: Textual narrative in the works of Fellini', 'Lacanist obscurity and capitalist deconstruction', 'Postsemiotic cultural theory and structural neoconceptualist theory', 'Dialectic narrative in the works of Madonna' are just a few examples of essays that are generated each time the page is opened or refreshed. Interestingly, the web site's title is 'Communications from elsewhere'.

3. DIFFERENT REGIONS

At some point a quantitative difference can become a qualitative difference.[2] What eventually turns out to be not so new, may still hold the capacity to stretch our ordinary concepts, to affect the distinctions we ordinarily make, to put existing practices at stake, or to push our understanding of things into regions previously unimagined.

3.1. Words can slow you down

The shift to a reader-controlled textual environment makes it difficult for the reader to indulge himself/herself in a passive receptive attitude for the emphasis is on the choices the reader makes. The act of reading has become an act of deciding what hyperlinks one will follow, of choosing the pieces of texts (images and sounds) one will activate, and thus of writing the story one will read.

Electronic texts have lost their centres, have lost heart (every level is levelled down to equally valuable pieces of information). Therefore, it is the user's interest that necessarily functions more and more as the organizing principle for textual exploration – the reader must give the electronic text a heart, a 'meaning'. Hence, electronic media herald a revival of both constructivist theories and of the modern subject par excellence: the subject who creates meaning by linking textual fragments at his/her own discretion is no less than the origin of and reference for meaning and truth. The post-structuralist and postmodernist ideas hypertexts are said to exemplify and are paradoxically undermined by the conception of the subject that they generate.

Reading has become searching [Ctrl + F]; electronic texts encourage the reader to find those parts related to his/her interests, needs, and research aims. A text is then no longer 'another voice' empowered to thoroughly affect the reader's thoughts. An interesting (useful) text is one that confirms rather than disturbs.

Reading as searching has become skimming; glancing through the text in order to find that key word, that relevant passage, that missing link. Reading then is always 'in order to' and is therefore restless in nature. This is not to say that reading is like clicking feverishly from one hyperlink to another, though it easily moves in that direction. The inclusion of electronic references, which are ready to be activated, encourages the reader to move on and explore the material in an unforeseen way. Seduction does not come from the words, the text, but it is in the links and their inherent promise to reveal something more attractive. Compare this to traditional references or footnotes that rarely encourage the reader to make the effort to search for the material and actually read it.

Contrary to what one might think, this reading mode is far from an invitation to let oneself be carried away by the text. Getting lost in hypertext is an experience often fed by the illusory idea that *the* answer, *the* ideal source, is within reach. And thus one clicks on. The experience of getting swept along by a story constructed by an author differs from this search in a profound way. In 'ordinary' reading the reader

must be willing first and foremost to distance oneself from one's own interests, and be sufficiently open-minded to give the floor to the author's voice. Only then reading – indeed as a kind of 'passive reception' – might bring along the discovery of something new, something captivating. There is a greater likelihood of such an encounter in the traditional, author-controlled environment, since the reader gives in to the story that is told and waits for it to lead him/her. Perhaps this is the inherent pleasure of reading, i.e. surrendering to unfolding thoughts.

The electronic distribution of conference proceedings undeniably has to do with economic, ecological, and practical considerations (advantages), but it also influences the way one deals with the material, the way one 'reads'. The electronic storage of the conference texts encourages the reader to download and print only those texts he/she is interested in, i.e. those papers that are perceived as relevant to him/her. One important thing is at stake here. Proceedings in printed version allow the conference participant to glance through the texts while being at the conference, to discover something unexpected (which did not fit into his/her domain of interest at first sight), and to pick up some new ideas. Electronic proceedings instead encourage the participant to plan and organize his/her conference (the sessions he/she will attend) in advance. For a researcher this might imply a certain constriction of the material he/she will be engaged with, and thus a constriction of his/her own work.

3.2. Searching for attention and thus losing it

'Skimming' a text, going through a text using 'Ctrl + F', etc. not only brings into view the reinstatement of the centrality of the subject. It also points to a change in the concept of attention. 'Attention' has changed in the sense that a contemporary (electronic) reader/researcher is no longer predisposed to make a maintained/ sustained effort.

Our attention levels have intensified but are now shorter and extremely differentiated. They need attractive stimuli to be renewed every couple of seconds.

The market has understood this very well: the emphasis is not placed on the content of a text but on catching the reader's attention.

In *Weekend Knack*, a fairly well-known weekly magazine in Flanders, some passages in the articles, or even just individual sentences of no more than three or four lines (in a layout with narrow columns) are highlighted by a marker in eye-catching yellow. It is difficult, if not almost impossible, to refrain from focusing on these sections. Apparently, the editors think it is necessary to do this, to draw the reader's attention to a particular passage or sentence. Do they want to push their readers toward the most important passage(s) or sentence(s)? The most relevant ones? Spectacular ones? Or ones that allow the reader to decide whether or not to read the entire article? And who decides on which passages to highlight?

Marking passages in articles suggests that it suffices to read only those marked passages in order to know what is actually said in the article, in order to have 'read' the article.

The way in which CNN (and of course also other news networks, and music channels such as MTV) has, for some time now, been broadcasting world news,

exemplifies a strategy that is explicitly based upon presuppositions about changes in attention on the part of the viewer. The screen does not only show the newsreader, but also news blocks which contain brief summaries of (relevant? important? not to be missed?) news facts that (usually) have no relation to what the newsreader is saying at that moment. Another news block continually shows the most recent stock market figures. To be sure, this might be interpreted as granting the viewer the intelligence to process multiple kinds of information over a short period of time. It might also be an indication of the fact that in-depth discussion and analysis does not match the viewer's (attributed?) needs any longer.

The development of digital television is also linked to changing conceptions of attention in interesting ways. For example, Digital TV makes it possible to pause a real-time football match (let us say that the phone rings and you want to answer it), and to continue watching it later (after having finished the telephone conversation) from the very moment you paused that game. You do not have to miss a second of the game! With digital TV it is also possible to watch a programme you (just) missed, or to replay it. Without wanting to ignore the practical possibilities this entails, such as the possibility of replaying an interesting documentary during history class without having to record it on tape – we simply want to bring to attention how the relation between medium and user is being reversed. Instead of the individual user adapting oneself to the medium (e.g. its programme time schedule), here the medium is designed to be adaptable to an individual's attention span. Put differently, if problems pertaining to individual capabilities (in relation to attention, patience, readiness to select or choose) have been erased, the only problems that arise relate to the technological limits of the medium. This is an indication of a world that increasingly refuses to deal with finitude.

Returning to the academic world, one telling example here is the pressing demand to restructure study programmes in collections of modules that students can choose from. What presents itself here is a service for students' individual needs and interests. Here we might note the recognition of a market mentality, even when it comes to academic work, which is, in our view, testimony to a lack of attention to – or perhaps 'patience for' would be more appropriate here – the requirements of a general or introductory course. When general or introductory courses feature in a programme, or even in a course textbook, these courses or chapters are mostly experienced as a necessary burden – not much you can do about it but suffer them – as if they constitute a price to pay for the more specific and applied courses one is interested in.

As for doing educational research in particular, a fine example here is the increasing demand to reduce the term of a doctoral research fellowship from six to four, or even three years. Undeniably, what lies behind this is also the pressure put on a Department or Faculty to produce more Ph.D.'s with the same resources. This is again indicative of a change in our conception of attention. An extensive period of reading oneself into a particular domain or set of problems is no longer expected. Instead, the doctoral student is expected to focus immediately on what is relevant. (Hence, also the demand for being as clear-cut, transparent and problem-oriented as possible when applying for research funding.)

That there is no(t enough) time any more for reading is not that much of a surprise in times in which pressure to publish is high.

The very number of publications on a topic sometimes makes reading – in the sense of making oneself familiar with a particular domain or field – virtually impossible. Reading as such becomes first and foremost the act of selecting, which, in its turn, brings other issues to the fore, such as who does the selecting, and on the basis of what criteria.

3.3. Existential exhibitionism

The author of a text (presented in the traditional format) will include a list of sources, referred to in the text. This bibliography testifies to the literature the author included (and thus excluded) to develop his/her idea. It also testifies to the fact that the text is interwoven with other texts, and it allows the (highly motivated) reader to trace the author's process of construction. It is worth considering whether referring to web sites and all kinds of digital sources and databases is something different than merely citing one's references, whether it affects the position of the author, as he/she exposes himself/herself more explicitly to the reader (a particular kind of exhibitionism and voyeurism) by allowing the latter to retrieve immediately the material he/she used. If it can be said of an author that he/she no longer presents a neatly finished product, then what he/she can be said to be presenting is rather his/her strenuous writing process, an exposition of his/her mind.

In this sense, the criticisms raised against traditional authorship (cf. supra) are in fact a misconception of the dynamics of hypertexts in particular, and of e-writing in general. Clearly, the 'material' presence of ICT – that is, its mode of presentation, its interfaces, and the ways in which it is used – brings the points about authorship to attention in sharp ways. Rather than signalling an abdication of authorship, we suggest that e-writing highlights issues of an existential nature. Questions about authorship are existential questions; in them, issues pertaining to subjectivity are at stake.

3.4. Blogs

The advent and development of digital media, such as e-mail and Internet, have made possible the emergence of a variety of electronic writing modes. We are thinking here of news blogs, run by (for instance) politically engaged people who keep a close track of national revolutions, scandals, ongoing discussions, and television debates, then compose a daily electronic newsletter and send it across the globe. Here the significance of what they do is inherently tied to the medium used. A printed newsletter dealing with this level of specificity would always arrive too late in the day, since an electronic letter collects interviews, newsflashes, newspaper contributions, and radio comments. The author cannot wait a day to publish his/her collection, for it would already be outdated. Furthermore, this sort of electronic

writing enables the author to spread the news on a global scale at once, while shipping printed versions would take too long. Here, relevance is indistinguishably connected to the medium used. This kind of news blog would not exist without the Internet. As McLuhan argued some time ago (1964), the medium and the message are inextricably tied to one another.

Perhaps new media can enable researchers to spread new (at least new in some senses) messages. In this respect, the question is not only whether educational research is affected by (the constraints of) new media, but also whether researchers (should) allow their work to be affected by new technological opportunities.

The educational researcher might start up a web blog. It is the mode of electronic writing par excellence that facilitates or even enables the distribution of his/her ideas, ideas that are still developing yet relevant enough to be announced to the public. But why would that be a researcher's concern?

A researcher who reflects on a particular aspect of actual practice, who puts his/her developing reflections on the Internet and who updates his/her texts continuously, has a voice that might be heard and that might challenge the reader. In doing research in this way, the writing itself can be conceived as the search for answers, or for a more illuminating perspective on a certain issue – a process that is *shown* to the reader. This presupposes a particular understanding of what research is. Research here is not taken as a form of disinterested knowledge, or as the development thereof, nor as a form of reflection per se, or as fundamental research. What we have in mind is research as engaged knowledge. E-writing, in the shape it takes in blogs, has the capacity to bridge the gap between theory and practice. What educational researchers write in these blogs is not to be understood as applied theory. Rather, their writing can be taken as a reflection on the actuality of education. As one might put it: 'This is what I think of this and that – and it is for this and that reason. Think about it yourself and consider my arguments. Perhaps some of them are convincing, perhaps, indeed, you have other ones, better ones. But we will continue our discussion.'

E-writing, which appears, for example, in blogs, does not have to go through a review process. It is not subject to the censorship of the scientific community. Can it still properly be called research, then? That the kind of writing on blogs (if done by educational researchers) does not need to go through a review process, does not imply that it lacks engagement. In a sense, it involves even more engagement than writing an article for a journal. The public nature of these publications leaves no room for anonymity. There is a considerable difference between 'putting something on the web' on the one hand and 'presenting one's arguments' on the other. In the latter case, the e-writer shares something that is meaningful to him/her. He/she takes up a certain position and therefore takes on a certain responsibility as well. E-writing on blogs is more public than either standard articles, or books. In a Cavellian sense (1988, p. 39), e-writing on blogs can be said to be more objective than standard articles and books. Claims for justification are stronger.

Arguments need to be weighed – the idea of the necessity of rational argument lost its appeal some time ago. This also applies to 'standard' articles that are submitted to a journal. In fact, in such cases, most of the weighing up has already been

done beforehand. Researchers (generally speaking) only submit their articles if they feel confident that they have met the prevailing academic requirements. Put differently: the texts they submit have already, in a sense, undergone a process of censorship, in this case self-censorship. Reviewers can therefore be said to review not so much the original text – whatever that may be – but the process of the author's self-censorship. When, as in the case of writing on blogs, this review procedure is abolished, this does not imply that the weighing up of arguments is also abolished. On the contrary, the weighing up of arguments, as an exemplification of the dynamics of e-writing, comes more strongly to the foreground since the scales of the scientific community are no longer being used.

For the educational researcher, this might be an interesting alternative and complementary way of publishing, supposing he/she thinks his/her ideas worthwhile enough to share with a large public (not merely with a small audience of researchers). And for the domain of educational research itself, it seems to be important to ensure a certain degree of involvement in actual educational debates, so that it shows its relevance without necessarily losing its scholarly nature.

NOTES

[1] Anscombe's translation reads: 'Is the word ever actually used in this way in the language-game which is it original home?' (Wittgenstein, 1953, p. 116). We slightly changed this translation because we find it is not really in tune with the original German line, which reads: 'Wird denn diese Wort in der Sprache, in der es seine Heimat hat, je tatsächlich so gebraucht?' First of all, Wittgenstein uses *Sprache* (language) instead of language-game. Secondly, the suggestion is not that a language *is* the original home of a word, but that a word has its home in a language.

[2] We would like to thank Nick Burbules for helping us to make our argument in this way.

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CHAPTER SIX

KATHLEEN COESSENS AND JEAN PAUL VAN BENDEGEM

ON THE POSITION OF THE EDUCATIONALIST INTELLECTUAL IN THE INFORMATION AGE: SHOULDN'T WE BECOME META-MODERN ARTISTS?

1. CHANGING AGES, CHALLENGING THE INTELLECTUAL

[T]he world taking shape around us, and giving new shape to even familiar processes, institutions, movements and values, has to be increasingly understood in communicational and cultural terms. (Waterman, 1999, p. 358)

New developments are setting new challenges. Preceding societal movements, which include the 'labour society' or 'work culture', which were brought into being by the coterminous development of the economy and new technologies, have paved the way for further societal trends. Such trends have been named the 'network society', 'information age' or 'knowledge society' and are characterized by an unprecedented worldwide and systemic process of interconnection, integration, exchange and interdependence of national economies (Smeby and Trondal, 2005). How can we define these changing times?

In the first place, knowledge is turning into an economic commodity. The economic sphere has incorporated intellectual capital – and thus 'human capital' – ruling over it as a 'knowledge manager'. Performance and productivity are now required of the intellectual product in order to assure its market value just like any other traditional product. As such, intellectual capital now needs to venture outside the confines of education. Think tanks, action research, consultancies, flexible learning processes, lifelong learning and workplace learning are but some of the products of this knowledge management that is drawing intellectual capital away from educational settings and striking out for new horizons of economic power. At the same time, the knowledge society seems to be moving at two different speeds: on the one hand, there is the measured speed of the 'traditional' educational settings, schools, institutions, coping with their challenges of cultural diversity, inclusion and values; on the other hand, there are the rapids of the fast knowledge stream propelled by economic drift, pervading workplaces, responding to performance and market discourses and turning into a new virtual locus of power.

In the second place, identities are being destabilized. Globalization processes are changing the cultural settings, making them more permeable. Identity has become the target of shifting discourses on culture and diversity as well as the engine of efforts

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to counter the 'ideological discourses' of globalization. Until recently, relatively stable conditions sustained an image of identity that, even if it was too essentialist, offered a sense of belonging somewhere, of being somebody. The technological changes, the shifting status of knowledge and the multiplicity of 'knowledge', the loss of 'truth' and the assault on longstanding narratives, are blurring every well-constructed image of the self and imposing dynamic repositionings. The clash between identity and globalization mirrors the local–global opposition and hinders a repositioning of 'how to think and to be in the world', in this 'globalizing' world. But, at the same time, cultural identity and self-knowledge seem to be the only antidotes to the complexity and harshness of the global market (Carnoy and Castells, 2001, p. 10).

In the third place, socialization is developing a more complex and uncertain dynamic. The effect of globalization on intellectual and cultural capital is provoking tensions in the social world and requires a reconfiguration of social relations: of context, place, time and the other. The means by which people become members of their culture is regulated by a wide range of practices that are transmitted from generation to generation. Conditions of state democracy are altering; new notions have been induced, such as flexibility, performance and instrumentality. New patterns of practice, networks and lifestyle are developing. Boundaries between the public and the private are blurring. All these trends require continuous adaptation by social agents, of their dispositions and representations. The global debate for societies revolves around the impact of the increasingly worldwide dominance of the 'knowledge economy' over people's everyday lives. Never before have people in developed countries lived in such a protected and controlled social environment. Just consider the areas of health care and life expectancy, policing and legal security, educational support and, to varying degrees, social protection. In a sense, they have never had it so good. But, at the same time, they experience the dynamics, the changes, the flexibility and the performance criteria of this era as profoundly destabilizing and increasingly risky, fuelling a need and a demand for higher security. Is there an underlying Frankensteinian fear as if mankind's accomplishments were running out of control? Giddens calls for a society which provides social solidarity, inclusion and coordinated international intervention to regulate market excesses. Castells draws attention to both the loss of control and the emancipatory capacity of the people, as workers and as urban residents (Waterman, 1999, p. 366). Social practices were previously located in space, in face-to-face encounters, in labour and embodied activities, but now they are increasingly taking place in 'a space of flows', leading to different, virtual encounters and space–time compression – in terms of communication as well as transport modes – providing more intensive and complex forms of contact, between larger numbers of people and cultures, merging the notions of local and global, objective and subjective.

2. THE NEED FOR META-MODERN ATTITUDES: ARE WE BECOMING ARTISTS?

Why do people think artists are special? It's just another job.
(Andy Warhol, 1975, p. 178)

Education is fundamentally intertwined with these shifting parameters of knowledge, identity and socialization. Educational research is twice confronted with it, reflecting

on itself as well as on the educational aspects of society. What then should/could be the position of the educational researcher in the knowledge society? We just described the changing times from the side of the general effects on societal matters; let us next look at the dimensions that interplay or are involved in the educational sphere of social and information networks. We can determine three of them: the actors or subjects, the object and, finally, the context.

A first dimension is that of the actors involved: it is the axis going from the public/layperson to the educational academy/intellectual. In between, a diverse range of actors implicated in education play a role, ranging from students, teachers, NGOs, think tanks, policymakers, economic players and media-actors to the intellectuals and academic researchers. The educational researcher should be aware of the complexity and force of the relations and interactions between these different agents.

A second dimension is the complex domain of education regarding its object – this would encompass practice, research on educational practice and research on educational research – meta-research. The interaction between these two dimensions – educational actors and educational object – poses a lot of questions about the relations between practice and research, between practical input and academic output, between academic research and public reception, between policy and research.

But it is the enmeshing of the third dimension, the context of the knowledge society, that is important to us here, as it shows itself in the important interplay between the local and the global, influencing both other dimensions profoundly: holding its actors spellbound and kidnapping its object, sustaining as well as sustained by information networks and social networks.

These three dimensions can then be spatially mapped (see Table 1): on one side we locate institutional space, on the other side, the space of everyday practice and experience (this dichotomy strangely resembles the distinction between structure and agency) and in-between, lurking around, influencing both, we find the space of commodification. Contemporary education and educational research can be mapped in accordance with these spaces as complex social networks, entangled in institutional settings, economic claims and day-to-day practices, compelled by technological and information networks.

Table 1

	Actors	Object	Context
Institutional space	Laypersons Researchers Students	Educational practice	Knowledge society
Space of commodification	Teachers NGOs Think tanks	Educational research	Information age Network society
Space of everyday experience	Policymakers Economic players Media-actors	Meta-research	Globalization technology

So, what can the intellectual/educational researcher do? Can they do something? Can they make sense of ‘new times’? (Slee, 1998, p. 441) How can they do this?

We will offer three approaches, which, from a philosophical point of view, can further the heavy task of contemporary educational research: we will draw the first

lesson from our 'damned' modernity, the second from the Greeks, and finally offer a creative vision of researchers' needs in the knowledge society, linking these lessons to the table of the three dimensions and the three spaces.

2.1. Lessons from modernity

We have never been modern. (Bruno Latour, 1993)

Where are the roots of contemporary intellectual activity? Among the many roads available to tackle this broad question, the most promising avenue seems to be the replacement of this question with a different one, namely whatever happened to the idea of modernity? We do not claim that there is a logical connection between these two questions. Rather, we think we have observed the replacement of one by the other. If it is accepted that the intellectual has a societal role to play, the reasons and motivations for this acceptance are derived from some notion of modernity. However, we dare to claim that at present the position of modernity is a rather weak one. Often, it seems that modernity is depicted as the culprit of our times: did it not help the armed forces of science to conquer evermore psychological territory, and did it not produce technologies invading all aspects of everyday life, promising Promethean gains but merely offering Frankensteinian desolation? Modernity is considered the offender of our times, paving as it did the way to a multiplicity of plagues including ecological disaster, weapons of mass destruction, nihilism, consumerism and hedonism (as is mentioned by Wikipedia, Dutch version). Who dares to be modern in this accusatory climate?

However, isn't the picture painted above a caricature of modernity, and, if so, what is real modernity? Who are its protagonists? Roughly speaking, modernity originated in the physics of Isaac Newton (who could not imagine the militaristic potential that accompanied his discoveries), in the evolution theory of Charles Darwin (who was ignorant of the ulterior motives of eugenics), in the social statistics of Adolphe Quetelet (who was unaware of the racial economies which would result from his studies). So, yes, the inventions of modernity seemingly concealed their Mr. Hyde qualities. The question remains however: was it the *sole* fault of modernity? After all, modernity was not alone in shaping society: it was just one complex process operating in the midst of other social, civil and political forces. And would the world have been better without modernity? We firmly believe the answer has to be no. Are we saying that real modernity as well should stand accused, but that some form of moderation is called for, hence perhaps a reduction of its sentence? The answer to that question is also no. If we really want to condemn modernity, let us be thoroughly modern, let us not banish modernity, but let us use it, let it do some community service (*gemeenschapsdienst*), as present-day criminologists are suggesting.

In fact, what does modernity have to offer society? Surely, the most important thing to note is that it apparently generated the tools to accuse itself. Indeed, note that we were able to accuse modernity, precisely because it offers us the scientific tools, techniques and methods to do that. The development of these tools in natural sciences, via biology, and further on in the social sciences, makes it possible to analyse/accuse modernity and its progeny. Modernity offers us the tools for its own condemnation. Modernity has transformed us into reflexive beings of a very complex kind, capable of analysing the complexity of our own society, opening up the possibility of reflexivity, of questioning practices and experiences that were previously

either unquestionable or not to be questioned. This is what the poor offender achieved – it offered us a reflective approach towards our time, our practices, our research, ourselves. In short, it generated a capacity for self-reflection. The ambiguous result, 'the reply of reflexive modernization', is that 'many modernities are possible' (Beck, l994, p. 24). Maybe the intellectual is losing himself in the squabble surrounding these possibilities, but as such is searching for sense-making labels. Aren't we all searching for sense-making labels?

Modernity thus offered (and still offers) us a toolbox with the capacity for reflexivity and self-reflexive awareness. One tool in this box is modern historical consciousness, transforming our relationship to the past, analysing the present as history, interpreting and reinterpreting the relation between knowledge and the social, between policy and education, between institutions and actors. Let us offer an example. We can only interpret and reinterpret the challenges, the alienation and the disenchantment caused by network/knowledge–society, recognizing the insights of Durkheim, Weber and Simmel as well as considering the practices and originalities of this precise context – social and information networks. Thus, intellectuals need a historical insight into the present, if they do not want to lose cultural capital, neglect significant ideas, concepts and theories and at the same time be open to the discontinuities and innovations of present practices (Popkewitz et al., 2001). Let critical historical researchers be the gatekeepers of educational research (Coessens and Van Bendegem, forthcoming).

But our preceding reflections imply that we cannot embrace a historical consciousness of the present, without considering another, connected tool modernity offered: scientific method and theory construction. Theory can be 'a catalytic agent of change within the complex of social life which it analyses' (Fay in Ball, 1995, p. 262) – think about Newton, Darwin and Quetelet. But one should be aware of the danger of uncritical rationalism. It is a tool to be used as part of the reflexivity process, inside historical awareness. As Ball writes:

> [T]heory can separate us from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibilities of no longer seeing, doing or thinking what we are, do or think. (Ball, 1995, p. 266)

Thus, without adopting the pretensions that accompany the view that social scientists are free moral agents, outside the social, theory offers

> a language for challenge, and modes of thought (…) to de-familiarise present practices and categories, to make them seem less self-evident and necessary. (Ibid.)

The intellectual can then use this modern tool to offer 'perspective rather than truth' (ibid., p. 268), to deal with complexity, uncertainty, doubt, risk, rather than attempting to fix experience in some descriptive state. And did not Foucault, already in 1977, write something similar about historical consciousness, thus linking both tools modernity offers:

> History becomes 'effective' to the degree that it introduces discontinuity into our very being. (...) 'Effective' history deprives the self of the reassuring stability of life and nature, (…) It will uproot its traditional foundations and relentlessly disrupt its pretended continuity. (…) it seeks to make visible all of those discontinuities that cross us. (Foucault, 2003, pp. 247, 250)

Thus, let us accept the lessons of modernity! Or rather, let us be meta-modern, using modern tools to critique modernity itself, using modern tools to analyse our lives, practices and research.

2.2. Lessons from the Greeks

> Gods are not fair, nor courageous, nor liberal, nor moderate, because they do not live in a world where contracts have to be signed, dangers have to be defied, sums of money have to be distributed or desire has to be tempered. Gods do not live in a world of relation, adventure, need. (Aubenque, 1963, p. 65; our translation.)

Modernity refers, in some senses of the term, to Greek philosophy. Greek philosophy opens a discursive space for reflection, to Socratic questioning of the self and the context. The Greeks reflected on notions of contingency, risk and uncertainty. They approached the intellectual as somebody with *phronesis*, meaning that acting responsibly in the world entails coping with contingency and risk, both inherent to the situation and the context of the human being, even in the banality of life. *Phronesis* is searching for the best possible solution to every situation, knowing that the best possible solution is limited by the circumstances. In their discourses on contingent contexts, full of risk, involving unexpected events, which they tried to interpret, the Greeks developed two important notions that sustain the concept of phronesis. In the first place, they developed the notion of choice, *proairesis*; second, that of the right moment, *kairos*. *Proairesis* evolved from a notion of personal preference, via a notion of committed and deliberate choice, which treated the whole life in heroic terms, to a human disposition or free engagement of responsibility concerning choice – this last meaning was Aristotle's. Different contexts, aims, trajectories and situations require time and again new choices, decisions and new forms of reflection. Choices can never be settled, can never rest on facts and principles:

> [T]here were no rules to be abided by, under which the particular cases with which they were confronted could be subsumed. They had to decide each instance as it arose, because no rules existed for the unprecedented. (Arendt, 1963, p. 295)

These multiple choices, ephemeral as they are, are fundamental to our ability to cope with the complexity of life and the world. And as situated beings, situated in place and time, in contexts and networks, humans have to make decisions, choices regarding time, situation and experience. They must act in specific contexts. Every decision, every commitment is specific, particular and linked to the context. Thus, decisions and choices, analyses and commitments have to be made at the right moments, at the opportune times, the *kairos*. We have to be alert, to react, to contest, to interfere, whenever our responsibility as researchers can make the little difference that is necessary. These Greek philosophical insights offer us, in times of unexpectedness, in our 'risk' society, some help to accept the definite contingency that accompanies life and human beings.

When translating this discourse into our times, some authors/intellectuals try to find a way of enacting *phronesis* now, of embracing *proairesis* and choosing *kairos*,

of never boldly accepting interpretations and situations without a reflexive awareness, without trying to think otherwise. Eco named such an approach 'semiotic guerrilla warfare':

> In an era in which mass communication often appears as the manifestation of a domination which makes sure of social control by planning the sending of messages, it remains possible (as an ideal semiotic 'guerrilla warfare') to change the circumstances in the light of which the addressees will choose their own ways of interpretation. In opposition to a *strategy* of coding, which strives to render messages redundant in order to secure interpretation according to pre-established plans, one can trace a tactic of decoding where the message as expression form does not change but the addressee rediscovers his *freedom of decoding*. (Eco, 1976, p. 150, note 27)

Eco refers to the freedom we have to use the media of our era to construct, interpret, reconstruct and reinterpret networks of social and intellectual capital. Intellectuals should free themselves from the stupefying atmosphere of commodification, resist inequality and exclusion, redefine messages and crack prevailing codes. At the same time, they should think of ideas, alternatives and solutions to create a knowledge society that is worthy of the name.

De Certeau also advocates flexible, creative tactics, which, by eluding technocratic and economic pressures, confronting conformity production and obtrusive passivity and consumption, defy the invisible imposed power strategies that impact on peoples' actions and lives:

> [A] rationalized, expansionist, centralized, spectacular and clamorous production is confronted by an entirely different kind of production, called 'consumption' and characterized by its ruses, its fragmentation (the result of the circumstances) its poaching, its clandestine nature. (De Certeau, 1984, p. 31)

In our context, we can see such tactics as tools for defying and contesting the negative strategies present in information networks. Such tactics conquer new territory on which to build a humanizing world. This would lead to the creation of social networks, which develop in accordance with the information network. The creation of such social networks leads to a more humanizing world, sustained by reflexive solidarity, a term coined by Giddens and Jodi Dean (1995).

Dean uses Durkheim's theory concerning solidarity as a starting point for his analysis. Durkheim distinguished two forms of solidarity. The first is the old traditional mechanical solidarity, in which the community, group and family structure prevail, sustained by traditional values and shared norms. When society was changing under the pressure of industrialization and labour, a new kind of solidarity emerged, namely, organic solidarity. In this form of solidarity, which depends on participation in different environments, new relations develop between people inside the same social environment, linking diverse people to diverse groups. Both forms of solidarity are now in crisis, because of continuing urbanization and mobility, growing labour and leisure diversification, the propagation of independent lifestyles and increasing individualization. From a multiplicity of fragile, provisory, virtual and weak contacts a new kind of solidarity emerges: reflexive solidarity. New forms of social engagement begin with the individual, from proper deliberate social choices, without any

prescriptive norm. They are based on 'our communicatively engendered expectation of the other's responsibility' on 'generalized reciprocity' (Dean 1995, pp. 132–133). Dean sees in this kind of solidarity a sign of respect for the other, for difference and trust, as well as a responsibility for the social world and for diverse and socially shared relationships. Giddens links this form of solidarity to our claims concerning meta-modernity:

> [R]eflexivity (…) refers to the susceptibility of most aspects of social activity, and material relations with nature, to chronic revision in the light of new information or knowledge. (Giddens, 1997, p. 20)

Educational institutions and researchers have a considerable impact on social change or maintenance, challenging or reproducing existing conditions – crime, poverty, cultural biases, social inequality, economic disparities, racial and ethnic conflict (Mourad, 2001, p. 740). They are in contact with the world, with cultural tensions, diversity, complexity and a multiplicity of identities. At the same time, they are regulators of social intercourse, imposing a certain view on the world and enforcing certain forms of social habitus. The changing social, economic and technological settings, which make up our world, force education to face four important challenges. In the first place, education should maximize the development of self-knowledge, providing fragile identities with the power to cope with the new world systems and the flexibility of self-definition, concerning choices and lifestyles. Second, it should take care of the conflicting aspects of individualism and social mobility, and be a gatekeeper for inclusion – equal access to educational opportunity – and acceptance of diversity. Third, the traditional educational aims of passing on knowledge, developing skills and nurturing problem-solving abilities, directed towards specific academic and professional ends, should be coterminous with the valorization of human potential – and not only with market aims. Fourth, education has to lead the human being through the mazes of social as well as information networks, and learn strategies and tactics to cope with them. This is essential for successful participation in the knowledge society and the active transformation and 'humanization' of that society.

These educational processes can take place on a more global as well as a local plane. The example of the 'reflective practitioner' and the 'reflective teacher' Schon (1983) is a rather localized response to the new challenges posed by the globalizing era. Reflective practitioners can take into account their experiential learning and self-knowledge, make explicit their tacit knowledge and posit themselves into the larger context of learning processes and knowledge transmission (Askling et al., 2001, p. 348). These elements, locally acquired, can then be shared on the Internet permeating into, and nourishing, different social and information networks. Thus, the local merges into the global on a human and human-induced scale.

Initiatives such as the Soros foundation offer a more global answer to educational problems by funding research in large settings of exchange. Here networking is meant to spread ideas and knowledge globally, giving special attention to those – local – regions (and researchers inside these regions), which are at risk of being excluded. As a result, the third and fourth world would be integrated into an 'open society' of 'knowledge sharing'. The exchange is two-sided, empowering that part of the world which, because of inequality, could drop out, and offering the 'hard' core of the global world diverse input.

2.3. Shouldn't we become meta-modern artists, reconsidering the knowledge society?

> To be an artist is not to be a member of a secret society; it is not an activity inscrutably forbidden to the majority of mankind. Even the clumsiest, ugliest and most ignorant lovers make love; and what is important is the oneness of man in making artefacts, not the abyss said to exist between a Leonardo and the average of mankind. We are not all to be Leonardos; but of the same kind as Leonardo, for genius is only one end of the scale. I climbed Parnassus once, and between the mundane village of Arachova at the foot and the lonely summit, quite as lovely as the poets have always had it to be, there is nothing but a slope; no abyss, no gulf, no place where wings are necessary. (Fowles, 1968, p. 156)

What is an artist? What is an intellectual? Can we insist that we face a similar problem when trying to define the intellectual that confronted the famous contemporary mathematician Sir Roger Penrose when he examined the notion of consciousness?

> I do not think that it is wise, at this stage of understanding, to attempt to propose a precise *definition* of consciousness, but we can rely, to good measure, on our subjective impressions and intuitive common sense as to what the term means. (Penrose, 1990, p. 555)

We think the metaphor of the artist – as in the citation above – gives us a good point of departure for trying to situate the intellectual in our contemporary moment.

Claude Lévi-Strauss offers us an interesting interpretation of the complex task of the intellectual in his book *The Savage Mind*. He makes a distinction between the 'engineer' and the 'bricoleur'. The engineer is interested in the realization of big new projects in which the means have to suit the aims. The bricoleur wants to play with, and invent, a thousand uses for the existing objects he finds. The bricoleur is indeed limited to small actions by those materials he has and by his experience, his creativity resulting from the reinterpretation of what exists, what is pre-constrained. The engineer questions the universe in a scientific way, hoping to attain the limits of the knowable, necessitating new means to realize his dreams. The dream of the engineer resembles the dream of modernity. Meta-modern researchers have to merge these 'engineery' dreams with 'bricolage', coping with the heterogeneity and flexibility, contingency and irony of this society, in between coherence and heterogeneity, unity and proliferation. As Lévi-Strauss remarks, art is situated in between the bricolage and the engineery, both being modes of merging knowledge and experience.

These different paths offer us at first sight seemingly divergent ideas on the role of educational action and reflection in the knowledge society. Although they can be coherently mapped for the educational intellectual, aware of the problems and opportunities of this age, such paths can also be mapped onto educational networks, as Table 2 demonstrates.

Concerning the space of institutional settings, the subject of the first row, an actor in the realm of education, should assume a reflexive, meta-modern intellectual attitude, recognizing the failures of modernity as well as reassessing its values for research. The tools of modernity can offer a reflective, theoretical and historical awareness of both the object of education and the importance of educational research and meta-research. Reinterpreting modernity as well as inventing new tools

Table 2

	Actors in the realm of education	Object: educational practice and research	Context of technology age and knowledge society
Institutional space	Reflexive, meta-modern intellectual bricoleur – engineer	Use of the tools of modernity: theory, history, reflexivity	Meta-modern networks interaction: practice–theory, local–global, past–future
Space of commodification	Phronemos	Tactics versus strategies semiotic guerrilla warfare	Educational discursive networks interaction: social–economic realm
Space of everyday experience	Reflective practitioner	- self-knowledge - inclusion - valorization of the human potential - humanized technology	Reflexive solidarity networks interaction: face-to-face–virtual

leads the actor to a position alternating between bricolage and engineery. This attitude could lead to the creation of meta-modern networks in which practice and theory, local and global, past and future are no longer opposites but interact positively.

For example, to cope with 'the gap between the traditional academic values of the university and the market values of the knowledge society' (Sadlak and Ratajczak, 2004, p. 436), researchers and universities have to participate in wide-ranging networking; they have to move on in the world, to associate with non-educational organizations. As well as having to be 'policy focused' (Stone, 2002, pp. 1–2) they need to connect themselves to 'advance, share and spread knowledge'. There is a need for meta-research groups, like the 'Global Development Network', connecting academic researchers, institutes, professional associations and think tanks, to analyse the development and practices of global knowledge networks and the interaction between their educational settings and the larger society. These global networks can take the form of virtual networks, networks organized around a discipline or around an issue, networks of organizations and institutions – NGOs, think tanks, universities – or multidisciplinary networks (Stone, 2002). The importance of such knowledge networks lies in their impact on policy transfer and evaluation (and also on politics), on the international scope, communication and dissemination of knowledge, theories, ideas and practices and on social learning, offering an interface between knowledge and policy, knowledge and lifestyle (consider issues relating to gender and ecology). As Stone remarks:

> The production of knowledge cannot be divorced from its context. Knowledge networks are a form of power. The contest of ideas and battles to control the terms of policy debate reveal that the utilization of knowledge – indeed, what is considered to be valid knowledge – is a political process. (Stone, 2002, p. 9)

The third row, the space of everyday experience, offers the idea of the educational actor as a reflective practitioner, aware of his/her position in, and impact on, the educational settings, by accentuating the importance of self-knowledge, inclusion, valorization of human potential and rendering technological and informational networks human-sized and accessible. In a knowledge society, reflexive solidarity networks can be created in which face-to-face interaction can be completed by valuable virtual encounters and exchanges via information technology, in which exchange between researchers and laypersons can take place without prejudice. These networks resemble Mark Poster's 'new public space', offering new positions of discourse – new language games – renegotiating power relations, offering instantaneous dissemination, exchange and circulation of ideas and knowledge:

> The 'magic' and the appeal of the Internet is that it is a technology that puts cultural acts, symbolizations in all forms, in the hands of all participants; it radically decentralizes the positions of speech, publishing, film making, radio and television broadcasting, in short the apparatuses of cultural production. (Poster, 1995)

Finally, in between these two spaces, the growing space of commodification requires educational discursive networks, and searches for an equilibrium between the social and the economic, between structure and agency, between global aims and individual dreams. Acting in these settings requires phronimos, the name the Ancient Greeks give to the human potentiality for deciding and acting in a contingent, flexible, ever-changing world. Sometimes educational research and practice should take a semiotic guerrilla-warfare stance; at other moments the pros and cons of strategies will have to be weighed and gaps can be tactically filled in. Questions arise concerning corporate involvement, the position of the academic profession, research and knowledge management, financial solvability, involvement with non-academic actors and global markets, competitiveness and efficiency. Educational researchers should reflect profoundly on these new factors. They do: universities try to resist being dominated by the economic market and its laws so as to remain in control of education and research programmes, though the struggle is hard. Lohmann, in *Commercialism in Education* (2002), gives an interesting account of the marketization of public education institutions, answering the question: what is the role of organizations such as the WTO, the OECD, the IMF, the World Bank and the EU in the commercialization of public education? For example, in 1996, the WTO extended the General Agreements on Trade in Services to education. This means that instead of open knowledge-access worldwide, the market is opened for for-profit educational services, thus treating 'education as an international trade commodity just like steel, chemical products and the like' (Lohmann, 2002, p. 559). Reaction and resistance fused within higher education organizations, who offered no opposition to internationalization and quality review practices, agreed with reducing obstacles to international exchange and cooperation in higher education, but rejected every form of commercialization of higher education, knowledge production and diffusion as well as the restructuring of educational systems according to market opportunities (Lohmann, 2002).

The educational researcher's task amounts to more than analysing education as the combination of knowledge, skills and problem solving for a changing job market; he/she has to take care of the human being, of human fragility in the increasing complexity of the societal context.

CONCLUSION

We have not traced a clear trajectory for intellectual usefulness. We have just offered a complex map and some meta-modern reflections, hoping that the networks of our times and the networks of the intellectual will interfere. We think educational researchers have to sustain people as they become members of their world and culture; they should try to maintain the balance between the local and the global, between structure and agency, countering a dualistic society.

Education poses ethical challenges. Knowledge poses ethical challenges. Information and social networks pose ethical challenges. Shouldn't we become artists, merging bricolage and engineery, knowledge and responsibility, creating discursive networks, and re-imagining education under conditions of globalization, flexibility and technoculture?

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CHAPTER SEVEN

PAUL SMEYERS

THE HIDDEN HOMOGENIZATION OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH: ON OPENING UP THE SPHERE OF RESPONSIVENESS

1. THE QUALITY NETWORK OF EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

A recent issue of the *Educational Researcher* (2006, p. 35, August/September) published the 'Standards for reporting on Empirical Social Science Research in AERA Publications'. These standards were adopted by the Council of the American Educational Research Association in June 2006 and are '… part of AERA's broader educational mission to advance high-quality research in education and to foster excellence in reporting on empirical research' (ibid., p. 33). The Association recommends the use of these standards in the training and preparation of researchers in publishing research. Attention is given to problem formulation, design and logic, sources of evidence, measurement and classification, analysis and interpretation (distinguishing between quantitative and qualitative methods), generalization, ethics in reporting and finally to the title, abstract and headings. It goes without saying that educational researchers can benefit from this: it makes transparent what the Association expects and can thus guide the vast number of scholars working in this field when they prepare reports, papers, articles and books for the academic educational community. Laudable as it is, this document also sets out *standards* that will be used in the complex process of refereeing and thus disciplines the material that can be submitted for publication. In doing this, it creates the conditions for a network of research quality and singles out particular principles, which scholars should abide by. In the first paragraph, this document distinguishes what it calls 'the guidelines' for reporting on empirical social science research in AERA publications, from other forms of scholarship, which it recognizes as equally important to educational research. Thus it lists: 'reviews of research; theoretical, conceptual, or methodological essays; critiques of research traditions and practices; and scholarship more grounded in the humanities (e.g. history, philosophy, literary analysis, arts-based inquiry)' (ibid., p. 33). I surmise that these other forms could have been included as well (evidently under a different label) but the fact that they are not, seems to me highly relevant. Is the leading idea that only empirical research is *real research*? Holding their breath

P. Smeyers and M. Depaepe (eds.), Educational Research: Networks and Technologies, 85–104.

concerning non-empirical forms of research, or glibly paying lip service to the relevance of such research, carries the overtones of familiar juxtapositions such as those of fact and value, objective and subjective, research and philosophy, theory and practice. But there is more that is worrying. The approach that is argued for seems to rely on a particular concept of how language operates, i.e. a relationship between language and reality.

This chapter first looks at the limits of research focusing on the 'particular' and then questions the so-called rapprochement between quantitative and qualitative empirical educational research (exemplified for instance in the mixed-theory approach). It then moves to how words are used according to the legacy of the later Wittgenstein, Cavell's reading of that legacy. The concept of the 'perspicuousness of the ordinary' is highlighted and thus it arrives at some reflections on what philosophy is focused on. A discussion of the reference to new 'criteria' for the use of certain concepts points to narrative forms and how stories can be conceived, thus not only to what words call for, but also to the voice of the other. It is argued that the dominant modes of empirical educational research cannot deliver what is necessary. An example from the area of child protection is given as an illustration. The chapter concludes by arguing for an interpretative stance in educational research, in order to do justice to the nature of education and for an involvement of the researcher in the moral debate that is always and necessarily at stake. It thus reinterprets Wittgenstein's dictum that we should bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday usages, which, consequently opens up the sphere of responsiveness to the situation the researcher as well as the practitioner finds herself in.

2. EMPIRICAL EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

It is often said that an educational research problem is an issue, topic or question that may be theoretical, practical or a combination of both. However, in most cases, the starting point for research derives from a particular educational reality that is unsatisfactory to the parties involved. In other words, the theoretical interest is secondary to dealing with the kind of educational reality one is confronted with. Examples are not only language learning, participation in higher education of particular social groups, implementation of educational policies, but also bullying in primary schools, the burnout of teachers, the empowerment of parents, etc. As argued above, generally[1] educational research grounded in the empirical traditions of the social sciences (commonly called quantitative and qualitative methods) is distinguished from other forms of scholarship such as theoretical, conceptual or methodological essays, critiques of research traditions and practices and those studies grounded in the humanities (e.g. history, philosophy, literary analysis, arts-based inquiry). Since the early twentieth century, mainstream educational research has been of an empirical nature, but though quantitative methods are still very much in use, qualitative research has gradually become more and more important. In quantitative research (A), one typically looks for a distribution of variables (how many are there with this or that characteristic) and for explanations, which can be of a deductive-nomological kind

(incorporating universal laws) or be of an inductive nature, which employs statistics. Due to being subsumed under its own set of laws, quantitative research can also offer an explanation not in terms of an argument (a logical structure with premises and conclusions governed by some rule of acceptance), but as a presentation of the conditions relevant to the occurrence of the event and a statement of the degree of probability of the event given these conditions. Many writers have exercised doubts over whether or not it is possible to find universal laws within the context of the social sciences. Even if one accepts the more moderate approach, which accepts that one can measure an event according to the degree of probability, most scholars will argue that contextualization of theoretical insights is necessary, which comes down to a much more moderate version of what science is capable of.

There is of course a strand of criticism, which argues that any form of recourse to causal/deterministic explanations (this would include indeterminism as a descriptive statistical category), represents a redundant approach. This is not to deny that human beings are exempt from the effects of causal processes generally, but suggests that behaviour itself cannot be exhaustively explained in such a way. It is argued that human beings give meaning to their lives (see Taylor 1985a, b, 1991, Ricoeur 1991a, b), and this should be understood as something different from things which just happen to them (consider here the law-like explanations and predictions of the natural sciences) and that research should focus on this (B). For some (e.g. Winch, 1958) understanding human conduct comes down to comprehending the reasons for our actions and the understanding that is offered should be of the same kind as the understanding involved in the 'practice' in question (using descriptions in terms of everyday language, often by verbatim expressions of the practitioners themselves). This does not imply that technical concepts cannot be used, but if so their meaning will 'rely' on everyday language. Various qualitative methods and techniques have originated from this interest including case studies, participatory observation, interviews, analysis of policy documents, content analysis and so on; even a technical vocabulary has developed which includes terms such as horizontal and vertical analysis, 'thick concepts' and triangulation. The researcher brings to the forefront what was as yet not fully realized by the participants or he/she may reconceptualize the problem through his/her interpretation and in this way 'solve' the problem. This applied not only to many cases such as research into multicultural and feminist issues but also to studies about teachers and teaching; narrative data is gathered (through interviews and self-descriptions for instance). This led to the development of a particular field, which became known as 'narrative inquiry'.

Polkinghorne (1995) draws a distinction between an 'analysis of narratives' and 'narrative analysis'. When conducting an 'analysis of narratives' one looks for common features in different cases, in order to define them within a broader category. By pointing at features that different experiences have in common, one can construct cognitive conceptual frameworks. The purpose of the paradigmatic analysis is not only to discover and to describe categories, but also to describe the relationships between categories. In many cases this kind of research is generally analogous to a quantitative design (including hypotheses), with the exception that qualitative data are gathered (B1), i.e. they refer to what people feel about, or what their experience is with particular

things, what they say that their reasons, desires and intentions are. In 'narrative analysis', on the other hand, the data is generally not in a narrative form. The information comes from different sources: the researcher arranges events and actions by showing how they contribute to the evolution of a plot. The plot is the thematic line of the narrative, the narrative structure that shows how different events contribute to a narrative. The writing of it involves an analytical development, a dialectic between the data and the plot. The resulting narrative must not only fit the data but also bring out an order and significance, which is not apparent in the data as such. The result is not so much an account of the actual happening of events from an objective (i.e. something we agree about intersubjectively) point of view as the result of a series of constructions. It is a particular reconstruction of that researcher. Whereas, in the 'analysis of narratives', the narratives (gathered from the participants) are the source of knowledge, the narrative in 'narrative analysis' is the result of the research, i.e. the creation or interpretation the researcher comes up with. The researcher is not only *present* in the conclusion that is offered, he/she is also involved throughout the process (though this is of course different to the practitioner's involvement). This interpretive research (B2) thus goes beyond research as the accumulation of knowledge and comes close to those areas of scholarship (see above) that were distinguished from educational research grounded in the empirical traditions of the social sciences. In other words, an interpretation is offered.

Educational researchers are interested in 'how things are' (what the facts are, how those who are involved feel about particular things), and in this sense they are interested in understanding what they are presented with. In some areas this means describing or reconstructing the participants' experiences, in others being able to make predictions. It is clear that this presupposes a particular conceptual framework (sometimes also a theory) or at least a set of concepts in order to make sense of the multitude of phenomena one is confronted with. Clearly, it is accepted that one is part of an intersubjective reality that may be characterized in various ways (what is considered to be a fact, what we value, how we situate ourselves as human beings). But research is also nearly always interested in change, in making improvements (either to prevent particular problems or to address them). Thus it is interested in manipulating particular things in view of certain aims, which often involves a complicated means–end approach. And in this sense the value-ladenness and maybe even the utopian dimension (how one could conceive things differently) come unavoidably to the forefront. This presses the point about the nature of what the researcher is really doing (or is allowed to do or should have to do).

There are two further issues that require our attention. If we accept that to study educational problems one need not only have a quantitative approach (A) but also some kind of qualitative stance (B), it is not clear whether the kind of qualitative research that is merely a use of qualitative data within an overall quantitative design (B1) is not contradicting its own presuppositions (because it is likely to betray the holistic nature of the meaning giving process as a consequence of 'generalization'). In other words, this research appears to be trying to do something that cannot be done. This certainly seems to be the case if we accept seriously that one should not strip words of any context in which they might be used for saying something in

particular. Second, and perhaps even more importantly, is not all empirical educational research guilty of trying to assist an escape from the particularities of a situation one finds oneself in, guilty of (in Wittgensteinian terms) a metaphysical use of language, which closes one off from being responsive to the situation one finds oneself in? To put this differently: Is there a way that an analysis can bring words back from their 'metaphysical' use (in the Wittgensteinian sense) and thus bring forward the ordinary? Granted, there is a sense in which knowing certain facts and being acquainted with the experiences people are likely to have in certain situations is helpful in our understanding of educational problems. But the issue is how far this type of research (A, B, B1) goes. Does it offer more than a starting point, a background, for an in-depth analysis of what is at stake? It is not so much that I am as concerned about this as Dachler, who argues that 'qualitative research, will always play second (and muted) fiddle to quantitative research, as long as qualitative research starts from the fundamental research agendas and the corresponding epistemological assumptions championed by a realist/individualistically oriented quantitative methodology' (Dachler, 1997, p. 711). What occupies my attention is the nature of research that does justice to the particularities of the situation and what its characteristics and its relevance can be for educational practice.

It is therefore to the two further issues mentioned earlier, that I would like to draw attention in this chapter. These reflections on the nature of empirical educational research are highly relevant in a time where research is used as a quality label almost equivalent to 'sound thinking', and experts are solicited to give advice on all kinds of issues belonging to the educational context. The chapter thus asks the radical question – what kind of research is helpful? What does this presuppose and what is its place within, or in relation to, educational practice? If it is the case that people have high expectations of research, it is not helpful to repeat again and again particular shortcomings or to refer these issues to another discipline (e.g. philosophy). We need to understand why there is a constant temptation to avoid doing justice to the nature of education. Such avoidance has led and constantly leads to pushing ourselves into the aforementioned kinds of research. It is here that a number of issues concerning language, which Cavell has put on the agenda, are crucially relevant.

3. THE PARTICULAR AND THE LIMITS OF RESEARCH

The fundamental questions that are raised concern the discussion of the nature of empirical educational research either in terms of the 'analysis of narratives' or in terms of 'narrative analysis'. The paradigmatic thinker searches for what is common and by doing so indisputably slights the particular. From an alternative viewpoint, the paradigmatic narrative solution liberates us from this dead end and does justice to the uniqueness of every subject. Narrative educational research, however, leads to new questions such as whether what is offered is more than *just* a construction of the researcher, and whether the rejection of the positivist paradigm also entails abandoning all or some of the criteria for scientific research which are generally accepted.

Narrative educational research gives occasion to questions that are analogous to those brought to the forefront by the framework of Wittgenstein and Taylor. Wittgenstein points to the groundlessness of that which we are embedded in, by focusing on the language games belonging to a form of life. However, he also keeps an important place for the individual in all of this. However, he keeps silent about what this precisely implies. When he speaks about the role of the human sciences, he 'only' refers to 'description' or to *a new way of looking at things*. And concerning philosophy he confronts us with *philosophy leaves everything as it is*, with the exception of the human being who might become different. Does research also in this sense leave everything as it is? It can offer clarity where there is vagueness, but, as Taylor claims, it can also challenge us to see things differently. But, in what sense is its result more than just a commentary on reality, which is governed by its own rules (or lack of them) and dynamism? Taylor's notion of a 'practice' incorporates the idea of 'better', but he does not expand on what this means exactly. That the particular, as it is embedded intersubjectively, plays an important role goes without saying, but how exactly this should be understood remains obscure. And if we accept that reality and truth are things that happens in which new things appear and others disappear and more generally if we accept *post-foundationalism*, in what sense is a theoretical reflection then more than just *Spielerei* and at the same time different from and more than just stating the obvious, more than *common sense*?

In educational research what is at stake is the understanding of a particular reality brought to the fore by language: this presupposes that this reality can be understood and moreover that its intelligibility can at least partially be made explicit. But is that really the case? Moreover, language is a possible way of signifying (expression and evocation,) self and other – it is not only an instrument of rational inquiry. Language also figures in attempts to express human existence in its non-reducible plurality – the beautiful as a sanctuary of what is not yet concluded, not yet given a particular shape. Words may comfort us, may appeal to us, or make us angry. They can apologize, express regret or remorse, they may insult or support. One can thank someone (at the occasion of a farewell for instance) with beautiful words and one can thank others for such beautiful words. One can express oneself by what one says, by the particular manner of saying something. Words are given and at the same time we use them – everyone gives meaning to them. 'We talk, we utter words, and only *later* get a picture of their life' (Wittgenstein, 1953, II, p. 209e). Wittgenstein speaks about the *feeling of meaning*. The core of the conception of language, which marks Wittgenstein's later work, is that in the context of social practices any attempt to say something is always partial, it is always one-sided. No way of speaking, no doctrine whatsoever can control cultural practices and thus liberate us from the restlessness and uncertainty of human existence, of the search for meaning in our lives. He points to the fact that what we do can never be completely transparent, and that it is always characterized to some extent by arbitrariness. Thus it becomes clear that in what we say we bear witness not only to what we long for, but also to what we are not certain of, such as how we try to express ourselves or be coherent. In an analogous way, Cavell argues that we should not try to escape from the existential conditions we find ourselves in, in order to look for false certainties, but urges us to

be reborn continuously and thus to be mortal. In his book, *In Quest of the Ordinary: Lines of Skepticism and Romanticism* (1988), he maintains that, among other things, words in philosophy may create a distance. They allow us to start over and over again and thus generate an alliance with others who are also focused on this process. Words may help us escape, but at the same time they create a home. Thus philosophy is engaged in a certain revision of the way one sees particular things and the philosopher may identify himself/herself as someone who *reviews her vision*, of else *revises her reviews*, thereby reflecting on what she is conscious of.

The conceptualization of social (and political) problems therefore demands an ever-renewed rethinking of reality using similar instruments. To think again, can only mean to think from a different point of view about what one is trying to understand (perhaps change). From the previous philosophical framework it will be clear that an investigation of what exists is only a starting point. What is at stake shifts to what is at stake for someone (again for the other and for myself), where the other is recognized in his/her personal struggle as an emotional being, thus partaking in unstructured justice. Rigid approaches to social (and political) problems will have to be complemented by a more flexible ethical sensibility. Here it is no longer possible to ignore the recognition of emotions as an essential component of a comprehensive social rationality (Nussbaum, 1997). *The message is to feel again.* To see the other is to look for the way in which he/she expresses himself/herself, gives shape to himself/herself in the struggle with himself/herself. But to touch the other is also to confront the other with one's own struggle by means of the evocative instruments that are at our disposal. That we inevitably 'violate' the other is clear enough. After all, the understanding of the other is at the same time a negation and a constitutive affirmation. We approach the other as an intentional 'object', which we crave to understand. We want to read the story of the other, too often without recognizing the illegibility of his/her story. This does not necessarily imply that we would not be able to understand him/her or do not want to do justice to him/her. The reading of the story of the other is however at the same time a reading which is bound up with our own stories. We are called upon to surrender to the intersection of this reading with its reader, and to what this does to us.

4. WORDS, WRITING, THE PERSPICUOUSNESS OF THE ORDINARY AND PHILOSOPHY

By investigating how the subject belongs to the domain of intersubjectivity, Wittgenstein shows the value of our freedom, of our autonomy, not as the exercise of an arbitrary choice, but as the result of the way in which nature as well as artistic products and moral responsibilities are taken seriously and are even seen as necessary. He mocks those who are seduced by the promise of being able to control the cultural and who think they are able to represent our thoughts and concepts as necessary. For Wittgenstein, to write is to surrender to certain readings (words are 'what is given to us') and philosophy becomes the result of a 'play' of reading and writing tied up with individual authority. We are either able to rethink a thought that comes our

way, to possess it and to judge it, or we have to let it go as it does not belong to us. This kind of philosophy either expresses one's own life or is futile. Cavell quotes Emerson: 'The simplest words, – we do not know what they mean except when we love and aspire.' To understand the meaning of words we have to be in a certain mood (of the heart). We find ourselves and in the answer to the way we see ourselves we find a place to begin. We have to live with the antagonism that is generated between hope and despair (Emerson's *odious facts*). Cavell thus gives his approval to Wittgenstein when the latter writes: 'It is in language that an expectation and its fulfilment make contact' (Wittgenstein, 1953, I, p. 445). Cavell refers to the consolations of the word; to *this* meaning for the other; as a song; as sharing in the case of food and drink, to have in some sense the 'same' experience. Here, to write becomes a means to fight the struggle with oneself (with one's own language), and poetry becomes a means to make a bridge. In the words of Cavell:

> ... that what we are is written all over us, or branded; but here especially the other way round, that our language contains our character, that we brand the world, as for example with the concept of Fate; and then listen again to such an idea as that one's character is one's fate. Now it says openly that language is our fate. It means hence that not exactly prediction, but diction, is what puts us in bonds, that with each word we utter we emit stipulations, agreements we do no know and do not want to know we have entered, agreements we were always in, that were in effect before our participation in them. Our relation to our language – to the fact that we are subject to expression and comprehension, victims of meaning – is accordingly a key to our sense of our distance from our lives, of our sense of the alien, of ourselves as alien to ourselves, thus alienated. (Cavell, 1988, pp. 39–40)

This feeling of desolation presupposes an expression of the struggle with oneself, presupposes expression as a kind of surrendering. The written word, the poem is a weapon in this struggle. It requires no other material presence; it does not want to explain; it only suggests that we see things in a particular way. The word provides the 'means' to be at home for a moment, both for the lonely individual and for the subject-with-others. The continuance of Wittgenstein's legacy in the work of Cavell is thus accompanied by a remarkable intensification of the attention to literature. Also, questions surrounding the relationship between language and world, between a narrative and reality leads us to the concepts 'expression' and 'evocation' which profoundly characterize human existence both ethically and aesthetically.

In a paper called 'The Investigations: Everyday Aesthetics of Itself' (in Gibson and Huemer, 2004), Cavell argues that Wittgenstein claims for the ordinary its own possibility of perspicuousness. He argues that Wittgenstein points to resemblances between for instance a mathematical proof that tells me that something is over and the concept of perspicuousness. Understanding a proof requires seeing connections, but so does understanding a unity among sentences. Thus one discovers a new manifestation of the concept in seeing something new about the ordinary. 'Seeing connections' is understood as supplying language games or more generally, in showing grammatical derivations or differences. Wittgenstein is occupied with questions

concerning the sense in which logic might be thought of as something sublime. However, it is necessary to point out that here he is not interested in the formal ideal, not in logic as the ultimate formal systematization of the unity of knowledge. Yet, the aim of philosophy, of what according to Cavell is expressed by 'the fantasy of logic', remains the mark of philosophy's intellectual seriousness. Philosophy demands an extraordinary understanding, but not of something new; it is not in competition with science. Seeing things in this way is, for Wittgenstein, the beginning of something. Cavell refers to the movement from being lost to finding oneself when philosophizing. He relates this to the feeling that coincides with the effort to achieve the indestructible – the therapeutic experience of initially destroying everything great and important. Thus he writes: 'Perspicuous representation is accordingly the end of a philosophical problem that has *this* form of beginning' (Cavell in Gilbson and Huemer, 2004, p. 23). And he recalls that the philosopher's treatment of a question is according to Wittgenstein like the treatment of an illness, a sickness of the understanding as well as a sickness of the will. Philosophy must learn to give itself peace, which means to break away from asking the wrong questions, it has to surrender, to entrust itself with 'how things are' in the realm of the ordinary. This realm of the 'ordinary' does not refer to 'the everyday', but recognition of it allows us to move beyond our disappointment with criteria. Shedding the demand for something more is the therapy Wittgenstein speaks of. An example of the kind of thinking, which we must distance ourselves from might include the demand for authenticity that leads to looking for 'the real self', but which turns out to be a *fata morgana,* which so many search for in vain. Another example is the sense of disappointment with the human, which takes the form of a disappointment with the language it is given in.

What is said for philosophy holds as well for the philosopher in each and every one of us. It leads Cavell to conclude that the way of following the *Investigations*:

> … requires a willingness to recognize in oneself the moments of strangeness, sickness, disappointment, self-destructiveness, perversity, suffocation, torment, lostness that are articulated in the language of the *Investigations*, and to recognize in its philosophizing that its pleasures (they will have to reach to instances of the ecstatic) will lie in the specific forms and moments of self-recovery, it proposes – of familiarity (hence uncanniness, since the words of recovery were already familiar; too familiar), of soundness, of finitude, of the usefulness of friction, of acknowledgement, of peace. (Cavell in Gibson and Huemer, 2004, p. 27)

Here we must consider the importance of the literary aspects of texts. All texts do not only use language to express certain contents, but also direct the readers' attention to the workings of language. Moreover, by telling stories, novels may allow us to describe uncommon situations and develop a new perspective on everyday situations. Thus they provide the context necessary for exploring not only the grammar of our language, but also the limits of our form of life. Poets may provide short, carefully crafted texts that are particularly apt for minute and acute analyses and critiques of single expressions and their roles in language. Thus new metaphors may shed light on the limitations of ordinary language to express certain

situations or feelings. The poetic brings a linguistically altered reality into focus, something new in the world and thus blurs the boundaries between 'the literary' generally and philosophy. But of course, poetry also deals with the connotative and topical power of words and the rhythmic and sonic quality of phrases and sentences. That philosophy may be written as a poetic composition will, according to Wittgenstein, therefore primarily refer to its potential for invention, i.e. poetry as conceptual art.

5. PHILOSOPHY AND NEW CRITERIA

Language according to Wittgenstein requires neither reform nor theory: it needs to be described in all its dense, intractable, living hurly-burly (cf. Wittgenstein, 1967, p. 567). As we do not command a clear overview of the use of our words, and our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity, a perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in 'seeing connections'. This leads to a view of the philosopher as an itinerant sketcher, and not as a settled cartographer. The bewilderment that arises from finding oneself lost in a wilderness rather than at home in a domestic garden arises from the 'inexpressible'. But, unlike the *Tractatus*'s sense of this concept, here it refers to the immense complexity of the background that escapes even the most comprehensive attempts to control it. As David Schalkwyk argues:

> The desire for the elevated overview stems from a wish both to see the nature of the background and its relation to any particular concept clearly, and also to map completely the relationships among all concepts in the language and the totality of background against which they 'have their meaning'. While there is no logical prohibition against this, Wittgenstein is forced to acknowledge that one can sketch such relationships only from a situated position. (Schalkwyk in Gibson and Huemer, 2004, p. 71)

Thus Wittgenstein registers a personal sense of bewilderment and limitation and his task is carried out in the vast network of the literary in which the situatedness of concepts in human life and the world is registered and imaginatively renewed and tested. What is crucial is good thinking, a good use of words; an imaginative use of language creates a new kind of being which one then pits against the reality which one had formerly adhered to. Literature stages and embodies our alternating perceptions of that home, now as a wilderness, now as a well-laid out garden. As Mulisch argues, a work of art enlightens the human condition not by explaining it, but by making us feel in an intensified form, the unnameable enigma. If language and reality coincided there would be no enigma. As this is not the case, there is only art to do justice to the dream and the enigma that would otherwise escape. It is not that art can solve the enigma, but it makes it vivid by enlarging it. Philosophy as 'a poetic composition' offers the best kind of grammatical investigation of our concepts; this is what a 'perspicuous representation' refers to. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein says that anyone who understands him, i.e. eventually recognizes his propositions as nonsensical when he has used them, has to climb up beyond them: 'He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it' (Wittgenstein, 1922, p. 6.54).

Similarly, once we have reached a 'perspicuous representation' and have seen the world 'rightly', the old notions need to be abandoned. This does not involve happening upon a new metaphysical idea, a view from nowhere – nothing should be taken out of the flux of meaning-and-world. Thus philosophy offers a kind of therapy: it is not the elimination of what is impossible, it is what breaks the grip of what seems all too necessary, in order that we may accept what otherwise seems merely, almost accidentally, to be the case.

In offering new criteria for the use of certain concepts philosophy comes, by way of aesthetics, close to religion. This position explains why a philosopher who has been shown the 'correct' usage of language does not necessarily give up his stance. It explains why the 'fly cannot be shown the way out of the fly-bottle' as it is its prison only at a superficial level. At a deeper level it is a home the fly has, at least to a certain extent, built for itself. In a philosophical proposition, what is valuable for someone takes the shape of what the philosopher longs to be true, the truth *happens* there; or, in Heidegger's terms, the true is brought into the openness of what could not before be seen.

The matter of offering 'new' criteria for the use of certain concepts demands particular attention. In general, a conceptual problem does not arise from a disagreement with someone else's ideas, but from a discomfort in the way of expressing them. But though Wittgenstein often refers to the way of *solving* a problem, he does not speak much about the way of *detecting* it. He does not characterize precisely what a philosophical problem consists of. In connecting the manifestation of a problem with expressions such as 'confusion', 'bewilderment', 'puzzlement' or 'perplexity', he gives only a clue: such problems are conceptual problems (we fail to fully understand the different uses of some expressions in our language games). Conceptual discomfort arises because an expression, a gesture, an action, appears out of place in a particular language game. But, so Joe Margolis argues (in Gibson and Huemer, 2004), we are not clear at all about how Wittgenstein proceeds. In terms of method he cannot rightly be said just to bring words back from the metaphysical to their everyday use, because 'everyday use' is often deeply affected by one or another form of mind/body dualism which Wittgenstein rightly opposes. Further, because the seeming correction of such a 'mistake' is itself 'metaphysical' and thus exceeds whatever counts as 'everyday use' and moreover, if all this is admitted, then we can no longer supply a rule for determining what the right scope of a pertinent generalization should be, a matter which follows directly from Wittgenstein's position concerning rule-following. In other words, trying to deal with a 'bewitchment' seems necessarily to invoke another one. Margolis therefore argues that the bare proposal to depart from prevailing usage in order to secure a possible philosophical gain but to go considerably further cannot be disallowed on grounds of past or prevailing linguistic usage alone and is not, as such, incompatible with Wittgenstein's therapeutic intuition. Therefore, what Wittgenstein suggests does not constitute, in Margolis's opinion, a determinate method, but is rather a way of going along with a particular intuition, in this case Wittgenstein's 'feeling' of what is minimally required in order to avoid philosophical nonsense. Again this

gives further ammunition to the idea of philosophy written as 'a poetic composition' or prose poetically written seen as 'work', as offering a new insight.

Philosophy is therapy – it is about undoing knots in our thinking and understanding. A cloud of metaphysics, Wittgenstein says, is condensed in a drop of 'grammar' (Wittgenstein, 1953, II, p. 222e). Philosophy is thus a form of attack, but what one is attacking are castles of air or houses of cards (ibid., I, p. 118); it is about going back to the rough ground (ibid., I, p. 107). The therapy it offers can be a reminder for what happens to the human race and its so-called civilization, for instance where he refers to Spengler (at various places in *Culture and Value*) and calls upon us to be sensitive to the cultural malaise. At other points, Wittgenstein argues that the therapy philosophy offers has to do with overcoming a personal crisis in his life as in the *Lecture on Ethics* (Wittgenstein, 1965). Also, philosophy's therapeutic dimension helps us to live with scepticism and to withstand our longing to resolve it. Wittgenstein's approach demonstrates a need to live with the existential attraction of scepticism; it should be respected, even if it seems to go nowhere, as it might prompt us to say something noble about the human species. The 'ordinary' should not disappoint us, but give us peace so that we can give up our craving for particular kinds of criteria, for the general, for idle, metaphysical talk.

6. THE STORY OF THE RESEARCHER

Thinking about the nature of a story, not only in educational research as the raw data one starts from but of educational research itself, may be a way to do justice to the study of education along the lines advocated by Wittgenstein and Cavell. On the one hand a story can be conceived as something that joins people together, on the other hand as what can only 'show'. Here education may be seen as what starts from an initiation into what is 'groundless'. Both educator and student can do no more than give expression to their stories, and appeal to the *educandus* (and practitioner) by what he/she holds to be valuable and constructive, taking into account the child's or the student's response and thus being responsive to her. Maybe this is implied in Cavell's idea of philosophy as the education of grown-ups, an idea, which provides a lesson for educational research. If educational research can be heterogeneous and produce different (kinds of) result and moreover can be presented in various ways, if different stories can be told, this eventually will endorse the classical insight that education is about instilling and evoking a good disposition. Educational research might then be regarded as another way to express this 'showing', as a mode of the will to join in this kind of dialogical speaking and doing. However, this requires an understanding of educational research, which no longer sees it as quantitative (A), qualitative (B), or quantitative using qualitative data (B1). Rather, we must opt radically for an interpretative stance (B2).

Indeed, the fateful mistake would therefore be to attempt to say something about *what must be happening in us* when we see (or otherwise experience) one thing or another, to be so and so. This characterizes an attitude not of keepers of truth but of registrars of truth, something that we cannot become without losing ourselves

(Baz, 2003, p. 478–479). This is, as Cavell points out, not to deny the fact and the significance of the background of pervasive and systematic agreements among us, but to see that the point of our own words or the words of others is just as much a condition of human speech. Following Cavell, Baz argues:

> And *when* one of those rare occasions does occur, and something speaks to us, what speaks to us is *never simply* those objective properties that anyone who speaks the language and has eyes in her or his head can see. What *speaks* to us in things always goes beyond, comes from beyond of, what anyone can just plainly see. *These* would be the moments in which it might make sense for us to give expression to what we see, for no other reason but *that it is true.* What we then would say might perhaps be unwarranted – there would be no obvious way for convincing others of its truth, or for fitting it into a world-view. But in spite of that, and in fact precisely by virtue of that, it would be an expression of our faithfulness to what we see. (Baz, 2003, p. 496)

It also invites us to allot a different role to the educational researcher. Cavell argues that:

> From the root of speech, in each utterance of revelation and confrontation, two paths spring: that of the responsibilities of implication; and that of the rights of desire … In acknowledging a mode of speech in or through which, by acknowledging my desire in confronting you, I declare my standing with you and single you out, demanding a response in kind from you, and a response now, so making myself vulnerable to your rebuke, thus staking our future …. (Cavell, 2005, pp. 194–195)

Many educational researchers have been kept awake thinking about the world in order to find information that is 'useful'. Their dedication cannot be doubted. The dream of the labourer, to interpret 'what is the case' and by this knowledge to grasp 'what is predictable, what can be influenced' is, however, based upon a kind of thinking which is in need of reconsideration. 'The story before bedtime' may offer a way out for the 'labouring sleepwalker'. In the recognition (and exploration) that passed the door of the mystical, the human being can only be understood in what one is touched by. One cannot initiate the child. One cannot but initiate the child into one's own story. Woven into a growing network of stories, everyone articulates what one is (expression). Everyone touches the other and is touched by his/her (evocation). What touches is the other, with whom I am joined in an intersubjective manner, who expresses oneself by dint of what evocation is capable of. That one can say 'I' is only thanks to the other joined in what we are touched by, joined with what cannot be said anymore, but only shown. And the story of the researcher, it may touch us as any other story, may invite us to tell a new, perhaps (partly) different tale, in which the thread is taken up again, the existence articulated and challenged.

Cavell reminds us that saying something in particular, has its conditions. Only by acknowledging this, can we avoid overlooking questions pertaining to the point of what we say. Following Cavell, Baz argues that *what* we say cannot be specified independently of *why* we say it. And he continues:

> [I]f Cavell is correct in his recurrent reminders to the effect that the intelligibility of our words is a matter of their being found to be worth saying – *here* and *now* in *this* way – then whoever wishes to understand our experience of the world on the model of saying something about the world, … would have to take into account the question of what *calls for* the words with which we give voice to our experience of the world. (Baz, 2003, p. 476)

To say that educational research has to be interpretive echoes Mulhall's claim that interpreting '… things into practical life has no distinctive structure or principles because it is fundamentally not based on the following of some pre-given set of rules; it depends upon imagination, the ability to see connections, the creative shaping of one's sense of how aspects of human experience hang together or fail to do so' (Mulhall, 2000, p. 264). The example concerning child protection given below, can be seen as illustrating this as well as 'giving a voice', thus as transgressing a pre-given set of rules.

7. SOCIAL WORK AND EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

An example of what is meant in this chapter by a different kind of narrative educational research is offered by a closer look at a study from the area of social work in the context of child protection.[2] It illustrates how the 'negotiation of meaning' has come to replace models of child protection that proceed from a model of medical intervention. The kind of case I have in mind results for instance from a mother finding that she cannot cope with her children anymore, or where a father cannot endure the crying of his baby and is at risk of harming her, or where a child realizes after countless rows, possibly violent rows, between her parents that she cannot trust them anymore. In such cases the involvement of a child protection agency is unavoidable. A decision is taken, usually made after years of assistance, to invoke a court ruling, which might result in the suspension of parental authority and the placing of the child in an institution or with foster parents.

The report written on such families, which any court, Council for Child Protection (in the Netherlands) or Local Authority (in the UK) or combination of such agencies will require, will attempt to convey the full significance of the complex and changing realities of these families. This contrasts with the early days of social work, in the Netherlands at any rate, where scant attention was given to the viewpoints of parents and children. Decisions were taken from an authoritarian and moralistic point of view or from the firm belief that the authorities knew what was best for the client. What we would now see as unnecessary force was not unheard of. Children were sometimes placed in isolation and decisions were taken over the heads of those involved. The general attitude created a sense of dependency instead of challenging it. Clients were not allowed to read what was reported about them: the perspectives of the family members hardly mattered. Procedures of decision making were non-transparent and professionals involved were not self-critical. In the 1960s and 1970s this patronizing attitude was heavily criticized. The first line of criticism resulted from the influence of American methods of social work, which

were informed by a theory of human relations work and the growing psychologization of the field. This was then backed up by an interest in wider social and political problems and the rights of clients, which, in the 1980s and 1990s, formed part of a general criticism of the welfare state and the role of social work in society, which included criticisms concerning the financial costs of child protection. The system was accused of inefficiency, condemning clients to lives of dependency. Social work was challenged to justify itself in terms of procedural transparency, assessment methods, client participation, communicative skills, quality management and audits.

Social work was now asked to deliver hard evidence to show the quality and efficacy of its services and it was believed that a scientific approach could investigate the methods and strategies it used to make its effects visible. A new kind of social work could be put in place based on the knowledge (the general laws) of the processes of social work. The neutral kind of mastery gathered according to the methods of science would then be applied in all kinds of situations and so cut loose from the interpretation of the client and thus the care worker. Two of the models that are often used in this kind of research are the main determinant model and the interaction model. The former offers a causal explanation. The developments and changes in the client are the result of environmental factors, in this case, of the interventions of the social worker. The interaction model distinguishes between the child and the environment. Here the development of the child is explained by a set of factors, which, in relation to others, lead to a particular effect. Models where protective and threatening factors are listed exemplify the interaction model. These models yield important information for the care worker, but they may also serve a clinical purpose, in the sense that they can be used to discover, with a fair degree of accuracy, how certain actions of a client have to be interpreted and which reactions by a care worker have an optimal result for the client.

However, it is questionable whether scientific knowledge of this kind is of any but indirect use in the context of care. Statistical knowledge and general laws seem to be only marginally relevant in individual clinical cases. Evidently they have importance in terms of what social workers know, and this will be used in their discussions with the clients. But social workers will also take on board the experiences of fellow workers in the field, which might give them an idea of how to tackle the particular problems. A serious danger, however, threatens the endeavour to objectify all elements of social work. It may lead to an unacceptable reduction of what is involved and it may be counterproductive if essential processes and methods are studied out of context for reasons of testing. Good evaluative research is rare because it is so complex. The result is often no more than an enumeration of isolated measurements, which are put together in a matrix. Social work cannot be studied in a social laboratory as specific elements necessarily take on different meanings when separated from their natural contexts. In everyday life these elements come into play at the same time and only some of them can be controlled. Also, it is usually impossible to measure effects with control groups. It is therefore often not clear what exactly is being measured and which theoretical position is corroborated.

The so-called transactional model understands developmental processes differently. It holds that changes in the situation of the client influence his/her behaviour in the sense that certain kinds of behaviour become possible or impossible. Social worker and client are both regarded as constructors of meaning in this model and as possessors of their own schemes of interpretation. Each party provides different explanations and contexts for their ideas and concepts, which consequently are never stable. This explains why research in this field benefits from observations and explanations made 'from the inside'. Social work is therefore situated in the middle of such meaning-generating processes. The interventions of the social worker owe their effect to a successful shift of meanings, to a reconstruction of the life story of the client. This is the reason why what really happens between a social worker and a client can never be completely treated in terms of isolated elements, which can be scientifically studied. Meaning cannot be subdivided into separate phenomena which, taken in isolation, contribute to the total meaning. Rather, each phenomenon is a dependent part of a larger meaningful picture. Because people give meaning to their dealings with each other, relationships between social workers and clients have a moral and subjective character, which cannot be reduced to general laws and testable hypotheses. The morally rich discourse that I am concerned to advocate is of a different order.

Constructive caring, on this model, aims to help people to reconstruct their lives. When the client talks about his/her life and the social worker responds, an exchange of meaning takes place. The client may talk about events that he/she could not influence. The social worker may ask for more information, may seem to understand the client, but can also talk of other things and bring in his/her own experiences and alternative stories. Sometimes, the client will say certain things for the first time, as if he/she has only just realized what really happened. Sometimes the partners just repeat each other's interpretations as a first step towards their own new interpretation. The client may also put the social worker's interpretation into perspective. Also, it is possible that the two lines of construction may pass each other by, and so forth. At the symbolic level new conceptual connections are possible because of new interpretations and this may lead to new experiences. In their mutual communication social worker and client conduct a kind of dance. Life stories help to create an experience of continuity in our lives in the midst of change.

Often clients see themselves as victims of bureaucracy and the arbitrariness of the authorities and cannot appreciate how they themselves contribute to their own problems. They feel that they are powerless and have no trust in the future. Clients of youth care and child protection work often see the intervention in their family as a proof of their complete failure as persons. Because of this, they approach other social situations with little confidence and in so doing they enter a downward spiral, underestimating the personal resources they still have at their disposal. The kind of care they are offered, in this account, aims to help parents to cope with the disappointments in their lives and to create the space for a different outlook on their problems. It takes no great effort to try to explain to clients 'what went wrong' and to give them the instruments with which to change their lives. This would presuppose an objective reality, which may be known and controlled. It helps the client to solve

his/her problems by sharing with him/her the search for new concepts, for the words for his/her history and future and for new and different ways in which to look at his/her life. It may also help him/her to realize that the truth about his/her life is not written in the stars and immutable. Also, it may help him/her to overcome a kind of fatalism. The aim of this kind of social work is therefore not so much to look for the explanations for and solutions to problems that have arisen but to see how different stories can coexist with one another.

Evidently, a distinction can be made between what a social worker does in terms of intervention and research in this area, but viewing this opposition in terms of radically different aims is overstated or even misconceived. The kind of research one needs should do justice to the particularities of the situation, not only in order to understand such particularities and to know what is going on, but also to avoid idleness. This research can shape itself to become another voice that may be heard by those involved.

8. AN INTERPRETATIVE RESEARCH STANCE

Affeldt argues that we should be hesitant about the use of criteria because they may be seen as marks and features which 'tell us' when the application of a concept has been licensed and legitimated. We should be wary of believing that articulating grammatical relations among our concepts might 'tell us' what exactly we have said in any particular instance of applying a concept. Criteria should not be seen to determine either what our concepts mean or to cover what else we (must) have committed ourselves to or made ourselves responsible for in employing a particular concept (see Affeldt, 1998, p. 5). In a similar vein, content analysis of interview protocols, horizontal and vertical analyses of case studies, and the use of observation categories (stipulating a neutral description in behavioural terms), draw us away from the particular in the name of objectivity and generalizability. There is certainly a 'first person' aspect to the story the researcher presents. Yet, in another sense, he/she seems to claim to speak for others. His/her endeavour therefore involves a peculiar mixture of self-reliance and vulnerability. What he/she does is *only* to remind his/her audience of the very possibility of a different scenario.

Gustafson interprets Cavell as arguing that the epistemologist starts from familiar language and makes a projection, in that he/she imports words into unfamiliar contexts. The pervasive significance of our unregularizable projective imagination manifests, he says, 'the extent to which keeping language alive and the world in view is not a matter of passive conformity, but a continuous undertaking which requires the employment of those interests, feelings, modes of response, sense of humour and significance and fulfilment. … This undertaking is our task, as language using creatures; we are burdened with this responsibility. It cannot be transferred to, say, a machinery of rules the application of which is fixed independently of human modes of response' (Gustafson, 2005, p. 377). If the researcher claims to sense something others fail to see, there may not be an agreed-upon procedure by means of which the issue can be resolved. One cannot decide in advance which projections are tolerable.

But, as Mulhall argues, this is not different from how we are situated in a moral debate. To present your position is to present it by defining your sense of its relation to other positions, to place yourself in a particular space which acknowledges other moral options, and so to place yourself in relation to those who would plot that space differently or would have you place yourself differently in it. And he continues:

> But this placing is yours alone to do: the logic of moral argument offers no impersonal background on to which one's responsibility not only for the choices one makes but for the range of choices one regards as available can be sloughed off. What it does provide, however, is the possibility of accounting for one's choices, by engaging in modes of explanation and defence which not only make reasoned agreement on that choice a real possibility, but also ensure that a sense of mutual respect, of mutual moral intelligibility, might survive eventual disagreement over the rectitude of a given choice. (Mulhall, 2000, p. 272)

This form of respect should characterize educational research that aspires to do justice to the nature of education. Research of this kind would be inescapably interpretative.

Now, we might anticipate objections to the adoption of interpretive research methods. Some may argue that adopting the paradigm of narrative analysis (or interpretive research) is just a game we should not want to play. Is it not possible to simply turn one's head away and focus instead on the deep disquietudes human life confronts us with? But a huge price is paid for this disdain (such disdain can certainly be found in some circles of the philosophy [of education]). Not only may disavowal jeopardize the relevance of one's reflections in a context where 'scientific' is a quality label of sound thinking. It may also give ammunition to the message of those who bombard the educational practitioners with an inexhaustible stream of new research techniques. Going back to the criteria we find in the ordinary can help to enlighten many kinds of educational research, but only if criteria are conceived in a particular way. Standish argues that criteria should be seen:

> … not just as something into which the potential speaker is inculcated but ultimately as something that depends upon her for their sustenance. Criteria are not the cause of her judgment so much as the result. The maintaining of criteria requires this continual giving of assent by the members of a culture, and this can be done in creative and in moribund ways. Suppression of voice would be a form of the latter, and skepticism is one of its forms. Ordinary language philosophy is committed to the recovery of the voice of the ordinary from its suppression or denial by the impersonal metaphysical voice of philosophy. Good education is committed to its recovery of an ordinary understanding of teaching and learning from its denial by the metaphysical voices of performativity and quality control, and from the empiricism of educational research. (Standish, 2006, p. 8)

Similarly, good educational research should bring the ordinary into the forefront and steer itself away from the craving for general criteria. It should acknowledge the

other and give up its metaphysical aspirations. The danger that such research might become fictitious can easily be countered by the normal procedures by which we establish, what is the case, what counts as an explanation and what makes sense for us. Good educational research should therefore confine itself to offering another voice alongside those of educational practitioners. Such a redirection of its nature will also put an end to the sterile debates between adherents of the quantitative or qualitative approaches, and will put the researchers' findings in contact with the practice of education itself. No less will these insights find a place in a particular discursive field in which validity claims are to be met, not grounded in authentic accounts of 'the real', but neither embracing a complete dismissal of the truth. As Koro-Ljunberg argues, '[W]ebs of cultural meanings are produced through history, language, and power … [but] these constructions are always temporal and open to critique.' (Koro-Ljungberg, 2004, p. 615)

Is all this enough of an antidote to the threat posed to the homogenization of educational research, or will research fall victim to yet a new constraint? It seems that if it does, it will be on the level of practice. But if anything, the multifariousness that characterizes practice will warrant at least an approach that has the potential of breaking through the dominant discourse. As argued above, this brings to the fore-front the need for what could be called a 'utopian dimension'. But that is another issue, which cannot be dealt with here.

NOTES

[1] See for instance: Standards for reporting on empirical social science research in AERA publications. American Educational Research Association. (2006). *Educational Researcher*, 35(6), 33–40.

[2] In the following section extensive use is made of the insights developed by Carol van Nijnatten (2004). *Opvoeding, taal en continuïteit* [Child-rearing, language and continuity]. Amsterdam: Boom.

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CHAPTER EIGHT

NAOMI HODGSON AND PAUL STANDISH

NETWORK, CRITIQUE, CONVERSATION: TOWARDS A RETHINKING OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH METHODS TRAINING

1. INTRODUCTION

Much attention is currently given to the improvement of the methodological training through which graduate students are inducted into educational research. At one time students' competence to embark on their research was assumed already to be derived from their previous studies and experience or to be gained through working with their supervisors, perhaps alongside other students. Recently, the gaps in students' theoretical and practical knowledge have been more widely recognised, and participation in some kind of research training has become the norm, even de rigueur.

The cogency and value of educational research as a practice and field of study is perennially challenged, and so it is not surprising that the construction of methods courses, to fulfil this preparatory role should be contested terrain. The breadth of the field – with its internal demarcation disputes and with its various contributing, often disarticulated disciplines, in tandem with anxieties recurrently occasioned by this lack of unity – has tended to issue in a striking self-consciousness about methodological propriety, the adoption of somewhat dogmatic stances, and more than a little confusion. (The so-called paradigm wars between qualitative and quantitative approaches – though it has been fashionable to say that these have waned in recent years – have manifested these weaknesses.) It is our purpose in this chapter to diagnose certain aspects of this malaise, especially in relation to the prominence of networks and network thinking, and to suggest ways towards both a more coherent conception of educational research and a better induction into this.

We begin by acknowledging the prominence of networked relationships and the theorisation of these in the celebrated work of Manuel Castells. We go on to identify the ways in which networks figure in both practices within and induction into educational research, and expose what we take to be the orthodoxy at work here. We challenge this orthodoxy in terms of its lack of openness to critique, claiming that, to the extent that it does incorporate or promote a critical approach, this is critique that has been domesticated. In the light of this we seek to explain ways of thought (of practice, of being) that fall outside the structures we criticise but that might contribute to a more rich, more rigorous, and more exacting form of educational enquiry.

P. Smeyers and M. Depaepe (eds.), Educational Research: Networks and Technologies, 105–120.

2. THEORISING NETWORKS

Educational research as an academic field can be understood as a network or group of networks and, therefore, to consist of interconnected nodes that structure the way the field operates and understands its purpose. Induction into such research, in ways that we shall explain, involves familiarisation with the nature and extent of such networks, understanding of their modus operandi, and competence in participating in them. But what exactly are networks, and what is their significance? The *locus classicus* for theorisation here is Castells' *The Rise of the Network Society* (1996). Where does his thought lead?

It is not uncommon to speak of 'networks' in relation to information technology, and there are obvious technical reasons for this. But clearly the usage of the term is much wider than this. Information technology, both facilitates and models, ways of interaction between people that reconstitute the institutions and relationships of our social world, including the world of work. The terms 'network' and 'networking' refer to people coming together to exchange ideas, making connections with those of similar interests and, through this improved communication, enabling more productive working practices. Castells suggests that, although the idea of the network is not in itself new, 'the new information technology paradigm provides the material basis for its pervasive expansion throughout the entire social structure' (Castells, 1996, p. 469). He defines a network as a set of interconnected nodes and explains the structure of the relationships that are formed in the following terms:

> What a node is, concretely speaking, depends on the kind of concrete networks of which we speak. The topology defined by networks determines that the distance (or intensity and frequency of interaction) between two points (or social positions) is shorter (or more frequent or more intense) if both points are nodes in a network than if they do not belong to the same network. On the other hand, within a given network, flows have no distance, or the same distance, between nodes…The inclusion/exclusion in networks, and the architecture of relationships between networks, enacted by light-speed operating information technologies, configure dominant processes and functions in our societies. (Castells, 1996, p. 470)

It is important to note that Castells' understanding of the network highlights the power of flows between nodes in the network. The term 'flow' here depicts an ease or freedom of movement, and one of Castells' more significant insights is his recognition of the way that the importance attached to such flows can displace the importance attached to the substance of the messages they carry. A banal but surely persuasive instantiation can be found in educational institutions where the efficient operation of accounting systems, themselves quite probably structured by information technology, takes precedence over what is being accounted for, with the whole process degenerating into the familiar box-ticking of which educators commonly complain. Castells phrases this as follows:

> The power of flows takes precedence over the flows of power. Presence or absence in the network and the dynamics of each network vis-à-vis others are critical courses of domination and change in our society: a society that, therefore, we may properly call the network society, characterised by the pre-eminence of social morphology over social action. (Castells, 1996, p. 469)

It is the ability to adapt and diversify that characterises the benefits of the network and as such it is involvement within it which is important rather than its products: 'The logic of the network is more powerful than the powers in the network' (Castells, 1996, p. 193). The good manager in such an institutional setting, someone who is intent on being adaptable to change, will be one who is attuned to this power of flows and who perhaps allows himself/herself to become desensitised to the matters of substance that they hide. The successful researcher, we shall try to show, may be someone whose negotiation of networks affords them high visibility, to the neglect of the deeper engagement that enquiry into education might otherwise exact. But from where does this power of networks come?

Castells characterises the organisation of production in late modernity in terms of the network as a response to 'the conditions of unpredictability ushered in by rapid economic and technological change' (Castells, 1996, p. 164). In response to the network flexibility offered by the technological advances of the Internet and globalisation, vertically organised, autonomous bureaucracies give way to the horizontal corporation. Flexibility and adaptability are then, 'the key competitive weapons' (Castells, 1996, p. 172). The necessity of 'either considerable resources (financial, technological, market share) or an alliance with a major player in the network' means, in fact, that access to the network is governed to an extent by the already existing major corporations or power holders or by cooperation between them (Castells, 1996, p. 192). Once one is part of the network one has access to resources and the potential for adaptability to the economic, social and political forces that determine its focus. It is the logic of the network, however, rather than the specific interests expressed through it that are determinant. What does this imply for the novice educational researcher?

3. INDUCTION INTO RESEARCH METHODS

In a recent paper (Hodgson and Standish, 2006), we tried to show how the prominence of networks makes claims on educational research methods training. Students are familiarised with such networks, come to understand the way they operate, and gain competence as participants in them. It is important for our account, of course, that we do not suppose the term 'network' to refer only to formally constituted organisations that adopt this name: networked thinking operates through the regimes of textual production (including, self-referentially, the theorisation of that production and the fieldwork methodologies associated with it), through the professional and social practices involved in collaboration, through conferences and publication – in short, through the entire research domain. We share with Stone (2006) a sense that there runs through this a normalisation of practice that, for all its apparent internal

rivalries and disputes, in fact shores up the orthodoxy, driven by the dominant notion of 'what works'. It is similarly important to add at this point, however, that the woefully overworked expression 'what works' may masquerade as the touchstone of real engagement with educational problems but in fact itself slips neatly into the very performativity upon which efficient networks can thrive. It is in so many respects this that shapes the field and conditions the induction it has come to institutionalise.

Stone (2006) offers an incisive and in some ways amusing critique of the induction of graduate researchers in the USA, where the notion of 'what works' dominates in the way we suggest. She draws on the work of Kuhn (1962, 1970) in order to reveal how 'new generations of researchers early on learn what is "normal"' (Stone, 2006, p. 127): the natural sciences serve as the model for research; the quantitative tradition predominates; efficiency is paramount and held as part of what science is; and ethics becomes a matter of compulsory 'institutional review to "contain" harm' (Stone, 2006, p. 128). Very early in their training, and sometimes prior to admission, graduate education students in the USA are required to state their methodological orientation, placing themselves in either the quantitative or qualitative camp, as 'this community membership is a first founding component of belonging to the education research community' (Stone, 2006, p. 134). Students learn that they must be strategic in their approach in a number of ways:

> One message is to 'get in and get out'. A second is the necessity of funding and to locate projects and methods in order to 'get grants'. Still a third is to move quickly to focus on a research question and to narrow one's topic as one learns one's method. A fourth value is to adopt and perfect standardized routines and formats. These range from designing and conducting studies to reporting their results. All of these values are woven through courses and research experiences, through course papers and projects, articles and finally dissertations. All are constitutive of induction into a broad education research culture. (Stone, 2006, p. 135)

There is an instrumentality to this in that it enables students to produce results in the most efficient way possible and to get on the ladder of publication. This is, after all then, an efficient way to proceed. But what is telling, Stone shows, is what is missing from such courses, namely background study of education, study of the founding disciplines of education, and attention to theory. We might add to this list of omissions a further item, for reasons that will become clear below: that is, any real sense of critique. But we make this point here primarily for emphasis, aware that a reasonable version of any of Stone's three items would necessarily include critique. Her analysis also helps to reveal the rigid, linear nature of the way in which research is understood through such courses, as a kind of homeostatic problem-solving, a restoring of equilibrium, of the efficient running of the system, it being taken for granted that what education or society itself is about – that what the good life might consist in – is no longer up for serious consideration.

We value Stone's identification and characterisation of this orthodoxy, and, like her, we are moved to satire. Recalling Castells' claim that the network represents a triumph of 'social morphology over social action' (Castells, 1996, p. 469), we entertain the thought that one day the practices of educational research may come to seem like the activities of an obsolete and eccentric religious order, with qualoid and quantoid sects, and with many of its practices governed by the demands of ritual rather than reality. Research students, we imagine, as novices to this order. The elements of practice into which they are initiated are then nodes in the network, necessary points of connection in the processes of induction and professional practice.

But we are also moved to pay careful and more prosaic attention to statements by the UK's most significant source of funding for research, the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), which accredits and funds postgraduate research degrees in the social sciences. The concern with informing policy and practice as the key feature of the domain of educational research is reflected in its outline of the nature of the field: 'Educational research may include any enquiry which promotes theoretical and/or empirical social science understanding of educational and/or learning processes and settings, or which informs judgements about educational policy and practice' (ESRC, F5, 1.1). While this includes both empirical and theoretical research, the danger we suggest is that the focus on processes and on informing policy and practice may be narrowly interpreted. This is especially so where the influence of the network structures expectations, strategies, and ways of thought. The description of 'The Nature of the Area' continues:

> Educational inquiry draws upon a broad range of theoretical and methodological resources including philosophy and social science disciplines. It may involve specific methods and techniques appropriate to the distinctive nature of educational knowledge and theories and the generation of new methods may itself be a focus of educational research. (ibid., F5, 1.2)

While this may appear to be a usefully open definition of the area, one that enables research in education to be conceived according to multidisciplinary theoretical and methodological approaches and with some appreciation of what is distinctive about education, its limitations need carefully to be examined. When considered in relation to the guidelines for Social Anthropology, the above outline seems cramped or curtailed.

> Social Anthropology works with a creative tension between empirical particularity and attention to the broadest theoretical questions about what it means to be a human social agent. Its theory, method and analysis are mutually constitutive. The discipline is noted for its fine-grained empirical detail. Its researchers achieve high levels of linguistic and cultural competence through long periods of fieldwork, complemented by ancillary sources of documentary information. Social anthropologists locate their evidence in as broad a context as possible, and the data they collect usually extend beyond the original focus of interest and specific research topic. (ibid., F13, 1.3)

The contrast helps to illustrate the limited horizons within which educational research is conceived. In such a normalised research context heavily influenced by networks, as we have suggested, the outline of the nature of the area of Education is unlikely to be interpreted broadly. The description of Anthropology, by contrast, is alert to the possibilities of a complexity and intensity of experience, in both the substance of the field of study and in the practice of enquiry into it. In contrast to the homeostatic maintenance of the system, both substantively and methodologically, it lays itself open to the pursuit of thought in uncharted directions. What place is there for criticism in the domain of Education? Can criticism function without new paths of thought?

4. CRITIQUE AND ITS DOMESTICATION

We have tried to show (here and in Hodgson and Standish, 2006) that induction into the field of educational research is achieved in the following ways. There is, first, an initiation into research methods courses and their associated textual domain. This has the following characteristics: research design is presented as a process of creating an unimpeded conduit from designing to 'doing' research; the demand for 'evidence-based' policy and practice maintains the problem-solving linear focus of research design and practice; ethics is treated as a checklist of problem avoidance (sometimes with associations of purging and confession, e.g. acknowledging one's 'positionality'). Second, there is the point that it is through such practices as attending and speaking at conferences, and through that blend of professional and social interaction that, in various ways, typifies such events, that the field's discursive orthodoxy is constructed. Access to the appropriate network is to some extent predicated on adopting the language, style, and manners of those who exert influence within it, and success in publishing and promoting one's work – not to mention the securing of a position – may partly depend on this. The place of 'critical thinking' is likely to be foregrounded in these practices. Indeed the importance of 'being critical' is now so thoroughly institutionalised in educational research that it has almost become yet another method one can choose from the contents page of the research methods textbook. Heyting and Winch (2004) point out that being critical or criticality can take many forms, has its origins in different traditions, and, therefore, has different purposes; but this is a point that is lost in the lip service paid to the term in educational research. As we have indicated above, then, our suspicion is that this will be a form of critique whose sharpness is dulled and whose challenge surreptitiously contained. In short, the critical becomes orthodox; it is neutralised and domesticated. We need to substantiate this claim.

The terms 'domestication' and 'domain', with their shared etymology in *domus* (house or home), depend upon a binary that significantly shapes the understanding of the field of educational enquiry. This encourages us to think of an 'inside' into which the novice researcher is admitted. In relation to the network it has been stated that it is inclusion in the network that is important, and induction into educational research operates to ensure that students can access and speak in terms of the

dominant discourses of the field. The term 'domestication' of critique has arisen to describe the way that the very terms of critique are limited by that anxiety of securing this 'inside', with the consequence that the domain either insulates itself against challenge or incorporates a minor incursion from outside in such a way as to inoculate itself. A number of subtle arguments that reveal this to be the case and explore its consequences have recently been advanced (see Heyting and Winch, 2004; and, within this collection, especially Heid, 2004, and Ruitenberg, 2004). As Masschelein (2004) has argued, critique has now become an integral part of the system with the consequence that any more detached, more emancipatory potential within the critical tradition is suppressed.

We value these lines of thought, but we also foresee a danger. This is that criticism of the field in terms of the domestication of critique may, in spite of itself, as it were, simply provide another binary (domesticated/undomesticated) with which to discuss the field of educational research. There is a further danger, however, concerning where this leaves us: our own doubts about this critique of domestication may render us inarticulate when it comes to offering alternatives – for fear of our own criticisms simply being incorporated somehow into the ways of thinking we seek to subvert. So our task is to elaborate more directly and fully different ways in which critique might operate and the potential for breaking free from the binary structures that we see as vulnerable to this incorporation.

The alternative to orthodoxy that presents itself most obviously is a matter of direct opposition to that orthodoxy's stances and claims. One can imagine this as operating at a variety of different levels and in relation to both more specific and more general matters. These are scenes of confrontation, opposition, and, one may hope, dialogue and negotiation. The ideal scenario for such interactions is one where the participants openly acknowledge their views, argue their case, and perhaps seek to reach consensus. We are indeed thinking of something like a Habermasian ideal speech situation. Our purpose in what follows is not to reject this, but rather to move forwards on the strength of our concern that the very terms of such argument are vulnerable – perhaps as a result of the need to agree on terms, to find common ground – to a kind of normalisation and incorporation in the ways that we have tried to show. Moreover, the undoubted importance of these ideals of argument and engagement can hide the different ways in which thought can fruitfully proceed. In order to show this we shall turn first to remarks by Harold Bloom and then to ideas drawn from Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

5. CRITIQUE AND THE *CLINAMEN* OF THOUGHT

In his highly influential book *The Anxiety of Influence*, Bloom's concerns, let it be acknowledged, are far from matters of educational research. It is necessary for a moment then to suspend any expectation of quick answers to the problems we raise in order to attend to the rather different questions he addresses. Bloom sets out to consider the ways in which major writers are influenced by their predecessors, whether through imitation or through self-conscious breaking away and rejection.

In elaborating a theory of poetic influence he is not, as he makes equally clear, interested in the 'wearisome industry of source-hunting, of allusion-counting' (Bloom, 1973, p. 31). He seeks rather to understand what it is that the best poets do and their relation to the influences by which they are affected. This is nothing less than a highly provocative account of how the best thought might proceed. The central principle he arrives at, which is 'not more true for its outrageousness, but merely true enough', is that:

> Poetic Influence – when it involves two strong, authentic poets – always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main tradition of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, wilful revisionism without which modern poetry as such could not exist. (Bloom, 1973, p. 30, italics in original)

Ben Jonson, the playwright, Bloom tells us, had spoken favourably of *imitation*, but with the Enlightenment's passion for genius, originality, and authenticity, Jonson's faith in the artistic value of diligent work could not be fully sustained. Bloom contrasts this with the way that Edward Young laments the great precursors: 'They *engross* our attention, and so prevent a due inspection of ourselves; they *prejudice* our judgement in favor of their abilities, and so lessen the sense of our own; and they *intimidate* us with the splendor of their renown' (Bloom, 1973, p. 30). In terms that happily coincide with the allusions to religion in our own account, Bloom relates the breaking away from imitation, and the revisionism it implies for the practice of criticism, to heresy. But whereas heresy tended to have its effects on received doctrine by an alteration of balances, the orientation of modern thought, as his principle indicates, is towards a kind of creative correction. It is this possibility of creative correction that we seek to emphasise. The particular turn that is given to the idea of correction, it should be noted, should quell any quick assumptions that this is another reversion to orthodoxy. Bloom proposes, on the strength of his claims, a new approach to practical criticism that is based upon giving up the 'failed enterprise of trying to "understand" any single poem as an entity in itself' in favour of the 'quest of learning to read … in terms of its poet's deliberate misinterpretation, *as a poet*, of a precursor poem or of poetry in general' (Bloom, 1973, p. 43). Understanding a poem as 'an entity in itself' might figure as an example of a misconceived kind of correction, a conformist propriety, and a deadened way of thought; this is not the creative turn that we seek. As Bloom later expresses the matter, 'Influence, as I conceive it, means that there are *no* texts, but only relationships *between* texts' (Bloom, 1975, p. 3). Although he identifies a number of forms that such deliberate misinterpretation can take, the guiding notion is that of the swerve (or *clinamen*) – what Coleridge had called the '*lene clinamen*, the gentle bias'.[1]

What in the context of enquiry into education might constitute this kind of swerving of thought? Let us imagine three possibilities, within, say, an advanced course in the study of education. In the first case, we envisage the more or less uncritical adoption of the language and practices of the expert researcher, including

perhaps certain critical procedures and points of view. This might figure prominently in the orthodox research of which we complain. Second, we can imagine the overt exercise of critical judgement, in confronting received opinion and in readiness to challenge prevailing arguments, all of this encouraged perhaps by the enlightened teacher. This would be the Habermasian scene we sketch above, otherwise perhaps a dialectical progression. Third, we call to mind those more elusive occasions where, for example, a text is read and discussed in class, or a problem considered in the light of conflicting and contrasting literatures. Discussion progresses more as a theme with variations, whose fine declinations, increase to gain the impetus of a swerve. And here we imagine those participating as beginning with certain shared reference points – the texts under consideration and some sense of their background and context. It is in conversing about these matters (these texts, these problems) that differences in thought are able to emerge; it is through careful attention to them that differences come to light, in much the same way as this happens in the best literary criticism. The literary critic does not set out to solve problems, but perhaps rather to discover them – that is, to reveal possibilities of thought that, without this, would lie dormant. Finding problems is finding occasions for more thought. And the aim would not so much be the finding of consensus as the releasing of ideas that would otherwise lie sleeping under the railway tracks of progress, those railway tracks of thinking of which Wittgenstein was consistently wary. We can imagine, can we not, that the participants in such a discussion might emerge from it with a sense that the discussion had enabled them to think something new, and – further – that that new thing might be precisely an insight into practical matters, a way forward, that was otherwise blocked?

Thought in such circumstances may start along parallel lines, and at this stage it may not be so captivating, but as differences emerge there is a kind of swerving away in a vortical movement that progressively intensifies. If we think of our communication with others as a realm in which our pre-established commitments and projects are to be negotiated (dialogically, argumentatively, if need be), or as a networked realm in which the rapid transfer of messages (of information!) is of the essence, we shall miss the fact that this public sphere is precisely where we might *discover* what our projects and commitments are, where, that is, they might be formed. This would be no less true for what our individual aspirations might be than it would be for what our collective educational endeavours could become. That it is in communication that we might discover our commitments should cause us to think of this in terms not of dialogue, negotiation, and confrontation but rather of *conversation*. And as the middle syllable of this term suggests, the best conversations are precisely those in which there is a *turning* of thought that both fashions it and gives it the vortical impetus of a swerve, a *clinamen*. These are, we venture to suggest, some of the best passages in education, both in the substance of practice and in enquiry into this.

In fact, these thoughts are not so far removed from Michael Oakeshott's celebrated account of 'the conversation of mankind', and something similar to them is richly articulated in numerous passages of the work of Stanley Cavell (see, e.g., Cavell, 2005, as well as his account of Emerson's 'aversive thinking', Cavell, 1990). As was indicated above, however, we propose in what follows to locate them in the very

different idiom of the work of Deleuze and Guattari. This will be a further attempt to show the ways in which the domestication of critique might be avoided and thought released to new possibilities. Our purpose in the section that follows is to expose notions of intensity and flow to a distinction that potentially casts light on different kinds, or different possibilities, of network. We refer to a topological contrast between striated and smooth space.

6. THE STRIATED AND THE SMOOTH

The idea of smooth and striated spaces is elaborated in Chapter 14 of *A Thousand Plateaux: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (Deleuze and Guattari, 1998), though the distinction has a relationship with other contrasts explored earlier in that book, for example, between the rhizome and the tree, between nomad space and sedentary space, and between the War Machine and State science. What is at stake in the drawing of this distinction? Let us begin by explaining its terms and then work through some of the connections listed above.

While striated space is understood most obviously in terms of the grid lines that partition a map, the idea extends to taxonomies and categorising devices such as binary codings, as well as to structures of opposition and of argument itself. Such forms and structures, as it were, close off in advance possibilities of thought. They are apt to block the new paths to thought that undomesticated critique may, as we have intimated, require. By contrast, a smooth space, the space of the sea, is fluid with surging movement and change. Smooth space suggests a kind of thought that is determined not by universals and particulars but rather by singularities, and these defy and exceed the terms of categorisation or definition. Unlike the oppositional structures of a confrontational thought, the smooth is 'the continuous variation, continuous development of form; it is the fusion of harmony and melody in favour of the production of properly rhythmic values, the pure act of the drawing of a diagonal across the vertical and horizontal' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1998, p. 478). It is no evasion to say that smooth space is not simply to be defined, for definition is part of the game it resists; it is not then to be surveyed in advance but rather to be encountered on foot.

Such possibilities, Deleuze and Guattari seek to show, are forever at the mercy of the kind of thought that is too anxious to draw its distinctions, to assert its regime, to rein things in within its imperium of language, and to establish its disciplinary domain – in other words, to reassert its striated space. Yet, just as the *domus* must in the end break open, so too, striated space itself cannot ultimately retain its self-containment.

Deleuze and Guattari praise Serres' *La Naissance de la Physique dans le texte de Lucrèce*, subtitled *fleuves et turbulences* (1977), for its linking of the 'generative differential element' of the *clinamen* (identified by Lucretius as the slight deviation in the atom's fall) with the power of flows and vortices that overspill the space of striation (Deleuze and Guattari, 1998, p. 489). The hydraulic movement that this releases is not one of straight lines but rather of 'a curvilinear declination to the

formation of spirals and vortices.... It is the difference between a *smooth* (vectoral, projective, or topological) space and a *striated* (metric) space: in the first case "space is occupied without being counted" and in the second case "space is counted in order to be occupied"' (ibid., pp. 361–362, remarks cited from Pierre Boulez). The movement is not from problem elements towards overarching theory, but towards the accidents that condition and resolve the problem, with the problem not an obstacle but a 'projection', a movement to surpass that obstacle (ibid.).

Is this the space of Castells' networks, where flows have no distance and where connections are activated as if by light-speed operating information technologies (Castells, 1996, p. 470)? We note the emphasis on flows, but smooth space, Deleuze and Guattari tell us, is 'a field without conduits or channels'; it can only be explored by legwork (Deleuze and Guattari, 1998, p. 371); and they warn us also that one of the fundamental tasks of the State is 'to utilize smooth spaces *as a means of communication* in the service of striated space' (ibid., 1998, p. 385). This is perhaps suggestive of the fear of uncertainty that further fixes the direction of communication and action in striated space, reining in thought and, in the present context we add, deadening conversation. For smooth space is not the place of straight lines of connection but of 'a movement that deviates to the minimum extent and thereafter assumes a vortical motion, occupying a smooth space, actually *drawing* smooth space itself' (ibid., italics added). It is not the legislative determination of a domain but an ambulant thinking of deterritorialisation that extends the territory itself. This is the surging, spiralling movement of a critique that enables us to think what we could not think before.

Let us attempt an alternative avenue into these thoughts. The perhaps now more familiar distinction between the rhizome and the tree, elaborated in the introduction to *A Thousand Plateaux*, also serves to represent different modes of organisation and different modes of thought. The tree's central trunk, spreading branches, and tributary roots form a model of organisation and distribution that is replicated in, say, the management structure of a business or school, and, of course, the family tree, as well as in the conceptualisation of a disciplinary field, with its canon, its 'central' problems, its branches of inquiry. The rhizome has a quite different form of growth: potatoes multiply in a process of cloning or lateral spreading; couch grass extends across the sand dunes, which form and extend with no centre; so too there is the ant colony that reforms and regroups with seemingly endless permutability. In contrast to the American military, with its headquarters, there is the Vietcong and al-Qaeda, organisations with a spreading flexible body, with no head and no necessary organic arrangement. There is nomad existence in contrast to the *polis*. These distinctions model a difference in thought. Arborescent thought moves constantly within stable structures – this, on the one hand, that, on the other; delineations and demarcations; upright and sturdy; secure in its foundations; heavy with gravity and propriety. This thought displays what thought itself should be like. In contrast, rhizomatic thought flows freely and with affirmation, with a logic of *and* + *and* + *and* + *and*... – affirmation without negation. It is the logic of the Moebius strip, a surface with no underside, recto without verso.

In Hindu mythology, the gods Varuna and Mitra form a dyad – Varuna the despot and binder, Mitra the legislator and organiser. They function as a pair, in alternation and with symmetry, at once antithetical to one another and complementary, as though they together constituted a sovereign unity. The State then quite rightly acquires an army as a means of the juridical integration of war into its organisational functioning. In contrast, to Varuna, however, the warrior-god Indra, who comes to displace Varuna, stands outside this dyad or any symmetry of relations, in opposition to Varuna no less than to Mitra. Outside all dualities of terms as well as correspondencies between relations, and refusing to implement any binary relations between 'states', he bears witness to a *becoming*. So, in Deleuze and Guattari's provocative terminology, this is a War Machine quite other to the State apparatus, a force outside any possible terms of its juridical integration. And this becoming, it is important to note, cannot become a model, for this would be precisely to fix and arrest it. A nomad science such as this would develop eccentrically, in a way that is banned or barred by the conditions of State science.

Although the striated, like the network, works on the basis of inclusion and exclusion, and the smooth may be likened to the undomesticated and the nomadic, it is essential not to lose sight of a danger that constantly attends and threatens to compromise the very thinking we are trying to reveal:

> No sooner do we note a simple opposition between the two kinds of space than we must indicate a much more complex difference by virtue of which the successive terms of the oppositions fail to coincide entirely. And no sooner have we done that than we must remind ourselves that the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1998, p. 474)

And at the end of this chapter Deleuze and Guattari warn: 'Never believe that a smooth space will suffice to save us' (ibid., 1998, p. 500). This illustrates perhaps something of the indirectness and reserve that must characterise the kind of thinking that is at issue here. It shows why it cannot appear in the confrontational terms of argument or dialectical reason. And its reserve indicates its unavailability to domestication. For all the defiant provocations of Deleuze and Guattari's terminology then, it is this reserve that safeguards a smooth space for thought, and it is this that preserves the possibilities of a critique that enables us to think what we could not think before.

7. TOWARDS A BETTER INDUCTION INTO EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH

It is worth saying, in conclusion, that we present this argument in a particular historical context, one that perhaps makes it more difficult for the argument to be heard. We have avoided labouring the point that the anxiety about the credibility of Education as a field of study that we mentioned at the beginning has led to an overstatement of the scientific credentials of educational research, fuelled by a narrow conception

of social science, as our contrast with Social Anthropology has helped to show. This overstatement in fact betrays the way that striated space is vulnerable: statements of methodological principle here acquire a rhetorical force that exceeds their practical credibility or any scientific warrant. The technologists are poets in spite of themselves. In a similar way the current vogue for the 'knowledge economy' has given a new potency to the term 'research', such that, beyond procedural pieties, the espousal of a reflexive and critical approach has become a mark of devotion. It is in part, this excess that has provoked our satire.

A further aspect of this prevailing scientism, as Stone shows, is the obvious marginalisation of theory and philosophy. We are very ready to defend the place of theory and philosophy, as we are to attack those assumptions that underlie the belief that we should only be interested in what works. But none of this is exactly what we have tried to do, and we believe we have offered something more constructive.

We believe we have done this, and yet we imagine the reader at this point who may doubt that we have provided anything beyond the fanciful or picturesque. Perhaps, our reader will have the good sense to concede that technical expertise can run away with itself, but surely, he/she will think, there are more straightforward ways of saying this than what we have here. How could the picture here possibly be translated into practice? We imagine also a more sympathetic reader, pained, so it seems, by concerns similar to our own, who finds us to be strong advocates for the qualoid faith, who sees us championing 'values in education'. Such sympathy we prefer to decline. And we foresee a third reader whose postmodern inclinations readily receive our post-structuralist turn, and who, we suppose, will now want to line up with us against any expectation that ideas so necessarily complex and elusive as these should be pinned down in terms of implications for practice. We reject this too. We shall be defiantly prescriptive.

If you wish to improve your research methods courses, if you want a better induction into practice, if you want to understand education, to teach and learn...

- Make your students read. Make them read whole books – not sift indexes and chapter headings, not indiscriminately search keywords, not glean a text for its 'findings' in order to support views they already hold. Avoid secondary glosses, potted versions, beginners' guides. Read classics, and be disturbed by them. Do not seek reassurance in long reference lists. Praise the student who has concentrated her reading but read well.
- Give them the kinds of texts that have helped those working in the *Geisteswissenschaften* to think better and more deeply, more critically: about the institutions of society; about their history; about what it is to be a human being, what to be a child; and about the education without which a human being cannot be. Call this social science if you will, but think about what 'science' might mean. Look beyond the bookshelves marked 'social science'.
- Do not be content with citations that are deferential or honorific. Save your students from the wearisome industry of referencing every sentence, an industry that saves you and them from having to think. Demand more specificity,

chapter and verse. Expect quotations (not just citations), and expect something to be done with them.

- Beware the 'latest' 'research' 'findings'. For what is latest is often most ephemeral and most avoids thought. What announces itself as 'research' is often mired in self-consciousness. And what focuses on 'findings' too often loses sight no less of the assumptions embedded in the conditions of enquiry than of their speculative indulgence when these are 'discussed'. Remember that theory and philosophy are not there in a kind of repository of knowledge, ready to slot into your Theoretical Framework or to reinforce your 'discussion'. Read them with your students at the start of enquiry. Read them to make you think.
- Do not imagine that you have done your job when you have presented your class with a list of research methods. Do not imagine, when you have tabulated this list – when you have differentiated theoretical perspectives from methodologies and methodologies from methods, when you have provided your taxonomies of positivism and interpretism, ontology and epistemology, relativism and realism, constructionism and feminism – do not imagine that you have helped your students to think.
- Do not tell your students that their dissertations must follow a template that you provide – viz., identify the area of enquiry, identify the problem, formulate The Research Question, formulate Sub-Questions, explain methodology, present findings, discussion of findings, reflection on methods used... – for there are questions in education that cannot be broached in this way. Your methodological correctness moulds students into an orthodoxy that hides these questions and prevents them from thinking in the terms that the practical field requires. It makes them fearful of the thought they need.
- Do not position your students with that sense of 'positionality' where they must come clean or come out about their identity as researchers, their qualoid or quantoid credentials, their Theoretical Perspective – without which they will feel oddly naked in the court of enquiry you surreptitiously construct, without, that is, an 'identity' that they have, in truth, self-consciously created. Beware then, in this process – in your formulation of the field of enquiry no less than in your projection of this onto students – of adopting an understanding of the self and subjectivity that, in effect, and for all its 'social scientific' credentials, panders to self-centredness and arrogance.
- Set the focus not on the problems you want to solve, for these so often will be problems whose terms you have taken for granted. Focus instead on the *construction* of the problems. Ask why the problem has been construed in this way, why just this has emerged as an 'educational problem'. *Create* problems, do not just insipidly solve them.
- Set the focus (again) not on 'delivery' in the classroom but on social science in a broader sense, for this will in turn alter delivery in the classroom, in ways that the current focus on delivery altogether prevents you from imagining. And remember that social science is not something that can be simply

applied to education, for an advance in the understanding of education is itself education.

- Do not plan your course or your classes in such a way that you understand them only in terms of clear behavioural outcomes. Subvert performativity. Open the space of conversation, precisely the space in which there can be that unsettling swerving of thought that may make you less sure of your position but that, in the end, is the only basis for critique.
- Do not say to your students: gather your data and write it up in the first two years of your Ph.D., and spend the last year getting published.
- Remember that Ph.D.'s. can come too easily. Struggle a bit with your students on the way. You, Research Professor, yes, you should struggle too.

We set out at the start of this chapter to explain ways of thought (of practice, of being) that might contribute to a richer, more rigorous, and more exacting form of educational enquiry. In order to do this, we have shown the vulnerability of critique to domestication, and we have demonstrated the nature and the dynamics of the kind of thought we advocate, differentiating this from more confrontational or dialectical processes. We have indicated the kinds of activity – the kinds of conversation, the engagement with texts and problems – that can realise such forms of thought within the context of educational research methods courses. We have been motivated to do this by our practical experience as students and teachers, by our encounter with texts such as we draw upon here and, perhaps especially, by the conversations that these have occasioned. It is such factors that have been amongst the best aspects of our own induction into educational research.

NOTES

[1] Bloom explains that he had originally thought that this use of the term was his own (Bloom, 1975, p. 200).

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CHAPTER NINE

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RESEARCH IN MOTION: DOCTORAL PROGRAMMES AT THE NETWORK UNIVERSITY

1. INTRODUCTION

> Europe, more than other parts of the world, depends on the brains and the creativity of its people to guarantee its future prosperity and its model of society.[1]

The European Union has committed itself to become both a knowledge-based society and the most competitive economy in the world by 2010 (Lisbon European Council, 2000). As Europe's most important resource is its human capital, Europe needs to become a world leader in the production and transmission of innovative knowledge. Therefore, research is regarded as a key factor in achieving this objective.

> Today, knowledge is and should be at the very core of economy and society. To become the most competitive economy in the world, the European Union must capitalise on the creativity of its people by strengthening the three sides of the 'knowledge triangle': research, education and innovation.[2]

For the coordination of research activities and the convergence of research and innovative policies at national and EU level, the European Commission has established the European Research Area (ERA) (European Commission, 2000). This structure is expected to bring all endeavours together and 'to build a research and innovation equivalent of the "common market" for goods and services'.[3] In a paper (given by the European University Association (EUA)) on the Research Role of Europe's Universities, which was given at a major conference called 'The Europe of Knowledge 2020: A Vision for University-based Research and Innovation', there is a clear recognition that universities are obviously key players in the process of improving Europe's research capacities. This paper also recognizes the need to strengthen the research function of Europe's universities. It is argued that:

> Universities advocate a Europe of knowledge, based on a strong research capacity and research-based education in universities – singly and in partnership – across the continent. European universities are active on a global scale,

P. Smeyers and M. Depaepe (eds.), Educational Research: Networks and Technologies, 121–135.

> contributing to innovation and sustainable economic development. Competitiveness and excellence must be balanced with social cohesion and access. As 'multi-actors' in the research process, through their teaching, training, research and innovation activities at regional, national and European/International level, Europe's universities have an essential role to play and are key actors in the debate on future research policies for Europe.[4]

According to the EUA, contemporary universities can make a unique contribution to improving Europe's research capacity, as, over a long period, they have built up expertise in linking up research and education. They can offer a unique space, which means they can build excellent research and learning environments for young researchers in order to ensure the continuity of the 'research pipeline'.

Although the vital role of universities in this process has been recognized, it is also argued that most European universities are not well equipped to face the new challenges of global competition. Policymakers and representatives at the university recognize that major structural reforms are needed. In order to accomplish this mission, the EUA claims that activities, targeted towards enhancing universities' unique role in doctoral training, are of utmost importance.

> EUA's goal is both to raise awareness of the crucial role universities play all across Europe in training young researchers and to encourage institutions to take account of the changing environment in the development of their research strategies and specifically in the organisation and structure of their doctoral programmes.[5]

The university has traditionally been the main institution awarding doctoral degrees in Europe. Doctoral education and the career development of young researchers belonged to the core mission of universities. As we can read in the EUA report on doctoral programmes, this mission has not changed. However, given the essential importance of doctoral training for the fulfilment of the university's mission, EUA finds it important that universities themselves take the initiative and assume ownership of the development of an excellent environment for young researchers by improving their doctoral programmes. Their inclusion in the third cycle in the Bologna Process in 2003 demonstrates how essential doctoral programmes are expected to be for building the European knowledge society.

Today, we all seem to agree that universities need to consider doctoral training and the career development of young researchers as belonging to a core mission. Doctoral students can only applaud the statement that today's university is a unique space that can offer young researchers an excellent research environment. The need for excellent environments seems to be something doctoral students all agree on. After all, who could be against quality? And who could be opposed to a university of excellence? We (staff, doctoral students, etc.) tend to treat this question as purely rhetorical. Yet, the aim of this chapter is to problematize this striving for quality and excellence. In order to do this, in the first section of this chapter, we want to focus

our discussion on the doctoral student who is in need of excellence. We want to clarify for *whom* – for which kind of subject – excellence and quality is needed and wanted. For this approach we are inspired by what Foucault describes as an 'ontology of the present', which means that our starting point is the question – *who are doctoral students (asked to be) today*? (cf. Foucault, 1982, pp. 231–232; 1983, p. 448; 1984a, p. 573). This is not meant to imply that we are dealing with the doctoral student as an empirical subject. Rather, a (limited) mapping of the knowledge circulation and vocabulary concerning doctoral training today as well as of the instruments and practices related to this knowledge, will tell us *who* doctoral students are asked to be today and how they, as inhabitants of the universities, are asked to look at themselves and to relate to themselves (Masschelein & Simons, 2005). We will mainly – but not exclusively – refer to instruments and practices we observe at the K.U. Leuven. Thereby we do not claim that our conclusions need to be confined to the present condition of (only) Flemish doctoral students. Rather we believe that the need for quality that is experienced today exceeds the specific context of doctoral research at the K.U. Leuven. Indeed, regarding this context or horizon, Readings indicated the global tendency towards a need and will for quality and excellence at universities (cf. Readings, 1996). In this chapter we will show how this need and will is not a natural or self-evident need or will, whereby 'quality' and 'excellent' would simply be new words for 'good' (universities, education, research). We will show how this need and will are related to a particular individuality or self-understanding, which we will call an *environmental* self-understanding or considering oneself as inhabiting an environment.

We will elaborate on what it means to move in a learning environment, which is today experienced as a network environment. And we will explain that the problematization of doctoral research at the postmodern *network university* differs in a fundamental way from the problematization of doctoral research at the modern university considered as an *institution.*

2. WHO ARE *WE*, DOCTORAL STUDENTS, TODAY?

> Do you have a passion for your field of study and for research? Then a Ph.D. may be your thing. Doing a Ph.D. at K.U. Leuven gives you the chance to carry out research in an internationally competitive environment over the course of four years. You will tackle fundamental or concrete topics in your field of study with the intention of making original contributions. You will learn to publish the results of your research gradually and to defend them in front of your scientific examination commission. Ph.D. work has a professional, but above all, also a personal surplus value. It is hard work, but working on your own project is always the most fulfilling. Moreover, you won't be standing alone. Our professors/promoters – experts with strong international reputations – will dedicate themselves to supervising your work as best they can.[6]
> (Introductory text for (candidate) doctoral students at the K.U. Leuven)

2.1. Quality as added value

As we can read in the introductory text for doctoral researchers of the K.U. Leuven, choosing to start a Ph.D. is about opting for added value. That the added value of a doctoral degree has become an important question for doctoral students is of course related to the fact that we all know by now that, where doctoral research traditionally used to be considered mainly as a gateway to future academic careers, today it is often just a temporary stage, opening onto a wide variety of careers. Therefore, it is a common concern for doctoral students today to know whether they are competitive on the labour market, that is, whether they can compete with candidates who do not have a doctoral degree but, for instance, have a few years of professional experience under their belts (Pyck, e.a., 2006; S'Jegers & Smit, 2006; Vlaamse Raad voor Wetenschapsbeleid 2002a, 2002b, 2006). As well as mentioning career perspectives (whether or not those careers take place inside or outside the university), this introductory text also tells us something about how doctoral students (are expected to) look at themselves today. The text addresses doctoral students as people who look at themselves as having a specific stock of human capital, which they want and need to invest. It is part of this self-understanding to know whether starting a Ph.D. is the best way to invest or to valorise knowledge and competencies, and to know whether the university today offers them the best environment to employ their capacity for knowledge production, or to put their capital to work. At this point, doctoral students are asked to look at their work as an enterprise that delivers a product of which they themselves are the client. They are therefore encouraged to regard their research and learning projects as a business, or more precisely, as their own business.

2.2. Information about quality

It is only by understanding themselves as entrepreneurial selves that doctoral students feel the need to be informed about the added value of particular choices. In this sense, it is important that the added value or quality of a doctoral degree is clearly demonstrated by an adequate supply of information. Therefore, contemporary universities have bureaus that perform (or contribute to) studies concerning the added value of doctoral degrees. These bureaus define the quality of doctoral programmes on the basis of *quality indicators* that inform doctoral students and other 'stakeholders' about the added value of a doctoral degree. It is against this background that we can understand why the K.U. Leuven considers their recently developed 'competency profile' to function as 'a quality label that articulates the acquired competencies of the doctoral student after having obtained a doctoral degree' (Buyens, 2006, own translation).

The competency profile is a list of skills and competencies doctoral students are expected to obtain during their doctoral projects: on the one hand skills and competencies that are crucial for a successful accomplishment of the doctoral research project, and on the other hand skills and competencies that are needed for further career development after having obtained a doctoral degree. This profile informs not only (candidates) doctoral students, but also employers, about the quality or added value of a doctoral degree at the K.U. Leuven.

Competency clusters of the competency profile for doctoral students at the K.U. Leuven[7] (own translation) are:

- Relational competencies
- Academic and technical competencies
- Leadership and innovation competencies
- Intellectual competencies
- Self-management competencies

As we mentioned above, information and data concerning added value appear as essential elements in order to make (candidates) doctoral students aware of the 'quality' that is available to them. Apart from the competency profile, there are several other instruments to be found not only on the K.U. Leuven web site – but also on web sites of other universities as these kinds of instruments are parts of contemporary learning environments – that help doctoral students to make informed choices regarding quality. For example, the following instrument helps doctoral students to choose a good supervisor:

Profile of a good supervisor[8] (own translation).

The supervisor has a crucial role during the doctoral process. He is responsible for the material and intellectual environment in which the doctoral researcher performs her research. He has a stimulating, coordinating and evaluating role during the doctoral process.

- As a researcher he needs to have an excellent reputation. This is expressed in publications, citations, invitations to conferences, fund raising and other objective criteria, which derive from several studies performed at this university.
- He has a good reputation in the research domain which is related to the doctoral project.
- He is responsible for the quality assurance of the doctoral research project, which has to be evaluated during the first year by a doctoral research commission which includes foreign experts.
- He spends enough time on discussing the project.
- He helps with planning, performance and adjustment of the doctoral research.
- He is a regular participant in occasions where the doctoral researcher presents her research and gives feedback.
- He introduces the doctoral researcher to the 'world of university research' and to other researchers who can help. He stimulates participation in conferences, gives advice, and encourages.
- He indicates opportunities for publications and assists in their completion. He takes responsibility for the research thesis, articles and abstracts. He offers maximum opportunities for the doctoral researcher to valorize her work as first author of her work.
- He is responsible for monitoring progress over the appropriate period.

It is appropriate for leading authorities of the university to perform quality assessment with regard to supervisors.

2.3. Personal needs

Since all doctoral students have their own specific needs, it is not enough to have a standardized doctoral programme for all students, as this would imply that every student at a certain stage of the doctoral process has comparable needs. Working out which opportunities best fit particular needs has to do with very specific circumstances at every moment in the learning process (future career perspectives, former performances, performances of others, changing demands in the work field). Hence, the entrepreneurial doctoral student needs a doctoral programme that allows for flexible, individual learning trajectories. Furthermore, as doctoral students want to work on their own projects and wish to take primary responsibility for their professional development, it is important to have monitoring systems at one's disposal to identify these needs as soon as they arise. The entrepreneurial doctoral student is under permanent surveillance in order to search for opportunities to fulfil needs or to make the most of human capital.

Teaching and learning support services, like that of the University of Queensland, 'support universities and their staff in their efforts to pursue excellence in all aspects of teaching and learning by providing educational consultancy, resource development, staff development and evaluation services'.[9] They have developed a tool for Ph.D. students with Frequently Asked Questions, information about several stages in a Ph.D. process and general information. Here we read for example:

Identifying necessary skills

> The important thing is that as early as possible you identify what skills you need to acquire and at what level of expertise. Take your supervisor into your confidence and, although you take the initiative, also take on board your supervisor's advice about what skills you might need and how to gain them. And there may be cost or time implications which you are not aware of but which your supervisor can handle.[10]

The entrepreneurial doctoral student is someone who finds himself/herself in a flexible learning environment and who is asked to constantly identify what he/she needs and to focus on opportunities to meet present challenges. Therefore it is indispensable that he/she has up-to-date and transparent information about where he/she is (at what level he/she is working at), and about the quality of services regarding what is available here and now. It is against this background that a competency matrix (alongside different kinds of portfolio and assessment instruments) can function as a monitoring instrument for professional development. The competency matrix for doctoral students of the K.U. Leuven (Fig. 1), which is a detailed elaboration of the competency profile that links each competency to learning opportunities during the

doctoral project, helps doctoral students to identify which competencies they have acquired and which competencies they have yet to acquire or need to renew in relation to their personal needs:

> For the elaboration of learning opportunities for doctoral researchers we search for instruments – apart from courses – that help the doctoral researcher to take up responsibility for her own professional development during the performance of his/her doctoral project. After all, nobody worries more about your growth and development, than yourself. Therefore it is crucial to identify learning opportunities, keeping in mind that the doctoral researcher herself needs to have the most significant impact on her learning process. Hence, the K.U. Leuven has prepared an instrument – the competency profile of the doctoral researcher and a competency matrix – by which the doctoral researcher can govern her own growth or manage her/his learning (as acquiring competencies). The instrument offers a matrix which visualizes assignments and responsibilities of the doctoral researcher and relates this with clusters of competencies to be acquired in order to be employable within and outside the university. The competency profile will be used to make doctoral researchers aware of the competencies (knowledge and skills) they have acquired during their doctoral projects and to stimulate them to deepen these further.[11] (own translation)

	Relational competencies					
Research project	Interpersonal skills	Teamwork: cooperation	Diplomatic skills	Networking	Speaking in public	…
Writing the project	X		X	X		
Planning/ coordinating experiments	X	X				
Collaboration with different disciplines/ methodology	X	X		X		
Bringing in materials and technologies			X	X		
Accomplish projects before deadlines		X				
…						

Figure 1. The competency matrix as monitoring instrument for doctoral programmes, K.U. Leuven (own translation, limited part, X = own indication as example)[12]

This kind of competency profile, which is similar to assessment instruments adopted in other universities, functions as a monitoring instrument to help doctoral students to identify learning needs and search for the best learning opportunities to fulfil these needs. Additionally, as doctoral students begin to see themselves in this way, asking for and handling feedback become important practices to help them orient themselves. Feedback becomes of utmost importance as it allows for a permanent positioning and repositioning and offers information on one's actual state in order to develop and calculate future strategies, actions, and investments. Hence, as advice for doctoral students at Queensland University tells us, '[I]t is important to seek, receive and handle feedback, to find strategies for getting the best feedback possible and to overcome the reluctance to seek feedback.'[13]

> Strategies for getting the best feedback possible [14]
>
> Be prepared. Go to each meeting with things to report, even if you are reporting not much progress, and particular issues you want to discuss and questions you want to ask.
>
> Know what you want. When you are handing in a draft of anything you've written, decide at what level you're seeking feedback. You could specify that you need feedback on: general structure; the quality of the evidence you are using; the general flow of ideas; the appropriateness of writing style; the best arrangement of your data in tabular or graphic form.
>
> This won't guarantee that you will get what you want. But it does give your supervisor or other reader something to focus on and is more likely to meet your needs.
>
> Ask questions. The better the questions you ask, the better the feedback you get. For example, it is better to ask 'Do you think the discussion of x fits better in section a or b?', rather than 'Would you look at my writing?' Or you could say to your reader, 'Don't bother at this stage with sentence structure, but tell me if the argument is logical and convincing.'
>
> Seek feedback from as many sources as possible. Your supervisor is not your only possible source of feedback. You could ask fellow students for specific feedback (and of course reciprocate when asked). You could also ask other scholars – although courtesy and common sense say you need to mention this to your supervisor.

2.3. Learning as a condition for quality

Prior to this point, we have shown that doctoral students today (are asked to) strive for quality and excellence. They need excellent research and learning environments, which enable them to identify needs and give transparent and up-to-date information about opportunities and challenges, in order to take up responsibility for their own

'businesses'. At this point, learning becomes a permanent concern for the entrepreneurial doctoral student. From his/her entrepreneurial point of view, learning is regarded as a kind of capital to produce added value, as something for which he/she is himself/herself responsible and as something that he/she can and should manage. In other words, learning, in terms of the acquisition of skills and competencies, is indispensable for one's personal 'business' or one's 'capitalization of life', and thus a crucial condition for assuring quality. Hence, for the doctoral student today, quality is a permanent, entrepreneurial concern and learning is experienced as indispensable to meeting this concern. In short, permanent investigation of learning needs and learning opportunities on the basis of constant feedback, permanent evaluation, and assessment is essential for the entrepreneurial doctoral student.

The learning process, which the entrepreneurial doctoral student undergoes, is ultimately directed towards the knowledge society, and its knowledge-intensive economies. The aim of doctoral programmes, and individual learning trajectories, is to produce professional researchers, that is, people with skills that have an added value in knowledge-intensive economies.

> The transition towards more knowledge-intensive economies changes the skills required to enjoy productive lives and also changes the ways in which knowledge comes into general use. These changes impact on all aspects of the University's mission: education (for example, in supporting life-long learning and the acquisition of trans-disciplinary skills), research (balancing specialisation and leadership against flexibility and richness of culture), and valorisation of knowledge.[15]

In view of these challenges, doctoral programmes acknowledge that learning and excellent learning environments are crucial conditions, which budding researchers should enjoy. Indeed, as the inclusion of doctoral programmes in the third cycle of the 2003 Bologna process suggests, becoming a researcher in today's environment involves the experience of a well-defined learning process. In this context, the entrepreneurial doctoral student does not only want to deal with a specific part of a research discipline and the conditions for valid or scientific knowledge production in a particular field of knowledge, but also wants to obtain 'generic skills'. He/she wants to obtain skills and competencies that are indispensable to a wide variety of careers inside and outside the university.

The picture we presented so far, tells us that the doctoral student – in need of excellence – is someone who makes calculated choices in view of a productive capitalization of his/her life. Regarding the obsession with quality and excellence today, not merely in Europe but all over the world (cf. Readings, 1996), one might have the impression that need for quality and excellence is a natural need. We want to stress in the next section that this need is not at all natural or universal. Instead this need is related to the entrepreneurial self and his/her self-understanding. We would like to call this an ecological or *environmental* self-understanding, that is, an understanding of the self as inhabiting an environment, for instance a network environment.

3. FROM MODERN INSTITUTION TO NETWORK ENVIRONMENT

3.1. Network environments

Contemporary universities are expected to be excellent learning and research environments for doctoral students. Therefore the issue of doctoral programmes needs to appear high on the agenda of university policy. Their structure and organization needs to incorporate the demands of doctoral students that need to produce added value, need to take up learning opportunities, here and now, in relation to personal learning needs. Doctoral programmes need to establish an enabling infrastructure, a learning environment, for entrepreneurial doctoral students where they can develop a permanent willingness to invest in their human capital.

The entrepreneurial doctoral student regards the university no longer as an institution, but as a learning environment that is organized as a network connecting points in different configurations. To experience one's environment as a network implies that one experiences a set of interconnected nodes, which can be persons or organizations. Each node can have a strategic function in the network, which creates added value for the network environment (Castells, 2000). Within this network, the most important question is not how people are positioned towards a particular norm or standard. As we argued earlier, quality has no referent, but is always related to particular needs. These particular needs here and now are determined through coordinates within a network, based on the relation between points, and can be described in a formal way in series, rosters, and diagrams. For someone who experiences the world as a network, the idea of a (normal, fixed) 'position' no longer makes sense. For instance, entrepreneurial doctoral students find themselves permanently moving and trying to connect and disconnect in order to accumulate competencies and in order to satisfy learning needs. Doctoral programmes function for these students as a network environment with individual learning trajectories that should help these students to keep adapting to particular needs. This adaptation is always a momentary condition in the ever-changing network environment.

3.2. The university as modern institution

It should be clear that – despite all nostalgia – doctoral research is no longer performed in public institutions. Instead, the entrepreneurial doctoral student regards his/her 'habitat' as a network environment. It is important to keep in mind that the particular entrepreneurial attitude of the doctoral researcher (which we described above) coincided with the changing role of the university and its transition from public institution to network organization. Indeed, considering the discourse, technologies and instruments that we described above, we can see that the way in which doctoral research is problematized today differs largely from the way in which research activities were perceived and problematized in a modern university, that is, in a university that understood itself as a public institution. Although in

contemporary policy documents reference is still being made to the university as a public institution and in particular to the Humboldtian tradition (cf. Commission of the European Communities, 2002), we want to argue that the self-understanding of doctoral students today, as well as their experience of time and space in the network university, has totally changed. The meaning of 'research' and 'education' prevailing in the actual discourse about the university, and doctoral research at the university, differs considerably from that of *Wissenschaft* and *Bildung* in the language of von Humboldt (cf. Simons, 2006). Hence, it is important to focus in more detail on these differences. It is not our aim however, to judge the current, entrepreneurial situation based on criteria of the von Humboldtian tradition. Instead, we aim to focus on the differences between modern and contemporary universities. Nevertheless, at the level of policy discourses and mission statements, one continues to see continuity with the von Humboldtian tradition.

When speaking of the modern university (*Bildungs*university) as a public institution, reference is made to the German model, that von Humboldt instituted at the university of Berlin, that is widely copied and that still served as the leading model for post-war expansion of tertiary education in the west (von Humboldt, 1810/1959; Ash, 1999). This modern university could be described as an institution with the nation state and national culture as its main points of reference (cf. Readings, 1996). This institution was needed by subjects who defined and understood themselves primarily as citizens of a nation state, and being a citizen of a state meant to be educated in its culture, to speak its language, to be engaged in its historical edification and emancipation (including the edification and emancipation of its citizens). Its definition was in essence a cultural one. Thus if we take up the question 'who was the subject inhabiting the modern university (i.e. the *Bildungs*university)?', then we could say: it was the subject experiencing himself/herself as the citizen of a nation state defined as being a state which is unified (or should become increasingly unified) through its culture and language and on its way to realize progress and emancipation, so engaged in a process of progressive development. What is at stake in the university is the study of this culture and language, its tradition and history. Culture is the sum of knowledge that is studied (in research: *Wissenschaft*), as well as the cultivation and development of one's character as a result of that study (in teaching: *Bildung*). Doing *Wissenschaft is Bildung*, or, participation in research *is* the cultivation of virtuous citizens. Researchers, in particular in the humanities, had to play their role in the flourishing and historical development of the nation state by the performance of *progressive* research. The university was experienced as an institution that had to play a role in the historical process surrounding the nation state. Thus, being a subject (researcher and student) at the modern university implies a certain experience of durability and extensiveness (the borders of the nation state) and a self-understanding of being engaged in an *historical progressive development.* Moreover, it implies an experience of being *positioned* in relation to something like a common (historical) destination.

As we all know by now from what is said and written about the university, the university no longer has to propagate and safeguard the progress of national culture. Although we still read about the university in terms of a unique space for research and education, the space of the network university is no longer a space where the

fusion between research and education is legitimated by reference to a cultural or national referent. And as a result of this, 'what' exactly is investigated as knowledge matters less than the fact that it can be 'excellently' investigated (Readings, 1996). Today the university finds its legitimation in its ability to be an excellent provider of services. Services find their legitimation not in their relation to a national culture, but in their function. Organizations that provide services need to recognize that they exist because they are needed and that they can only survive as long as they satisfy the needs of their clients and take this environment into account.

Although we still speak in terms of progress (doctoral) research today no longer need be progressive or have an (historical) orientation. Doctoral researchers need to be trained to do *proactive* research. Progress, today, is understood in terms of adaptation to an environment, but has little to do with a particular orientation. On the contrary, the notion of progress is inextricably bound up with permanent adaptation and reorientation to the needs of the environment. In fact, doctoral research cannot be formulated in terms of progress and orientation – which has a temporal dimension. Instead, it is formulated in terms of permanent positioning and repositioning – which has a spatial dimension. In other words, doing doctoral research is a proactive business in which the willingness for permanent adaptation and repositioning appears as a crucial condition for quality. Researchers are not supposed to be *progressive* thinkers, but *proactive* investors and calculators.

Furthermore, the university is no longer understood and problematized as the space where something is instituted (a subject within a nation state, a cosmopolitan citizen within a world society). It is no longer concerned with the installation of stability, interruption of movement or, to the limiting or confining of movement into a well-defined direction: historical progress. In opposition to this, the unique space of the university today, which is in fact a network infrastructure, is a space that *mobilizes* doctoral students, that asks them to move and to mobilize themselves. The relation to one's self, which is required to move within such an environment, implies an ongoing preparedness to forget the past or at least to deal with the past in such a way that it safeguards the opportunities in present environments. In this sense, the reference that is still made today to the van Humboldtian link between research and education, appears as a resource to safeguard a certain position for universities in the European Research Area today. We are all moving – mobilizing our capital – in an environment in which it is precisely the disruption of movement and permanent repositioning (e.g. by institutional or disciplinarian limits) which always implies a threat to the life and survival of oneself as researcher, research unit, department, or university. The refusal of movement is, one could say, threatened by death.

Finally, autonomy related to contemporary (doctoral) research has taken a particular form. Doctoral students are asked to take responsibility for *their own* learning processes. They need to maintain *their own* research businesses and define *their own* projects. This suggests that it is up to *them* to establish the norm and to define *their own destinations.* However, the experience of moving in an environment in which one permanently needs to make decisions in terms of needs and opportunities simultaneously implies a certain experience of *being delivered.* Researchers are therefore delivered up to all kinds of assessment, which operate on the basis of

comparison (e.g. rankings) and finally of sovereign decisions (by commissions, reviewers, etc.) according to ever-changing requirements. Researchers need to accept accountability and take up responsibility for quality and excellence.

4. CONCLUSION

As we have argued in the first part of this article, doctoral students can be urged today to strive for quality and excellence. This need for quality is related to a particular type of self-understanding, which we have called an environmental self-understanding and implies that doctoral students, as far as they take up this environmental (entrepreneurial) attitude, consider themselves and their lives to be the result of informed choices that will meet their needs. Furthermore, we have argued that this self-understanding differs in a fundamental way from the self-understanding and problematization related to modern universities.

Maybe for some of us it is tempting to be nostalgic about the modern idea of the university related, as it was, to the experience of historical progress and to having a critical position – at least in a certain sense – towards society. From this perspective there would be many reasons to question the desirability of recent reforms in doctoral programmes at our universities. This would be interpreted as an economic logic of entrepreneurship entering the educational scene and threatening the public character of university research. There is a real risk indeed of reverting back to a nostalgic commemoration of earlier and better times when university research was still expected to contribute to progress for current and future generations. From this perspective, our paper could have been read as a diagnosis of some form of tragedy, which would imply that doctoral students are feeling ill at ease with the present situation. Or, the article could have been read as a critical reading of contemporary doctoral training, in the sense that we have approached doctoral programmes today as a successful or unsuccessful realization of certain principles (e.g. to be found in the idea of the modern university).

However, this was not the main impulse behind this article. When we paid attention to some historical ideas about the university, this was not to call up a nostalgic memory. Nor was it meant to offer a kind of inspiration to (re)introduce a new referential paradigm for reflecting on doctoral training today, in a time where the education apparatus suffers from being unreferential. This contribution was not meant as simply another attempt to engage with a critical perspective on university policy in order to judge the situation we are dealing with. The reason for this is not a lack of critical ambition. Rather it is an attempt to take our situation, and in particular that of doctoral researchers striving for quality and excellence today, as a starting point and to call contemporary identities to question. The critical character of this question, we believe, resides in its ability to unground the apparent givenness of our present experience. What is at stake for us is the unmaking of contemporary ways of thinking and acting and maybe also the invention of new, ever different ‘presents’, which also means different relations towards ourselves, others and the world, which makes sure that we can no longer be urged by quality, information and feedback.

NOTES

[1] European Universities: Enhancing Europe's Research base: Report by the Forum on University. Retrieved 15 February 2007 from: http://www.eua.be/index.php?id=35
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CHAPTER TEN

NANCY VANSIELEGHEM

PUBLIC SPACE IN A NETWORK SOCIETY? A NOTE ON THE CALL FOR PUBLIC SPACE (PHILOSOPHY) IN EDUCATION TODAY

He speaks not about himself or about another but with himself and with another.
(Bakhtin, 1984, p. 242)

1. PHILOSOPHY IN EDUCATION OR THE ESTABLISMENT OF PUBLIC SPACE

This chapter begins by looking at the growing interest for philosophy and ethics in education and in daily life. For example, consider the current vogue surrounding creative and critical thinking and philosophical consultancy. In 2004, the former Flemish Minister of Education Marleen Vanderpoorten, signed a protocol concerning philosophy and education, which specifically focused on 'interactive philosophy'. This means that a budget will be available to develop curriculum material, to provide teacher training and to do scientific research in relation to the integration of practical philosophy in education. This interest in philosophy is not limited to one particular state or country. UNESCO also recognizes the need for philosophy as a practice, not only in educational but also in cultural, social or political fields. The International conference 'Philosophy as Education and Cultural Practice: A New Citizenship' organized in 2006 at UNESCO's headquarters, considered the importance of practical philosophy and the mobilization of international networks looking at the development of the teaching of critical thinking, citizenship and ethics. This interest in philosophy represents an attempt to dispense with the hierarchical relation between teacher and pupil and includes a plea for a less, manipulative and deficiency/problem-oriented approach to education. The focus is on a form of education that provides confrontation with other philosophical perspectives that does not see philosophy as a particular discipline or a form of study: 'Philosophy will therefore be approached as a method of teaching and not as a specific discipline, and will be considered as broadly educative, as a place for discussion, for the development of autonomous and critical thought, and so on' (UNESCO, 2006, p. 2). Following a similar line of argument Jongsma, in an interview about philosophy in daily life, argues that: 'most of the people do not have anything to do with famous philosophers … they want someone

P. Smeyers and M. Depaepe (eds.), Educational Research: Networks and Technologies, 137–148.

thinking along with them' (see an interview from Carpels and Karssing, 2000, p. 89 [my translation]). In relation to education, this means that the teacher fulfils the position of facilitator; he provides opportunities for the students to discuss ethical issues. The point is that when a place for discussion is created, the classroom becomes a site of political transformation in which otherness and difference can be felt and articulated, in particular with regard to citizenship, democratic practices and 'living together'. In relation to this point it is argued that our thinking should no longer simply address 'logical' criteria but should embrace other opinions and encourage risk-taking in daily activities. This form of education is about being prepared to inquire and to revise one's own opinion. It is about: (1) recognizing the importance of everyday emotions in everyday life; (2) cultivating affection between human beings; and (3) avoiding rigid world views and being open to other viewpoints (Moriyon, et al., 1999). A body of material has emerged, which backs up this approach. This material includes philosophical stories, philosophical questions and criteria and information on how to organize a community of inquiry. It is generally written with the didactic intention of achieving a philosophical encounter. These 'products' are designed to release us from what we have always taken for granted so that we might have the opportunity to look at our lives in another way: a more existential way.

Now, what intrigued and intimidated me was not whether philosophy in education could foster a public freedom of expression. Instead, I was concerned with what this concern with philosophy reveals about us. In other words, what fascinated me was the proposed encounter with the will to reflect upon what we have always taken for granted, our will to repeat this call and even to enforce it. Similarly, I was intrigued by the call for a public space in education, neither because I see this as an impossible mission, nor because I want to save the public space, but precisely because public space is not '*something*' that can be made or restored. Therefore my working hypothesis, inspired by Nancy (1982), goes as follows: if education focuses on the restoration of the public space, does this not imply that the public space (and the space of education) has ceased to be? If education limits itself to the service of existential matters, does this not leave behind those questions that (trans)form our selves and are therefore educational and existential? That education tries to answer existential questions is its own privilege. The intimidating question that derives is the question if we do not first have to consider the presuppositions beyond this privilege. However, this neither means that I want to move beyond convention when thinking about education, nor that I will try to identify the power relations behind all this. However, if we want to speak in public, we have to think and act in a particular way. So, in this chapter I will throw some critical light on the attention that has been given to the philosophical dialogue as an effect and a condition of a specific configuration of the self; a specific configuration that points to the need for a model towards which we can orientate our thinking and acting. I am not simply interested in the logic behind practical philosophy. I want to consider the time and the effect through which the current educational context can be seen and heard. In order to make the point that asking existential questions is not obvious to every human being, I will consider the question 'who are we? We who are willing to ask existential

questions and believe in the necessity of installing a public space in education? What is at stake in this chapter is not the limit and (in)stability of the actual legitimating procedure, but the *figure* for whom asking existential questions becomes important. Furthermore, this chapter also aims to portray the conditions in which the philosophical dialogue appears to be attractive. However, in this portrayal, I do not want to judge the subject that we are, but rather, I want to create space so that other subject forms can come.

2. THE INTRODUCTION OF THE FIGURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

To portray the actual 'we' who are interested in philosophy in education, I will introduce the figure of the professional learning community. I will present it as the figure that installs the conditions on which the philosophizing subject can appear. With the figure of the professional learning community I first of all want to underline that the actual organization of school (and the space outside school) produces a new configuration and experience of time and space; a configuration that can no longer be characterized in terms of discipline or public institutions but in terms of quality and the network environment (see Masschelein and Simons, 2002). Before sketching this new configuration, we should first observe the tensions, which presented themselves in the modern school. Afterwards, I will show how this new configuration has installed the conditions that make the philosophizing subject attractive to us.

Up until the 1970s, learning took place in institutions and disciplinarian settings and was concerned with knowledge transfer and the cultivation of human virtues. Knowledge was the product of learning human virtues. Knowledge represented the (true) world presented by (and also embodied in) the teacher. The teacher was a representative of the organic integrity of the state and, importantly and increasingly, of the nation, by way of a displaced identification. The teacher was the figure that children would want to emulate, a figure through whose unobtrusive yet ever-present gaze children could look at themselves and see the kind of people they must become. The role of the teacher was determined by its positioning, as the point from which the normalizing surveillance emanated. Learning, as a transfer of knowledge, was an act directed towards the child to initiate the child into the true adult world. It started from childhood and ended when the child reached adulthood. Furthermore, learning took place in the period between childhood and adulthood in a zone where children were positioned and oriented towards a final destination (adulthood). This was a process that could be judged and controlled in relation to that destination (a destination that was not known, only formally known or open). Furthermore learning in this configuration of schooling was limited to school time. Thus, being a subject, instituted by the modern school, implied an experience of being positioned in relation to a common destination, which meant that it was possible to orientate the pupil and that the pupil has to be orientated. It is an orientation towards a final destination, a definite position that is always also an allocated social position.

The actual experience of time and space in the contemporary school is different. As an effect of the knowledge society, the figure of the professional learning community participates in an organization of school that is no longer arranged in a more or less continual sequence but in accordance with a personal (learning) path. This kind of organization generates a new type of space and time where individuals no longer go to school but where they are participating in a form of organization where the difference between outside and inside (school) disappears. In this configuration of school and society, learning time is no longer limited to school time but happens in all places and at all times. A central notion in speaking and thinking about this so-called new socio-economic field is the 'network' (Castells, 2000). According to Castells the topography of a network is constituted by a set of points that are interconnected. In a network there is no centre, there are only nodes that have a strategic function. Between different nodes there are different kinds of connections that make transfer possible and necessary. It is in relation to this new kind of organization of time and space that 'learning' and 'school' have taken on new meanings. Constructionist and human resources development theories have assumed major importance in these new meanings (Wendrich et al., 2005). As a result of thinking and speaking about school from a network perspective, the idea of the *professional learning community* appears. This idea supposes three related communities: the professional community of educators; the learning community of teachers and students, which exists both within and outside classroom; and the stakeholder community. The idea of a professional learning community or a professional community of learners is not that the organization changes the individual but that the individuals change both themselves and the organization they belong to (Lagerweij and Lagerweij-Voogt, 2004). In a professional learning community, it is the learner who provides the most effective route for accomplishing systematic change and thus for learning. Adopting a similar approach, Senge (1992) uses the aphorism 'everybody is the organization'. This means that learning is no longer understood in terms of transmission and determination. Instead, learning is now defined as the construction and acquisition of knowledge by the learner himself/herself. After all, there is no longer a general horizon of meaning. Instead, there is only a network in which information, data and files have no meaning prior to conversion into meaning. Learning is performed by the learner himself/herself, excepting the fact that the learning process is strongly dependent on the environment in which learning takes place. Knowledge and competencies are no longer transmitted and absorbed but constructed in interaction with the direct environment (Masschelein and Simons, 2002). However, this construction does not start from scratch but takes on board preceding knowledge, levels of competence and experience. Learning is all about constructing and reconstructing different material (information and data) in a specific way to deliver a qualitative product (a corporate identity) (see also Castells, 1997). Quality and product are not the same thing, a product is qualitative when it offers some added value and takes into account individual needs. The process of reconstruction and sampling is self-directed, which means that the learner himself/herself must direct it by means of self-reflection. In other words, the learner chooses his/her own learning trajectory. Furthermore, learning is about an investment in the

self, in the network that we all belong to. Learning to learn involves learning how to transform information into a qualitative product.

Understanding school reality from a network perspective or from a set of nodes in a network implies that the rate of exchange, access and accessibility, avoidance of short-circuiting and disturbance and performance are emphasized. Education in the professional learning community is all about facilitating the learning process and the access to forceful learning environments in which an investment in the self can be exercised. In this respect, it not only the psychological needs of individuals that have to be met, but professionalism, flexibility, sensitivity, creativity and innovation should all be improved. Against this background of a network society or a professional learning community age, discipline, development stage, gender and ethnicity appear to lose their constitutive functions. The figure of the professional learning community no longer needs to be emancipated from norms, gender, age or development (perceived as merely a task or a means to an end), but should be fulfilled by emancipation, now construed as an activity through which we produce, discover and experience our selves. The figure of the professional learning community wants to change but also does not want to be changed. Age, developmental stage, gender, etc. can be reformed and managed so that they could become elements in a personal learning path of self-fulfilment and self-actualization (Rose, 1989, p. 103). In this respect the figure of the professional learning community does not need to put aside his/her needs. The school no longer needs to take needs that have been frustrated and exacerbated into account. The figure of the professional learning community himself/herself becomes the privileged space for the satisfaction of the social needs of individuals and especially for the need for added value and growth (Rose, 1990, p. 117). In the professional learning community there are no norms, or, rather, there are norms, but they are always referred to as needs that are individual and relative: needs, which derive from a chosen learning path. To realize this objective, individual profiles of knowledge and skills must be designed. These profiles show the learner's strong points, needs and growth. Such techniques will help, so we are told, to develop the competence to learn and to develop human capital (see further Masschelein and Simons, 2002, p. 593).

The learner is a subject who is trying to live his/her life as a kind of professional learning community, striving to increase the quality of his/her life and that of the network through the choices he/she makes in the marketplace of life (Rose, 1989; Masschelein and Simons, 2002). In this respect Masschelein and Simons are introducing the notion of the entrepreneurial self as an active, counting and calculating self. This self, Masschelein and Simons argue, is a self that is required to live a life in an *environment* for which added value and interconnectedness are required. This means that the professional learning community will expire when more successful, new combinations or changes in the environment and needs appear. So, in order to hold a position in a network environment it is necessary to know one's resources, to use them and develop them, to put forward and constantly look for improvements on the basis of permanent evaluation and accreditation. Subsequently, every learner is expected to acquire and manage knowledge about himself/herself, learn how to invest knowledge and calculate gains. Only changes *in* the environment or new information

about the environment can have an influence on the environment, an influence that does not disrupt the figure of the professional learning community but tries to permanently (re)position, (re)orientate and (re)calculate. This means that existence in the professional learning community has to do with the willingness to orientate and reorientate oneself to an environment. Things receive their meaning from their position in the network and in relation to needs. This implies an ongoing willingness to deal with our selves in such a way that it safeguards investments in new environments. All units, which can be persons or organizations, have to be made transparent in relation to their availability for the network. As long as there is no transparency, there is no unit and there is no connection. Existence in the professional learning community depends on transparency, availability and interconnection. Subsequently, every learner is expected to acquire and manage knowledge about himself/herself and to legitimate a specific position in the network. A refusal of positioning and orientation implies a retreat from life and survival. This means that, for the figure of the professional learning community, tradition, gender and ideology are no longer constitutive of life. The figure of the professional learning community has no content but has many needs.

3. THE FIGURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY AND THE CONTEMPORARY INTEREST FOR PHILOSOPHY

Against this background the call for philosophy in education is no longer about disrupting and refusing the figure of the professional learning community, but reflects a resumption and reproduction of the words, the sentences, the arguments, the grammar and the configuration that the professional learning community has constituted and produced. The call to give place and space to the philosophical dialogue does not sound strange, but plausible and recognizable. Education's interest in philosophy derives from the lack of a guiding principle by which we can orientate our lives. This means that philosophy, as a way of life, appears as a *product* to release us from what we have always taken for granted and gives us the opportunity to take into account our own perspective in relation to that of all (imaginative) others (instead of for others). Our own perspectives (or our internal representations), then, appear as a resource that can be used, developed, chosen for and looked to for improvement. They become products that can be invested in and calculated. By referring to contemporary philosophers, defenders of philosophy in education maintain that the way education is interpreted today begins to assume an economic value besides a more traditional use-value and that there is a tendency for educational systems to become less grounded in people qua people and more in the regulated transparency of competencies and outcomes. Authors such as Barnett speak about important reductions in the competence discourse; reductions that, according to him, have to do with knowledge, thoughtfulness and existential experience (Barnett, 1994). In the same respect, we hear Korthagen (2004) complaining about students who are too focused on competencies, and questions such as 'who are we?' and 'what do we want to become?' are left behind. Educational institutes may say that they are

student-centred; actually, in the quest for consumption and production of knowledge that will engage in more flexible, enterprising and competitive ways of thinking, they are seemingly becoming more like knowledge centres. Furthermore we hear that all kind of activities are being measured and ranked against each other, with ever less concern for the rationale for doing so (see, e.g. Kennedy, 1999; Rondhuis, 2005).

In relation to all this, it becomes quite obvious that philosophy as a discourse that poses fundamental questions to the so-called logic of instrumental rationality and economism, becomes very attractive. This means that philosophy becomes a tool for the production and circulation of discourses that can in principle be critical of dominant theories of knowledge. It becomes a tool that offers children the chance to explore ordinary but puzzling concepts, to improve their thinking, to acquire a clear-cut overview of possible perspectives and to discover for themselves what it is to be valued and cherished (Glaser, 1998; Splitter and Sharp, 1995). It is argued that this approach cannot be developed from some overriding principal or essential base, but must develop in accordance with a doubt that emerges out of constantly changing contexts. The more discussions we have with other people, the more we will come in contact with other possibilities, capacities, ideas and habits and the more we will be able to orientate our lives by ourselves. Furthermore, taking risks, having courage, opening up new horizons, travelling or doing artistic activities appear as skills and attitudes that assure us a broader more clear-cut overview of possible perspectives in relation to current needs. These skills and attitudes seem to have been forgotten by competence discourses, yet they are fundamental to self-orientation. In this respect the task of the teacher is not to orientate the child but to create environments and to provide the knowledge and the skills to stimulate the learner to permanently reflect upon her own life and to pose the questions 'who am I?' and 'who do I want to become?' in a comfortable and safe environment.

This means, that acquiring philosophical capital seems to become necessary to govern an autonomous life. In this respect we can say that the philosophical subject is not established on the basis of a 'will to power' on the part of individual or collective actors. What is involved, rather, is a process in which the philosophical dialogue appears to be a solution to problems of pluralism and blurring of moral standards in the professional learning community.

It seems to be the case that we cannot have freedom and we cannot 'orientate ourselves' without some other instance providing us with the means to acquire that knowledge, alongside the tools provided to us by expertise and knowledge. In other words, in the professional learning community, there is no freedom without added value and interconnection. The philosophical dialogue is only expressible and visible in the specific (strategic) configuration of the professional learning community that is obsessed by security and product differentiation. Besides this, what our interest for the philosophical dialogue presents, *is not an interest in existential questions, but an interest in investing in existential questions.* Philosophizing in the professional learning community gives added value to the philosophizing self by investing in the self as a producer of philosophical capital. In exchange for philosophical capital, philosophical subjects are participating in philosophical communities of inquiry and

practices. The originality of philosophy exists in the production of philosophical capital out of which the individual, while self-actualizing, can produce differentiation and in this sense added value. To conclude, we can say that the appearance of the philosophical dialogue today, is nothing other than a reproduction of the figure of the professional learning community and is thus the installation of a (re)new(ed) strategic configuration. Even if the professional learning community moves to a shift from subjectivity to intersubjectivity, this intersubjectivity is, in a certain sense, subordinated to an economic tribunal and the *nomos* of the quest for added value and interconnections. We could say that the figure of the professional learning community invests in the philosophical dialogue.

In this sense, we have to turn around what the philosophical dialogue promises: what the philosophical dialogue presents as an encounter and experience of the real self, is precisely the opposite, namely the presentation of what our existence is based on. The figure of the professional learning community seems to produce and reproduce an organization of space and time with ever-changing boundaries. However, this reproduction always implies an experience of being abandoned: abandoned to the *nomos* of the question for added value and quality. This experience of abandonment shows that the current interest for the philosophical dialogue can only be read in terms of a specific strategic configuration of the self: a configuration in which one permanently needs to make decisions in terms of needs and opportunities.

4. PHILOSOPHY BEYOND THE FIGURE OF THE PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITY

Now that it has become clear that the call for public space and philosophical dialogue is a complex matter, I return to philosophy in education for a last time. If education limits itself to being in service of existential matters, as my hypothesis suggests, does this not leave precisely those questions behind that (trans)form our selves and are therefore e-ducational and ex-istential? The figure of the professional learning community presents the attempt of interactive philosophy to restore the public space. However, this does not imply a rupture with the strategic configuration he/she has criticized. Instead, the current discussion on public space is accompanied by the establishment of a specific (strategic) configuration – a configuration that regulates what, in the current educational context, can be seen and heard. It is in the name of the figure of the professional learning community that philosophy has become important. Although the figure of the professional learning community criticizes the self as an essence either, he/she defines the conditions in which a certain self can appear: namely as a philosophical compensation for a so-called narrow-minded pedagogical expertise and professionalism.

The philosophical self that embraces the philosophical dialogue, then, is not the self that philosophers such as Hadot, Foucault or Nancy had in mind when they spoke about philosophy as a way of life, since these thinkers refuse to think of an ontological self as an essence even if this essence is existence. This refusal, however, is

not a refusal that provides, in any way, the measure of things. It neither refers to existence, nor to coexistence, but to the operation through which existence is known to us and is manifest today. According to these philosophers there is nothing latent or forgotten about the self, there is only the manifestation of the self and what is manifest today is nothing other than the lack of a visible and legible public space (existential questions). This means according to Nancy (1991, p. 120) that public places are not concealed by a lack, but that this lack reveals that the public is itself suspended. In this reading, philosophy is not about an affect toward a thing we imagine as necessary, possible, or contingent, but about an affect toward a thing we simply imagine as existence (Agamben, 2003). That means that the affect is not a confrontation with a real face, but with the subject of existence, with his/her figure. On that score Nancy mentioned that the lack of existential questions 'has nothing whatever to do with the metaphysical surfeit of the thing over the sign, of the real over language. The lack of [existential questions] is a lack of *Wink*, and not of signifying capacity' (Nancy, 1991, p. 119). If there is a lack of existential questions, it is not because certain environments are lacking. There is a lack of existential questions, of appellatives:

> I would argue that we should understand those words as meaning that it is the sacred itself that is lacking, wanting, failing, or withdrawn. The lack of sacred names is not a surface lack concealing and manifesting the depths of a sacred held in reserve. It bars the way to the sacred, the sacred as such no longer comes (advient), and the divine is withdrawn from itself. (Nancy, 1991, p. 120)

For Nancy, this means that existence cannot be judged in relation to sense but in relation to gesture, a gesture or wink that invites or calls and gives space to speak and act. It is an invitation that opens the possibility of *waiting* for the strangeness of existential questions (public space). It is opened up, but not established. This means that thinking about philosophy for Nancy has nothing to do with ensuring that existential questions have their place and establish a public space, but with proclaiming the existence of that space, and giving it its chance.

In this reading, philosophy does not appear as a possible solution to what has become problematic but as an activity and positive vitality of life. This possibility, however, supposes according to Nancy, the preparedness to face the events of life and to subsequently get lost on the road. It is the preparedness to refuse to talk *about* myself and *about* the other, but to talk *with* myself and *with* the other (Bakhtin, 1984). This preparedness has according to Nancy (2002) nothing to do with knowledge or skills in the first place, but with attention.

This could lead us to initiate another way of speaking about philosophy in education. We might see it as a space that not so much introduces an attitude of knowing how to orientate our lives but introduces us to a kind of speaking that withdraws the question of orientation to the point at which the very sense of the question is transformed. This might lead us to the question 'how is it possible that "we" are interested in philosophy as a product to orientate our life?' (Agamben, 2003, p. 58).

In this interpretation, philosophy no longer appears as an instance that provides the tools to criticize what we have always taken for granted so we might (re)orientate our lives, but, instead has the potential to speak itself. Such a potential for speech manifests itself without asking and presents us. It is a speaking that stems out of a critical position, but this critical position is not the one that provides the tools to judge and give meaning. It is a critical position in the sense that it is vulnerable, fragile or naked. This speaking neither imposes itself, nor even proposes itself, but exposes itself to what is finite about sense, with all its resources (Nancy, 2003, p. 30). It is the limit-experience of the conditions in which a certain subject can exist. It is a kind of speaking that stems from the acceptance that the search for the self, cannot be anything other than a withdrawal of the self, of 'who we are' and can thus no longer coincide with it (Agamben, 2003, p. 122). However, this withdrawal is not a withdrawal in which one would judge oneself. The operation of withdrawal is not one of judgement but one of transformation and displacement. In this sense, it is not a speaking that confronts us with a knowledge-based economy of education but a speaking that exposes a knowledge-based economy: an exposition that is a displacement or withdrawal from that regime.

In relation to this, we wonder whether a call for philosophy or public space in education would not be *greater* if we did not understand it as a comfortable space where we learn to expose ourselves by learning to pose existential questions, but as a poor space that exposes the self or puts the self in an uncomfortable or critical position (cf. Masschelein, 2006). By taking this into account, public space can no longer be read as a space in which we find our real or true selves, but where we get lost or withdrawn from our selves. In this respect, philosophy does not appear as a compensation for (a limited, reduced or reductionist) education or a means toward an end, but as the heart (set in the midst) of education. However, it is not possible to isolate this aspect of being (the heart of education) and to put it into action. By doing this, one effectively 'separates' it from itself. Thinking of philosophy as the heart of education means paying attention to who we are and what we take for granted. In this understanding, the philosopher does not appear as someone who reveals those parts of the world that can be regulated and secured, stored, distributed and placed in reserve for future use. On the contrary, the philosopher now appears as a figure that only speaks and writes to get lost and cut of the road. It is this kind of speaking that invites and inspires us to work upon the transformation of the self and to take care of the self. This means of thinking and acting do not refer to a method or the legitimation of knowledge production but to a form of acceptance in which the self is exposed to the strangeness of existential questions. This kind of philosophy does not provide spaces for children to grow but *gives* space so the child can grow and manifest itself (Nancy, 1982). In this respect, the child no longer appears as an object that has to be educated. It appears as an object that desires and demands to be educated.

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CHAPTER ELEVEN

JAMES D. MARSHALL

'ERASMUS THE ALBATROSS': THE TRANSMISSION OF IDEAS AS INFORMATION

1. INTRODUCTION

First, the notion of the transmission of ideas is ambiguous between, on the one hand, the notion of the *mutual* exchange of ideas, of dialogue, and of collegial discussion, including argument and disputation and, on the other hand, the notion of telling, forwarding, and the ordering of groups, and institutions through instantaneous *communication* of ideas, principles, and requirements as *information* (especially those which carry implications of order, commanding, or requiring). In the former case it is through notions of immersion, agreement, and disputation that we understand, agree with, or reject ideas, principles, theories, and values. Even so the discretion afforded by us in these situations is not unlimited. We are born into structures of thought and educated in advanced institutions into structures in which we must, at least, involve ourselves. As Georges Canguilhem puts it: 'Life, whatever form it may take, involves self-preservation by self-regulation' (Canguilhem, 1973, p. 128). However, the traditional liberal assumption is that we are independent thinkers and can, therefore reject many of these ideas, act freely, propose new structures, and order or act according to our conscience, whatever. Nevertheless in the second case it seems that we have little ability, often, to reject, or even to *act* accordingly with the prescriptions which descend upon us through modern methods of transmission and management.

This chapter is concerned with the dramatic change in the ways in which idealists, academics, and intellectuals have communicated and transmitted information (to be developed below). A contrast will be drawn between the wandering scholars and intellectuals of the fifteenth/sixteenth centuries and their modern counterparts in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. First I will take as an example from the former era, the great European and humanistic scholar Erasmus of Rotterdam, and from the second I will characterise (and not caricaturise, I hope) a model of modern intellectual *transmission* of knowledge (as information). Fundamental to these changes is a shift from mainly ethical concerns, in the case of Erasmus and his educational aims for example, to the mainly epistemological emphasis of the last four decades, as exemplified in the recent emphasis on knowledge that is *useful* (Lyotard, 1979).

There are three types of information, or three senses of the term 'information' (Borgmann, 1999). First there is the sense of information *about*. Erasmus' fresh

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translations from the Greek sources gave information *about* the original scriptures which implied, if not required, the replacement of the Vulgate by the 1516 text. Then there is the sense of information *for*. Erasmus provided information in the new translation *for* the Catholic Church (including the Lutherans and other liberal reformers), for Henry VIII of England as Head of 'his' Church, for theologians and scholars, and those who sought righteousness (it was of course in Latin). But there is another sense of the term that we need to consider in relation to information technology (IT). This is the notion that information is not about reality and for changes in reality, but that it is transmitted *as* reality, as if it is *itself* the reality. It replaces reality. These ideas will be covered in sections 2–4.

2. DISEMINATION BY FOOT

Erasmus was not a wandering scholar in the sense that Ariès (1962) talked of the wandering and often dissolute scholars in the Middle Ages. Instead he was more like the wandering albatross circumnavigating the world – approximately a two-year journey, with its amazing wing spread and strength, south in the dangerous and inclement roaring forties.[1] According to Léon-E Halkin:

> In our own times his attractiveness still lies for many in his being a European, not a sectarian or national figure. Since he belongs nowhere, he belongs everywhere. All renaissance scholarship is polyglot: Erasmian scholarship is particularly so. (Halkin, 1993, preface)

Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam was a Dutch humanist and theologian. He was born Geert Geertsen[2] in Rotterdam on 27 October 1466,[3] and died in Basle, Switzerland, on 12 July 1536. There is some difficulty in establishing facts concerning his early life (Halkin, 1993, p. 1). He did however provide some 'censored' autobiographical details to Conradus Goclenius, a Professor in Latin at Leuven in 1524, known as the *Compendium Vitae* or *Brief Life* (Rummel, 1990). He was certainly born illegitimate, and his parents never married, even though there was an elder brother. It appears that he did not wish to talk about this early life because he was illegitimate, and his father, after his birth became a priest. Though born in Rotterdam he lived there for only four years and never returned. His parents died from the plague in 1483 (perhaps earlier), and then given the best education available to a young man of his day in a series of monastic or semi-monastic schools. According to Zweig (1934, p. 33) however, he was 'given' to the church as a young man of promise by relatives who did not want the expense of raising him. There is some evidence that his relatives cheated him.

Erasmus of Rotterdam, 'was, of all the writers and creators in the West, the first conscious European, the first to fight on behalf of peace, the ablest champion of the humanities and of a spiritual ideal' (Zweig, 1934, p. 4). A further recognition is no doubt the selection of the name of the student exchange programme, 'European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students' was such as to provide the acronym 'Erasmus' and the shortened title 'The Erasmus Student Exchange

Programme'. Clearly the name was chosen because of his being an early believer in a form of Unified Europe, and having studied himself at various European universities.[4] This European and cosmopolitan did not believe in the superiority of any one nation over another and wished to unite men of 'good will in every land, from every race and class, in one great league of the enlightened' (Zweig, 1934, p. 8). Given that he spoke only Dutch and Latin and mixed and corresponded mainly with cultured and enlightened people – he may have been more influential on them, especially as he wrote in Latin, and that he was 'far away from the common people (as well as the rising middle class)' (Wielemans, 1991, p. 171). Given that he had converted Latin into a more literary and flexible tool for conveying thoughts and understanding he was able to converse with a large number of people across Europe. But even though his political thought was realistic (Mansfield, 2003, p. xi) he did not achieve this grand unifying aim.

'Erasmus had a philosophical bent, but he was no systematic philosopher… (as) his writings contain inconsistencies and ambiguities' (Rummel, 2004, p. ix). But, according to Wielemans, (1991, p. 171) he 'was the most outstanding theorist of education in the early 16th Century,…zealous for educational innovation, in particular for an educational system based on humanism…' (as he was) 'the sensitive brain of his world… (and) …the heart and the critical conscience of his time'. In part the ambiguities arose from the context in which they were written, as he changed his position on some issues, and wrote in changing and often threatening times. Erasmus was a teacher, a pedagogue, who wished to teach people about 'certain' conditions that pertained to human beings and to social living. He believed that these conditions or characteristics pertained to human beings, qua, human beings, and permitted them, if not required them, to behave in certain ways, so as to actualise their 'true' humanity. Thereby, there might be a common culture for Europe. Erasmus was a humanitarian – and a humanist in the sense that he held a conception of 'Man'.

At about the age of 25 Erasmus took Augustinian monastic vows and in 1492 was ordained into the Catholic priesthood. He did not practice as a priest however, finding scholarly pursuits in the cloisters more attractive. Indeed monasticism was one of the chief objects of attack in his lifelong critique of the evils of the Church. Because of his command of Latin and his reputation as a man of letters he became secretary to the Bishop of Cambrai, where he was given a temporary dispensation from the priesthood duties on account of his poor health, dislike of monks, and love of humanistic studies. Pope Leo X later made this dispensation permanent. Thus he remained a monk until his death. In the light of later experience, Erasmus made this early education appear like one long conspiracy to force him into the monastic life.

With the approval of the Church he began to study at the University of Paris in 1495. From then Erasmus led the life of an independent scholar, independent of country, of academic ties, and of religious allegiance. This was to be free from anything that could interfere with the development of his intellect and the freedom of his literary expression. This was followed by time spent at Leuven, Cambridge, Basle, and Venice. He did not attach himself firmly to any place; he was a wanderer, a man alone but with a book.[5] An often quoted saying from Erasmus is this: 'When I get a little money I buy books; and if any is left I buy food and clothes.' He was

offered many positions of honour and profit in the academic world, but declined them all on one or another pretext, preferring the uncertain, but as it proved sufficient rewards of independent literary activity.

At K.U. Leuven the faculty nicknamed him the promoter of the *Luther plague.* Erasmus steadfastly refused to take sides on the struggle between Luther and the church. He would not stand as a spokesperson for either the Pope or for Luther, as partisanship was not an aspect of his character. The students took part in violent demonstrations against him and the Leuven priests fulminated against him from their pulpits (Zweig, 1934, pp. 175–176). Later the University of Leuven, and the Sorbonne, attempted to suppress *In Praise of Folly* (1511) (Loon, 1942, p. 10).[6] Erasmus disapproved of the Church for its pedantry, abuses, and follies but in his criticisms, sometimes quite satirical, he did not directly attack the Church and its Institutions. He disliked the priests' garb and was excused from wearing it. But if he did not enjoy the company of churchmen, he had no enmity for them. The reforms that Luther was promoting were not the reforms that Erasmus promoted, though he had some sympathy with them. But Erasmus did not take sides, as he believed that only if he was an independent scholar could he influence change in the Church.

The twin purposes of Renaissance humanistic education were the acquisition of knowledge and virtue (Rummel, 2004, p. 36). Here Erasmus stood firmly on the side of the new learning versus the traditional curriculum. One of his first publications was entitled *Antibarbarians* – the term 'barbarian' was used by humanists to denote the opponents of the new learning. That would certainly have been a point of disagreement with the Leuven theologians, as they doubted both that the study of literature and languages – the new learning – was necessary and that classical literarature provided good models for young minds (Rummel, 2004, p. 28). But Erasmus' concern was how best to combine the two cultures while retaining Christian values.

Erasmus packed his belongings and departed the city of Leuven. Was he pushed or did he flee? But if he left Leuven because it was too Catholic, then he was later in life to leave Basle because it was too protestant (Zweig, 1934, p. 220).[7]

At Cambridge he was Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity and made lifelong friendships with Thomas More, Thomas Linacre, John Colet, John Fisher, and William Grocyn, amongst others. He could have stayed at Cambridge as a professor, for life, but he took off, albatross-like, again. More was perhaps his closest friend, and in the dedication to him of *In Praise of Folly*, Erasmus says this:

> As I was coming awhile since out of Italy for England, that I might not waste all that time I was to sit on horseback…I chose rather one while to revolve with myself something of our common studies, and other while to enjoy the remembrance of my Friends…Amongst these you, my More, came first to mind, whose memory, though absent yourself, gives me such delight in my absence, as when present with you I ever found in your company; than which, let me perish if in all my life I ever met with anything more delectable…(you are)…a person so excellent an Advocate that no man better defends his client, though the cause many times be none of the best? Farewell, my best disputant More and stoutly defend your Moriæ (a play on 'folly' and 'More').

Erasmus' literary productivity came comparatively late in his life, when he had mastered an appropriate and effective Latin style. This he began to use on current subjects of literature and religion in support of his lifelong conviction that what was needed to regenerate Europe was sound learning applied frankly and fearlessly to the administration of public affairs in Church and State. Erasmus was a marked individual, for he stood alone, yet he corresponded with more than 500 men of the highest importance in the world of politics and of thought.

Erasmus said this about education and being a human being:

> The proper activity of a human person is self-directed study in the collegial good company of good, peer friends: Therein to shape and build their shared life together in the process of reflecting on that shared life together. All other activities and passivities in life find their proper place by that activity situating them within and with regard to itself. (quoted in Erasmus (1))

But what were his educational proposals? According to Erika Rummel:

> Erasmus's curriculum proposals may be read as manifestos of humanism. They contain the features that epitomise Renaissance humanism: an admiration for classical antiquity, an inclination to site classical sources in preference to medieval writings and an emphasis on language studies, rhetoric and social sciences in preference to logic. (Rummel, 2004, p. x)

Erasmus sees study in such a curriculum as a way of improving himself, as a moral, peaceful, and righteous human being. It was not a secular humanism that he was promoting. But this independent and self-directed study must be undertaken in collegiality, with other humans who are both peers and friends pursuing this common end or goal. Together they are able to reflect upon their shared life, and discuss, critique, and dispute their courses of study with one another. Knowledge and understanding, theoretical and/or practical, serves one function – the improvement or betterment of each other as human beings so defined. Knowledge, beliefs, and activities and practices are subservient to this ethical demand for Erasmus. It was not knowledge for its own sake and it was not hived off, for Erasmus' views were widely disseminated in the hope that cultured and educated people, in particular, could become better human beings. Nor was it useful knowledge as was the discovery of oxygen and its use in improving munitions (e.g. by Lavoisier in the late eighteenth century).

Most of what he said about education was for the education of boys. But he did see the education of women as having some importance in a time when the questioning of whether women would benefit from education was being asked. He believed that their education would provide good family models and thereby benefit society. Erasmus had shifted from earlier reservations about the education of women because of More's daughters who showed him that women could benefit from an education (Rummel, 2004, pp. 22–23). Mansfield (2003, p. 8) said that on education Erasmus:

> …combined a clear vision of social realities, a capacity based upon classical precedents, for rational reflection on what he observed, sympathy for the human subject, especially the child, a recognition of the bond between intellect and character, and strong convictions about the receptiveness of the mind and spirit to leading and instruction. A plausible connection could then be made between Erasmus and Locke, Rousseau and Pestalozzi. In this way the pedagogical journals of 1936 celebrated Erasmus (in the Quatracentury Commemorations).

Erasmus' aim was to improve the Church, through better knowledge and understanding of Christianity to be obtained by better historical study and better translations. It was also to improve righteousness, promote better human beings, and to unite a peaceful Europe. It must be noted however that the issues which Erasmus wished to resolve were not resolved, even though his political thought was realistic. He was a forerunner of modernity and believed in the endless improvement of mankind through the advancement of reason. Here, Erasmus contributed to this cause by the scholarship and work involved in the production of the Latin–Greek New Testament of 1516, which he considered as his chief service to the cause of a sound Christianity, and his more literary activity.

This information was transmitted by foot – usually horses' feet, as Erasmus noted in his letter to More. It took time and travelling was dangerous. It was also potentially dangerous for Erasmus to publish material such as *In Praise of Folly*. But its publication and transmission were ethical demands which he directed first upon himself.

3. INFORMATION IN THE SEVENTEENTH–MID TWENTIETH CENTURY[8]

Early in the seventeenth century Francis Bacon produced three important texts – *The Advancement of Learning* (1605), *Novum Organum* (1620) and *The New Atlantis* (1626). In his new 'philosophy' of nature Bacon provided information *about* the natural world and gave information *for* the extension of power and control over nature. Bacon, as Lord Chancellor, 'was the first to discuss the organisation and bureaucracy of modern science' (Peters, 2006, p. 229). For Bacon transmission was not by foot but by text, for he did not travel much outside England.

Arguably the most important event in Britain for the extension of Bacon's views was the formation of The Royal Society in 1660. However a group of prominent people had been meeting since 1645. They had strong contacts in Europe and travelled extensively. But the travelling was not one way. As examples, Becarria, the prison reformer, was to visit with Voltaire and Voltaire, himself, was to spend two years in London (after having been exiled from Paris). Descartes 'hid' in the Netherlands, and Rousseau 'settled' upon Hume (and others). But this travelling was not merely a fleeing and seeking of refuge from political enemies, because it involved, for example, Voltaire writing on Bacon, Locke, and Newton, Descartes challenging Locke, and so on. In these relationships we have evidence of two notions of the transmissions of information – the notions of information *about* and information *for*. But we see a

disputatious element entering these writings, breakdowns in some of these friendships and a lack of the collegiality that had been evident in Erasmus's letter to More. Here Peters (2006, p. 231) notes that the formation of a number of learned societies across Europe 'represented a new form of cooperation that bypassed politics and religion and established norms for independent enquiry, collaborative research and discussion'.

The dissemination of information from these societies was by serial publications, the first (arguably[9]) of which published on 6 March 1665, was *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society.* According to Fjãllbrant (1997, p. 3):

> It was a medium for publications of new observations and original experiments in science, mostly carried out by the Fellows of the Society. This was a monthly publication of scientific material together with book reviews and space for discussions between people holding differing scientific opinions … (and it)… provided a model for subsequent publications of scientific academies throughout Europe.

While the learned societies were also concerned to spread and diffuse knowledge individual scientists however, protected their original works by encrypting an anagram for their discovery and depositing it with an official witness. Anagrams were thus the forerunners of patents and copyright. The anagram that Galileo sent to Kepler (and which Kepler could not solve) was this:

smaismrmilmepoetalevmibunenugttaviras.

In Latin Galileo's discovery was deposited as *altissimum planetam tergeminum observari.* In English this translates as – *I have observed the uppermost planet triple.* This scientific anagram was the means by which Galileo registered that he was the first person to observe the three rings of Saturn (Fjãllbrant, 1997, p. 4). An effect of the scientific anagram and the deposited account, by establishing ownership and priority, was to hinder diffusion.

But they also communicated by letter as had, of course, Erasmus and More. Fjãllbrant (1997, p. 4) notes that significant individuals and groups corresponded with other individuals and groups.

> These were often sent to a person who acted as a 'gatekeeper' or a mailbox for transmitting news to other people. One of the most famous correspondents was Samuel Hartlib, born 1600 in Prussia. He emigrated to England and corresponded indefatigably with the European scientific and literary figures of that day, for example Boyle, Comenius, Cromwell, Descartes, Milton, Pascal and Wren. He collected the papers of other savants and supplied information on demand.[10]

Here are two possibly conflicting practices in transmission by letter. On the one hand diffusion could be hindered by gatekeepers passing information only to a selected few – 'the chosen' believers so to say. Hartlib however seemed to correspond with anyone.

Fjãllbrant (1997) also notes the use of books and newspapers. Books were used in all disciplines, she says, but they were expensive to buy and involved a slow and expensive process to produce. For this reason they often became a medium to report the work of a lifetime. Newspapers, appearing in the seventeenth century as a means of reporting recent and important events, also began to contain information about agriculture and husbandry. There were also commercial periodicals.

It can be claimed that since the seventeenth century there was little change in the *form* of the transmission of information – its spread and diffusion – before the middle of the twentieth century. The formation of learned societies, with their accompanying journals and conferences, the printing press, the rapid growth in educational institutions and research, the modes of transportation changing from feet, horses, and sail to train, motor car, and aeroplane have done little to change the views on information developed above; that information is *about* reality and *for* change in reality. For example the purification of water and the building of sewage systems have possibly been more beneficial for humanity than anything else.

What changed in the activity of study and information diffusion between Erasmus and the seventeenth century? At least one major change has been the formation of learned societies and the appearance of serial journals. What differs between modern learned societies and Erasmus and his friends at Cambridge, for example, was the necessity for a certain form of collegiality. In Erasmus' case collegiality was not only important for progress in knowledge but was also necessary for the progress of himself. Study in an atmosphere of similarly inclined people was necessary for improving himself, for becoming a better human being amongst similarly inclined human beings. This aspect has dropped from modern accounts of collegiality where collegiality is perhaps sought because it aids research. Two people can be good research colleagues but not necessarily wish to spend time together.[11] Paradoxically what Erasmus did not seem to be able to do in his early life in the monasteries was to study with other monks and theologians.

But something else has changed also about reality.

4. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

So far we have dealt with information *about* and information *for*. Now we need to consider information *as,* and in relation to IT. This is the notion that information is not about reality and for changes in reality, but that it is transmitted *as* reality, as if it is *itself* the reality. Simulacra have become almost real; information as with modern IT has stepped up to claim the real.

This issue was raised as early as Marshall McLuhan's well-known adage: 'The Medium is the Message'.[12] McLuhan believed as early as 1964 that new forms of IT were forcing human beings to reconsider and re-evaluate every thought, action, and institution, and every aspect of their personal and interpersonal life. In addition he noted that '*how* we experience information can influence us more than the actual *content* of the message given' (McLuhan, 1964, p. 320). According to Borgmann (1999, p. 2):

> To information *about* and *for* reality it adds *information as reality*. The paradigms of report and recipe are succeeded by the paradigm of the recording. The technological information on a compact disc is so detailed and controlled that it addresses us virtually *as* reality. …Information through the power of technology steps forward as a rival of reality. Today the three kinds of information are layered over one another in one place, grind against each other in a second place, and are heaved up and folded in a third. But clearly technological information is the most prominent layer of the contemporary cultural landscape.

A good example here is the weather reports that we see on television. If we have an outing planned for the next day we await eagerly the evening forecast. But what an extraordinary *performance* greets us. There are swirling lights dashing across the screen, rapid talking, waving arms, etc., and perhaps ending by the weather person donning a rain coat and chatting with the news presenters. Does the viewer get up from the couch and look out of the window, to check what is real? Usually not, because what was on the screen *is* the weather. Furthermore it is most unusual to see nowadays a barometer in a home, or someone searching in the hall to tap one, or someone reading the weather maps, sometimes still to be found in newspapers. What once was weather has become 'the show'. The pictures on the screen tell us all and what was once encoded information is now taken *as* reality.

Shipping needs weather information. It is encoded and transmitted to ships. At sea an officer on the ship would decode the message and construct a weather map based on the coded information. It would have, when plotted, such things as low and high pressures, fronts, temperatures, etc. When the Captain received the chart he would survey it and then he would certainly look at the sky and the sea, thermometers and barometers, the estimated position of the ship, and the preceding weather information recorded in the ship's log. I wonder if there are yet many gnarled old sea captains left who can 'smell' the weather.

The difference in these two examples is not just sophistication. It needs to be said that the relationships between weather and sea for the performing weatherman and the gnarled sea captain is that they are very different and they are very different persons. The relationship with the weather has changed and in so doing it has changed the person. For the performing weatherman his relationship is to an earlier show of the weather. Truth is relational. For the sea captain his relationship is to recorded and measured data, and he has some knowable facts which are available to anyone. Erasmus would have behaved like the sea captain.

Insofar as they each have a picture – one on a screen and the other on a chart – they have information about the weather. But the decoded information on the chart is seen as information *about* reality and which needs to be checked against the weather the ship is then experiencing. The weatherman is offering us further encoded information on the screen *as* the weather. With the reliance for most people on the media weather shows on television for their weather they can only check a mediated form by another mediated form. If so the *form* that the weather show takes, how it is presented, has determined what counts as reality.

Because we accept the performance of the weatherman as the (real) weather, then our relationship with truth is changing, and insofar as we operate with sets of beliefs and truths about the world, we are who we are because we react to a world over which we have little control. As Canguilhem said in the earlier quotation: 'Life, whatever form it may take, involves self-preservation by self-regulation.' But how are we to self-regulate?

How would Erasmus cope with information *as* reality today? In part this is answered by Wielemans (1991) in using the historical Erasmus to critique the modern European Erasmus programme. Drawing upon the writings of Guy Neave between 1984 and 1988, Wielemans (1991, pp. 173–177) argues that the Erasmus programme should be seen as falling under central governments' oversight in the Rise of the Evaluative State as part of the market economy, and characterised by strategic evaluation and 'a shift from process control to product control as a way of "steering" higher education more closely towards "national priorities"', towards entrepreneurship and service to perceived institutional (i.e. economic) needs. This has been accompanied by neo-liberal management theories and structures, and IT plays a crucial role in the production and presentation of the product – in Wielemans' terms the traditional universities have become submissively responsive as *service universities.*

There is little doubt that Erasmus would not have approved of this. The uncritical adoption by the universities as *service universities*, attuning to non-'democratic' management structures and market forces, would have prompted a similar critique as that which he developed against the established Roman Church and its institutions. He would have found the curriculum heavily orientated toward the 'hard' social sciences and not towards the humanistic and cultural objectives that Erasmus had for European unity. Instead unity seems to be pursued in Europe through economies and economic structures. That is not to say that everything is wrong within the Erasmus programme – e.g. Erasmus was not overly concerned with local languages and literatures and indeed championed Latin as the lingua franca (as opposed to the more recent emphasis on English). And he would have noted that the new and different relationships to truth were changing people, their social relations and their cultures.

5. CONCLUSION

In New Zealand the neo-liberal approach of successive politically opposed governments in the last two decades has been to push ahead with the information highway as much as possible. There were huge changes to the structures of education beginning in the late 1980s; change has been an almost continuous process since then.[13] But politicians of both sides of the House are agreed on the importance of linking education with the economy and with developing IT-wise entrepreneurs. There is little doubt that IT has brought tremendous benefits. But the theory and assumptions that have come with it about human beings bring also a warning about what might happen to individual persons (e.g. Marshall, 1995).

The IT 'industry' driven by the information economy will not only restructure schooling as we know it, and its curricula, but it will also change and restructure the

self, our social and cultural relations, and our concepts of experience and reality. If we stay with the weather example we can see how this might happen. The person sitting on his couch, supper on his lap, and watching the weatherman becomes, first of all, a passive spectator if he no longer acts as a modern Erasmus would, and checks against the reality of barometric pressure, wind direction, and cloud formation. Instead the reality as experienced by the couch potato is the flickering colour on the screen – *that* becomes his experienced reality. He becomes a solitary individual if he does not consult with his farmer neighbour about the cloud shapes and the possibility of rain preventing the harvesting of grain. The irony is that, under these conditions experience becomes fully mediated. That is to say, that there is no other alternative.

Descartes claimed in the *Meditations* that we cannot be deceived by our senses or by dreaming or by hallucinating because there were always veridical states against which we can check either the veracity of our senses, or that we are dreaming or hallucinating. Though we may have doubts about Descartes' arguments, we can and do check such matters by an appeal to veridical states. But if the weatherman has given us *the weather*, that *is* the veridical state. There is nothing to check against except other mediated experience. At best we may have a consistent system but like dictionaries there must be some points of reference to reality. But that term too is already changing its point of reference, to the weather show, to the mediated news, to….

Finally we should return to Erasmus and his views on collegiality and the self. Knowledge *about* was not only improved through collegiality but knowledge *for* the improvement of the self was also advanced through collegiality (perhaps mentoring in Foucault's terminology). The couch potato in not seeking collegiality may lose more than his cash grain crop if he does not check the weather with his neighbouring farmer.

NOTES

[1] Latitudes south of the equator where very strong westerly trade winds blow. Albatross, sailing vessels and round the world yacht racers transit in these dangerous and hazardous waters.

[2] An alternative spelling is Gerrit Gerritszoon.

[3] He may have been born in Gouda, but Loon (p. 36) says that he went there at age 5 or 6.

[4] For a critique of the Erasmus programme from an Erasmian position see Wielemans (1991).

[5] Hans Holbein's painting depicts him as *writing* a book.

[6] Loon comments further; '…not only Erasmus but all the more liberal theologians of that age held (Leuven) in small esteem as a hotbed of reactionary tendencies'. Of the Sorbonne Loon says its 'record as a stronghold of spiritual and political conservatism was so well established that its disapproval attracted very little attention – all the more so as the King was known to be entirely on the side of the author'.

[7] Somewhat ironically the Erasmus Tavern in Tiensestraat faces the K.U.L. Department of Philosophy. The research group continues debate in this tavern.

[8] In the remainder of this section I draw upon Peters (2006), restricting myself mainly to the case of science.

[9] The *Journal des Sçavans,* was published in Paris on 5 January 1665, but it was suppressed in March 1665 only to be resumed in January 1666. One hundred and eleven volumes appeared between 1665 and 1792, when it was finally repressed in the Revolution. It provided a stimulus and model for other journals. (Fjãllbrant, 1997).

[10] A considerable part of this extensive correspondence is preserved at the University of Sheffield.

[11] The writer who does emphasise what doing research and writing it up, producing the information *about*, is Michel Foucault. For him writing meant not only that one produced information about the prison say, which could be used for other changes in reality (the prison) but that it was also *for* himself as it changes the writer.

[12] See McLuhan, 1964.

[13] Michael Peters and I wrote a considerable amount on these changes. See e.g., Marshall & Peters (1999 and 2000), Marshall et al. (1997), and Marshall (1995 and 2000).

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CHAPTER TWELVE

RICHARD SMITH

PENELOPE'S WORK: ONLY DISCONNECT

1. ACCESS

> *We have drenched the world in information in the hope that the unknown will finally and definitively go away. But information is not the same as knowledge. To extract one from the other, you must, as the word suggests, inform. You must transmit.*
>
> (Hari Kunzru, *Transmission,* 2005, p. 271)

The Internet and World Wide Web are, it seems, well named. They will catch everything in their grasp, and the world will be drenched with information to be grasped. All knowledge will be contained on the Web, available to search engines and surfers. And of course everything is connected to everything, linked on an infinite-level plane. 'The whole of the Web lies only a few links away from any page. With a hyperlinked database, the user is encouraged to traverse a vast network of information, all of which is equally accessible and none of which is privileged' (Dreyfus, 2001, p. 10). It is not just that you can find a particular piece of information that this or that item is there for you: with one item comes the vast cross-textured whole. The Web is an emblem, almost a burlesque, of our technological engagement with the world that Heidegger identified as the 'essence of technology'. Dreyfus (ibid., pp. 1–2) writes:

> If the essence of technology is to make *everything* easily accessible and optimizable, then the Internet is the perfect technological device. It is the culmination of the same tendency to make everything as flexible as possible that has led us to digitalise and interconnect as much of reality as we can.

There are suggestions that this technology may have its downside. A recent letter (12 September 2006) to the *Daily Telegraph* from 110 'teachers, psychologists, children's authors and other experts' appears online under the heading 'Modern life leads to more depression among children'; the signatories touch on technological change, 'sedentary, screen-based entertainment' and 'electronic media' only as elements among others in a poisonous climate that includes junk food, an excess of academic competition with its regime of testing, and market forces that turn children into mini-adults. However, much of the media coverage focused on 'the computer'. Baroness Susan Greenfield, on the BBC's *Today* programme on the same day, suggested that

P. Smeyers and M. Depaepe (eds.), Educational Research: Networks and Technologies, 163–175.

it is essentially a question of choosing our ends and then harnessing technology to achieve them. 'Everything that's out there should be harnessed once we decide what we want children to learn, what kinds of people we need them to be'. She is, according to the *Daily Telegraph*'s web site, 'so concerned about the effect of technology on children that she has set up an all-party group in the House of Lords to look into it'.

There is a familiar point to be made here to the effect that conceiving technology as neutral means is naïve: that technology uses us, exploits us as, in Heidegger's phrase, 'standing reserve' (*Bestand*). When we imagine we are efficiently googling for the cheapest flight to Brussels or a phrase from Wittgenstein to slot into the article we are writing, in fact we put ourselves at the disposal of the Internet. From Brussels we follow a link to City Breaks, from there to Amsterdam where we discover there is a Rembrandt exhibition, and in moments we are admiring the late self-portraits. From the Wittgensteinian phrase to an article which promises to elucidate it, and so on, rhizomatically. This point could be extended to mobile telephone technology: we are always available to be called or texted, or to listen to the messages that have been left for us. In being accessible to the technology we are not accessible to each other. Where once you might walk down the street and catch someone's eye here, exchange a nod or even a greeting there, now your colleagues and fellow citizens hold one hand to their ear and speak into their mobiles, their eyes glassily fixed on the pavement some 5 m ahead.

It is tempting to build an argument to the effect that it is not an accident, but a legacy of the new technology, that education today is in love with the explicit and the connected. There must be lists of aims and objectives so that the children know just what they are supposed to be learning. They are not merely to acquire knowledge, but to know what they know ('what have you learned today?') and how they know ('What is your evidence for that?'). In the UK school inspectors move around the busy classroom, asking: what are you supposed to be doing? Do you know? Why are you supposed to be doing that? How is it connected with what you did in the last lesson? (Only connect, only connect). There is a vogue – particularly in Further Education – for knowing what kind of a learner you are (verbal, iconic, kinaesthetic, auditory), though whether this is in order to focus on your learning strength or to acquire the learning styles you are short of is seldom clear. Initiatives such as 'Every Child Matters' emphasise the importance of teamwork among the many agencies – schools, police, social services – that deal with children. Joined-up thinking is the mantra (only connect): reports are circulated, databases made available, liaison officers appointed, distribution lists distributed. In the light of high-profile cases of child abuse where the different agencies failed to talk to each other, of course this is to be welcomed. Our whole picture of education is slowly being transformed, nevertheless: nothing is concealed, everything is open to surveillance of various kinds, and the random, contingent and arbitrary is eliminated in favour of the ordered, necessary and measured, its place on the system charted and known.

Thus it can seem that it is the very availability of what the new technology makes possible, its 'readiness to hand' or, as I shall put it, its *accessibility* that is the problem, with its correlate that all is explicit, open and knowable. Then there is a

further temptation, to wonder if access – or knowledge, or experience – worth having needs to be difficult, roundabout and hard to win: if there needs to be a kind of inaccessibility, truths that cannot be told, things that refuse to be made explicit; if there needs to be, in education, what we might sum up as a kind of silence. I shall suggest that this is a variation on the familiar, indeed ancient, longing to break through beyond writing to something beyond: the truly real, we might say, seen not through a glass darkly but directly and without intermediary. This longing both seems to show up the limitations of what the new technology makes possible, but at the same time it is haunted by it, its possibilities and the sense of novelty and excitement that accompanies it. There is no such longing without the writing (text, the Derridaean 'archive' of section 5) whose manifest shortcomings inspire that longing; yet how hard it is to escape from writing – from text and its endless webs of meaning.

2. THE WEB

> *When you write code you are in control. You construct a world from first principles, drawing up the axioms that govern it, setting in motion the engines of generation and decay. Even in a computer environment designed by someone else you can relax, safe in the knowledge that you are engaged with a system that runs according to potentially knowable results. From this perspective the real world possesses the paradoxical quality of not feeling real enough. Surely, of all things, reality ought to be transparent, logical. You should be able to unscrew the fascia and view the circuitry inside.*
>
> (Hari Kunzru, *Transmission,* 2005, p. 103)

In the nineteenth book of the *Odyssey* Penelope tells of her misery at the long absence of her husband, away at the war with Troy and still not returned 10 years after its end (wonderfully, she tells this to Odysseus himself, who is disguised as a beggar: there are layers here, to which we shall return below). All the nobles of the neighbouring islands are paying court to her, certain that Odysseus is dead and greedy for his kingdom that would come with Penelope as a bride. But, says Penelope, 'I spin them out a thread of stratagems' (*Odyssey* XIX, l. 137).[1] Led by divine inspiration, she set up a great web in her hall, and asked for her suitors' patience. Odysseus' father Laertes is old, and she must weave a burial robe for him, for it would not be right for one of his wealth and status to lie at his death without a shroud (l. 147).

> So I spoke, and their wills consented. From that time on I would weave the great web all day, but when night came I would have torches set beside me and would unravel the work. (ll. 148–150)

Thus the night unravelled what the day began. Betrayed by her maidservants, however, Penelope was forced to finish the work, and brought to her wits' end.

Penelope's unweaving of her web has for many come to be emblematic of a kind of forgetting that makes true remembering possible; or perhaps it is better put as emblematic of the way that remembering and forgetting need to be held together in a kind of dialectical tension. Walter Benjamin coins the word *Penelopewerk* in his analysis of Proust. Proust's narrator is famously taken back by particular sensuous impressions: the *petit madeleine* takes him back to his childhood in Combray, where his aunt used to dunk just such a little cake in her tea and offer it to him, so too the smell of hawthorn blossom or the cobbled street beneath the feet suddenly felt as familiar. Here the thought seems to be that what has been lost to conscious and explicit memory has the power to return with unusual vividness. For such remembering we need first to forget; and our more prosaic and pedestrian recollections are in turn a loss of the kind of memory that comes with force and vividness. Benjamin writes:

> For the important thing for the remembering author is not what he experienced, but the weaving of his memory, the Penelope work of recollection [*Eingedenken*]. Or should one call it, rather, a Penelope work of forgetting? Is not the involuntary recollection, Proust's *mémoire involuntaire*, much closer to forgetting than what is usually called memory? And is not this work of spontaneous recollection, in which remembrance is the woof and forgetting the warp, a counterpart to Penelope's work rather than its likeness? For here the day unravels what the night has woven. When we awake each morning, we hold in our hands, usually weakly and loosely, but a few fringes of tapestry of lived life, as loomed for us by forgetting. However with our purposeful activity and, even more, our purposive remembering each day unravels the web and the ornaments of forgetting. (Benjamin, 1969, p. 202)

If the weaving of the web figures the infinite connectivity and availability supplied by modern technology that I have called 'accessibility', then the unravelling stands, it seems, for a different order of consciousness. Here we have not 'knowingness' and the explicit, but the unconscious and half-guessed; not the explicit and articulate but mystery[2] and the mythical, the symbolic rather than the spelled-out; the realm of play, of the absorption in an activity that loses you to the world, even daydreaming as opposed to focused, means–end rationality of the calculative or instrumental sort that we easily think of as rationality itself, the archaic smile that plays on the lips of the *kouros*, rather than the enlightened self-knowledge, the rueful wisdom of the late Rembrandt self-portrait. The weaving of the web then looks like mere trickery ('I spin them out a thread of stratagems', above). Our purposive, pedestrian remembering by day undoes the dreamwork of the night. The day unravels what the night began.

This is a romantic reading of the connections between memory and forgetting. It can take us in a number of directions. One, whose roots are clearly there in Proust's description of *mémoire involontaire*, is that of seeing forgetting as a protection against the intrusion of the kind of manipulation that has the capacity to affect consciousness but not what has sunk below its level. A second, which is to some extent also present in the first, emphasises that only what has been lost to ordinary recollection can return with the force that does justice to what is remembered, and

contrasts the knowledge that can be contained in language with the knowledge that, like a memory from the unconscious, has the power to break through the merely linguistic. A third way of thinking helps us to see that memory and forgetting are not easily separable, and that there is a constant temptation here to seek – impossibly – something beyond signs and language and the kinds of experiences shaped by them: something immediately *given* and indubitably present in a different order, a different way of consciousness.

3. MEMORY

George Orwell's novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is, among other things, a reflection on memory, the integrity of the individual, and technology: it illustrates the second and third directions indicated above. Memory and its importance are introduced early in the text. Entering his flat out of the 'vile wind' and the gritty dust that it carries with it, past the hallway which smelled of 'boiled cabbage and old rag mats' (p. 157[3]), Winston Smith 'tried to squeeze out some childhood memory that should tell him whether London had always been like this' (p. 159). Failing to do so, he turns his back to the telescreen, the universal instrument of surveillance, and embarks on his first act of rebellion against the Party: the keeping of a diary. This is illegal because the Party is the sole authority on the past: one of its slogans is 'Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past' (p. 186). And Smith's own job, in the Ministry of Truth, is to rewrite old newspaper articles to bring them into line with the Party's version of history.

> This process of continuous alteration was applied…to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. Day by day and minute by minute the past was brought up to date.… All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as necessary. (p. 190)

Smith's growing resistance to this is matched by his attempts to recall his childhood: 'It was extraordinarily difficult…when there were no external records to refer to even the outline of your own life lost its sharpness' (p. 184). He senses, without being able to remember any details to corroborate the impression, that somehow his mother's life and his sister's were sacrificed to his own. The crucial memories come unbidden. During his illicit trip into the countryside to make love to Julia for the first time she gives him a piece of old-fashioned chocolate, very unlike the 'dull-brown crumbly stuff' that passes for chocolate in contemporary Oceania:

> At some time or another he had tasted chocolate like the piece she had given him. The first whiff of its scent had stirred up some memory which he could not pin down, but which was powerful and troubling… He pushed it away from him, aware only that it was the memory of some action which he would have like to undo but could not. (p. 261)

Later the memory clarifies, partly in response to another dream about his mother and partly because of the similarity of a protective gesture she had made to Winston's sister to that made by a Jewess Winston has seen on a news film, trying to put herself between her little son and a hail of bullets. The emerging memory is of stealing his sister's share of chocolate and running off with it:

> His sister, conscious of having been robbed of something, had set up a feeble wail. His mother drew her arm around the child and pressed its face against her breast. Something in the gesture told him that his sister was dying. He turned and fled down the stairs, with the chocolate growing sticky in his hand… He never saw his mother again. (p. 297)

Similar but less vivid or coherent memories are stirred in Winston by the real coffee that Julia brings to their room above Mr Charrington's shop and the perfume she wears. These are indeed cases of *mémoire involontaire:* in the case of the choco late Winston even seems to try to prevent the painful memories emerging into consciousness.

We might here make a distinction between different kinds of memory, following Wollheim (1979).[4] In cases of *retention* a person remembers what he/she came to know at second hand. For example, I remember that the Archduke was assassinated in 1914: this is something I have read about, and I have seen the grainy newsreels. In cases of *recollection* he/she remembers what he/she came to know at first hand, having seen it happen himself/herself, perhaps. Thus he/she remembers the 2-0 victory over Manchester United, which he/she watched in the stadium at the time. In cases of *experiential* memory the remembering is, as we might say, 'from the inside'. Proust's examples illustrate this perfectly. A flowering hawthorn hedge recalls not just that hawthorn smells slightly bitter (retention: something one might have read), nor is it simply the case that 'I know that smell – slightly bitter – it's hawthorn' (recollection). Here the experiential memory is of the smell of hawthorn sprays in a particular place, the church at Combray, on a particular day, the feast day of the Blessed Virgin. In another of his novels, *Coming up for Air*, Orwell gives an excellent description – almost a definition – of experiential memory in contrast to the other kinds that Wollheim distinguishes. The narrator, George Bowling, reflects:

> The past is a curious thing. It's with you all the time, I suppose an hour never passes without your thinking of things that happened ten or twenty years ago, and yet most of the time it's got no reality, it's just a set of facts that you've learned, like a lot of stuff in a history book. Then some chance sight or sound or smell, especially smell, sets you going, and the past doesn't merely come back to you, you're actually *in* the past. (Orwell, 1962, p. 30)

For Orwell, both in *Coming up for Air* and in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, what Wollheim calls 'experiential memory' has a particular and distinctive importance: the direct and vivid link between what is experienced from the inside and what is remembered from the inside preserves its authority unusually well in the fact of attempts to occupy and colonise our experience. Its power is carried by the medium of images

and sense impressions (particularly smells, as Orwell notes). Not being reducible to language, it is less susceptible to being controlled. Newspeak, the language of the Party in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, was of course designed precisely to facilitate the control of the present and the past: for 'reality control' or 'doublethink' 'all that was needed was an unending series of victories over your own memory' (p. 186).

It is often said that the ultimate test of the brainwashing to which Winston Smith is subjected in *Nineteen Eighty-Four* is the fact that at the last he loves Big Brother. This is to miss the significance of another incident from the closing pages of the novel. As he sits in the Chestnut Tree Café before his chessboard and pieces, one last experiential memory is triggered, perhaps by the smell of damp cardboard.

> Uncalled, a memory floated into his mind. He saw a candlit room with a vast white-counterpaned bed, and himself, a boy of nine or ten, sitting on the floor, shaking a dice-box and laughing excitedly. His mother was sitting opposite him and also laughing. (p. 414)

His mother had gone out and bought a cheap set of Snakes and Ladders, one rainy day when Winston and his sister were unbearably bored in their one dark, cramped room. 'He could still remember the smell of the damp cardboard' (p. 414). The game brought rare hours of pleasure.

> For a whole afternoon they had all been happy together, as in his earlier childhood… He pushed the memory out of his mind. It was a false memory. They did not matter as long as one knew them for what they were… He turned back to the chessboard and picked up the white knight again. Almost in the same instant it dropped onto the board with a clatter. He had started as though a pin had run into him.
>
> A shrill trumpet-call had pierced the air. It was the bulletin. Victory! (pp. 414–415)

The telescreen brings news of a great military victory against Eurasia.

> Ah, it was more than a Eurasian army that had perished! Much had changed in him since that first day in the Ministry of Love, but the final, indispensable, healing change had never happened, until this moment. (ibid.)

4. JUSTICE

Perhaps nowhere is the question of memory raised more acutely than in relation to the Holocaust. How are we to remember Auschwitz? How are we to represent it to the next generation, to ensure that justice is properly done to the memory of those who were murdered there? How easily the images become trite: all is reduced to the familiar pictures. There are the railway lines (perhaps with a picturesque powdering of snow) that lead to the gates with their wrought iron motto, *Arbeit macht frei*. There are the prisoners, gaunt in their striped uniforms and caps, huddled behind the barbed wire. There are the ovens, the piles of shoes, the piles of children's chamber

pots. All these are readily found via Google. Ah yes, we think, we remember Auschwitz. It may be only a case of 'retention', to use Wollheim's term, but better that, surely, than for Auschwitz to be forgotten?

Jean-François Lyotard tells us that there is a particular problem here. Auschwitz gives us the sense that something is trying to be said that cannot be said. There is no language that can do justice to the different polarities of experience: 'It is not a concept that results from 'Auschwitz', but a feeling, an impossible phrase, one that would link the S.S. phrase onto the deportee's phrase, or vice-versa' (Lyotard, 1988, p. 104). We are not to remember, or to 'know', Auschwitz or the Holocaust as if each was just one more historical event to be known or remembered. Lyotard writes of the 'immemorial' to indicate what can neither be remembered – that is, represented to consciousness – nor forgotten and given up to oblivion. Readings (1991, p. xxxii) writes that 'he task of not forgetting, of anamnesis, is the task of the avant-garde, which struggles to keep events from sinking into the oblivion of either representation…or silence.' If we could remember – commemorate, represent, retain – the Holocaust, 'we would have forgotten its horror. It is an ethical necessity that the Holocaust haunt us, that it cannot be remembered but cannot be forgotten either' (ibid., p. 22). To give voice to the silence of those who suffered in the Holocaust gets things wrong: it 'would be only to betray that silence' (ibid., p. 61).

> We have to write a history that will testify to the unrepresentable horror without representing it. We must not give voice to the millions of murdered Jews, gypsies, homosexuals and communists, but find a way of writing history that will testify to the *horror* of their having been silenced. (ibid., p. 62)

Lyotard's notion of the sublime is, as Christopher Norris puts it, precisely of that which 'necessarily eludes any form of adequate representation through the concepts and categories of analytic thought' (Norris, 1990, p. 11). It stands for what 'teases philosophy out of thought' (ibid.). While modernism as a movement was gripped by 'nostalgia for presence', a longing to *depict* that offers 'solace and pleasure' (Lyotard, 1984, p. 81), the postmodern by contrast is the way that artists give us a *new* sense of the sublime. It 'puts forward' but does not *present* the unpresentable; it 'denies itself the solace of good forms'; it searches for new presentations 'not in order to enjoy them but in order to impart a stronger sense of the unpresentable' (ibid.). There are strong resemblances between Lyotard's notion of the sublime and his (earlier) concept of the 'figural'. The figural

> must be thought of as buried, it does not lend itself to being seen, nor thought; it shows itself obliquely, fugitively at the heart of discourses and perceptions, as what disturbs them. It is the fitting place for desire, it is what is at stake in the struggle which painters and poets never cease to wage against the return of the ego and the textual. (Lyotard, 1971, p. 135)[5]

This goes some way towards showing what is at stake in discussion of the sublime and the immemorial. In this quotation and elsewhere in his early work in particular Lyotard himself seems nostalgic for some sort of primal or extra-textual experience:

a kind of negative theology, as some have noted, that seems paradoxically to long for something substantial, albeit 'oblique' and 'fugitive', at the centre of negation.

But then how are we to 'put forward', while not presenting, the unpresentable? How can we 'testify to the unrepresentable horror without representing it', how can we do justice to the horror of an imposed silence (above)? Rachel Whiteread's *Memorial to the Victims of the Holocaust* in the Judenplatz in Vienna is a low, square structure with each side resembling a vast bookcase. The difference is that here the books face inwards, their titles and authors illegible, as it were defaced. Here is a culture eradicated. The horror is not that of the ramp, the selection, the gas chamber – the familiar, even over-familiar, representations of horrors of the concentration camp – but that of, literally, obliteration, consignment to oblivion. Does the Memorial succeed by refusing to *represent* this, or does it constitute a representation of this obliteration nevertheless?

5. ARCHIVE

In the dialogue *Phaedrus* Plato has Socrates compare writing unfavourably to speech. Socrates tells the story of the Egyptian god Theuth, who proudly announced to King Thamus his invention of writing. Thamus is unimpressed, telling him that his discovery will do no good at all. 'Those who acquire it will cease to exercise their memory and become forgetful; they will rely on writing to bring things to their remembrance by external signs instead of on their own internal resources. What you have discovered is a receipt for recollection, not for memory' (*Phaedrus,* p. 275).[6] Theuth's receipt or recipe (or medicine, potion, drug or poison: the Greek word *pharmakon* can bear all these meanings) will bring not *mneme*, memory, but *hypomnesis*, 'mere repetition' as it is sometimes translated, as opposed to 'living memory'. And that will equip the users of writing with only a semblance of wisdom, not with truth. They will be *poluekooi aneu didaches*, literally 'much hearing without instruction': Hamilton translates this as '[T]hey will receive a quantity of information without proper instruction', Jowett (n.d.) as '[T]hey will be hearers of many things and will have learned nothing.' Thus *mneme* as a matter of live and vivid *anamnesis*, the recollection that brings memories into full presence, is distinguished from the *hypomnesis* that is a business of summoning up, recalling, the dead letter of writing, signs, text. As one might bring back onto the screen a file from the hard drive or memory stick (Ctrl + O, or use the icon on the toolbar: no great flooding of the soul occurs here).

It is tempting to think of the users of writing in Plato's story as those to whom the new technologies are constantly accessible. The description can seem to apply rather well to those who pull down information from the Internet, slotting it into their reports, presentations, essays and papers without passing it through their own 'internal resources', what Derrida (1981, p. 132) calls 'memory as psychic life in its self-presentation to itself'. But the distinction between *mneme* and *anamnesis* on the one hand and *hypomnesis* on the other, Derrida shows, is unstable.

> The boundary (between inside and outside, living and nonliving) separates not only speech from writing but also memory as an unveiling (re-) producing a presence from rememoration as the mere repetition of a monument... The space of writing, space *as* writing, is opened up in the violent movement of this surrogation, in the difference between *mneme* and *hypomnesis*. The outside is already *within* the work of memory. (ibid., p. 109)

What I called in section 3 'experiential memory', or remembering 'from the inside', may seem superior to the dead signs summoned from 'outside', but there is a paradox here. Living memory is frequently described in the *Phaedrus* in terms of marks and signs: 'metaphors of engraving, deciphering, inscription and other such textual figures' (Norris, 1987, p. 36). And it is worse, or at least more paradoxical, than this, for Socrates speaks of a sort of discourse that is the brother of written speech, but of 'unquestioned legitimacy' (*Phaedrus,* p. 276a); and when Phaedrus asks him what discourse he has in mind, Socrates replies 'the sort that goes together with knowledge and is written in the soul of the learner' (ibid.). Derrida comments on how remarkable it is that:

> The so-called living discourse should suddenly be described by a 'metaphor' borrowed from the order of the very thing one is trying to exclude from it, the order of its simulacrum. Yet this borrowing is rendered necessary by that which structurally links the intelligible to its repetition in the copy, and the language describing dialectics[7] cannot fail to call upon it. (Derrida, 1981, p. 149)

There are, then, traces of text that infect our most urgent longings to find something real, something of 'unquestionable legitimacy': logos, reason, philosophical truth. These are aspects of the metaphysics of presence: the aspiration to go beyond writing to something 'immediately *given* and indubitably present in a different order, a different way of consciousness', as I put it at the end of section 2; or, in Christopher Norris's more elegant words, a state 'where meaning and truth are assumed to coincide in a self-sufficient state of original linguistic grace' (Norris, 1983, p. 42).

Matters are no simpler when we turn to text itself: to the institutionalisation of ideas or knowledge that Derrida calls the archive. Here, in the context of education, we might think of the boxes, vaults and silos of data (as some will conceive them): sufficient analysis of this data and satisfactory worship of this god as the one true god of educational research will tell us 'what works', bringing an end to educational debate and to pagan educational polytheism. Or we might think of the archive as the product of the fetishization of audit and the demand for the paper trail: the result of a 'two-task culture' in which people have both to do their nominal work and, alongside that, labour to prove that they are doing it (Bunting, 2004, p. 130). And then the data in the archive risks being taken merely to *show* the reality it is meant to represent, setting in motion further demands for accurate recording and auditing.

This passion for representation, for recording and auditing, is part of the obsessive feverishness in the 'archive' that is one of the meanings of *Mal d'Archive*, the title of Derrida's (1996) book. The title points also to a sickness infecting the archive. The archive is always subject to political control: the archives are filed in the house

of the authorities, the archons, who have the power both to select what is archived and to interpret it. 'There is no political power without control of the archives, if not memory' (ibid., p. 4, n. 1). Winston Smith, we recall, was an archivist: his job was to rewrite past issues of *The Times* to bring them into line with current political orthodoxy.[8] Derrida further argues in *Mal d'Archive* that the technology of the archive determines what can be stored in it, an argument that he pursues partly by analogy with the technology of psychoanalysis. If Freud had been able to use computers, faxes and email then the theory and practice of Freudian psychoanalysis would have emerged in a different form.

Just as we must give up the hope of a pure language uncontaminated by writing, then, so must we give up the craving for innocent data, or perfect information, uncontaminated by their very 'archivisation'. There are always 'sublime indeterminacies that… resist totalisation in the postmodern information age', and the archive, like the encyclopaedic text, is 'contaminated by difference and dissonance, gaps and spaces in the order of things, which resist any attempt for a systematic and universal principle of knowledge' (Lambeir, nd).

6. THE DREAM OF PENELOPE

> *Perfect information is sometimes defined as a signal transmitted from a sender to a receiver without loss, without the introduction of the smallest uncertainty or confusion.… In the real world, however, there is always noise.*
>
> (Hari Kunzru, *Transmission,* 2005, p. 271)

If Penelope's weaving of her web stands for the conscious artificing, recollection and availability of modern technology, then a more careful reading of her story shows that nothing is quite straightforward here. It is disconcerting that she weaves a shroud for Laertes, who is not dead, and stranger still that she *really* (we might say) weaves it for the sake of, mindful of, the Odysseus to whose death she seems wearily resigned. Perhaps she weaves it *in memory* of him, in which case it is natural for her not to want the weaving to come to an end. The weaving is a stratagem, a trick: we might wonder just on whom it is being played. And when Penelope relates the story of the web to the disguised (and still apparently unrecognised) Odysseus – himself a man of tricks and strategies who might be expected to respond to the story with respect and recognition – we might wonder what else is going on, what quiet resonances between Penelope and the beggar are being almost unconsciously sounded, what first thread is being thrown across the space between them.

Neither the weaving nor the unravelling is authoritative, neither constitutes the living discourse as contrasted with the derivative copy. All our weavings are haunted by traces, never more so when we attempt to systematise, technologise and archive them; so too are our forgettings, our attempts to go beyond text to a state where (echoing Norris, above) meaning and truth coincide in a state of philosophical and linguistic grace, free at last from the contamination of technology – of the Internet or writing – with Odysseus finally returned, Laertes laid to rest in his shroud and the

loom dismantled. When the night that true love waited so long for, has finally unravelled what the day began.[9]

NOTES

[1] Translations from Homer are from Shewring (1980).
[2] The word 'mystery' is derived from the Greek verb that means 'to keep silent'. Mysteries are what you do not talk about.
[3] All references are to Bernard Crick's edition of the novel (Orwell, 1984).
[4] Earlier use of this was made in Smith (1983).
[5] *Il faut le supposer enfoui, il ne se donne pas à voir, ni à penser, il s'indique de façon latérale, fugitive au sein des discours et des perceptions, comme ce qui les trouble. Il est l'espace propre au désir, l'enjeu de la lutte que les peintres et les poètes ne cessent de mener contre le retour de l'Ego et du texte.* (Jean-François Lyotard, *Discours, figure*, p. 135: the translation is my own.)
[6] Translations from the *Phaedrus* are from Hamilton (1973) unless otherwise indicated.
[7] This is of course the philosophical discourse of 'unquestioned legitimacy', above.
[8] 'As soon as all the corrections which happened to be necessary in any particular number of *The Times* had been assembled and collated, that number would be reprinted, the original copy destroyed, and the corrected copy placed on the files in its stead. This process of continuous alteration was applied not only to newspapers, but to books, periodicals, pamphlets, posters, leaflets, films, sound-tracks, cartoons, photographs – to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date. In this way every prediction made by the Party could be shown by documentary evidence to have been correct, nor was any item of news, or any expression of opinion, which conflicted with the needs of the moment, ever allowed to remain on record. All history was a palimpsest, scraped clean and reinscribed exactly as often as was necessary' (Orwell, 1984, p. 190).
[9] I am grateful to Paul Standish for suggesting many improvements to this chapter.

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CHAPTER THIRTEEN

GEERTRUI SMEDTS

NORMALIZING PARENTHOOD ONCE AGAIN: WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A PARENT TODAY

1. INTRODUCTION

The problem exposed in this article is that parents are being labelled as incompetent actors. Moreover, having read articles in the popular media, outsiders, who do not know anything about the specific family circumstances surrounding an event, postulate themselves as experts. In the past, educational experts also pretended to know it all. Now, journalists and even children are sometimes called to the fore as experts in the matter. Although this is not made explicit, the message conveyed to parents is that they are 'immature' or ignorant. They should, or rather, *must* learn, and what they should – no, *must* – learn is right at hand, provided by the amalgam of aforementioned outsiders.

This rigid form of condescension is strange in an era in which parents are supposed to have a freedom of choice in how to educate their children. We, as outsiders, *pretend* to 'give' parents that freedom. Giving is indeed the right word. It is still a process of giving and not of *having*. This chapter essentially aims to paint a picture of how we look at parenting today, not only from the outsider's perspective, but also from the heart of parenting itself. This research reflects on *what it means to be a parent today*. I wish to show that parents themselves – or at least some of them – claim their right to choose by promoting practical judgement within the borders of the normalizing tendencies of technical reason.

2. THE PHENOMENON 'PARANOID PARENTING'

Frank Furedi, writing both as a parent and as a sociologist, wrote a book called *Paranoid Parenting*. In this book, he points to the concerns that people today have about their children. He notes that parents are worried about children's first steps into kindergarten, anxious about them going to school by bike and paranoid about them playing on so-called dangerous playgrounds. Consequently, because of such fears, parents try to protect their children. In doing so, they deprive children of their freedom to discover and experiment. They keep an eye on the kindergarten teacher's

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activities, bring their children to school by car, take initiatives to close down playgrounds simply because one child fell and unfortunately broke his arm. It should be pointed out that it is through no fault of their own that parents have become so anxious. Society emphasizes that parents must bear the responsibility if something happens to the child or if the child does something wrong, even in later stages of life. Thus, parents deal with their children in a way that society considers to be correct: parents have to control and supervise their children. Take the example of 9 June 2006 and the disappearance of Stacy and Nathalie in Luik, Belgium. A wave of discussions regarding parental responsibility enveloped this unfortunate event. The newspaper blames the parents who did not take sufficient care of their children (Verdwijning, 2006). The same newspaper also printed the views of a prominent journalist who argued that this was a case of 'socially maladapted behaviour and unworthy parenting' (Becaus, 2006). Only six days after the disappearance – the children have not been found yet and the exact circumstances surrounding their disappearance are not known – pedagogue Hans Van Crombrugge criticized the parents and asked: 'Who will educate the parents?' The exact circumstances surrounding the event are of no interest to Van Crombrugge – whatever happened the parents are to be held responsible. He says society should determine the norms for the education of parents, which will allow them to compare their practices (Van Crombrugge, 2006). In Belgium, but in other countries as well, those norms have clearly become control and supervision.

However, '[I]f children are protected against dangers, they do not get the chance to learn to appreciate what is involved and to develop self-confidence and flexibility' (Furedi, 2001, p. 203). Liberal authors stipulate that catering for the best interests of the child involves the fostering of rational autonomy, as outlined in the Declaration of the Rights of the Child of November 1959. This point refers to the idea of laissez-faire within education, which does not focus on the demand for control and supervision. Hobson (1984, p. 67) argues that:

> Parents thus need to act as paternalistic agents in their children's upbringing and aim to distinguish appropriately between that amount of paternalism necessary to securing the child's best interests and that which is excessive and may even result in delaying the child's progress towards autonomy.

Moreover, a parent should be a responsible agent who knows how to keep up the balance between 'legitimate self-care, one's freedom and the care for the other, the child' (Van Crombrugge, 2005a, p. 48). In the case of Stacy and Nathalie, the step-mother, who was supposed to watch them, was blamed for not being 'paternalistic enough', for not keeping her children at hand 'correctly'. She took too much care of her own leisure pursuits, drinking in a bar whilst her children were playing outside. She responded to these accusations by saying that she had been watching them all the time except for a moment when she went to the ladies' room. Also, we might ask whether it is not feasible that a 10-year-old kid should be capable of playing alone when its mother is in the neighbouring room.

Now, without trying to defend the mother's parenting skills – indeed, the circumstances in which the children were kidnapped rather plead against her being a

'good' parent – we should read this situation in relation to the tension between controlling and laissez-faire approaches and see how this characterizes (how we talk about) educational relationships. This is nothing new under the sun: this tension typifies thinking about upbringing across the centuries. For example, the famous work of Dr. Spock in 1950 emphasizes the tension between an anti-authoritarian education and the limits that should be set by parents (Wubs, 2004). So, it goes without saying that the same undercurrents still operate beneath educational debate (Depaepe, 1999). Yet, this story shows that the tensions described above have gained a special élan in the twenty-first century – the age of the Internet. Researchers certainly indicate that something has changed: the debate on the appropriate amount of paternalism[1] is being given a subtle facelift.

3. DEALING WITH THE INTERNET @ HOME

Furedi nicely sketched today's parental uncertainty by giving many examples. To typify what has changed regarding the aforementioned tensions, an up-to-date theme is needed. When observing the contemporary topic of dealing with Internet usage at home, the tension between controlling versus laissez-faire approaches really catches the eye. Over the past few months, media weekly announced Internet-related research outcomes or news concerning children and the Internet. Mostly, they reported on the Internet's dangers for children as well as how parents can prevent their children from coming to any harm. Headlines such as 'Less SPAM, more danger' (*De Standaard*, 6 July 2006), 'On the Internet as well, children are made of flesh and blood' (*De Standaard*, 19 May 2006), 'Baby-website swiped by pervert-minded people' (*De Standaard*, 3 June 2006) and 'Children underestimate the dangers online' (*De Standaard*, 6 September 2005) pop up regularly. Reading these messages, one should not be surprised that parents are anxious and are trying to protect their children. We all know the Internet is the place par excellence where children are left alone to click and explore. They can experiment and choose which sites to surf to and gradually build an individual life path online. Children grow up with the Internet unlike their parents for whom it is all new and obscure. Parents are rather ignorant; they must make their way through these new technologies. The Internet therefore provides an excellent topic in relation to which we can ask parents about their parental role as 'paternalistic agents' and what it is that makes them anxious: how do they handle the ambivalence between doing nothing and doing too much with regard to their 'connected' children? How do parents cope with their and, more generally, society's anxieties? Has the introduction of the Internet at home altered the parents' stance within the educational relationship and has educational research on the matter changed likewise?

In one sense, research on children's Internet usage tells us something about (how we talk and think about) contemporary educational relationships. Three partners have come to the forefront that engaged themselves actively in research, and were subjected to it. Outlining their contributions to 'talking about the Internet at home' will lead to a view on 'how we look at parenthood today' or 'what it means to be a

parent'. The points of view spoken of will be elaborated on separately: (1) the child or youth's stance; (2) the parents' stance; and (3) the state's stance.

3.1. The children's stance

When considering the children's side of the story on Internet usage, four major themes emerged: (1) occupations online and offline; (2) influences on identity exploration and construction; (3) influences on social life; and (4) the negative influence of inappropriate contents. As far as what the children do, many researchers hypothesized that children's real-life occupations would decrease in favour of solitary activities online (Bamford, 2004; Kraut et al., 1998). This hypothesis radiates a negative attitude towards a life online. However, most researchers found that virtual reality is not at all harmful for the average child. It has rather positive effects on or supports their real-life activities, the way they construct their identity and lead their social life given the communicative possibilities of the Net (Brenner, and Rauch, 1998; Greenfield, 2004; Gross, 2004; Lenhart et al., 2005; Schiano et al., 2002). Moreover, virtual reality does not impede youngsters from spending an equal amount of time on real-life activities. Thanks to multitasking, they can combine all their activities within (almost) the same length of time (Kraut et al., 2002; Roberts et al., 2006). Youngsters themselves see the attractiveness of real-life situations and do not want to give up on them. Therefore, the overall research conclusion is that the child's real-life affects his life online and that virtual life does not hinder his real life. The hypothesis that virtual life has negative effects on the real life of the average child has been rejected.

Second, educationists occupy themselves with the effects virtual reality might have on youngsters' identity construction. Many educationists hypothesized that the amalgam of information would lead to confusion and to a split or far from steady identity. However, research has shown that virtual life assists in the exploration of identity and refines teenagers' identities (Hernwall, 2000; Danielsson, 2000; Thornburg and Lin, 2002; Greenfield, 2004; Gross, 2004). Because teenagers are able to search for information about those things and people they are interested in, they can broaden and deepen their knowledge, refine their feelings and pick out things for themselves. Only a few cases led to negative conclusions. As Gross notes: 'psychologically vulnerable early adolescents' do not benefit from using the Internet but loose focus instead (Gross, 2004). Therefore, generally speaking, the hypothesis that Internet use will invariably bring about damaging results can be rejected. The original hypothesis is only supported in certain specific cases.

The third topic concentrates on the effects of virtual reality on the social lives of teenagers. As in the first hypothesis, researchers assumed that virtual reality is a relatively solitary activity, impeding children and teenagers from engaging in real-life forms of social contact. Research leads us to reject this hypothesis. It has been shown that virtual forms of contact prolong offline relationships: most of the contact that takes place on the Internet is with people that children know from their offline lives. The amount of contact with offline friends only augments use of the Internet.

In a way, all youngsters' friends become 'cyber friends' too (Haythornthwaite and Wellman, 2002). Virtual reality with all its communication possibilities thus supports the real social life (Danielsson, 2000; Weilenmann and Larsson, 2000; Kraut et al., 2002; Sinnaeve et al., 2004; Lenhart et al., 2005).

Some researchers – especially in American contexts – strongly emphasize the negative sides of the Net as formulated in the previously mentioned hypotheses. The possible dangers are indeed diverse. Dangerous and inappropriate experiences on the Net (Finkelhor et al., 2001; Thornburg and Lin, 2002; Greenfield, 2004; Lenhart et al., 2005; Pardoen and Pijpers, 2006) such as exposure to unsolicited pornographic material, sexual solicitation or racist sites, hate sites and threatening or harassing materials are often mentioned. Also, authors point to juridical risks such as illegal copying, social/emotional risks such as cyberbullying and the poor reliability of information found online. Nevertheless, Pardoen and Pijpers (2006) for example, put these findings into perspective mentioning that children are: (1) also confronted with these issues in real life; (2) often look deliberately for these materials out of curiosity; and (3) can cope with what they find if education 'in general' prepares them for this kind of confrontation.

From the youngsters' perspective, research results turn out to be supportive. In general, they point to the positive effects that accompany the virtual life. The average teenagers benefit from their online lives as they open up a new world of possibilities and experiences. Only in certain cases, when the child is troubled in real life, are negative attitudes or feelings prolonged by being online. Many (most) authors believe children are capable of dealing with 'harmful' materials.

3.2. The parents' stance

Several online and offline publications devote their time to parental fears and give advice, which parents can follow to protect their children from the dangers mentioned above. When formulating concrete measures on web sites and in educational books, it is surprising that no room is allocated by authors to the positive sides of the Net, which have been unearthed by research (see the children's stance). Similarly, these publications do not tend to mention how frequently problems occur. These omissions might lead to paranoia or indifference amongst the readership. Giving tips without putting specific situations in their exact contexts, gives importance to topics that can be wholly disproportionate.

The measures, which are specified for dealing with the aforementioned problems, are fourfold: (1) spatial advice refers to putting the PC at a central point (Lenhart et al., 2005); (2) technical advice refers to installing software (Thornburg and Lin, 2002); (3) educational advice alludes to what is taught to children (Thornburg and Lin, 2002; Bamford, 2004; Bremer and Rauch, 1998; Roberts et al., 2006; Pardoen and Pijpers, 2006); and (4) parental-behaviour advice (Thornburg and Lin, 2002; Bamford, 2004). Within those four categories, an amalgam of advice is given and it is hard to get an overview of the priorities that should be adopted (this is certainly due to the fact that the occurrence of problems is not outlined). Advice can be found

on every potential danger. It can be found in research, in educational books and on several web sites (for the Dutch speaking community alone, some 42 web sites work on the topic either in the margins of their work, or as the topic of their work). Nevertheless, all researchers agree that, despite their importance, spatial and technical measures are actually not adequate on their own. What is of utmost importance is the parents' proximity to the children's behaviour and the kinds of action, which the parents consequently perform. This obviously poses difficulties to parents given current familial circumstances – parents are busy and children are rather independent. That is why many of the researchers and authors of educational books conclude that it is hard for parents to control so-called dangerous situations. There is just too much for parents to do to secure their children from online dangers; parents become lost in a storm of advice. Moreover, in the age of the Internet, it is just not possible to be physically near one's children all the time. Also nearness itself does not suffice. If parents want to guide their offspring, they must become knowledgeable about life on the Internet and engage themselves actively by getting to grips with youth culture (MSN Messenger, Sims), (Pardoen and Pijpers, 2006).

In conclusion, when emphasizing parental involvement in the Internet usage of their children, research stresses the potential dangers their offspring might be confronted with. Only the 'solution' relating to proximity (control) and education – not only for children, but also for parents – is stressed. As mentioned earlier, it is hard for parents to realize expectations in these areas. This form of research and its communication in the different media appeals to parents to engage themselves proactively in becoming knowledgeable about the Net and today's youth culture publications.

3.3. The state's stance

The Belgian federal government promotes Internet use under the slogan 'Internet for all'. The state has introduced substantive tax reductions[2] on computers. The government does this because it is convinced that the Internet helps children to 'find their way in full self-confidence; it will help them manage a large range of activities from making quality homework to getting a job'.[3] Nevertheless, embracing the Internet is not unproblematic. Though we should applaud the fact that the state looks for various opportunities to assure that as many households as possible get access to the Internet, it (the state) cannot ignore these other concerns. That is why the state takes other measures besides quantitative ones to get everyone 'connected'. The government evidently realizes the necessity for cooperation with other European states in this matter. On www.saferinternet.org and on www.saferinternet.be both the European–Belgian plans are outlined. On the Belgian web site, the following can be found.

> Safer Internet is a grand European sensibilizing campaign for children, youngsters and adults, which started in our country in April 2005. […] The partners of the Belgian platform – OIVO, Child Focus, ISPA, IACSSO and the Centre for Equal Chances and the Suppression of Racism – want to teach children and youngsters to use the Internet and mobile technology in an

> intelligent and careful way. They warn them about possible risks and ambushes in order to augment their fun in playing on the worldwide web. But in the campaign, which lasts for 18 months, we direct ourselves to their parents and teachers too.[4]

Apparently, these measures include initiatives for both children and their educators. Initiatives for educators aim at making them knowledgeable about the possibilities of the Net and the measures they should take to educate and guide their children online. Many initiatives can be found including the web site cited above. These initiatives inform educators about online safety. Another web site is www.peeceefobie.be, which aims at counselling adults in an easy accessible way on the possibilities of the Net and on how to protect themselves from online dangers. There are also real-life initiatives such as *I will teach you*. The main idea of that project was to profit from the children's knowledge about online activities. As many as 170 teenagers aged 12–14 taught their parents what the possibilities of the Internet were and how one can surf safely. The outcome was positive: both parents and children became more conscious about online safety (*De Standaard*, 7 February 2006).

Initiatives for children are all about safety and codes of conduct online, which children can learn for themselves. One of the state's initiatives, which I have to mention, is the project SaferChat. Minister P. Van Velthoven started it up in 2005 to promote children's safety online. A specific chat box was created and a new device, an electronic ID card, would guarantee exclusive access to children. Then, 100,000 electronic cards were distributed to 12-year-olds in Flanders to identify them as children. Unfortunately, the *De Standaard* newspaper of 24 January 2006 reports that the SaferChat project failed. Most children did not seem to have the necessary card reader and therefore could not visit the chat box. Consequently, due to the fact that there were only a few visitors, those who had the reader and were able to visit it, were not particularly attracted to it. The same minister was also behind the creation of a comic book *Suske & Wiske*. The title of the book was the *Sinister Site*, which focused on the risks and dangers of the Net and how to deal with them. The newspapers of 7 February 2006 reported on the release of the book and the fact that a free copy would be provided for all 7th graders in Flanders. Also, Safer Internet Belgium developed games for children of different age groups to 'learn the correct reflexes when surfing online: informing one's parents, making choices and not giving out personal information' (*Mallemuis*, game for 6–9-year-olds). Safer Internet Belgium brought out online simulation games such as '*spotm'nblog*'. These games aimed at 'stimulating wariness when making a real personal weblog on the Internet'. In June 2006, the last phase of the project started: an informative web site for children aged 14–17 years was put together to promote 'responsible surfing conduct' (www.web4me.be).

In this manner, the government takes measures for its citizens to become safely connected. Whereas the emphasis used to be placed on quantitative measures, increasing emphasis is being placed on safety. The dangers are accentuated on a daily basis and advice is spread across different online (and offline sites). Although the advice provided aims protecting children and youngsters from harm, it often simply ends up providing tips and tricks for the educators. Critics often suggest that educators do

not know how to handle this information (cf. *I will teach you!*); that they need education themselves and would not be able to manage otherwise.

The previous outline gives us the views of 'the outsiders' to the home. Throughout their attempts to give advice and help parents out, they postulate a view about 'what it means to be a parent today'. This view is remarkably fixed. For a state supporting freedom of choice as regards upbringing (as long as the harm principle is intact), parenthood *is* normalized. Let us look now at the most prominent findings and according views on this matter.

4. OUTSIDERS NORMALIZE PARENTING PRACTICES

The aforementioned research results, publications and governmental initiatives underline three points of interest, namely: (1) the dangers of a network for children; (2) its positive effects on their lives; and (3) tips and tricks for children and parents to cope with the network. One of these points of interest is stressed more strongly than the others. The parents' stance accentuates the dangers, whereas the children's stance rather pulls the string of positive effects. The state in its turn reinforces these findings emphasizing the third point of interest. They promote computers for the children's sake and at the same time point to the dangers and give tips and tricks to handle them. They supply children with safety rules, inform them about 'safer' chat rooms/sites and hand over a list of rules and techniques to parents. This accentuates the idea that children, but teenagers especially, are perfectly able to find a safe and fruitful life online; teenagers are capable of clicking, selecting and choosing in a rational way – they know what an online life amounts to. Web sites, constructed by the state with the help of non-profit-making organizations give children of different age groups techniques to help them be safe online.

What is on top of the list of our thinking about education and upbringing today, is that parents are not simply symbols of authority and need to be taught how to be (come) good parents. We have not yet arrived at the 'special' twist I want to talk about. During the period of medicalization, the parents' contribution to upbringing was also scrutinized. Parents did not know what the experts knew about health and what was best for one's children (Depaepe, 1999). Or, as Wubs (2004) outlines, educational books from all eras (or at least the period 1945–1999 as that is the period she studied) emphasize the importance of educational advice and the need for parents to listen to experts. Even in the seventies, when experts had more confidence in parents' capacities, they still had to have the last word.

This brings us to the special twist. Children and teenagers have become able to teach themselves (within certain domains) with the aid of 'parent- or teacher-independent' methods and knowledge frames. This reflects a more general tendency in society of children being more independent and knowledgeable. Although some experts in the field do raise questions about whether this is indeed so (not all children are knowledgeable about the Net nor can educate themselves and not all parents are ignorant), the issue puts the debate surrounding what parental responsibility implies and what paternalism means today back on track (Evers, 1978;

Gardner, 1983; Hospers, 1980; Hobson, 1984; Benporath, 2003; Richmond, 1998). The idea of paternalism is, remarkably, quite alive, but obviously, the parental role within it is questioned. Next to children becoming independent e-learners, Bolt suggests this questioning is due to the fact that it has become quite unclear for today's parents what their parental role should look like because '[t]he previous generation of parents is not a self-evident example anymore for the contemporary generation to take on education in their turn' (Bolt, 2000, p. 3). An explicit blueprint for education and guidance is indeed lacking – all parents are free to choose how they bring up their children as long as it is in their children's best interests (Declaration of the Rights of the Child in November, 1959). Although this is not made explicit, all parents *must* be learners, i.e. must become competent in the fields that they are supposed to struggle with, such as the Internet and educate their offspring, setting the necessary limits.

Keeping that in mind, educational research follows this trend. Although this is generally not made explicit, it is the educators and not the children who are the central point of interest in educational research and who are valued in accordance with their capacities. Whatever the point of view taken, whether it is the children's, parents' or state's point of view, research and initiatives put forward the view that parents are not capable of dealing with situations without subjecting themselves to learning. Parents should, in the first place, be educated so as to overcome their fears and negative attitudes and to become 'practically wise' (Steutel and Spiecker, 2000) about educating their offspring. What is happening here is that, for the first time, society and educationists pin parents down as incompetent educators *in comparison to everybody*. It is not only educational experts who supposedly know more than parents. Children are also considered to be more knowledgeable. Even total strangers such as newspaper reporters seem to know what parents should and should not do. The message is that parents need to learn from media announcements and educationists and from their own children too. This is the subtle shift. The 'paradox of upbringing' lying at the heart of contemporary educational research has changed from 'children can only grow up into adults by treating them as children' (Steutel and Spiecker, 2000) into 'parents can only become paternalistic agents if they are treated as children'. For the first time, it seems that parents are not being treated as adults. Parents have often had their critics but never have they had such a low status. Whatever they do, whatever measures they take and however hard they try to fulfil their roles, they will never live up to the implicit norm required by society. Parenting is normalized once again, not explicitly, but normalization is omnipresent in the writings of 'outsiders'.

To get back to my example and make this subtle shift clearer, I want to introduce another statement by the pedagogue Van Crombrugge. He suggests that we should provide parents with 'societal institutions where societal appreciations and standards supply the framework in which they can and should make choices' (2005b, p. 81). Only in that way, can parents live up to 'a promise' to be paternalistic agents. Here, Van Crombrugge makes explicit what is taken up implicitly in other writings – that there is indeed a norm. Giving this advice, he presupposes that parents' need the educationists or the state's help. He thereby treats them – maybe unintentionally – as

children and pins them down as incompetent actors. He suggests that if one is to be a good parent, one has to live up to the imposed standards, whereas educationists used to focus on 'the best interests of the child', they now pretend to know how to educate the parents[5] (as is the case when they talk about Nathalie's mother).

In brief, there are two striking presuppositions in contemporary educational research: (1) parents are incompetent actors who need to be educated in order to fulfil their parental role; and (2) educationists need to assist parents in average, 'normal' situations. But what about parents themselves? Do they all subject themselves to these tendencies? Are they all being paranoid? It seems some active or self-aware parents are undertaking some groundbreaking initiatives. Here again, the Internet, with all its possibilities, provides refreshing insights.

5. RELATIVES ON THE NET AND FINE-TUNING ADVICE

At first sight, the 'networked community' in which adults discuss parenting replicates some of the aforementioned assumptions. Actively engaged parents question their parental responsibility online and wonder whether they are capable of being 'good parents'. They are clearly convinced that each household is, in a way, a problematic household. Paul Verhaeghe wrote a manual for psychodiagnostics, titled 'On being normal and other disorders'. This is of direct relevance to what is at stake here: all everyday educational relationships between parents and their children, in whatever situations, are considered dysfunctional *by parents themselves*.

5.1. First thoughts and an example

When contributing to forums designed for parents on web sites such as www.klasse.be and www.oudersonline.nl, it is clear that parents in seemingly normal situations express their concerns. They give the public access to their households, open up the doors of their houses (virtually) for critique and advice. Thereby, they often overtly admit they feel incompetent to raise their children. Let me give an example found online[6]:

> San: Hello, my son is 14 and cannot be turned off the pc. Daily, we have long discussions to get him to stop. Would you know by any chance whether there is such a thing as a little program to switch of the pc after a certain time? Not just a time switcher. Greetings, San.
>
> Tonny: Daily, we have negotiations on who can use the pc for which amount of time. And now we are doing fine. To start with: do not give him his own computer, it will make the temptation lesser. Tonny (we are the six of us: one Internet pc, one very old computer to do useful stuff only and the two eldest have a laptop because of their studies mainly).
>
> San: Hi. Unfortunately, he has his own pc, because we're five at home wanting to use the pc regularly, so he's gotten a pc of his own for his birthday. The discussions have diminished, but now the problem has changed and we

> can hardly turn him off the pc. The easiest would be a program which just switches of the pc after a certain amount of time. Greetings, San.
>
> Tonny: … if you give your child a personal pc (which is an expensive gift, why did you not let him safe money for that?) it is not easy to forbid him to use it. It is not smart to change a problem because of the discussions, but yeah, you've noticed it now. A smart conversation then, at a smart moment. Making agreements on how long he may use the pc and what he does there exactly. Does he have his own Internet connection? Tonny.

San's story reflects a normal situation in a normal household. The child does not have a disorder in the classical sense. The normal situation is perceived as a disturbed situation by a worried, uncertain parent. San is actively looking for answers and advice. She wants to get assistance. Tonny (a father of four children, a situation he mentions to strengthen his point) answers in a remarkably confident fashion. He thinks of himself as an expert in the field. He is confident because he faces similar situations as a parent and thinks he knows how parental responsibility should be taken up in this case. This is not the only example. In fact, more and more of these kinds of forums featuring participating parents are to be found online. Parents try to test their intuitive feeling of what parental responsibility should be like and seek feedback and advice from 'relatives on the Net'. They consider them to be educational experts because their situation is just as normal but at the same time just as questionable. Across the world, parents are confused and are able to help each other out of their worrisome situations.

What I want to point to here is the fact that our networked society, where relatives on the Net are looking for each other, actually gives an impression of how parents would like to be 'treated', namely, not as children, not as incapable parents, but as partners in a dialogue. Thus Wubs suggests:

> Educational experts expressed during the last decennia that the parents' considerations concerning upbringing are important and, in accordance with that, they would regard for that being reserved when giving educational advice. However, the most important lesson their books teach parents profoundly has remained the same: who wants to educate qualitatively has to listen to educational experts. (Wubbs, 2004, p. 222)

So books and strict measures formulated on web sites might not serve the parents' demands. Parents such as San and Tonny indirectly give the answer. Their online efforts strongly suggest that research should be about private, particular situations with the parents' knowledge, according questions and concerns, forming the basis for discussion. Moreover, it seems that particular situations in a household provide perfect examples or stories to be reflected upon by other parents in another household (even overseas). Following San's story, it is quite clear that parents seek people's *personal* advice following their *personal* stories. The particular is what parents are interested in, i.e. someone who shares his or her concerns because he or she is going through a comparable, related situation. The networked society thus urges research to reflect upon what is considered normal.

The idea of relatives on the Net however results in yet another, rather contradictory conclusion. Advocates of the natural sciences see in those relatives a ground for generalization: we are all able to live up to the same standards because our stories are recognizable and thus generalizable (even overseas). If we all share the same concerns, then one unifying solution might be brought to the fore after profound analysis. This is what Van Crombrugge suggests; the parents are to be held responsible, whatever their circumstances. The context boundedness of household situations is of no importance; society can and should determine the norms for education with which parents can compare their practices (Van Crombrugge, 2006).

5.2. Turning the outsider inside-out

Parents as well as educationists are keen on norms and are constantly looking for knowledge and – in the parents' case – confirmation on how to behave. When I contacted a school to ask them whether they would be interested in sessions on 'how to deal with the Internet at home', they were enthusiastic. When I suggested I would only be able to give a session to a couple of parents, the principal immediately asked whether I could make a leaflet to inform the other parents on how to deal with Internet issues. He informed me that: 'There is a high demand for information'. We are all hoping to find 'the best means towards established ends' (Smith, 2005, p. 92). This 'technical reason' is what the media comply with. It is this technical reason that brought us to the logical conclusion that Stacy's stepmother was incompetent: she was not in the vicinity, so she was a bad mother. If she were a good mother, she would have known what to do. To be a good mother, she should get education; all parents should be educated to know what parental responsibility means. Unfortunately, technical reason is not waterproof when it comes to educational issues. There is more to take into account than the mere fact that Stacy's stepmother's children were unwatched for a moment to conclude she failed in her responsibilities. Parents acknowledge that they cannot live up to the norms pinned down by educationists and society. They cannot follow each and every piece of advice they are given. Stacy's mother could not watch the children for every single second in every single place. No single parent is capable of watching his children all the time, certainly not when they are online. Consequently, our fascination with 'means to an end' thinking merges uncertainty, feelings of incompetence and a perceived need for educational responses. We cannot live up to the standards of control. It is a vicious circle of being uncertain, asking for advice, getting advice, not being able to live up to it and feeling uncertain again.

However, there is, I believe, a way out of this normalizing tendency. It is not a way out of technical reason *as such* (this is our culture, our way to govern our society and ourselves), but a way out of parental uncertainty and treating parents as if they were children. The perfect illustration is San's example shown above. Like some other actively[7] engaged parents, San sought ways to cope with her uncertainty. In forums online, she shared her experiences with others to become more knowledgeable about her own situation. For these parents, their story is now, more than ever,

vivid and important. It is about parental experience, character as a person and a parent and feelings about parental responsibility. In brief, it is about what Smith defines as 'practical judgement' (2005, p. 97). Parents try to situate the advice that reaches them through media announcements by adding it to their individual stories. They show that they all have their own ways of dealing with situations – San's idea of how to manage is certainly different from Tonny's; Stacy's stepmother obviously had a different opinion too. At the same time, it becomes clear they have different characters. Tonny is far more clear-cut in his approach to parental action than San is. Their feelings cannot be normalized.

Now, if parents themselves – the target group of the educational research shown above – search for relatives on the Net, want to read and learn about others' *particular* situations to fine-tune their practices along the lines of technical reason (indeed, technical reason is being used in their arguments and thus not forgotten), then educational research should try to accommodate its clients' needs to the full. Instead of trying to follow the lines of technical reasoning, educationists should try to listen and learn from each individual story and try to work with that. It is the discovery of one's own practices as well as the individual story of other parents that makes educators self-confident and, as a consequence, responsible. Had the component of practical judgement been given some room in our thinking about 'how to educate', then Stacy and Nathalie's (step)mother might have found a fair and balanced profile of herself in the newspapers instead of a generalized, hasty conclusion.

6. CONCLUSION

The starting point of this article was the observation that today's parents are rather anxious about how to deal with their children. The topic per se, where this anxiety takes place, is the issue of Internet use at home. Parents feel lost in a world that seems to be so easy to navigate for their offspring. Their perceived incompetence makes them search for advice and indeed, educational research is more than ever providing them with the information they are asking for. This advice seems to be 'free to use' at first, but implicitly, educational advice still has the last word – when something goes wrong, the infantilized parent is being pointed to the fact that she has not paid enough attention to the lessons brought by different media. Indeed, all parents and their practices are exposed to educationists' research and advice. The advice is formulated in means-to-an-end terms and follows the line of technical reason. This technical reason normalizes parenthood and introduces (rather than reduces) fear because parents cannot live up to the advice given; the norm is set so high. But some active and aware parents try to get feedback on their individual parental practices by means of forums on the Internet designed specifically for parents. They search for relatives on the Net who know their situation, their personality, their feelings, i.e. who have something in common. They break through the normalizing tendencies by introducing the need for practical judgement. This means that they are actually doing what they are being asked to do: they are *learning proactively* how to cope with the situation.

In an attempt to mirror the exact sciences, contemporary educational research tries to give clear-cut answers to problems. However, as far as educational research is concerned, researchers should engage themselves more *actively* in their research. This means they should participate in their research subjects' lives and give the participants the possibility to actively construct their own shades or nuances to their experiences. After all it is the aim of educational research to help those who ask for it. I believe therefore that narrative inquiries, action research, inquiries on experiences and so on, i.e. qualitative inquiries, should gain some ground as far as the demanding parties are concerned. The network that connects us all opens up a forum – in a literal sense – to converse on a more balanced kind of research and practice where technical reason and practical judgement fuse. I am not denying this thought postulates 'a norm' once more, but it seems that this is the only way parents can bring their children up *in confidence*, exercising *actual* choices on how to bring up their children. If research, media and governmental initiatives broaden their thinking in this way, as the actively engaged parents are currently doing, maybe parents will *themselves* be enabled to come to terms with what it means to be a parent.

NOTES

[1] Reading the chapter, one will notice that there is no definition given on what 'paternalism' implies. Here, I want to point to the fact the debate surrounding this concept has returned to the stage. In further research, I wish to come to terms with what the notion of paternalism means in today's educational practices. For now, it suffices to notice that the notion refers to the debate of controlling versus laissez-faire, *führen oder wachsen lassen*.

[2] The government sent a letter to all citizens in May 2006 to inform them about this action, telling them the Internet is needed to keep up with our changing society. More information is to be found online – of course – Retrieved 1 June 2006 from http://www.internetvooriedereen.be

[3] *Eindelijk ook voor mij*. Leaflet from the Belgian government. Retrieved 10 January from http://www.belgium.be/eportal/ShowDoc/fed_ict/imported_content/pdf/Internet_voor_iederee n.pdf?contentHome=entapp.BEA_personalization.eGovWebCacheDocumentManager.nl

[4] Retrieved 2 June 2006 from http://www.saferinternet.be/cat.php?ID=1&group=1&lang=Nl

[5] In further research, I wish to consider the parents' stance in what paternalism means for them today. This will help to break through the infantilizing tendencies of the educational research described. This research does not infantilize the child (a process described by Dasberg in 1975, in Depaepe, 1999) but the parent. Thereby, in the age of the Internet, although there still is plenty of continuity within how upbringing practices take place, we might pass the bridge of educationalization (Depaepe, 1999).

[6] 9. Puberteit 12+, Forum, *Ouders online*, retrieved 2 February 2006 from www.ouders.nl

[7] The categorization of 'kinds of public', made by Van Ruler in 1998 (in Doeleman, 2002, p.78), is interesting in this case. Only parents who are 'aware' and 'active' will find a way out of the vicious circle by means of forums and so on. Those who are 'latent' or 'non-public' will not become engaged due to their ignorance.

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CHAPTER FOURTEEN

CERI BLACK

TRUE LOVE WAITS: ABSTINENCE EDUCATION IN THE USA

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

True Love Waits[1] is part of the politicised, right-wing, American, evangelical Christian movement. Situated in this context, but 'educating' teenagers from other backgrounds in the USA, the UK and across the world, True Love Waits engages teenagers with variations on the theme of a series of workshops and activities, culminating the taking of the 'pledge' (whose text is a central focus of this chapter). This kind of 'abstinence education' is part of a larger conservative agenda in America, with money promised to American schools and aid to African countries *on condition that abstinence programs rather than contraceptive advice are provided to children*.[2]

Previous academic work on the movement has focused on quantitative assessments of the efficacy of the pledge. The Heritage movement[3] is politically supportive of abstinence education and finds that pledgers are 40% less likely to have sex outside marriage. Other assessments, however, find that virginity pledging has little or no effect on sexual behaviour.[4] The most honest assessment, perhaps, is from Constantine and Braverman[5] who say: 'In considering the original question – do virginity pledges cause initiation of sexual intercourse to be delayed? – the answer remains that they might and they might not. This particular study adds little or nothing to our knowledge of this wished for effect.' To summarise, the studies on whether this technology is an effective one in creating the results it aims towards, differ wildly in methods and approach, and no watertight conclusions have been reached.

However, although the efficacy of this particular intervention is not established in any clear-cut way, the fact that there is a discussion about whether a social intervention is 'efficacious' shows the ease with which we (unthinkingly?) apply the terminology of technology to social phenomena such as True Love Waits. This chapter takes a different approach, looking at the ways in which power functions through the language of the movement. It does this through a post-structuralist/ feminist lens, rereading the pledge against the grain, examining the kind of self it appears to assume, and by assuming, perhaps helps to create.

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2. IDENTITY AND AMBIGUITY

> *Believing that True Love Waits, I make a commitment to God, myself, my family, my friends, my future mate and future children, to a lifetime of sexual purity, including sexual abstinence, from this day until the day I enter a biblical marriage relationship.*

When reread, this pledge can be understood as creating a certain kind of identity for the pledger. The pledge claims to rise out of the unconflicting beliefs of the individual (believing that true love waits…). This individual, through the promise of future adherence based on present choice, is posited as a fully Cartesian subject, capable of perfect concordance between volition and intention. The meaning of the pledge, then, appears to be the intentionality of the self-identical, unconflicted 'I' who makes it. This 'I' then appears to be the master of the discursive effects of the pledge; pledgers are posited as the author of their own pure body and action. The pledger is also posited as having a heterosexual self; homosexuality is foreclosed quite deliberately by the inclusion of the term 'biblical marriage relationship' in response to the possibility of the legalisation of gay marriage. Celibacy is also foreclosed as a possibility: the individual is assumed to enter into a biblical marriage relationship involving the progeniture of children and therefore (by implication) heteropenetrative sexuality. We are also informed in the literature that 'God's plan for you is to be somebody's perfect mate.' It could be argued that part of the functioning of this technology of the self is the positing of an individual through the taking of the pledge as Cartesian, coherent, in control, heterosexual and non-celibate; through pledging, a certain kind of self is constructed, the implications of which go beyond 'purity'.

The pledge ostensibly creates the body and the self of the individual as coherent in their commitment to a lifetime of sexual purity including abstinence. Certain kinds of sexuality are rejected for indefinite periods of time. At the same time, however, the very fact that such a pledge is necessary suggests that teenage sexuality, if left uncontrolled, will result in premarital sex, teenage pregnancy, STDs and so on. In other words, the necessity for teenagers to promise chastity and abstinence suggests that if they do not make such promises, their unbridled sexuality will run out of control. The pledge then, constructs teenagers as highly sexual at the same time as constructing them as chaste. It posits an out-of-control sexuality even as it purports to control it.

It can be argued that whilst a pledge claims to guard against the evil consequences of uncontrolled teenage sexuality, in fact taking a pledge is instrumental in the creation of those consequences for pledgers. Constantine and Braverman[6] argue that although there is much disagreement on the details, the majority of peer-reviewed scientific and sociological articles agree that pledging may delay first intercourse for 1–2 years, that pledging has little or no effect on sexual behaviours other than penile/vaginal penetrative intercourse (e.g. oral/anal sex), and that when pledgers do have sex they are less likely to take precautions. Pledging, in other words, may mean that individuals are more likely to engage in high risk, unprotected sex, hence are

more likely to have to face the consequences of such behaviours (STDs, pregnancy, etc.) Taking the pledge appears to create the consequences which pledging threatens, or treating the consequences as given (as Butler[7] puts it) 'presupposes and consolidates the normative conditions of [their] own emergence'.[8]

3. CARROTS/STICKS

This ambiguity is reflected in the binary opposition of the pledge breaker and the pledge keeper as contextualised in the text of the pledge itself. There are promises made to the pledge keeper and threats to the pledge breaker. The first promise is that of divine approval; the commitment is made first to God. This divine approbation appears to give the power of necessity to pledge keeping. In addition, the pledge keeper is promised social integration, that is, approval from friends and family. They are also promised a heterosexual marriage and children. A rereading of the first phrase is also useful for understanding the nature of the promises made to pledge keepers.

Believing that true love waits…

All of the following are valid expositions of this statement:

1. All cases of true love will save sex for marriage.
2. Nobody who is truly in love will have sex outside marriage.
3. Extramarital sexuality in any given relationship excludes the possibility that the relationship is true love.

The following statement is not inconsistent with the statement:

1. There may be some cases that are not true love which will still save sex for marriage.

Sexuality outside marriage, then, is characterised as either indicative of a lack of true love or destructive of the possibility of that love. The phrase also admits the possibility that a teenager may wait and yet not find true love. However, the ambiguity of the phrase suggests that the definition of true love is that which waits. Thus the pledge appears to promise true love to pledge keepers, whilst in fact doing no such thing.

If all this is promised to pledge keepers as a carrot, if you will, what is the stick for pledge breakers? Where keepers get divine approval, we can assume that breakers will face divine sanction. Elsewhere in the literature, the wrath of God is characterised as STDs, pregnancy and so on. The pledge breaker is also posited as socially disintegrated, having broken a commitment (a social contract or public promise) to friends and family. They are personally disintegrated, having succumbed to untrammelled sexuality rather than curb that sexuality according to the didact of a self-identical, coherent 'I'. They are threatened, then, with being a self in conflict with

itself, with the ego not being 'master in its own house'. (It is perhaps interesting to note that even pledge keepers have a conceptually split identity; how else is a person to be both the subject of the sentence 'I pledge' and the indirect object 'to myself'). In addition, breakers are implied to be risking letting down their future mate and children, becoming a disappointment at best, at worst an abject, delegitimated self, STD ridden, pregnant, ineligible for marriage. The pledge breaker is also informed that if they do engage in premarital sex within the confines of a given relationship, that relationship automatically relinquishes the possibility that it constitutes true love. There is the further terrible possibility to content with; that true *lovers* wait, that any form of premarital sexuality negates the very possibility that any future relationship will count as love at all.

This technology of the self, this intervention, works here through the discursive violence which circumscribes certain kinds of identities and delegitimates others. Relationships are recategorised as 'not really love' based on a temporal, qualitative difference in the moment at which certain acts are performed. This violence has behind it the historicity of divine and social law, invoked in the incantation of the pledge which circumscribes the sexual self of the pledger and defines what can and cannot count as a fairy tale.

In summary, then, pledge keepers are promised a coherent, stable, socially integrated, divinely approved, heterosexual self, true love, marriage, children. Pledge breakers, by implication, are threatened with incoherent, unstable, socially disintegrated selves, the possibility that true love is beyond their reach, certainly now and possibly forever, the jeopardy of future marriage and children, STDs, unwanted pregnancy stigma and death. More sinister, however, is what is not spoken here. The fact that for example, STDs and pregnancy may occur as a result of violent as well as volitional sexuality is ignored. This may present an additional burden for the pledger who is the victim of a sexual attack. The fact that many early sexual encounters involve a level of coercion on the part of the male, and the resultant ambiguity of 'consent' in such cases is swiftly passed over in favour of the Cartesian 'I'. Here, this becomes an almost Sartrian 'I', a self capable of volitional control over not only its own sexual urges, but those of others, this control and these choices exercised in a vacuum, the setting for the choice devoid of all but the most cursory social influences. A related point is that the making of teenage sexualities as the centre of discursive anxiety and concern, conceptualising it as the cause of social ills, takes the emphasis off predatory male sexuality. As decades of feminist research has shown, this violence is often supported by legal and other institutions which appear in this pledge to support the chaste teenager and bolster their virgin identity! The relevant question to be asked of True Love Waits is, then perhaps why this discourse about these things, and why now? That is, why is teenage sexuality the subject of such intense concern, such strongly worded technological intervention, when these other pressing social concerns are studiously ignored.

4. VIRGINITY

Virginity is avoided as a term in the literature as well as the pledge. The terms 'purity' and 'abstinence' are preferred. My suspicion was that this was a deliberate attempt to widen the influence of the educational technology; there is a widespread conflation of the term 'virginity' with penile-vaginal penetrative intercourse, and thus an implication that a pledger would remain a virgin until they had entered a biblical marriage relationship would fail to foreclose the possibility of a non-heteropenetrative sexual practice before marriage. In addition, given that True Love Waits also provides literature for those who have 'slipped' and had sex outside marriage, the pledge must allow that some pledgers may not be 'virgins' at the time of taking the pledge. On further reading, this suspicion seems well founded. True Love Waits maintains that the web sites an individual accesses, the books they read, the friends they 'hang out' with, can render the individual impure both in and of themselves, and also because they lead the individual down the wrong road to further sexual activity. Even kissing is to be avoided on these grounds. There is a fuzziness about these concepts, however. Jonny at the age of 16, we are told, enjoys a session of 'making out with his girlfriend in his new car'. This goes 'further than either of them had intended', so Jonny stops himself and goes home. After much prayer, they decide to split up. However, when Jonny is later married (to a woman who stops him when he 'goes too far' and she 'gets uncomfortable'), he is still able to give himself 'absolutely' to his new wife. He is able to do this despite having 'made out', a term which may cover a multitude of sins.[9]

Purity then, is a wider, more diffuse term, including but not limited to a hymeneal virginity, discourse about which is avoided as this would locate purity in a specific sexual act. Despite the deceptive width of the term 'purity', as we have seen, this pledge does not widen definitions of virginity. Rather, it forecloses non-heteropenetrative understandings of what counts as 'really' having sex (by positing a heterosexual, child-bearing self), whilst including any sexual practice at all as productive of the possibility of the abjection, disintegration and delegitimisation of identities through the wide net of the term 'purity'. When read through Douglas,[10] the implications of this impurity, or uncleanliness, can be drawn out. For Douglas, the crossing of boundaries is linked to the idea of pollution, uncleanliness and impurity. For example, the exterior of the male body is conceptualised as impenetrable, bounded. Therefore, gay men, who embody a physical crossing of the boundaries of the body, as well as a social transgression of gendered and sexualised identities, are linked in the public imagination with HIV/AIDS. HIV/AIDS is then rendered as a metaphor for the pollution, uncleanliness and impurity which result from the crossing of boundaries. Unsurprising, then, that in western culture the female virgin body is often fantasised (phantasised?) to be hermetically sealed by the hymen[11] and unsurprising that virginity is ritually and socially associated with purity and cleanliness, and that sexual activity in women especially, is often seen as shameful, dirty, even filthy. The more times the boundary of the hymen, real or imagined, present or not, is crossed, the dirtier the whore.

In his article, linked to the True Love Waits web site,[12] White introduces the first exercise to be done with teenagers on the road towards taking the pledge. The aim is to move the boundary of sexual purity from the boundary of the hymen to the boundary of the heart. According to this exercise, the tighter the boundaries on sexual behaviour, the easier it is to preserve the heart for God's use. Crossing these boundaries of purity is then related immediately to sex and herpes. This move from a concern with protecting the boundaries of the body (materialised in the fantasy of the impermeable hymen) to a concern with protecting the boundaries of the heart (operationalised through the avoidance of all forms of sexuality) does not erase the link between sexuality and STDs. Crossing of boundaries is still related to impurity, and the social crossing is embodied in the pledge. It is a pledge to God, family, friends and future spouse and future children. This technology, then, is 'plugged in' to socio-sexual taxonomies, as well as fears and the physical body, and it is from these that it may draw much of its power; without the current socio-cultural constructions of sexuality, without our ideas about purity and danger and the crossing of boundaries, sexual and otherwise, this technology would lose its regulatory power. This final section, then, looks at the wider context within which this technology functions, including national and international examples of virginity and the relationship between virgin identities, virgin bodies and the bodily history of the individual.

5. CONTEXT

A discussion of boundaries in the context of virginity brings the hymen to mind, that liminal, equivocal hymen, which appears only in its disappearance, the bloody evidence of whose destruction, is the only evidence of its existence. The complacent, permeable, crescent shaped hymen, the boundary which is not one, that hymen which is fantasised to hermetically seal the virgin body and maintain the virgin body *intacta.* That little flap of skin on which so much rests. And yet, the Gitano gypsies do not recognise the hymen as indicative of virginity, instead citing the *honra*, a physical structure inside the vagina which releases lubrication on first intercourse.[13] Around half the societies in the Standard Anthropological Sample do not recognise the existence of the hymen and place no value on virginity.[14] In other words, the hymen as a centre of discursive concern appears contingent. Given that the hymen is fantasised to seal the body creating a real physical boundary, and demonstrably does not do so, and given that the facts about the genital history of a given body are opaque to other individuals, even sometimes to the body in question, we might wonder whether virginity itself is performative, and whether this pledge is simply one of the citational aspects of the performative. Rather than as a technology, consciously designed to fulfil the functions we have described, might this pledge be better described as constituting the performance of a bodily part, specifically the hymen, thus relocating virginity away from the body and the bodily history of an individual and towards the social and the discursive. To clarify; this is not an argument that the bodily history of an individual is unimportant in their realisation

of self. Rather it is an attempt to untie some of the naturalised metaphysical moorings which bind virginity to a dividing hymen, and to allow both the hymen and virginity to mean in different ways.

6. BEYOND TECHNOLOGY

This chapter attempts to fill in some background for the following arguments: assuming that virgin identities are socially constructed on the grounds or foundations of the material 'stuff' of the hymen is problematic, in part because the material stuff of the hymen is problematic. Hymens can be broken in ways other than sexual, no normal hymen hermetically seals the virgin body,[15] the hymen may remain in place after intercourse,[16] and may be surgically reconstructed.[17] The relationship of the sexual taxonomy of virgin/not virgin to hymen/no hymen is not therefore straightforward even from the material side. From the social side, only a few questions need to be asked to blur the line: is a lesbian in a civil partnership with an active sex life a virgin because she has never had sex with a man? Is a woman who has been raped as a child justified in calling herself a virgin as a resistance identity? (As one informant put it to me in an interview for a related study, 'he took everything else from me, I kept my virginity'.) In this context, this article can be read as cataloguing one kind of virginity, asking what kind of virginity this pledge supports, what it undermines, and in what ways the application of these ideas in an educational setting qualify the True Love Waits movement as a technology of the self. If we take Butler seriously, the way that bodies are experienced as material is a matter of discursive effect; the virgin body is materialised as such through discourse rather than being a material fact existing prior to discourse. This discourse, however, cannot produce stable material virgin selves. Rather it is best understood as panicked, requiring constant reiteration to reinforce its norms. The pledge, then, might be helpfully read as a panicked virginity, reinforcing its norms through reiterations and citations.

In Butler's conceptualisation of sex, the production of sexed identities and selves is through the solidification of ossification of the regulatory norms of power, cited through individual performance, and thus appearing as fixed, material bodies. Virginity can be exposed through this pledge as a performative identity; the production of pure identities and selves may helpfully be regarded as the solidification of ossification of the regulatory norms of power, exemplified in the pledge and cited through individual pledging and social performance, and appearing as fixed material stuff, matter, even as fixed material hymens, and certainly as fixed material/conceptual boundaries in the taxonomy of sex. This circumscribes not only what can and cannot count as a fairy tale, but what can and cannot count as sex.

7. CONCLUSIONS

There are questions, unspoken or whispered throughout this paper, as to what the boundary of the hymen is protecting, by whom it is policed, for what reasons, with

what self-knowledge or lack of it, and through what mechanisms. Without space to consider, let alone answer these questions, as a final thought I put a tentative suggestion in the theme of this volume. We regard technology as humanly created; we make it, we shape it, we put it to our use. Technology may, however, also create us; it is impossible to imagine what life would be like without the motor car, the mobile phone or the personal computer – let alone advances in medicine or food production. Our lives and our selves are, in a real sense, shaped by technology, created and moulded by it. Likewise, we may regard virginity in a simplistic sense as a human creation, fantasised to be natural, given, related unproblematically to a specific body part. This creation, however, creates us. It creates our sexuality, it creates for us a boundary around that holiest of holies, heteropenetrative intercourse, as being the only thing that really counts as sex, and thus excludes other possibilities, other individuals, other lives, refusing them, as Butler might say, the possibility of cultural articulation. Virginity shapes and creates our sexual histories and our sexual narratives; in our culture, virginity seems a universally accepted milestone. This telling of our stories, however, this conflation of the hymen, real or imagined, and the virgin identity, this necessary background for taking the pledge, is wholly contingent. We make the hymen, we create virginity, then forget that it was created. We lose our creativity and our imagination, so we cannot picture it being any other way. Through pledges, as much as through pornography, film, magazines, sex education and even our own telling of sexual stories, panicked virginity repeats its norms and they ossify into ourselves.

NOTES

[1] see http://www.lifeway.com/tlw/ for an introduction to True Love Waits. All the references to the literature of True Love Waits in this article can be found on this web site or on White 2004, *Group Suggestions for True Love Waits* the full text of which is linked to this web site.

[2] www.medscape.com/viewarticle/467298_4_Medscape.com also including interesting information on the topic, regarding evidence-based versus principle-based medicine, the misuse of power and funds, insistence on 'parity between contraceptive and abstinence education, and the "efficacy" of condom use versus Abstinence education'. AIDS 17(18s): S15–S18, 2003. © 2003 Lippincott Williams & Wilkins.

[3] www.heritage.org//Research/Welfare/wm461.cfm

[4] www.webmd.com/content/article/102/106704.htm Webmed 6 September; Bruckner, H. et al. (2005). Virginity Pledge Works. *Journal of Adolescent Health*, 36, 271–278.

[5] Constantine, N. A., and Braverman, M. T. (2004). Appraising evidence on program effectiveness. In N.A. Constantine, M.T. Braverman, and J.K. Slater (Eds.), *Foundations and evaluation: Contexts and practices for effective philanthropy* (pp. 236–258). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Butler, J. (1993). *Bodies that matter. On the discursive limits of sex*. London: Routledge.

[8] Constantine and Braverman, 2004, op. cit.

[9] Interesting that when Jonny has to stop himself, the couple have to split up. When his girlfriend stops him, he marries her. The moral responsibility for controlling untrammelled male sexuality here clearly and unequivocally with the woman.
[10] Douglas, M. (1966). *Purity and danger*: London: Routledge Classics.
[11] Salih, S. (2001). *Versions of virginity in Late Medieval England.* Rochester, NY: D.S. Brewer.
[12] Ibid.
[13] Gay Y Blasco, P. (1997). A different body? Desire and virginity among Gitanos. *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, 3(3), 517–535.
[14] Achlegel, A. (1991). Status, property and the value on virginity. *American Ethnologist*, 18(4), 719–734.
[15] Berenson A. B. et al. (1992). Appearance of the hymen in prepubertal girls. *Pediatrics*, 8, 387–394.
[16] Caulfield, S., and Estives, M. (1993). 50 Years of virginity in Rio de Janeiro: Sexual politics and gender roles in juridical and popular discourse 1890–1940. *Luso-Brazilian Review*, 30, 47–74; in Mullaney, J. (2001). Like a virgin. *Qualitative Sociology*, 24(1), 3–24.
[17] Cindoglu, K. (1997). Virginity tests and artificial virginity in modern Turkish medicine. *Womens Studies International Forum*, 20, 253–261.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

FREDERIK HERMAN, MARC DEPAEPE, FRANK SIMON AND ANGELO VAN GORP

PUNISHMENT AS AN EDUCATIONAL TECHNOLOGY: A FORM OF PEDAGOGICAL INERTIA IN SCHOOLS?

1. STRUCTURE OF THE ARTICLE

In the first section we clarify our reasons for describing punishment as a technology. The polemics surrounding punishment that colour(ed) the educational landscape are dealt with in the second section. The trends of the protection, increasing legalism and problematisation of punishment are discussed, as well as the argument for a more repressive approach that is gradually gathering pace. On the other hand, we look at the national and international debate on the physical punishment of pupils, as well as the different opinions on possible changes, shifts or reversals in the educational treatment of children. In section three we give a summary presentation of a number of our research findings on the history of classroom practice in the twentieth century. We relate our findings to the context of the dominant discourse in educational journals of the time. On the basis of these findings, a number of widespread misconceptions are rebutted and adapted in section four, after which a number of conclusions are drawn in the final section.

2. PUNISHMENT AS A COMPONENT OF A TECHNOLOGY AND AS A TECHNOLOGY IN ITSELF

With regard to our subject, i.e. punishment as a technology, we have probably adopted a somewhat exceptional position in this series of papers on networks and technologies in education. Nevertheless, we hold the opinion that this subject does indeed come within the category of 'technologies'. The concept of *τεχνολογια* is after all a very vague concept that is characterised by a multitude of possible interpretations. We would like to give two justifications for our interpretations of this subject. A first interpretation falls back on a number of concepts (and the accompanying theoretical considerations) of Foucault, and the second originates from the completely singular results of the research presented below, focusing, as it does, on

P. Smeyers and M. Depaepe (eds.), Educational Research: Networks and Technologies, 203–219.

the development of punishment policy in boys' schools over the last hundred years. A Foucauldian framework helps us to find an entry point into this subject through the concept of 'biopower' as a 'technology of power'. Such a political technology, which covers a large number of divergent techniques, enables all the individuals within a society to be subjugated, and the entire population is therefore controlled (Foucault, 1978). The focus of this chapter is directed at 'anatomical policy' in particular – which is aimed at disciplining individuals and which according to Foucault (1989) mainly develops, and is thus observed, within institutions such as prisons, schools, barracks and workshops. This policy manifests itself in a variety of acts such as supervision, surveillance and punishment. However, it is just as prevalent in therapy and other forms of assistance. Such disciplinary measures are adopted by 'normalising' institutions in their intensive battle with the perverse, the abnormal and the pathological. We have chosen to see the subject of punishment (in school institutions) – which can be considered as an externalising form of power – as a component of a much wider power mechanism or power technology – 'biopower' – that acts on the different levels of society in an automatic, invisible and anonymous way.

For the second interpretation we utilise a conception of technology, which treats that term as 'the doctrine of processes, mechanical aids and/or methods that are related to production'. However, we have broadly interpreted the concept of 'production' here, using it to signify the interpersonal processes such as the education or normalisation – as a system of 'finely graded and measurable intervals in which individuals can be distributed around a norm' (Rabinow, 1991, p. 20) – of young people. The entire series of reasons for punishment that applied as soon as the child formed part of the school-going youth, and which continued to apply for as long as he/she remained in this category – alongside the machinery of various punishment techniques (with which the school rules were enforced) – can be designated as a specific educational technology. That is to say, this is a technology in which the system of rules and punishments can be considered as tools that are systematically applied, and which are aimed at consolidating school order and discipline. In this way, in this series of papers, punishment becomes both a component of a wider pedagogical technology, and a very distinctive educational technology in itself.

3. CONFLICTS SURROUNDING PUNISHMENT

3.1. To Punish or 'not' to Punish, that is the Question

As already mentioned in the first paragraph, 'the century of the child' (Key, 1903), provides the time frame for our research on punishment in schools. Indeed, the twentieth century was characterised by an intensification of attention directed at children by 'experts', coupled with the further 'professionalisation' and 'institutionalisation', or in a manner of speaking the 'educationalisation' (or even better 'educationalising'), of the environment of children. These developments were accompanied by all kinds of debates (on the micro, meso and macro level) on the design of the

'children's world' (Dasberg, 1975). One of the many subjects that continually crops up over time, which has still lost none of its topical value today, is the punishment of young people. Highly contrasting views on the 'punishment' of young people in school institutions, at home, in closed or semi-closed institutions, used to characterise (and still does) the scientific and social debates (Verhellen, 1988; Thompson Gershoff, 2002; Southgate, 2003; Haynes, 2005). The disputes, which took place over this issue, can be characterised by a continual swing between the two extremes of protection (re-education) and repression (punishment). Despite this contrast, we believe that we can say that both sides have a shared motive – to safeguard society (see, e.g. Van Gorp, 2005).

The 'protection idea' – to be taken here as shielding pupils from all forms of negative behaviour – made a lot of progress in the course of the twentieth century and is reflected in many types of conventions, declarations and laws.[1] These include the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (10 December 1948),[2] the Convention on Children's Rights (20 November 1989)[3] and the Belgian Constitution (23 March 2000).[4] Such standards, formulated in terms of rights, were/are carefully policed by many Courts. In other words, punishment policy with respect to children (and adults) was restrained by all kinds of legal provisions, and soon developed into a legal tug of war.

Towards the end of the twentieth century the antagonistic groups, who advocated a more repressive approach towards young people, increasingly appeared in the foreground (Bol, 1992, pp. 388–399; Southgate, 2003, p. 10; Dumortier and Brolet, 2003). This led to the argument for a fully fledged juvenile punishment law, the debate on reducing or even abolishing the age limit at which young people bear 'full' criminal liability, the debate on 'letting things slip', and the controversy concerning the shortage, construction and supervision of 'closed institutions'. In our opinion, this call for a harder approach comes from the 'moral panic' (Drotner, 1992) that was created by the masses. The (mass) media, which today have become the most important social influence, and which are responsible for the (albeit partial) colouring of social perceptions, have paid an extremely large amount of attention to 'juvenile delinquency' over the last decade. They have reported on a number of serious crimes by young people – and other illegal acts performed by youngsters such as drug possession, drug abuse and dealing and carrying weapons). Also antisocial behaviour or 'problem' behaviour in 'black schools' (schools with a high concentration of immigrants) has been rigorously covered. Through these channels, social problems are detected, formulated, sometimes even staged or created. Certain interests are then prioritised and policy is legitimised. An image has been cultivated of a derailed and corrupted youth. Brinkgreve describes this trend as (2005, pp. 24–34) 'the return of the fearsome child'. The extent to which increased attention and the accompanying problematisation of young people in general is based on a real increase in problem behaviour among young people, is another question. It is thus not surprising that a number of scientists looked into this issue at the end of the twentieth century. A number of studies done in the 1990s, for example by Baertveldt and Junger-Tas and his disciples, indicate an increase in social violence most specifically in schools (Van Der Ploeg, 1995, p. 357). We can ask many questions about such research such

as how was 'violence' recorded? Were acts recorded and ranked according to seriousness? Had the interviewees become more alert, more sensitive? Were things not monitored more? Nevertheless, we believe that such results cannot simply be disregarded. In this respect, we believe that accusations directed at the media, which posit it as the 'sole' cause of negative perceptions of young people, can no longer be taken seriously. The fact that the protection paradigm and the educational styles – (which are regarded as too relaxed and soft) arising from it, or, which are at least propagated by it, come under fire, has to be found in the reality of the situation, the perceptions formed in this respect, and the interaction between these two aspects. The argument for a more repressive approach kicked-off at the end of the 'century of the child'.

3.2. The 'long' exodus from corporal punishment

The fact that the debate on disciplinary measures focused on corporal punishment is of course far from coincidental. In the scientific, legal and political configuration of a 'modern' society, such a form of punishment was not viewed as terribly educational. It thus became one of the first measures to be put in the stocks (see, e.g. Bartkowski, 1995). In Belgium, one can find indications of a very provisional and short-lived abolition of corporal punishment as early as the eighteenth century (de Schietere de Caprijcke, 1766). Whether such prohibition had a real impact on classroom practice is certainly doubtful. The problems that accompanied the prohibition of corporal punishment at the policy level (macro and meso level) probably accompanied a stubborn refusal to conform in the classroom (at the micro level) (see Leyder, 1996). Nevertheless, such writings gradually brought in a climate where corporal punishment was regarded as an abhorrent practice. In 1884, with the School Conflict (between Liberals and Catholics) raging, a parliamentary report appeared in Belgium that lashed out at the violent and outmoded practices in Catholic schools (quoted in Depaepe et al., 2000, p. 171). This report demonstrates the 'generated interest in' and 'increasing opposition to' the use of corporal punishment in primary schools at the end of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless a final ban still took a full century to come.

As regards corporal punishment, substantial differences in attitude have to be noted when examining approaches in other countries. In relation to the English-speaking context, Southgate (2003) only mentions 'a fairly recent uprising of anti-corporal-punishment sentiment' (p. 10). Haynes (2005) says that in New Zealand and some other ex-British colonies, the fight against corporal punishment only took hold in the 1970s. In England too, the ban on corporal punishment in state schools (1986) and private schools (1999) met a lot of resistance amongst teachers, and generated much consternation within the general public. In some countries, that dissension still reverberates today.[5] Hodgkin (1997) argues 'smacking' was 'part of the UK's culture' (p. 201). Furthermore, writing about corporal punishment in the USA, Thompson Gershoff (2001) maintained that: 'The use of corporal punishment in public schools that is condoned by parents, lawmakers, and their constituents in 23 states, and which is supported by the U.S. Supreme Court, is meted out primarily

with wooden paddles, demonstrating a prevailing acceptance of objects to deliver punishment' (p. 603). Likewise, with regard to the USA, Bitensky (2004) lashes out at the unclear legislation and the legal loopholes that have been left open. The rather negative climate surrounding physical punishment in schools, which sprouted rather early in Belgium (and its neighbouring countries) and was gradually able to spread its roots to the different sections of Belgian society, has certainly not been universally generated.

3.3. Fierce Fighting between the Titans: Continuity and Discontinuity

Another and closely related polarisation is found in the forum where 'the extent to which certain (preached or considered desirable) educational styles or educational strategies have duly found their way into everyday educational reality' has developed into a subject of debate. Ideas pertaining to discontinuity and continuity oppose one another. Certain changes, which derive from educational historiography, are frequently cited in this argument. The popular calls for changing from a 'command regime to a negotiation regime' (De Swaan, 1980) and a desire for 'the humanisation of education' are clear illustrations of this. The turning point is often considered to have taken place after the Second World War, and in particular, during the 1960s. A more democratic educational style emerged during this period. But is there really a case for describing a change in pedagogical attitudes, and is it (proportionally) reflected in the way things are done in various educational centres (family, school, etc), or as it were in educational reality? The American 'psychogenetic theory' of Lloyd de Mause does indeed assume so. De Mause (1980) argues that there has been a change to more 'love-oriented educational styles' and 'tender loving care', or in other words there has been a 'humanisation' of education. Postman (1982) occupies similar territory to de Mause. He too believes that there has been a change. Postman stated that the opportunities for 'be a child' were gradually disappearing. In his opinion this was both the consequence and the confirmation of the change from the command household to the consultative household, and/or from authoritarian education to democratic education. He said that in certain respects children were treated more like adults. In many sectors the rights of the 'sensible' minor were respected to an increasing extent. Mortier (2002) tears down Postman's dogma: 'Far from "being a child" disappearing, many types of empowerment mechanisms are being developed to take account of the characteristics of children as groups, supporting them in their relationships with adults… sociological reality does not primarily involve an equalisation of individuals (child A is equal to adult B), but the equalisation of the relationships of power between groups' (pp. 10–17). Mortier therefore appears to comply with the view that more than one change has taken place.

Greven (1991) on the other hand assumes that 'nothing' has changed, that the hard approach continues to persist in educational environments. Various authors believe that the more balanced aspects of our society/culture have helped to generate a heavy-handed approach (both on a physical and psychological/emotional level: 'In our culture hard-handedness towards children is a very old and widespread tradition'

(Greven, 1991; Baartman, 1993). Greven notes that such a practice can even be found in the Bible: 'He who spares the rod, spoils his son.'[6]

It is perhaps tempting to adopt the theory of Finkelstein (1989). In her book *Governing the Young* she preaches that 'soft pedagogy' is rather like a camouflage suit for the old hard approach. She talks of an 'exchange', or if you like a 'shift' in power techniques. She is certainly not alone in holding such a view. Curtis (1997); Bernstein (1996); Hamilton (1990); Foucault (1989) and Elias (1979) head in this direction. Their theories place the changes – most of which had taken on a mythological character – in a completely different perspective, focusing on an exchange of power techniques. They thereby relativise these changes and strip them of their mythological character. Curtis (1997, pp. 19–42) indicates that teachers created a semblance of freedom in order to gain better control of the pupils. 'Freedom' was narrowed down to a tactic, which partook in the adjustments that were needed for the domineering management strategy. Teachers now focused their power on 'the autonomous selves of the ruled'. Others talk of a 'sham' freedom here (Hamilton, 1990). Foucault (1989) also relativised the change thesis. In his *Surveiller et punir* he describes how people still attempt to discipline and control individuals, only now things are done more subtly. The current power mechanisms are hidden: modern man is made to conform and normalised through a set of controlling and disciplining measures. Prior to this, Norbert Elias had said *'Fremdzwang wird zum Selbstzwang'* (Elias, 1979). In our earlier research, we positioned ourselves within this last group. This positioning resulted from our observation of a fixed and rigid school grammar (Depaepe, 1998; Depaepe et al., 2000). It is within the divergent field outlined above that this paper lies. We would once again like to test the tenability of the various opinions/positions here.

4. PREACHED NORMS AND SCHOOL REALITY

Issues, pertaining to the evolution of 'disciplinary practices in school institutions', were a feature of our earlier research (Depaepe, et al., 2000; Herman, 2006). Three principal questions dominated the organisation of our research at that time: (1) 'What happened in the classroom?'; (2) 'What suggestions on punishment were made in the educational press in the period concerned?'; and (3) 'To what extent did everyday practice reflect the discourse initiated by the educational press for teachers?' In order to be able to give the most complete and qualified answer to the question regarding educational action in the classroom (the bygone classroom reality), different sources such as interviews, questionnaires, published testimony and others, were found and compiled – a kind of 'triangulation' as Lather (1991) would call it. A systematic analysis of a wide range of educational journals, brochures and books from the years 1900, 1930, 1960 and 1990, resulted in the distillation of a number of dominant views, or if you like suggestions regarding the punishment of the school-going population. In order to answer the last research question – aimed at the (possible) effect in practice of the suggestions propagated in the press – the research

findings from the first two questions were contrasted with one another. The results are briefly presented below for each sub-question.

Disseminated paper mission: The message disseminated in the educational journals cannot be considered as an unambiguous monolithic whole. For example, on the one hand you can read that corporal punishment was discouraged in the period 1880–1920, and on the other you can read (between the lines) that 'a slap at the right time' could do no harm. Nevertheless, a dominant discourse can still be inferred. At the end of the nineteenth century, an intense paper battle was being waged between the opponents and proponents of punishment. This controversy was settled by a compromise that was found in 'punitive austerity' or 'soft strictness' (see, e.g. De Coene, 1918, pp. 32, 41; De Coene and De Hovre, 1924, p. 119). It is in such a climate that the subject of punishment, at least in the educational publications, began a gradual and long withdrawal from the early years of the twentieth century onwards. Corporal punishment, alongside a number of other punishments, including 'belittling, mocking, ridicule, severe threats and intimidation' belonged to the practices that were strongly discouraged at the start of the twentieth century (see, e.g. Foerster, 1911, pp. 214–219; quoted in Depaepe et al., 2000, pp. 223–247). Punishment was disposed of as inefficient, reprehensible, and moreover, it was commonly felt that it often led to undesired effects such as resentment and resistance. In the early years, here and there and mainly looking between the lines, you could tell that, for some writers, the application of corporal punishment was sometimes justified. This ambiguity disappeared after the 1930s. We see that with regard to other forms of punishment, practitioners were generally advised to avoid them as much as possible, due to the negative effects that they could bring about (quoted in Depaepe et al., 2000, pp. 163–247). Generally speaking, moderate or easy-going punishment practice was advocated in that century. It is notable that the practice of punishment acquired negative undertones. Punishment was treated as proof of the limited professional skill or incompetence of the teacher (see, e.g. De Coene, 1918, pp. 38–39). On the one hand, we see that punishment began an exodus. On the other, we also see that in every period we examined, it was recognised that a 'punishment-free' education was unfeasible due to the need for order and discipline (see, e.g. De Coene, 1918, p. 31). The dogma of the time stipulated that order and discipline, were of prime importance to the educational learning process and for later life (see, e.g. Foerster, 1911, p. 3; quoted in Herman, 2006, p. 4.31). The bitter pill of punishment was veiled in a sugar-sweet, idyllic and romanticised discourse. *Amor* would ensure that the humble balance remained. '*Amor magister est optimus*' (love is the best educator) said the old Plinius (see, e.g., De Coene and De Hovre, 1924, pp. 99–100). It is within this discourse that the teacher is presented as a father figure, a father who is both loving and fair, but who also exhibits the necessary strictness. In every period this metaphor is used. It is this humble balance that typifies the educational relationships across the entire twentieth century. The achievement of binding affection from the child – that one could get it to do everything on the basis of love – remained the determining factor of educationally correct behaviour. This even persisted after the turbulent, revolutionary year of 1968, which appears, incidentally, to have gone largely unnoticed by primary

education's opinion-makers: 'The more we surround our authority with love, the more that rewards will be appreciated and the less painfully that punishments will be experienced' (De Opvoeder, LX, 1963, pp. 388–389, quoted in Depaepe et al., 1999, p. 243).

In addition, we were able to observe that each period could be characterised by various discourses, which viewed 'youth' as problematic. In every period there seems to be something wrong with the fledgling adults. The fear that the situation would get out of hand invariably formed a base of legitimisation to maintain and justify the existing techniques of power, and in the extreme cases, to readopt rejected techniques. Notwithstanding the fact that punishment was strongly discouraged, we see that the educational journals, operating as opinion-makers continued working very prescriptively over the whole century. On the one hand, contributors to these journals maintained that punishment had to be ruled out whenever possible, and on the other they exhaustively wrote about 'how' to punish, a paradox that persisted to the end of the twentieth century. The purpose of punishment was rarely scrutinised during this period of time. The doctrine of (re-) education resounded unanimously. '*Non quia peccatum, sed ne peccetur.*'[7] Punishment was used as a means to prevent the child or the youth, from repeating the 'offence' (see, e.g. De Coene, 1918, p. 37). Nevertheless, we see that in the early years of the period studied, other purposes were also frequently specified, in particular penance and deterrence (so that other pupils would see that such behaviour would not be tolerated). In the course of time, these objectives stopped being reported in the educational press (here we mean the educational journals). It is striking to note that 'humanising' trends, such as abolishing corporal punishment/brutality and introducing participation/consultation are, in practically every period, reduced to (or justified as) a means of order and discipline to safeguard the teacher's authority, or as a means of protection against the impact of punishment. Even in the 1990s such conceptions of punishment still persisted – albeit less pronounced and less frequently. Consequently, thinking of such trends in terms of humanisation and democratisation, no longer seems adequate or sufficiently thorough.

Facing reality: What struck us, when reading the accounts of schooling we collected, were the often remarkable similarities between the recollections of individuals who were schooled generations apart. The analysis of day-to-day practice in the past (1900–2000), taking into account the reasons for punishment, brings a largely unwritten and extensive system of school rules (that remained basically unchanged over time) to the foreground. It also emphasised the fact that practically the same reasons for punishment are employed in primary and secondary education, and that more attention is systematically paid to the observance of certain rules or the prevention of further breaches of certain rules. In other words, young people were punished for the same reasons in both 1900 and 1999. Throughout the century, as soon as a child was of school-going age, he/she was subject to a machinery of rules, or a 'regulatory mosaic' (Caron, 1999, p. 88) that applied throughout his/her school career. Foucault argues:

> These rules and requirements are viewed as personal obligations, the breaking of which counts as an affront that brings retribution. Disobedience is considered to be the start of a revolt that in essence does not differ from civil war. An authority that does not need to justify why it enforces its laws, but which has to indicate who its enemies are and who have to fear unbridled power. An authority that revives its effectiveness in the spectacle of its separate demonstrations: an authority that acquires new force by ritually and overwhelmingly demonstrating the reality of its supremacy. (Foucault, 1989, p. 82)

The bulk of the reasons for the forms of punishment we encountered are classified under the category of 'order and discipline'. This school 'order and discipline' was the absolute precondition (or panacea) – for good educational practice.

We are confronted – with regard to the punishments imposed – (1) by a 'multiplicity of methods' (Caron, 1999, p. 88), or in other words a large and varied repertoire of punishments; (2) the strong similarity between the punishment measures used in order to keep pupils 'in line' in primary and secondary education; and (3) the great consistency with which the entire school punishment mechanism, including the category of corporal punishment, was employed. On the basis of the analysis, we would like to qualify the fact that we discovered many instances of corporal punishment. Despite the 'over-representation' in the corporal punishment category, we nevertheless believe that we cannot talk here of a real *Prügelpädagogik.*

It is plausible that this category (corporal punishment) is the one embedded most deeply in the memories – or 'sedimented in the body' (Connerton, 1989, p. 72) – of the respondents, and that, other techniques were cited less frequently. In addition, we have to acknowledge that the approach to 'corporal punishment'[8] that we adopted – where we reduced an entire range of different practices to a single umbrella concept – could have led to premature and incorrect conclusions. In our opinion, we adequately anticipated this by subjecting all punishments belonging to one well-defined category – such as corporal punishment – to a consistent and thorough analysis in order to be able to expose a number of trends. This resulted in a somewhat more nuanced account. The way in which pupils were physically punished changed somewhat. We can observe that, over time, there were gradually fewer blows, kicks and tweaks. 'Binding' the left hand was also consigned to the past. The 'severer or condemned corporal punishments' were taken over by lighter, more humane, more socially acceptable 'physical' punishments. Things were thus toned down in most cases, but that does not detract from the fact that in a few cases (in the recent past) certain teachers have still resorted to the 'harder' forms of corporal punishment. Corporal punishment is unrelenting in practice. Practically all punishments encountered were of a public nature, i.e. the punishment was generally pronounced publicly and/or administered in public. Foucault (1989, pp. 51, 69, 71, 81–83) sees a triumph in this, or a demonstration of authority, that must restrain others from committing the same offence. He describes it as a 'policy of deterrence'. The fact that the imposed punishment is practically always combined, or call it supplemented, with public exposure/humiliation or other punishment techniques leads Parke to conclude that (corporal) punishment is like 'a packaged variable' (Thompson Gershoff, 2002, p. 605).

Clash between preached mission and reality: 'Corporal punishment', 'mocking pupils' and 'intimidating pupils' are strongly discouraged in the educational press in the four periods we studied. If alongside this we consider the punishment encountered in both primary and secondary education over the full hundred years, we find many reports of corporal punishment, belittling and threats, despite the policy of discouragement. Another example is the notable discouragement of 'written' punishment from the start of the twentieth century onwards. Nevertheless, accounts of practice in primary schools reveal many examples of written punishment in this period. Towards the end of the twentieth century we note friction surrounding this form of punishment. Although, in the 1990s, teachers were advised against forms of punishment, which involved deducting marks, reports of such practices were nevertheless found in secondary education during this period. We could summarise here a number of these discrepancies between practice (educational reality) and the dominant discourse in educational publications (educational desirability), but we have already made our opinion sufficiently well known regarding the fact that what the educational journals propagated was not always (proportionally) followed in practice. The pathos in the press was (almost) unable to alter the punishment repertoire employed by teachers. It is also notable that, over the century, so many reports were found of punishment in practice. In our opinion, this takes us in the direction of the 'omnivalent' presence of such techniques, as it would have been very coincidental if we had only selected respondents from schools where these techniques were employed. It thus seems that, considering the findings mentioned above, pathos did not 'always' make its way through into practice. Perhaps this can be put more harshly, and we might say 'rarely made it through', but thorough statistical research would be the only way to make this claim 'scientifically' sound.

5. LIFTING THE MYTHICAL FLOG

The rhetoric of discontinuity, whereby cut-off points are placed on the past and certain aspects magnified, naturally yields accounts of progress in the benefaction of education and the good life. With such accounts, discipline itself was incorporated into a professional and pedagogically relevant outlook. The 'irony of that historicism was that, with a supra-historical idea of progress, it swept history aside – it was as if history was made blind to the way in which the historical conditions determined the finality and direction of the accounts of history' (Depaepe et al., 2000, pp. 13–14). Walter Benjamin presented this as history being emptied by history (Popkewitz et al., 2001, p. 4). Such representations, which testify to a modernistic belief in progress, were very quickly adopted by the general public. A 'false' understanding of history was able to become more widespread and degenerated into a myth! The discourse was blindly adopted, or as Armand Eisen described it: 'Assumptions can be like blinkers on a horse – they keep us from straying from the road, but they block our view of other routes and possibilities along the roadside' (quoted in Sharry, 2004, p. 3). Below we endeavour to eliminate, or at least approach, a number of these blind spots (relating to the views on 'the extent to which certain "desirable"

educational styles or educational strategies duly found their way into everyday educational reality'), which rest on premature conclusions, careless generalisations and assumptions.

From command to negotiation? The much cited change theses, which includes the shift 'from a command regime to a negotiation regime' (this shift – the notion of which was aptly formulated by De Swaan (1980) – is used to identify differences from how things were fifty or so years ago) resulting in the 'democratisation'/ 'humanisation of education' (think of Lloyd de Mause and Neil Postman) is quite simply negated by these results. As we have already demonstrated, many alleged innovations regarding discipline, which feature in the educational press, originate from the more distant past. Many suggestions in the educational journals are merely repetitions of an already well-trodden discourse, which is nevertheless presented as being new. A number of authors, who succumbed to the lyricism of these so-called innovators, assaulted historical reality for a second time, by simply transposing the latter's rhetoric onto classroom practice. They did not in any way penetrate through to what actually happens in the classroom. In addition, they seem to have drawn some very hasty and rash conclusions, as a thorough analysis – over a longer period and using different sources – of the educational rhetoric does not reveal any changes. Finally, they also seem to have passed over the reasons provided in the press for adjusting punishment practice. After all, together, the changes were considered to be a means to an end, rather than ends in themselves. The current situation in the classroom is in our opinion more characterised by the combination of a command regime and a negotiation regime. We are not simply confronted with a negotiation regime. We must therefore leave behind the 'yes-no game', which is inherently linked to the concept of 'change', because the term does not allow any intermediate positions.

Changing techniques or expansion? We found that the thesis of shifts (e.g. Finkelstein), separate from concepts such as change or reversal, provides a more nuanced view of reality. Nevertheless we would like to make this 'harder', because the term 'shift' is often taken to imply the abandonment of other techniques. The notion of 'abandonment' fits in very closely with the concept of changes that are concluded too quickly. This simply brushes aside the potential of the shift thesis to look back at the past in a more nuanced way. The aforementioned shift in punishment techniques cannot in our opinion be regarded as a complete abandonment of certain techniques in the favour of completely different ones, as some would claim. Almost all methods haunt the present in some form. Thus we have already seen that physical punishment in all its forms/degrees continues to exist. We might therefore note an expansion of techniques rather than a shift. In taking this position, we find ourselves opposed to Barbara Finkelstein, who, in her book 'Governing the Young', argued that corporal punishment had disappeared. This erroneous observation is attributable to, what is in our opinion, an overly narrow conception of corporal punishment.

Towards equal treatment of children and adults? To say that nothing has changed and that the hard approach still remains, as Philip Greven suggests, reflects an oversimplified vision, which, in the light of this research, must be regarded as untenable.

On the one hand, we have indeed been able to observe that 'corporal punishment' has always continued to exist, but on the other hand we have been able to observe a number of 'shifts'. The substitution of the 'severer (or condemned) corporal punishments' with lighter, more humane, more socially acceptable 'physical' punishments, can be illustrative here. A double moral standard seems to lurk behind physical punishment. In practice, the moral standards that are applied to relationships between adults do not apply to the relationship between educators and children. In general it is said: 'everybody is entitled to have his physical integrity respected'. As a result, violence towards anybody is prohibited (unless it is an exceptional situation). The results of this research show that there are apparently many exceptional situations with respect to young people, from which we have to conclude that the general rule cited above apparently does not apply (or does so but to a lesser extent) to children and young people. In this respect we can talk of a double moral standard. Violence against children is divided into two forms: the legitimised form and the condemned form of abuse. A 'different' moral standard thus applies to children (Baartman, 1993, pp. 319–331). 'Children are condemned never to leave the field of the one-sided battle they have to wage against adults' (quoted in Depaepe, 1998, p. 33).

The objective of punishment: from body to soul? Educational publications frequently proclaimed: punishment must not focus on physical sanctions, the emotional and psychological approach is much better, as expressed in punishments like 'grounding'. The basic idea was that punishment ought to shape the child's will, but not break it. In practice too, such techniques seem to have gained popularity as the 'century of the child' drew to its conclusion. This trend is called 'psychologisation', where the movement is away from the body and towards the soul ('psyche') as the target of punishment. Such an interpretation appears for example in the studies of the pedagogy of the body in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by Bouillé (1984, p. 139), where he demonstrated that other disciplinary techniques were being introduced: 'Now it is about striking the soul more than the body.' Foucault (1989) also provided a detailed description of the gradual evolution (in criminal law during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries) from acting on the body of the punished person to striking the soul. He refers to the principle of Malby: 'The punishment must, if I may say, strike the soul more than the body' (Foucault, 1989, p. 10). To put it briefly, up to now the concept of psychologisation has been frequently used to explain the evolution in punishment practices and rituals during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in prisons, detention centres, schools and also households.

The question is, however, whether such a broad concept ultimately does justice to the actual situation of punishment practices both in the past and today. First, the above research findings, on the evolution of punishment during the twentieth century, indicate that if such a shift has already taken place, it cannot and must not be considered as absolute. Corporal punishment certainly belongs to the repertoire of contemporary teachers. Such a finding does not undermine the psychologisation thesis, but it does take away its absolutising dimension. Second, it is necessary to examine whether the other punishment techniques, given as alternatives to physical punishment, such as the temporary 'exclusion' of pupils (which according to the answers of our respondents indeed became more frequent), actually resulted in more

pronounced 'psychological' effects than corporal punishment. Naturally, such interventions act on the 'inner person' of the pupil. Think of shame or the fear of losing a social position in the class group. However, the same thing applies to physical punishment mutatis mutandis. This kind of punishment is not lacking in psychological components either. Foucault (1989) illustrated this in a masterly way. Exuberant displays of power over the body (torture, execution, etc.) made way for imprisonment, and the idea of re-education, but that does not take away the fact that the assault on the body of the 'criminal' was also coupled with instilling fear, public humiliation and generating shame. The inner person was thus previously just as much a subject of punishment. Foucault (1989) himself in *Surveiller et Punir* raised the question of whether a punishment can be non-physical.[9] With this question he transposed the shift, which he outlined – to the punishment apparatus – from the body to the soul. Here he rightly called the Cartesian cage – that separates body from the mind – into question. There are many arguments that demonstrate the untenability of the mind/body dichotomy. A textbook example of this is *Commotion in the body* (Navridis, 1993, p. 107). In this description the soul is contained in the body – they form a unit – and when the soul is subject to punishment (re-education) then the body is involved just as much, something that Foucault also alluded to. Punishment always strikes the soul as well as the body. Much testimony in *Remembering School* by Southgate (2003) confirms this position. It is clear that corporal punishment has an impact on the body of the punished person, but the testimony also shows that the soul is shaken just as much. Respondents who described their experience of corporal punishment, frequently referred to the public humiliation and the feeling of discomfort and inner pain, which coincided with it. Other accounts of punishment, which can be classified as acting more on the inner soul of the pupil (e.g. humiliation) very often contain descriptions of physical reactions such as blushing, sweating (profusely), rapid breathing, increased blood pressure, being 'frozen on the spot', blurred vision, etc. When considering such accounts, arguments that the 'psychologisation' of punishment affects the soul 'more and more' are no longer tenable. The concept is just not closely woven enough to capture the distinction between the intended objective and the effects of the punishment experienced. A possible alternative to the concept of 'psychologisation' could possibly be found in the (intentional, fragmentary and non-universal) concept of 'debodying (dephysicalisation) the punitive intervention'. Such a description implies that the soul has always been subject to punishment – the greater/lesser presentation of the term psychologisation is thereby sidetracked – and also refers to the trend of the reduced use of (hard) corporal punishments.

6. CONCLUSION

In our attempt to break through to what actually happened in the past in the classroom, we came up against (small) shifts and extensions (discontinuities) in the repertoire of educational behaviour, and also the basic patterns of the rigid and anti-modernising 'grammar of schooling' (according to an idea of Cuban's, 1990; Tyack, and Tobin,

1994; Gore, 1995; Tyack and Cuban, 1995; Gore, 1997, 1998), which we deliberately widened into a 'grammar of educationalising' (Depaepe, 1998; Depaepe et al., 2006). The increased scientific attention to the effects of (physical) punishment and the accompanying aspiration to 'exorcise' certain forms of (corporal) punishment, the rather negative social opinions on (corporal) punishment (in Belgium), the prolonged advice to stop using certain punishments by educational opinion-makers and the gradual legal embodiment of the idea of protection, were unable to thoroughly change the traditional patterns of pedagogical action. This inertia and rigidity are frequently explained by the historically evolving 'school culture' (with its own school grammar, educational technologies and pedagogical semantics), or, in other words 'the basic suppositions, standards and values, and cultural artefacts that are shared by school members, which influence the way they act at school' (Maslowski, 2001, pp. 10–13), and which are externalised in 'standard practices', 'fixed patterns of behaviour' or 'customs', that have already proven their soundness and reliability. A long-term learning process brought the 'school culture' into being. This culture forms a guiding principle for teachers, which directs their thinking and actions. 'They are rules that drive the internal dynamics of life in the classroom and the school. They are the consequence of the historical development of the internal structural conditions of the institutionalisation of education, and of the historically sedimented patterns of expectations, conceptions, and attitudes concerning the child, his education, society, etc.' (Depaepe et al., 2006, pp. 32–33). By pointing out this 'continuity' we have been (partly) able to 'refute', or at least call into question, a number of claimed changes (shifts), which have created a rosy impression for a long time. Ironically enough, this 'dulls' the naively optimistic and promising headline 'The Century of the Child', with which Key (1903) prophesied the potency of the coming century. For a long time her dream was held up as a mirror of reality. This reality possibly now only consists of reflecting fragments, possible remnants of a modernistic illusion, but also refers to the more variegated, complex realities of 'real' life.

NOTES

[1] For example, in the international context, Sweden was the first country to legally prohibit all forms of violence in the education of children in 1979. Sweden was followed by Finland (1983), Denmark (1986), Norway (1987), Austria (1989) and Cyprus (1994).

[2] See, for instance, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: Art. 3 and Art. 5.

[3] See, for instance, the Convention on Children's Rights: Art.19.1 and Art.19.2.

[4] See, for instance, the Belgian Constitution: Art. 22*bis*: 'Every child is entitled to have his moral, physical, psychological and sexual integrity respected.'

[5] See, for instance, Whitworth, D., and Pierce, A. (1 November 1996), 'The man who gave Major a thrashing says it did him good', *The Times;* Glover, S. (1 November 1996), 'Can boys be beaten?', *Daily Telegraph;* Reynolds, M. (9 August 2005), 'Bring back the cane to tackle yobs', *Daily Express*; Dunleavy, T. (20 May 2005), 'Perhaps we should bring back corporal punishment', *New Zealand Herald.* These articles resound the clamour for a return to

an idealised old regime where the authority of school teachers was once unchallenged by rebellious school children. These messages are striking examples of the above 'argument for' and 'establishment of' a more repressive approach.

[6] See also, for instance, Katz, M. B. (1975). *Class, bureaucracy, and schools: The illusion of educational change in America*. New York: Praeger.; Rothstein, S. W. (1984). *The power to punish: A social inquiry into coercion and control in urban schools.* New York: University Press of America.

[7] Not because someone committed an offence, but to avoid him repeating the offence. See, for instance, Van der Perren, *Het opvoedkundige element in de straf*, 15–16.

[8] Corporal punishment: 'A reprisal or disciplinary measure that has an impact on the body of the punished person. The physical pain (i.e. physical suffering) can be caused by the use of physical violence (hitting, pinching, etc.) where an object may or may not be used, by imposing (severe) physical exertion, by requiring a certain physical posture to be adopted for a long time, by deliberately not allowing needs to be fulfilled, or by exposing the punished person to (extreme) weather conditions' (Herman, 2006, p. 2.24).

[9] But despite the fact that severe torture has given way to more 'humanised' forms of punishment that act on the soul, the body remains just as much the subject. 'As although they do not employ violent or bloody punishments, they do make use of 'soft' methods such as imprisonment or correction, but even then it still revolves around the body – the body and its strengths, their pliability and use, their distribution and subjection.' (Foucault, 1989, p. 40).

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