

*A Concept of Education in the Experience of Freedom:  
Hermeneutic-Phenomenological Investigations*

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## **Abstract**

This thesis considers the idea of freedom in education. It attempts to show how prevalent conceptions of education – for example, in progressive child-centred education and in the idea of a liberal education – take on the question of freedom as something that the human being has, a property that human beings have in varying degrees. Freedom is then understood as something that is realised (or frustrated) in one way or another through their education – whether, for example, by allowing children freedom from the start or by restricting their freedom so that they can be initiated into worthwhile pursuits and forms of knowledge. To consider freedom at this level is not only legitimate but desirable up to a point. Freedom is an issue for education. But to confine thinking to these matters is to miss something more fundamental and ultimately more important about freedom. This has to do with the ways that freedom is a precondition for human being: it is freedom that allows human beings to be. This is so because things, for human beings, are understood not just as meaningless objects but in terms of their possibilities. To think of possibility involves a freeing of thought or, otherwise put, a thought that frees. Martin Heidegger provides a uniquely powerful way to this insight, and this thesis is therefore concerned to explore his thought in this respect. As has been seen, this is not just to do with human beings, for on this line of thought, freedom is also a condition for the world to be as world: the idea of world is inseparable from an idea of possibility. Freedom allows human beings to be and things to come into their own nature. Hence, there is a reciprocal relation between human beings and world, and it is the freedom inherent though sometimes latent in thought that allows things to come into presence.

This thesis suggests ways of stepping forward from the current discussion of freedom. Within mainstream exploration and analysis of freedom, especially in Anglophone contexts, discussion is typically framed in terms of the contrasting ideas of freedom-from and freedom-to, in the light of which we can then speak of the freedom ‘of’ a person. Freedom in the sense explored in this thesis, however, is not to best understood in these ways. I am concerned instead with freedom as a phenomenon, which appears in education ‘as’ something. In a critical reading of Martin Heidegger and Jean-Luc Nancy, the idea of freedom in educational practice and theory is discussed in terms of five themes:

as movement, as possibility, as a leap, as language, and as thinking. In the light of such a phenomenology, education comes to be seen as a practice (or set of practices) in which the play of freedom reveals and conceals. In this way, the nature of education is considered as freedom in action, through which the human being is defined, refined, and renewed. It follows that any understanding of education that is blind to this freeing of thought is likely to fall short: for such a freeing of thought should be crucial to teaching and understanding in a subject and to the way the newcomer comes into the world.

## **Statement of Originality**

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Sun Inn Yun

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## List of Abbreviations of Martin Heidegger's Works

<b>BP</b>	<i>The Basic Problems of Phenomenology</i>
<b>BT</b>	<i>Being and Time</i>
<b>CPC</b>	<i>Country Path Conversations</i>
<b>CT</b>	<i>The Concept of Time</i>
<b>DT</b>	<i>Discourse on Thinking</i>
<b>IM</b>	<i>Introduction to Metaphysics</i>
<b>IP</b>	<i>Introduction to Philosophy</i>
<b>EG</b>	<i>On the Essence of Ground</i>
<b>EHF</b>	<i>The Essence of Human freedom</i>
<b>ET</b>	<i>On the Essence of Truth</i>
<b>FCM</b>	<i>Fundamental Concepts of Metaphysics</i>
<b>KPM</b>	<i>Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics</i>
<b>LH</b>	<i>Letter on "Humanism"</i>
<b>MFL</b>	<i>Metaphysical Foundations of Logic</i>
<b>OWL</b>	<i>On the Way to Language</i>
<b>PDT</b>	<i>Plato's Doctrine of Truth</i>
<b>PLT</b>	<i>Poetry, Language, Thought</i>
<b>PR</b>	<i>The Principle of Reason</i>
<b>PWM</b>	<i>Postscript to "What is Metaphysics?"</i>
<b>QCT</b>	<i>The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays</i>
<b>STF</b>	<i>Schelling's Treatise on the Essence of Human Freedom</i>
<b>WCT</b>	<i>What Is Called Thinking?</i>
<b>WN</b>	<i>The Word of Nietzsche</i>
<b>WT</b>	<i>What is Metaphysics?</i>

**Part I**  
**Introduction**



# CHAPTER 1

## The Problem of Freedom in the Over-Educated Society

### The Over-Educated Society

The well-known American economist, Richard Freeman, defined the 1970s in the USA with the phrase ‘the over-educated society’ (1976). In his book, the desire and expectation of individuals and society regarding college education is described from an economic perspective. This book is worth looking at in order to evaluate the way education is popularly considered. Freeman states that the value of higher education is to reward individuals with higher salaries and social reputation, and that it also produces national growth in economic and defence terms for society (e.g. after the success of the Soviet Sputnik the US government tried to promote expertise at PhD level in various academic fields). The main argument in his book is that the number of highly educated persons (in an economic context the supply) exceeds the number of available vacancies present in the job market (the demand), and that during the economic recession of the 1970s in the United States this led to a devaluation of higher education in general, reflected in lower salaries and fewer high-level white collar job opportunities than before. He names this phenomenon of the relationship of the number of educated persons to what is required by the labour market in circumstances where supply exceeds demand ‘the over-educated society’.

It would be wrong to dismiss this term simply on the grounds that it sees education in a very narrow way. Freeman cautiously differentiates what he means by this term from other accounts as follows: ‘Overeducated relates in this context to the connection between years and type of college studies and labor market earnings and opportunities, not to the broader cultural aspects of higher education’ (Freeman, 1976, p. 4). One of the reasons that Freeman restricts the term *over-educated* to its economic sense may be to set aside any other possible meanings or values in education for the sake of clarity of argument. The meanings that Freeman puts aside cannot be captured within the logic of supply and demand.

Yet to think of being educated in terms of supplying the labour market is only one way of looking at education. Besides, the quality of this supply is not even predictable due to the countless variables in education and human being in general. Unlike what is the case in many industries, the products (if we may tentatively for the moment identify education in terms of products, with teachers, textbooks and other possible learning materials including educational environments taken as the materials) are not, on the whole, so predictable. In fact such unpredictability remains as guarantor of various possibilities of human being and of nature. These themes are often conceived as issues to be discussed in the philosophy of education. In fact, this aspect of education and its possibilities is the key value of education, and it is one that economics is scarcely capable of disclosing.

Over forty years after the publication of Freeman’s *The Overeducated American* we find another economist, Hajoong Chang, also pointing to the ‘over-enthusiasm’ for higher education, with a conclusion that runs:

Education is valuable, but its main value is not in raising productivity. It lies in its ability to help us develop our potentials and live a more fulfilling and independent life. If we expanded education in the belief that it will make our economies richer, we will be sorely disappointed, for the link between education and national productivity is rather tenuous and complicated (Chang, 2010, p. 189).

What the two economists above may wish to preserve in the value of education includes more humanistic factors such as autonomy, morality, and notions of freedom that, when framed within supposedly practical disciplines such as economics, are often dismissed as

idealistic. The problem is that this dismissal may seem legitimately to exclude the consideration of the meaning of education itself. This technical usage often encourages the inclusion of educational values such as autonomy or freedom into a mix of politico-economic ideas, as found in such expressions as ‘autonomous consumers’, ‘free choice of study’, and so on, without prior and adequate consideration of their meaning within an educational context. The values implicit in education need discussing or rather discovering in philosophy, and this, I believe, is what philosophy of education is mainly devoted to achieving.

Perhaps starting with the rather technical terminology of the ‘over-educated society’ may appear too dry or academic. This is not, however, merely an abstract, academic interest for me. The question has its roots in my personal experience. Let me briefly describe how my interest in education and its relation to freedom has evolved.

I was raised by a single parent in a working class family in Korea. At home, there were not many books but we did have, exceptionally, a series of biographies of successful people in Korea and abroad. With little entertainment at home, I would pile up several books from the series on my left side at vacations, read them through, and put them on my right side. I often imagined myself in a similar situation as Marie Curie, as Ludwig Beethoven, as Noguchi Hideyo, or as Dong-ju Yun. At times I wished I was a genius like them. Looking back I can see how the virtues that the biographers wanted to introduce to their young readership appealed to me: work hard, stay committed, and there will be good times ahead. Some years later, I became a college student. In my first year of university, my mother died.

My mother, Ok-ae Lee, was herself a widow. She had not much of desire for herself but had single-mindedly set about making a success of raising her three girls on her own. She was sustained by a strong religious devotion. Every day she went to the Morning Prayer to pray for her family’s health and prosperity. Her faith was the main source of her resilience against the difficulty of life as a widow bringing up three girls on her own in the face of poverty. It had always been her wish that her three children would go to university. At her funeral, relatives and the neighbours who knew her well expressed their sorrow about what a pity it was for her to die at a moment when all her children had grown up having received a good education and that now they would neither be able to

pay her back nor would she be able to receive their gratitude and thanks (a kind of filial piety). All that was left for us was to give thanks to her in our eulogy for all the blessings she had bestowed on us.

After the funeral, I was puzzled in many respects. University life, on the whole, was not very exciting. I was too busy making a life for myself. And I was too sad to say, or to even know, that I was sad. The glorious moments that the biographies portrayed had not yet happened. I often thought that studying education further might lead to my day in the sun. Just like the idea of education, however, I had little concrete idea of such a day. I decided to go on with a higher degree. The principle remained in me: hang in there, the time will come. But will it?

My personal story may well be an illustration of the over-educated society: education, first of all, no longer functions as a social ladder. I do not expect my working class background to be superseded by my education. As the statistics show, PhD holders are no longer privileged by earning a higher income. Secondly, and more importantly, my story reveals more than the economic impact of the over-educated society. There is a particular way of thinking or belief about ‘a better life’ or ‘flourishing’ via education. This applies at the levels of both the individual and the society. Economic advantage, in this respect, can be seen as one of the tangible outcomes of ‘a better life’ through education. If the term over-educated society encapsulates such ideology, then perhaps it should not be used in an exclusively technical way. This should be the indicator that we need to question what education is.

In my Master’s dissertation, I examined educational practice in relation to the notion of death. The topic was chosen with two seemingly contradictory questions in mind: How can people actually teach about death? And secondly how do people avoid talking about death? These questions were rooted in my personal experience of dealing with my mother’s death. In my reading of Martin Heidegger, I came across one of his peculiar terms: ‘freedom towards death’, a term to which I shall pay some attention later in the chapter. I found the term unsettling as this notion of freedom seemed completely at odds with the more usual associations of freedom with educational aims – towards truth, autonomy, or something of this kind. What, in the light of this, might freedom imply in relation to education?

The question itself may seem disarmingly simple and straightforward. However, the concern driving it is perhaps at this stage best presented paradoxically. Many philosophers of education have had something to say about freedom and education in one form or another yet there has been little consideration of freedom in philosophy of education. This statement may seem astonishing since one can easily find a range of documents and articles discussing and advocating freedom. Freedom, for instance, can be understood as a fundamental concept of education which often makes education distinguishable from indoctrination. In this chapter, I would like to show how freedom in education has been discussed in philosophy of education by focusing on the debate around autonomy. In so doing, I shall draw attention to the point that, although freedom as an ideal has been discussed, little attention has been given to the nature of freedom itself - and, that is, to its fundamental importance in the constitution of human being and our understanding of the world itself. This is not because the philosophy of education has been indolent but because this concept itself has a more complicated history as a philosophical problem than we now encounter in its more restricted, although familiar use in relation to educational terms and values.

## **The Relation between Autonomy and Freedom in Education**

One value that philosophy of education has considered as an educational ideal is autonomy, in which the value of freedom is taken as given. It is worth tracing the concept of autonomy that Robert F. Dearden (1968; 1972; 1975)<sup>1</sup> considers, and how this conceptual configuration has been developed subsequently. In this line, Dearden suggests autonomy as an educational aim along the following lines:

The object of this paper is to attempt to clarify and evaluate a new aim in education. ... This new aim is to develop in children, over the whole period of

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<sup>1</sup> Although Dearden's account of autonomy as an educational ideal first appears in his book *Philosophy of Primary Education* (1968), his essays afterwards are focused in this paper. As Stone (1990) indicates, his philosophy of autonomy ripens in of his essays in *Autonomy and Education* (1972) and *Autonomy as an Educational Ideal I* (1975).

their formal schooling, an important quality of character which can appropriately be called that of 'personal autonomy' (Dearden, 1972, p. 448).

Personal autonomy identifies a particular character of the individual rather than of other institutions or of the society as a whole. Dearden (1972) then analyses the distinction between autonomy, freedom, and independence, and the relationship between autonomy and reason, morality and truth. Finally, he considers the values of autonomy insofar as they constitute an educational ideal.

With a Kantian perspective, broadly speaking, Dearden understands that freedom is a necessary condition for autonomy. For no autonomous activities would be achieved as a result of external influences. Freedom is a prerequisite in order for the agent to exercise autonomy. In this respect freedom is conceived as a condition of no external coercion: it is *freedom from any coercion*. This kind of freedom then conceptually guarantees that no other influence impinges on its status as autonomy.

Rather than focusing on the notion of freedom in education other than as a necessary condition for autonomy, Dearden pays particular attention to the development of autonomy, and this, as he claims, requires education:

The relation between freedom and the outward *exercise* of autonomy is therefore to be seen, not as one of identity, but as one in which freedom is a necessary condition. Attempts to identify the two more closely lead to a version of 'positive' freedom which may make a kind of sense but which is ill-advised. For when autonomy has as yet no psychological reality in a person, coercion may then be passed off as liberation, as being what he 'really' wants or wills, and thus as needing no further justification. Discussion of different positive ideals of character, or worthwhile exercises of freedom, will also be confused by each view claiming that it alone gives a true account of what freedom is.

What is more interesting from the point of view of autonomy as an educational ideal is the question of whether freedom is a necessary condition for the development, as opposed to the exercise, of autonomy (Dearden, 1972, p. 11).

The quoted passage encompasses the textual moment when Dearden most clearly analyses the conceptual relationship between freedom and autonomy – that is, whether freedom is a necessary condition for the *development* of autonomy. It is highly plausible that Dearden's focus on this question stands in the way of any more direct account of

freedom itself, even though he necessarily assumes that there must be some such true account. Any pursuit of this deeper question tends to be blocked because the discussion is oriented towards an ideal of autonomy: this hides the more fundamental ways in which freedom is a precondition for human being and for the world. This feature of Dearden's argument, as we have suggested, in which freedom is conceived as a necessary condition for autonomy, leads the discussion into the development of autonomy through education.

Let me expand on this a little. The issue of autonomy through education has raised a debate in educational practices. For instance, there is ongoing debate between liberal and progressive educationalists on the amount of freedom to be granted to students to encourage their autonomous development. Although freedom is understood as a necessary condition for autonomy, Dearden emphasises that it does not follow that freedom is necessary for the *development* of autonomy (1975). To begin with freedom should not necessarily be given to children at a time when they are too much influenced by peer groups or cultural trends. Rather he contends that a more disciplined upbringing may be required for the development of autonomy. On the matter of the amount of freedom, Victor Quinn (1984) rejects Dearden's idea of how to develop autonomy. For Quinn, autonomous behaviour is skilled behaviour that needs to be practised through education. In this respect, a proper amount of freedom needs to be given to students even at quite a young age so that they can exercise and develop their own autonomy.

From my point of view this difference in view comes down, as I have indicated, to the lack of problematisation of freedom in education, especially as a result of an almost obsessive preoccupation with the question of the development of autonomy. Freedom functions as a necessary condition for autonomy, and any more fundamental discussion of this disappears in Dearden's argument. Freedom for the development of autonomy then becomes subject to consideration in overly practical and quasi-quantifiable terms – say, in respect of amounts of 'free time'. Of course Dearden is not interested only in autonomy, but it becomes a kind of anchor for his discussion of other factors such as morality and truth. Once again, however, this is to the neglect of any more radical and direct examination of freedom itself. This makes him vulnerable to Quinn's type of counter argument, which is readily conceivable in its critical trajectory. The core of the debate becomes a matter of the practical, even the physical conditions of freedom. An important

point here is that the supposed behavioural indicators of freedom (such as freedom of movement in the classroom) are notoriously inadequate as indicators of what is going on in a child's mind and development. Hence, there is a danger that the kind of debate that separates Dearden and Quinn that it become fruitlessly self-perpetuating. Dearden's rejection of a focus on the notion of freedom itself (although the rejection is practical as well as essential for him to develop the concept of autonomy) eventually leads us to the following kinds of questions if we are ready to be critical enough to reject the instinctual resort to *apparently obvious* answers, such as 'because that is right', and so on. In what way can we pursue autonomy or expect that autonomy will be developed? What needs to be considered, I contend, is the reconsideration of the relationship between freedom and education.

Despite the high estimation of Dearden's attempt to set out the meaning of autonomy in educational contexts, his contribution to this problem may inadvertently circumscribe those deeper meanings that we may wish to discuss further in education. There have been a number of such discussions on the relation of morality and autonomy in which having freedom is merely assumed as a presupposition for autonomy. This then seems to have led, with some exceptions in politically-themed debates where freedom is considered as a key concept, to a conceptual consideration on the meaning of freedom in education that is somewhat impoverished but that has, nevertheless, continued to provide the defining terms in which the idea of autonomy in education is addressed.

## **The Subsequent Development of the Discussion of Autonomy**

The significance of autonomy as a central theme in British philosophy of education has been recognised for nearly a half a century. As John White (2003) rightly points out, autonomy has featured since the 1960s as a key enabler for British philosophy of education as well as for the liberal framework itself (p. 148). Although too numerous to list in this paper, research on autonomy can be broadly categorised into two main fields: a) those with a socio-political emphasis, and b) those with epistemological and existential



emphases. These two main fields are not strictly separated and in fact are often interconnected. By tracing the development of the discussion of autonomy in Britain, we may expect to see how the idea of autonomy, as initially understood above, has been re-shaped and how freedom now appears as a marginal issue in philosophy of education.

### **a) The socio-political emphasis**

Some philosophers have shown a clear predilection for a social and political perspective, in order to answer such questions. Among the exemplars of this socio-political emphasis on autonomy are White himself and Harry Brighouse. White deems it appropriate to tackle educational problems with the expansiveness of questions such as ‘What ought to be the aims of education?’ or ‘What should our society be like?’, and it is these that are in a sense the starting points for his consideration of autonomy (1982, p. 1). White proposes personal autonomy as an educational aim. White’s definition of *the educated man* seems identical with Dearden’s account of autonomy, in that it involves both prizing autonomy in association with an independent-mindedness he locates within himself and setting equal store by independent-mindedness exhibited in others (White, 1982, p. 121). White also considers the society and the moral life of the individual to be interconnected:

The educated man is someone who has come to care about his own well-being in the extended sense which includes his living a morally virtuous life, this latter containing a civic dimension among others. Whereas other recent accounts of him have made his possession of *knowledge* his chief characteristic, this one makes virtues more central (White, 1982, p. 121).

Inspired by Joseph Raz (1986), White deepens the concept of autonomy to invoke a stronger sense of the term than that ascribed to it by Eamonn Callan (White, 1990, p. 100).<sup>2</sup> This stronger sense of autonomy involves critical reflection on society that goes

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<sup>2</sup> The first sentence in the book by Raz is ‘This is a book about political freedom’ (1986, p. 1). Raz describes his book further as ‘an essay on the political morality of liberalism’ (*ibid.*). We may rightly say that freedom, morality, and autonomy in Raz are interpreted in political perspective, i.e. that of socio-political significance. White indicates that Raz’s account of autonomy has a stronger sense than that of Callan. In this stronger sense, autonomy requires ‘critical

beyond individualistic considerations. In so doing, an autonomy-supporting society is developed further through the cooperation of its political and educational institutions. Without questioning how far autonomy in the individual presupposes democracy, we find that White develops the concept of autonomy and education in terms of its social and political context. In tune with this, a social and political emphasis regarding autonomy is also found in Harry Brighouse:

Autonomy has a deeply social aspect, not least because human beings are deeply social beings. Individuals do not flourish separately from others; their interests are bound up with those of other people, and their reflection takes place within a given social context. Certainly they subject both their own personal traits and the relationships within their situation to rational scrutiny. Rational reflection can help us to detect inconsistencies and fallacious argumentation, and to uncover misuse of evidence. It helps us to see whether a choice coheres with our given judgements, including our judgements about what sort of person we ought to be. It also helps us to evaluate the ways we are attached to other people, and to carry out our altruistic obligations and goals more effectively (Brighouse, 2006, pp. 19-20).

Harry Brighouse has defended his political position as an advocate of liberalism via a number of educational issues such as parental school choice (1997). Although his main argument on school choice is persuasive and powerful, there is not scope within this thesis to explore it in detail. It is the right place, however, to briefly consider how Brighouse characterises freedom in liberalism. ‘Equal respect to persons’ as a core principle of morality, for instance, is likely to be perceived as echoing John Rawls. Along with liberal political philosophers in general, for Brighouse political morality needs to be understood in terms of minimum conditions: persons need to agree on certain rules so that more severe restrictions can be avoided.

Furthermore he offers an analysis of reasons for giving ‘moral priority to the protection of individual freedom’ (Brighouse & Swift, 2003, p. 357). According to Brighouse (2002), what Rawls suggests in the thought experiment of the Original Position is a picture of ‘the person as moral but also political’ (2002, p. 46): human beings are free

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reflectiveness about basic social structures’ (White, 1990, p. 100), whilst Callan’s autonomy, which is referred by White as having a weaker sense, shows little difference from autarchy.

and equal as citizens as well as obliged to treat others as free and equal. With the political aspect of humanity brought to prominence, morality becomes a matter of justice.<sup>3</sup>

In these accounts freedom tends to be taken as epistemically given and prior to questions of morality. In such expressions as ‘in order to keep human freedom’ or ‘in order to avoid coercion of human freedom’ take freedom for granted as something valuable. As a consequence, the nature of freedom remains beyond questioning at any more fundamental level. This tendency in research seems inevitable unless we are prepared to interrogate further fundamental aspects of freedom on which political and practical issues such as morality in this context may depend. Above all, we may see that Dearden’s account of autonomy has broadly persisted in White and Brighouse, as well as becoming progressively re-shaped by the force of changing political perspectives.

## **b) Epistemological and existential emphases**

Epistemological and existential accounts of autonomy tend to focus on how it is interpreted in the experience of the human being. As has already been indicated, such accounts are not without socio-political dimensions, but their focus of concern is typically not directly on this. The epistemological dimension, inevitably involves questions of ethics, and in some ways this is clearly evident in the value attached to critical thinking in the work of Harvey Siegel (1988). He stresses the epistemological significance of autonomy.<sup>4</sup> Siegel’s conception of critical thinking has deontological aspects. It comprises a ‘reason assessment component’ and a ‘critical spirit’. The reason assessment

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3 Brighouse’s account of morality, autonomy, and human flourishing is well scrutinised in Warnick (2009). In his essay, Warnick points out that Brighouse’s argument on autonomy is far from that of the Kantian notion, which relates to the moral law. Needless to say, the account autonomy in Brighouse, according to Warnick’s critique, is closer to Dearden’s.

4 Siegel also considers the social significance of autonomy in critical thinking theory. He reveals his political view on society and education as follows: ‘Why limit the desirability of education for autonomy and critical rationality to liberal... societies? Are ideals like autonomy and critical rationality society-relative? ... As is well known, many theorists, myself included, uphold particular ideals independent of society-type, and hold that, philosophical niceties aside, particular ideals – in my case, critical thinking – are in fact applicable to all societies and the people within them, whether or not those ideals are in fact endorsed by particular societies or their members’ (Siegel, 2008, p. 182). Furthermore, the stress on the ethical and epistemological aspects of critical thinking also indicate Siegel’s commitment to society. Siegel sees critical thinking as an educational ideal for four reasons: (i) respect for students as persons, (ii) self-sufficiency and preparation for adulthood, (iii) initiation into the rational traditions, and (iv) democratic living (Siegel, 1988, pp. 55-61). And he adds further that ‘the fundamental justification for regarding critical thinking as an educational ideal is the first, moral one (Siegel, 1997, p. 4).

component refers to the presupposition of epistemic criteria or the givenness of standards. In light of this, the disposition of critical thinking becomes ineluctably normative. The other component of critical thinking theory, namely the critical spirit, hints at its debt to the Kantian notion of reason. Because reason assessment alone would not allow one to think critically, a ‘complex of dispositions, attitudes, habits of mind and character traits’ need to be assembled (Cuypers, 2004, p. 77).<sup>5</sup> Thus it can be surmised that the critical spirit motivates us to be critical thinkers with reasons.

The deontological ground that Siegel seeks is found in Kant. According to Stefaan Cuypers (2004), critical thinking theory shows an explicit link between autonomy and rationality. In the theory of critical, autonomy is not merely asserted in the choices one makes but in critical reflection on rational principles. But if we follow this evidence of the Kantian notion of practical reason, we may ask on what ground the critical spirit functions. With compelling conceptual sophistication, autonomy is embedded in critical thinking as an educational ideal. We may once more find ourselves reminded of the direction of Dearden’s account of autonomy, which, in spite of its grounding in Kant, opens onto a tentative separation from the Kantian notion of practical reason. Needless to say, in consequence, the more fundamental question of freedom remains peripheral to the discussion. That more fundamental question remains distant from its function as conceptual necessity for autonomy.

This tendency is diagnosed through the project of conceptualising autonomy, authenticity and the self in the work of Paul Standish (1992; 1999). Standish would not deny autonomy as an educational ideal; rather he tries to clarify the concept of autonomy in education by redefining the meaning of education as well as that of authenticity. Autonomy in Standish, however, is at a conceptual distance from the liberalism as this is conceived by White (2003). For White wrongly interprets Standish’s notion of autonomy as complicit with an apparent abandonment of the whole (or the holism proper to autonomy).<sup>6</sup> What Standish criticises is the lack of discussion on the ontological

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5 The disposition of the critical spirit is investigated in Bailin *et al.* (1999). In this essay, critical thinking appears normative in education, a practice through which the intellectual processing of knowledge rather than its content is foregrounded. These two aspects of critical thinking show its deontological and epistemological aspects at the same time, which I identify here as epistemological and existential emphasises on autonomy.

6 In his essay (2003), White sketches the landscape of what he takes to be the current critical tendencies towards liberalism in British philosophy of education, and responses from those critics are published with his article. White categorises five types of criticism of liberal education, which he names ‘Intra-liberal’, ‘Contra-liberal?’, ‘Contra-

significance of autonomy. This seems to be a necessity for him, to supplement the concept of authenticity for autonomy and further, to develop the proclivity of autonomy to engender humility situated beyond the idea of the self. Standish's attempt to redefine the meaning of education and autonomy with authenticity needs to be fully appreciated. Such an attempt brings into view the meaning of education in daily life.

However, the problem, as one discovers in consequence, is that human freedom remains still a marginal issue. Standish's attention to the authentic relation means he puts less consideration into how freedom grounds the very possibility of notions of autonomy, authenticity, and humility. Such a tendency is, as I see it, the problem of freedom in education; which in essence is the distinction between how freedom is assumed and how freedom is conceptually constructed as the ground of autonomy. Ostensibly, we may share the same vocabulary in which the word freedom features, but hold in common little of its meaning in education. To sum up, in the development of the idea of autonomy since Dearden the meaning of freedom has been surprisingly little discussed. The implications of the problem of freedom, however, would *not* lead us to a straightforward choice between liberalism and progressivism in education. If the discussion is confined to the consideration of such options, the meaning of freedom itself will not come to light.

## **Questioning Freedom in Education Again**

It seems not simply true however to claim that no philosophers of education in Britain pay any attention to the idea of freedom in education. Does it not seem that the ideas of autonomy and freedom have been at the centre of the discussions in philosophy of education? The problem appears when the idea of freedom is limited within the account of autonomy, authenticity or any other accounts of the good, instead of being the direct focus of enquiry. As Standish (2000) points out:

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liberal', 'Extra-liberal?', and 'Extra-liberal'. White's diagnosis of the decrease of liberalism in the field of British philosophy of education is that it is related to outer causes such as political and social change as well as inner issues. The rejoinders to the paper, by Wilfred Carr, Richard Smith, Paul Standish, and Terence H. McLaughlin, focus on philosophical issues embedded in the concept of autonomy and take issue in varying degrees with White's diagnosis.

For all their undoubted importance, however, the ideals of autonomy and authenticity are subject to a degeneration with broad cultural and educational manifestations. Autonomy becomes allied to consumerist conceptions of free choice while authenticity is subject to a sentimentalized idealization of the self and a theatricalization of the real: media images enframe us with hyperbolic images of 'the real thing.' The kind of mastery celebrated in autonomy correlates with an expectation of explicitness and transparency (and with self-management and presentation) (Standish, 2000, p. 159).

This is an attempt to re-shape the question of the relationship between freedom and education. It seems, however, to suggest to us that we start from the question of what education is. This is substantially correct but we may then easily find ourselves pressed to establish a list of virtues and ethics, as well as qualities of intellect, as epitomised by autonomy. I would not wish to separate all the aspects relevant to the main question but to view them in their inter-relationship. In resolving to proceed thus, I hope to begin my thesis by analysing the process of putting the question itself, the question of what education is. From this we may uncover what it is that is expected in the asking of this question and what is presupposed. In this regard, the question is analysed and asked through an extended reading of Heidegger's philosophy.

We now come back to the puzzling idea that I encountered during my Master's dissertation: the idea of *freedom towards death*. How is this to be understood? In order to make progress with this it will be necessary to enter into the different and very difficult idiom of Heidegger's texts, and in order to illustrate the nature of this difficulty, I shall quote directly from his works in the paragraphs that follow, before bringing the discussion back to a more summative statement of what this thesis is about. I believe it is necessary to foreground this difference in idiom at this stage in order to indicate the nature of the problem to be addressed and something of the substance of the account that I hope to unfold in the chapters that follow.

Heidegger's preliminary understanding of freedom is presented in *Being and Time*. It is described as one type of ontological structure of *Dasein*. The term 'Dasein' (literally, being-there) is adopted by Heidegger in order to displace the history of associations and assumptions that attaches to 'human being'. He writes as follows:

In Being-ahead-of-oneself as Being towards one's ownmost potentiality-for-Being, lies the existential-ontological condition for the possibility of *Being-free* for authentic existentiell possibilities. For the sake of its potentiality-for Being, any Dasein is as it factually is. But to the extent that this Being towards its potentiality-for-Being is itself characterized by freedom, Dasein *can* comport itself towards its possibilities, even *unwillingly*; it *can* be inauthentically; and factually it is inauthentically, proximally and for the most part. The authentic 'for-the-sake-of-which' has not been taken hold of; the projection of one's own potentiality-for-Being has been abandoned to the disposal of the 'they' (BT 237-8).

Here we see the description of the basic mode of freedom as conceived in Heidegger's philosophy. In this ontological structure, the possibilities are particularly designated for the understanding of Being, which some have seen as his main question throughout his life-long project. What he is concerned to analyse particularly here is Dasein as possibility characterised by freedom in terms of Being-ahead-of-oneself.<sup>7</sup> In Heidegger freedom becomes a mode of human being; one that cannot be articulated as a separate quantum at the level of pre-ontological understanding.

Heidegger develops the idea of human freedom not in the political sense, but in human being's ultimate condition in experiencing *death*. He proposes a 'being-ahead-of-oneself' because it has this directedness towards death. As possibility, Dasein is always and already free as long as its structure is understood as anticipation of possibility, i.e. Being-ahead-of-itself towards death. In other words Dasein as possibility, characterised by freedom, once again demonstrates its complete engagement with finite human being. In the meaning of freedom, Heidegger discovers the finitude of human being. The projected relation of Dasein as possibility, freedom, and death is patent in what follows:

anticipation reveals to Dasein its lostness in the they-self, and brings it face to face with the possibility of being itself, primarily unsupported by concerned solicitude, but of being itself, rather, in an impassioned **freedom towards death** – a freedom which has been released from the Illusions of the 'they', and which is factual, certain of itself, and anxious (BT 210-11).

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<sup>7</sup> Being-ahead-of-itself, one of Heidegger's unfamiliar terms, is elaborated by Heidegger as follows: 'To being-in-the-world, however, belongs the fact that it has been delivered over to itself – that it has in each case already been thrown into a world. The abandonment of Dasein to itself is shown with primordial concreteness in anxiety. 'Being-ahead-of-itself' means, if we grasp it more fully, 'ahead-of-itself-in-already-being-in-a-world'' (BT 236). By so doing, Heidegger tries to grasp the ontological structure of Dasein in unitary phenomena in which the meaning of Being and, furthermore, the fundamental understanding of time in Dasein appear.

However Heidegger's main argument is not particularly oriented toward positive freedom. In the thought of *Freedom towards death*, one is not able to discern a negative/positive distinction such as that commonly demarcated in philosophy between *freedom from* and *freedom to*. Plainly what is at stake here is something different from a Kantian notion of freedom, in which morality and the moral law are rooted. For Heidegger, such positive freedom, which entails an idea of absolute truth or 'lawful concepts', stands in the way of realising the meaning of freedom *towards death*. This prompts us to question what kind of freedom he then tries to discover in Dasein. Heidegger's attempt to reposition the problem of freedom at the centre of philosophical matters unfolds as follows:

Let us recall our provisional schema of perspectives for the problem of freedom. With this in mind, we can establish, concerning the fundamental direction of our essential questioning, that *the essence of freedom only comes into view if we seek it as the ground of the possibility of Dasein*, as something *prior even to being and time*. With respect to the schema, we must effect a *complete repositioning of freedom*, so that what now emerges is that *the problem of freedom is not built into the leading and fundamental problems of philosophy, but, on the contrary, the leading question of metaphysics is grounded in the question concerning the essence of freedom* (EHF 94).

This invites us to take in, so it seems, the whole of metaphysics. In other words, it seeks to introduce a new perspective from which to see the issues of truth, morality and autonomy in freedom.

In terms of metaphysics, freedom has long been a thematic concern in Western philosophy. Early modern thinkers related it to the problem of pre-determinism (Leibniz), the problem of naturalism (Spinoza) or the problem of causality (Kant), for instance. In Heidegger, the challenge is brought into focus by the question of being. One of the most established Heidegger commentators, Charles Guignon tries to show that there are two main meanings of freedom interwoven throughout his philosophy (Guignon, 2011, p. 80). According to Guignon, the first sense of freedom in Heidegger is human freedom. In contrast to the ordinary understanding of human freedom as a matter of free will, as is found in mainstream philosophy, Heidegger understands freedom in terms of an



ontological account of human being in relation to temporality and the world. The second sense of freedom may seem rather idiosyncratic as it appears to be the essence of truth. This is radically different from the traditional understanding of truth in Western philosophy, which involves an idea of correspondence to the real or the standard or the ideal. Guignon understands that, for Heidegger, ‘human freedom is an event that happens in and through being itself’. This explains Heidegger’s writings in the late 1930s and 1940s which suggest that ‘humans are more like conduits carried along by the event of being’ (Guignon, 2011, p. 81). Likewise, Heidegger’s ontology extends to the problem of metaphysics by an analysis of freedom, autonomy and morality as a whole, refracted through being. In particular, an understanding of freedom is thematised in his philosophy, appearing as a central issue throughout his philosophical journey (Ruin, 2008). Therefore, following Heidegger’s writings, the focus of the thesis is on the ontological and existential account of freedom. At first glance, it may seem that this reveals little of direct relevance to educational practice. The thesis aims to show, however, that an ontological account of freedom may help us to take a critical view on the typical understanding of freedom in education as an educational ideal and to reveal the problems arising from its limitations. As a consequence, hopefully, we can reconsider the idea of education, an idea in need of being called into question in this over-educated society.

There are some commentators, albeit not many in number, who have insightfully discussed Heidegger in philosophy of education. In light of the problem of freedom in education, for example, the work of Michael Bonnett (1994; 2004) and Paul Standish (1992; 1997; 2000) attempted to sketch Heideggerian approaches, while later publications by the Israeli scholar Ilan Gur-Ze’ev (2010) and Iain Thomson (2005) extended interesting lines of thought. Gur-Ze’ev described the possibility of a counter education which in opposing the nominalising doxa of education, follows the path of Heidegger’s philosophy. Thomson also investigates ontological education by examining Heidegger’s interpretation of Plato’s allegory of the Cave. In fact the concept of freedom in education spans many of his other key philosophical concepts. In a range of specific instances, freedom and education emerge as a specific relation that might ground the possibility and the meaning of autonomy as an educational ideal. Therefore I would like to focus on the relationship between freedom and education.

As Dearden recognises, we are living in a modern society where the absolute truth or a certain concept of God has mostly disappeared; at the least the unavailability of these beliefs to confirmation has led us to become essentially sceptical. It is perhaps this that leads Dearden to the view that any more fundamental enquiry into freedom would not be fruitful. Yet, ironically in this respect, the ground of human being becomes still more clearly rooted in freedom. I have an intuition that this may also influence the grounding of the meaning of education, insofar as the issue of human being is at its centre. Hence through a sustained engagement with Heidegger's philosophy I will try to initiate and encourage others to philosophise the still marginalised understanding of freedom in education. Of course there will be those who say that freedom *has* been addressed very thoroughly in education: indeed it is central, they will say, to idea of a liberal education and in a different way to progressivism. But that discussion of freedom, as I have tried to show, failed to engage with the more fundamental questions of freedom that are my concern. Of course there will be others to who acknowledge this limitation but who claim to have explored similar lines of criticism to the ones I project – that is, the development of a different metaphysical account, along Heideggerian lines. But here too I believe that there has been a limitation in the attention that has been given to freedom itself. It is true that this connects with other concepts of fundamental importance in Heidegger, but I contend that it is freedom that has a special significance for the understanding of education, and this has not been sufficiently understood.

## **Conclusion**

The term 'over-educated', taken from Freeman, brings us back to the question of the value of education or the nature of education as such. Within the discourse of economics, education seems to be understood in supply-demand terms, and while there is some cogency to this way of thinking, this can only be part of the story. What we look for in and through education seems a better life and society than we are conscious of existing previously, perhaps one the nature of which we cannot yet know. One possible orientation for this search may be autonomy as an aim of education. However, if we are

investing in such aims or values in education, they need to be carefully scrutinised. Otherwise we shall end up espousing a belief with little consideration of what it is grounded upon. Taking my cue from this eventuality, I would like to consider philosophical aspects of human freedom that are embedded in various educational concepts. Such matters are in the end related to the political and economic conditions of life. Conversely, the variety of relations here cannot be adequately thought through without a fundamental consideration of freedom.

In this chapter, I have tried to show the fundamental nature of the problem of freedom in education. In brief, autonomy in philosophy of education has often been regarded as an educational ideal, within which freedom is presupposed, but this has impeded the direct consideration of the radical significance of freedom. In consequence freedom has been little considered in philosophy of education only in limited ways, even though it has been taken as a presupposition for a core educational aim, i.e. autonomy. And this requires us to look for the ground of freedom, which does indeed enable autonomy but which must be manifested in terms of its own possibility. This thesis, then, is resolved to enquire into the meaning of this presupposition in education and its relation to education.

We have also referred to Heidegger's evolving views on the problem of freedom. In the following passage he suggests to us how to deal with the problem of freedom in its intrinsic relation with human being:

The questioning of man and 'the question concerning man' are by no means the same. If we take man as one being among others, we inquire into man within the framework of the leading question. If we inquire into man in terms of our question of being and time, and of the essence of time, we do not ask within the horizon of the leading question but from the ground of the fundamental question. Nowadays, all kinds of anthropological studies are undertaken, e.g. in psychology, pedagogy, medicine, theology. Already this is no longer a fashion, but a plague. Even where man is treated in philosophical anthropology, it reminds unclear in what way man is interrogated and in what way this interrogation is philosophical. Indeed, we must say that all philosophical anthropology stands outside the question of man, which can only emerge from the ground of the fundamental question of metaphysics. This question of man from the ground of the fundamental question is what alone makes possible all philosophical questioning of man. ... The properly posed question of being, thus the question concerning being and time, concerning the essence of time, necessarily leads to the question of man (EHF 86).

This rather long quotation helps to show how Heidegger seeks to guide the questioning of human being. When he rhetorically tasks his listeners with starting ‘from the ground of the fundamental question’ when seeking to become orientated toward the question of man, it is a range of metaphysical problems including the essence of time, being, and freedom that are then ushered in, thereby swelling the problematic. Heidegger restates the problem of freedom in metaphysics in such a way as to show how the question of man has not been properly conceived, situated, or realised. This philosophical attention to the way of asking the question of man is, I contend, proximate to the problem of freedom that is discovered in education. Thus, I propose to pursue a critique of the meaning of freedom in education from a Heideggerian perspective.

There is a danger, I realise, that this question may seem to be of purely academic interest. In other words, the question may seem not to have practical importance for education. But from the process of questioning itself, our reflection can lead beyond the problem of autonomy as an educational ideal to the question of what education *is* and what *makes* education possible. As soon as we are impelled to ask what education is, we come to realise that the problem is not just about education as a concept but about the question of what human being is. In other words, what makes a human life as it *is*. Heidegger’s understanding of human being is distinct from a traditional way of understanding in which human being is understood as rational being. Heidegger endeavours to apprehend human being in the freedom through which it appears as it is. This is the point of inception for an analysis of how we can interpret Heidegger’s understanding of human being in freedom, in successive educational contexts.

In sum, I propose to discuss the meaning of freedom in education initiated by the question of freedom itself. While I may reasonably expect to elucidate the meaning of autonomy in the course of such an investigation, I shall *not* do so from a starting point associated exclusively with autonomy. In other words, my purpose is not to reject autonomy as an educational ideal but to analyse its ground. As we have earlier seen, the discussion of freedom, without the benefit of ontological scrutiny, may simply allow it to be regarded as a given condition in the field of political discourse or to dignify deontological accounts of human action. Instead I hope this question leads toward a richer

conceptual understanding of education, in such a way that, for those who are engaged its range of practices, it leads beyond the problems of the self and of rational being, and their combined legacies. At this point, the question is how this ontological approach to freedom can come to light in education.

One might reasonably expect that an outline of the chapters to come would follow at this point. But I have chosen to defer this until Chapter 2 for the following reasons. In order that the approach I adopt in later chapters be seen to be cogent and coherent, it is necessary first to lay out some groundwork of a more explicitly methodological kind. I am not, to be sure, speaking of methodology here in terms of the kinds of approaches that are adopted in empirical research. Rather I need to outline the philosophical starting point and approach of this thesis. An account of this will, therefore, constitute the first part of the chapter to follow, while the latter part of the chapter will indeed provide an outline of the sequence of chapters that make up the rest of this thesis.

## CHAPTER 2

### A Shift in the Question: from *freedom-of* to *freedom-as*

*The task is to question freedom itself.* Freedom has been rigorously defended in the field of socio-political studies and practices. The French philosopher, Jean-Luc Nancy states, however, that the ‘nature and stakes of what we call “freedom”’ are ‘less articulated or problematized.’

If nothing is more common today than demanding or defending freedom in the spheres of morality, law, or politics – to such an extent that ‘equality,’ ‘fraternity,’ and ‘community’ have demonstrably and firmly been pushed, if at times regrettably, into the background of preoccupations and imperatives, or have finally even been considered as antonyms of freedom – then nothing is less articulated or problematized, in turn, than the nature and stakes of what we call ‘freedom’ (Nancy, 1993, p. 1).

This statement may seem somewhat self-contradictory: How can an idea be defended before it is clearly articulated? In response, Nancy suggests that the establishing of working definitions of rights, exemptions, and moral values in respect of freedom has tended to divert attention from any direct questioning of freedom itself. But what is it to question freedom without bringing in those ideas that ally freedom with education? At this point, the question is how this ontological approach to freedom appears to us in education. To broach this point, let us begin with the received discourse within philosophy

concerning the idea of freedom, specifically its differentiation between negative and positive freedoms. In the light of my reading of Heidegger, the questioning of freedom will be reframed within a hermeneutic phenomenological enquiry as a shift from *freedom-of* to *freedom-as*.

### ***Freedom to and freedom from: Two Concepts of Liberty***

In order to consider the discourse surrounding the idea of freedom, let us begin with the famous lecture, *Two Concepts of Liberty*, by Isaiah Berlin.<sup>8</sup> It is not too exaggerated a claim to say that this lecture established the terms for and has continued to influence current debates on freedom in social and political philosophy and related studies. In this lecture, he distinguishes between two kinds of freedom: negative and positive. Negative freedom refers to *freedom from* the obstacles or constraints imposed by other persons or other factors on an individual's action. Positive freedom is *freedom to* take action under the control of one's own act of will. For example, person A wants to smoke a cigarette in a pub. In the light of negative freedom, A is unfree because smoking on such premises is prohibited in the UK by British law.<sup>9</sup> Although A's desired action is restricted by this condition, in terms of positive freedom A is still free to decide whether to conform to the law. The example shows the distinction between negative and positive freedom based on the absence of external obstacles and the presence of self-determination.

Admittedly, Berlin's notion of two concepts of liberty is hardly new in the history of Western philosophy. In negative freedom Berlin finds the optimistic and individualistic conception of man. The idea that the harmonious progress of society is compatible with

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8 There are some attempts made to distinguish between the terms 'liberty' and 'freedom' (see Williams, 2011). But liberty and freedom are often interchangeably used in social and political philosophy (see Berlin, 2002, p. 169). Besides such attempts often aim to delineate the discussion applicable only for the field of social and political studies from philosophical inquiries. However, the concept of autonomy or free will is inevitably assumed in the notion of freedom throughout the history of western philosophy (see Mill, Locke, Kant, Hegel). Therefore, it is not only social and political philosophy's that talks about freedom in this way, but philosophy in general.

9 However, the smoking example to describe the negative freedom should be false based on Day's interpretation on the relation between the desire and freedom (Day, 1970; 1987). For negative freedom does not depend on the successful consequence of the desired action, but having the open choice for one to have such desire and act according to the desire.

‘reserving a large area for private life over which neither the State nor any other authority must be allowed to trespass’ is one that is widely shared, according to Berlin: it ranges across the claims of such diverse advocates of liberty as Mill, Hobbes, Bentham, Locke, or Benjamin Constant and de Tocqueville in France (Berlin, 2002, p. 171). In contrast, Berlin finds the rational conception of man in positive freedom. From Spinoza to Hegel, a rational man is free because he acts based on his will. The rational or autonomous self is the higher self which can control any irrational impulse of the lower self. The problem is, so Berlin tries to show, that this higher self can be qualified or even replaced by the ‘whole’ of which the individual is an element or a part. And this kind of hierarchical conception of the self may lead to the justification of tyranny or to a defence of the ascetic self. After his cautious analysis of both negative and positive freedom, Berlin states that ‘perhaps the chief value for liberals of political – “positive” – rights, of participating in government, is as a means for protecting what they hold to be an ultimate value, namely individual – “negative” – liberty’ (Berlin, 2002, p. 211). After all, as his editor, Henry Hardy, later states, Berlin stands for the values of pluralistic negative freedom (2002, p. x).

Berlin’s lecture provided arguments that were taken up by at least two ‘camps’ of theorists of freedom: in the negative camp one might include Hayek (1960), Day (1970), Oppenheim (1981), Miller (1983), and Steiner (1994), whereas the positive camp takes in such work as that of Milne (1968), Gibbs (1976), C. Taylor (1979) and Christman (1991, 2005). Nearly every philosophical discussion of freedom, especially within the analytic tradition, has come to be conceived in terms of these polarised camps. Although there have been some attempts to find a third way, beyond these two clear-cut conceptions of freedom presented by Berlin (MacCallum 1967; Kristijásson 1996; Kramer 2003), such ideas have easily come to be assimilated within the grounds of one or the other of these camps.

Education is no exception. In fact, a different kind of justification regarding certain kinds of education policies and practices can be made by theorists of the two camps. The distinctive differences between the two camps are found in their focus of interest. In his criticism on positive freedom, Berlin warns that some constraints can be



justified by education. In Kant, such reasoning was apparent in his account of the human being's need to acquire reason through education. For Fichte, education was included in his grand vision of the development of Germany: children, its future citizens, should be educated to become autonomous citizens; they may not as yet be able to understand the virtue of being constrained for the sake of education, but later they will do. Berlin warns against this kind of logic on the grounds that it may become a justification for forms of tyranny. In positive freedom, however, the constraints are justified as a necessary intervention.

In negative freedom, on the contrary, there is limited room for such justification. Certain kinds of constraints can be regarded as interference by the state in individual freedom. The advocates of free choice of schools or parental choice emphasise individual preference or the ability of the child to benefit from a certain type of education system. The constraints involved in a national curriculum can also be put in question, especially insofar as this restricts the possibility of educational practice being based on an individual's needs and learning path. Needless to say, to select the contents of a national curriculum is a painstaking task. On the other hand, some would argue that the state's interference should be properly put in place in order to avoid possible inequality in education. The debates surrounding educational practice and the idea of freedom are matters open to endless dispute.

### **The Discourse of *freedom of* and its Limit**

The two concepts of freedom do not stand in such stark contrast in educational matters as is found in Berlin's account. For example, Mill, the champion of negative freedom, according to Berlin, would not disagree over the need for education in the development of children who are to become autonomous free individuals. By the same token, and to simplify matters for the sake of argument, the debate between liberal education, which would hold back the exercise of freedom until children become autonomous, and progressivism, which would allow children to exercise freedom from

the start, is in fact not about freedom as we have discussed in the previous chapter. Educationalists on both sides might share the idea that education is for the sake of the autonomous free individual and for the good of society. The debate diverges over *how* to promote such a quality (Hirst, 1965; Scheffler, 1973; Dearden, 1975; Quinn 1984). Freedom is not in question in any fundamental way; it is subordinated to the question of autonomy; and it becomes something that is already commonly assumed. *The question becomes something other than the question of freedom.*

In his criticism of Berlin's notion of freedom, Gerald MacCallum (1967) also points out that debates based on the distinction between the two conceptions of freedom are too polarised to create productive discussion. He claims in any case that such a distinction is not even clear: for example, classic theorists of freedom across the negative and positive camps would have agreed that human nature without education as animalistic. Rather than focusing on either kind of freedom, he clarifies three dimensions of freedom as follows:

Whenever the freedom of some agent or agents is in question, it is always freedom from some constraint or restriction on, interference with, or barrier to doing, not doing, becoming, or not becoming something. Such freedom is thus always *of* something (an agent or agents), *from* something, *to* do, not do, become, or not become something; it is a triadic relation (MacCallum, 1967, p. 314).

To put it differently, freedom must involve an agent (or agents), constraints or prevention conditions, and the doing of actions or becoming of the agent. Although there may be cases where one of more of these three are not clearly mentioned – such as free will or the free society – MacCallum claims that discussions will always implicitly include these three elements, and it is this that constitutes the triadic relation.

What these approaches have in common is a tendency to draw distinctions that pass over what is more fundamental and more difficult to fathom about the nature of freedom. Too much is taken for granted in the history of Western philosophy in respect of the understanding of freedom. It is as though the heart of the matter is being side-

stepped. It is as though the fundamental significance of freedom for the nature of thought is being missed, with the idea of freedom more neatly contained as a more or less political ‘quality’ that human beings potentially ‘have’. This is not to deny that we can and do talk in that way, but to confine our understanding to those terms risks missing the point: it obscures what is fundamental to human life and to the world.

Jean-Luc Nancy identifies in this a vacancy of meaning:

Nevertheless we know – by means of another knowledge no less incontestable but kept in some way discreet, if not ashamed – that ‘freedoms’ do not grasp the stakes of ‘freedom.’ They delimit necessary conditions of contemporary human life without considering existence as such. They sketch the contours of their common concept – freedom – as if these were the borders of an empty, vacant space whose vacancy could definitely be taken to be its only pertinent trait. But if freedom is to be verified as the essential fact of existence, and consequently as the fact of the very meaning of existence, then this vacancy would be nothing other than the vacancy of meaning: not only the vacancy of the meanings of existence, whose entire metaphysical program our history has exhausted, but the vacancy of this freedom of meaning in whose absence existence is only survival, history is only the course of things, and thinking, if there is still room to pronounce this word, remains only intellectual agitation (Nancy, 1993, p. 2).

The first evidence of a vacancy in the meaning of freedom appears in this discourse as *freedom of*: a genitive and adjectival condition that is attached to the human being. Frequently this is accompanied by such catch-phrases as ‘freedom of the oppressed’, ‘freedom of the child’, ‘freedom of choice’ and so on. In spite of the importance of these themes, the expressions reveal a particular way of thinking about freedom – as something to be owned. In the discourse of *freedom of*, the weight of the focus is laid more on what comes after ‘of’, the oppressed, the child, and so on. This then delimits the focus of the question in terms of the prospective ‘owner’ of the freedom.

The second piece of evidence is found in the shift of the focus within the *freedom of* structure: what is seen as problematic is its absence for the rightful possessor in the conditions of the status quo. The freedom of the oppressed or of the child, for instance, addresses the problem in terms of an absence of freedom. In its absence, to put it

differently, freedom becomes something to be acquired, such that its acquisition is to be celebrated or praised. Freedom is good to be achieved. As a result, regardless of the countless references to freedom, few questions or doubts are raised about freedom itself. Instead there is a tendency in Western philosophy to reside somewhat complacently with the idea of freedom as free will or as some kind of ideal. With little variation, freedom takes care of itself.

Criticism of this kind should not lead us to attempt to provide another kind of definition of freedom. And yet this seems inevitable within the structure of the questioning of *freedom-of*. This sentence structure already exhibits the way we think of this idea. The definition of the conjunction ‘of’ is suggested in the Cambridge Dictionary as 1) showing possession, belonging, or origin; 2) expressing amount, number or a particular unit such as a kilo of apples; 3) containing, such as a bag of sweets; 4) showing position, such as the top of this building and so on. The examples directly show the structure of possessive relations in the conjunction ‘of’.

Of course the order of the nouns evidently changes the structure of the question. To say ‘freedom of something’ can mean something quite different from the ‘something of freedom’. Whilst the former indicates the quality of something that is in a state of freedom, the latter may show the typical aspect or characteristic of freedom. For instance, the double-genitive structure of ‘the freedom of the child’ indicates two potential subjects, freedom and the child. The focus is more naturally on the child as subject, whose possession of freedom is somehow in question. But let us reverse the expression and think of the child of freedom. The focus is now on freedom, as the subject, whose child, figuratively, is at issue – say, where a child is born (or conceived) on the night of the revolution and is, therefore, regarded as the child of the revolution: revolution’s or freedom’s child. What this grammatical investigation helps to show is that in an ontological inquiry, of the kind that this thesis undertakes, one should be careful with the investigation of the *characteristics* of freedom since this already suggests that there is a substance of freedom to be distinguished by such and such a characteristic or quality. Whilst avoiding any assumptions that are already attached to the formulation of the question as constructed within Western philosophical tradition, the problem remains of how we form the questions that will enable us to directly address the problem of freedom.

At this juncture, phenomenology provides us with a way forward. It offers a way of questioning and thinking that provides a more rigorous assessment of both those substantive ideals of freedom mentioned at the start and the very fact that the notion is celebrated in this way. Phenomenology in this respect is particularly timely with regard to the possibility of a new discourse in education. In particular, it can lead to a different conceptualisation of freedom, different from its idealisation in substantive statements of educational aims. This is not, of course, to dispense with freedom. At a time when the direct focus on freedom has been called into question by some, but where it is still placed at the centre of educational discourse, the question should be how, other than as an educational ideal, freedom can appear in education.

### **A Step towards the Phenomenon of *freedom as***

Now the purpose of this thesis should be coming more clearly into view: it is not to establish the *concept* of freedom but rather to discuss the *phenomenon itself*. As Hans-Georg Gadamer (1960) emphasises, however, one particular method would never be sufficient to enable what philosophical inquiry prompts us to consider. Philosophical methods themselves must present us with ways of thinking without any accompanying dogmatic insistence that what they collectively discover is the only or determinate truth. In light of this, I would like to follow Heidegger's philosophical way of thinking that is named 'hermeneutic phenomenology' in order to initiate the questioning to be undertaken.

A brief and helpful sketch of the characteristic ideas associated with hermeneutic phenomenology is provided by Charles Guignon (2012). Guignon gives us a reliable account of hermeneutic phenomenology as basically a counter-concept to that reductive form of naturalism characteristic of the study of humankind. This requires: a) bracketing the uncritical assumptions embedded in this study of the human species, including self-evidence in physical, psychical or any types of admixture of the two; b) being sceptical towards the approach of value-free 'facts' about human nature; and c) challenging empirical attempts at generalization arising in the study of humankind. In place of this

approach hermeneutic phenomenology turns the question of substance ontology towards an appreciation of human being as meaning-laden and defined by meanings in the world. It circumscribes this horizon of understanding human experience by means of an ensemble of such newly-configured terms as ‘temporality, historicity, thrownness into a world and understanding’, which cannot be reduced to empirical discovery or law-like causality (Guignon, 2012, p. 99). In thus distancing itself from the empirical approach in educational research, the reading of Heidegger I propose opens up possibilities of viewing the problem of education in its meaning-laden aspects, the terminological core of which is revealed in this thesis as that of freedom. As Richard Polt (1995) sums up:

According to Heidegger . . . the difference it makes that entities are is a situated, contingent, historical difference. There are two fundamental themes of Heidegger’s thought, then: manifestation, and the finitude of manifestation. Interpretations of Heidegger should not stress one of these themes at the expense of the other. . . . Heidegger’s position, I would argue, is that it is precisely through finite, situated interpretation – whether we are reading a text, fixing a car, or playing the violin – that we are able to encounter what is not willed or constituted by our interpreting (p. 728).

Whilst it is also true that the world is manifested in our interpretation, as Polt emphasises, there is another side to the same coin: the finitude of the manifestation. This is the finite condition (ground) of the possibility of understanding. It is what might be called Heideggerian transcendence, which is internal to Dasein, world, and Being, which depends upon human finitude, and which is characterised by freedom (EG 163). The human being experiences this finitude through the mood of anxiety. Heidegger writes:

Of all beings, only the human being, called upon by the voice of being, experiences the wonder of all wonders: *that beings are*. The being that is thus called in its essence into the truth of being is for this reason always attuned in an essential manner. The lucid courage for essential anxiety assures us the enigmatic possibility of experiencing being. For close by essential anxiety as the horror of the abyss dwells awe. Awe clears and cherishes that locality of the human essence within which humans remain at home in that which endures (PWM 234).

In Husserl's phenomenological reduction, as Sheehan argues, things remain the same as they were before. For Heidegger, there is a hermeneutical structure to the relation of human beings to things, and they are mutually determined through this relation. In Heidegger's phenomenological reduction, therefore, things do not remain the same as they were before: in the experience of awe or anxiety, the hermeneutic structure reveals 'being' as 'meaning' and 'is' as 'makes sense as' (2011, p.44). For such reduction, as Thomas Sheehan shows, directs 'our hermeneutical (sense-making or meaningful) relation to that thing' (Sheehan, 2011, p. 44). Heideggerian phenomenological reduction rests on the hermeneutical structure of human being. Sheehan thus argues that 'it is quite incorrect to say that, given its strong focus on everyday practical activity Heidegger's early phenomenology operates within the "natural attitude" that Husserl's epoché brackets out' (Sheehan, 2011, p. 44). Educational concerns are inherent in this meaningful relation to things in daily activities, i.e. in hermeneutic phenomenological investigation.<sup>10</sup>

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10 Before considering Heidegger's views on freedom, the diachronic character of his thought should be acknowledged, distinguishing as it does the earlier writings from the later. Heidegger's concept of freedom is 'already multifaceted, evolving just as his thought does' (Schalow, 2001, p. 261), Heidegger's apparent abandonment of a key role for freedom in his later writings directly shows his evolving ideas in relation to it. A clear distinction was once suggested by William J. Richardson as Heidegger I and Heidegger II. The division was based on Heidegger's *Kehre*, the so-called Turning in his thought, in which he shifts the nature of his questioning. Heidegger I refers to the period before the Turning, most obviously to *Being and Time*, and Heidegger II to the period of his work after the Turning, heralded by *Time and Being*. Unlike its simple but clear distinction between Heidegger I and II, Richardson's purpose is not to claim a total separation in the thinker's thought. Rather, he wants to point out that there is coherence between I and II, but there is a radically different weighting to the questions. Heidegger himself responded to Richardson: 'The distinction you make between Heidegger I and II is justified only on the condition that this is kept constantly in mind: only by way of what [Heidegger] I has thought does one gain access to what is to-be-thought by [Heidegger] II. But the thought of [Heidegger] I becomes possible only if it is contained in [Heidegger] II' (Heidegger, 1993, p. xxii). On the whole, the Turning should not be regarded as the official abandonment of the earlier work but the noting of the different direction of the path that the thinker has taken. As Heidegger also clarifies: 'This turning is not a change of standpoint of *Being and Time*, but in it the thinking that was sought first arrives at the locality of that dimension out of which *Being and Time* is experienced, that is to say, experienced in the fundamental experience of the oblivion of Being' (LH 251). Further to this, as Günter Figal (1988) points out, the entire exegetical scope of Heidegger's achievement in philosophy can be read as a philosophy of freedom. The question is then how this particular idea penetrates this one thinker's mind throughout his philosophical journey. Heidegger's radical approach to freedom leads us to view freedom not as a property of human being but human being as a property of freedom. This is precisely what Charles Guignon's project on the interpretation of freedom in Heidegger seeks to articulate. The problem of free will as human freedom is defeated. Instead, human freedom is laid on or interwoven in the relation with the essence of ground and truth. This makes human freedom an event happening 'in and through being itself, a conception that culminates in the suggestion in the late 1930s and 1940s that the source of agency is being and that humans are more like conduits carried along by the event of being' (Guignon, 2011, p. 80-1). In other words, I find a constant focus of the thinker on freedom. Therefore, in this thesis, I pay less attention to analysing the scholastic differences in the changes of tonality in the thinker's mind. More attention instead is given to how the idea of freedom in relation to education can be understood with reference to Heidegger's work as a whole.

To begin with, Heidegger's interest in being and truth is closely connected to the phenomenology of freedom. This understanding is radically different from the Western tradition, as the following passage indicates:

The essence of Freedom is originally not connected with the will or even with the causality of human willing.

Freedom governs the open in the sense of the cleared and lighted up, i.e., of the revealed. It is to the happening of revealing, i.e., of truth, that freedom stands in the closest and most intimate kinship. All revealing belongs within a harbouring and a concealing. But that which frees – the mystery – is concealed and always concealing itself. All revealing comes out of the open, goes into the open, and brings into the open. The freedom of the open consists neither in unfettered arbitrariness nor in the constraint of mere laws. Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing there shimmers that veil that covers what comes to presence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils. Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any given time starts a revealing upon its way (QCT 25).

In the quotation, Heidegger shows that freedom is not to be construed fundamentally in terms of free will or in some systematic way, the kind of understanding of freedom that has shaped the idea of education as directed towards the development of autonomous being. If Heidegger is right, such assumptions about freedom are barriers to better understanding it and barriers also, as I shall try to show, to its realisation in education. How should it be questioned then? Having previously proposed that the question should be formulated in terms of freedom-as, I will now argue why that should be the case.

#### **a) The Structure of the Question – *freedom-as***

'The vacancy of meaning in freedom' that Nancy's criticism identified has led us to see the discourse of freedom in Western philosophy as structured by *freedom-of*. In this structure, the question is narrowed to focus on the possessor of freedom and the desirable characteristics of freedom in its absence. In our reading of Heidegger, we have come to question this view of freedom. For this, phenomenology is suitable, as the expression indicates, not to 'the *what* of the objects of philosophical research as subject-matter, but



rather the *how* of that research’ (BT 50). The question should be formulated to address the nature of freedom itself, with neither its ownership nor its status assumed. The question should bring into focus freedom as it appears to us.

The hermeneutic phenomenological investigation of freedom requires us to consider two aspects of its grounding: the phenomenon and its logic. The phenomenological method was briefly introduced earlier in the chapter as ‘ways of thinking without an accompanying dogmatic insistence that what they collectively discover is the only or determinate truth’. This is famously expressed in the phrase: ‘to the things themselves!’ The phenomenon is understood as the *showing-itself-in-itself* (BT 54) in which something can be encountered. How do we encounter things as themselves? For Heidegger, it is Logos which lets things be seen. Among other significations of logos, Heidegger also states:

... because λόγος as λεγόμενον can also signify that which, as something to which one addresses oneself, becomes visible in its relation to something in its ‘relatedness’, λόγος acquires the signification of *relation* and *relationship* (BT 58).

This relation is structured through our use of the conjunction ‘as’. We make sense of an entity by encountering it as something. Something as something indicates a connection of the two. For Heidegger, ‘as’ is more than one of the ways of expression, but is something grounded in the meaning of Dasein in its relation with things in the world, i.e. sense-making-as, in Sheehan’s terms. From the structure of ‘as’ Heidegger insists that ‘[O]ur task is to bring to light that original connection from out of which and for which this ‘as’ has emerged as a specific meaningful coinage.’ He goes further:

... ‘as’ signifies a ‘*relation*’ and that the ‘as’ is never given independently on its own. It points to *something* which stands in the ‘*as*’, and equally it points to *some other thing*, *as which* it is. Involved in the ‘as’ there is a relation, and thus *two relational terms*, and these not just as any two, since the first is one term and the second is the other. But this *structural linking* [Gefüge] pertaining to the relation and to the relational terms is not something free-floating on its own account (FCM 288).

A as B signifies ‘A, insofar as it is B’. In other words, in A there is B already given and explicitly brought out in the ‘as’ structure. In this statement, we may test out what is true or false in each case as the statement contains a manifestness of the matter itself. ‘The structure of the statement that makes manifest bears this ‘as’ within itself’ (FCM 287). To put it differently, in the ‘as’ structure, the manifestness of the world is possible. Stephan Käufer (2007) summarises the logic of Heidegger’s phenomenology as follows:

Heidegger explains the universality of the ‘as’-structure in experience from the temporal constitution of existence, which is the most fundamental analysis of the conditions of experience that he ever gives. Dasein projects ahead and comes back to what is present on the basis of what already is. It is part of the essential nature of temporal beings that they experience presence in terms of ‘something as something,’ and this ‘as’-structure provides the ground for logic as a science of the structure of experience (Käufer, 2007, p. 151).

The conjunction ‘as’ binds two different entities in relational terms. In this, a statement or sentence is constituted. Heidegger, at this point, claims such holding is only possible in freedom (FCM 342-3). Käufer explains Heidegger’s conception of freedom as follows:

‘The originary phenomenon of ground is the for-the-sake-of that belongs to transcendence. Freedom, holding the for-the-sake-of out in front of it and binding itself to it, is freedom for the ground’ (GA 26: 278). This means that Dasein, being bound by entities that it understands out of possibilities, encounters these entities in terms of ground-relations (whatever those relations may be; Heidegger explains several modes in which entities can metaphysically ground or be grounded). Heidegger thus posits a metaphysical version of the principle of ground: ‘the ground-character of ground in general belongs to the essence of being in general’ (GA 26: 283) (Käufer, 2007, p. 153).

Freedom is to be understood as the ground of the hermeneutic phenomenological investigation, i.e. the ground for the human being’s making sense of the world that is asserted in language with the structure of ‘as’. If Heidegger is right that the structure allows us a phenomenological interpretation of the world, our questioning on freedom should be understood in the very same manner. In order to understand freedom in phenomenology, I propose to bring this enquiry into freedom into the structure of ‘as’:  
*freedom-as.*

What should be acknowledged is this: The structure of ‘something as something’ is to present and to affirm; something is presented as something, and is affirmed as being conceivable or understandable in its terms. Any affirmation of freedom fails to address freedom because freedom by its nature cannot be fully grasped or conceptualised in the form of an affirmation. To make this point, Nancy introduced the idea of the experience of freedom:

[an] attempt executed without reserve, given over to the peril of its own lack of foundation and security in this ‘object’ of which it is not the subject but instead the passion, exposed like the pirate (*peirātēs*) who freely tries his luck on the high seas. In a sense, which here might be the first and last sense, freedom, to the extent that it is the thing itself of thinking, which cannot be appropriated, but only pirated, its seizure will always be illegitimate (Nancy, 1993, p. 20).

By the same token, the freedom-as structure is introduced in this thesis not to establish a proposition to be tested out but to present the phenomenon of freedom as it appears to us in the practice of education – i.e. as a phenomenon that appears to us as prior to our judgement or concern.

### **b) The Structure of the Thesis – Hub, Spokes, and Wheel**

The methodological aspects of this inquiry underline the ontological problem of freedom. With reference to these ontological aspects of the inquiry, I would like to draw attention to Heidegger’s distinctive approach to the canonical legacy of particularity and universality (Heidegger, 1930). This is a recurrent issue with which we are confronted in his persistent method of inquiring into what concerns us ‘as a whole’. The meaning of the whole and its effect upon us in phenomenal terms is discernible from the outcome of the analytic approach. While analytic thinking can be fruitful in discovering certain kinds of knowledge, it tends to promote particular kinds of conceptualisation with an expectation of the sum at the culmination of the process. However, it would be a mistake to think that we can proceed to understanding by discovering reality bit by bit and then gradually

accumulate a sense of the whole. The whole is *not* the sum of the parts. The methodology that Heidegger initiates in his philosophical inquiry maintains an expectation of analysing the problem as a whole while suspending commitment to either particularity or universality, having no intention of giving up one for the other. Käufer concludes his understanding of Heidegger's logic as follows:

Heidegger thus develops an essential connection between the holism of entities, the normativity that entities exercise on assertions, and the inferential interrelations of assertions. In Heidegger's philosophy of logic, this inferential holism is more fundamental still than the fact that assertions can be true or false. 'Man is primarily not a no-sayer, nor is he a yes-sayer; he is a why-asker. And only because that is what he is, he can and must say yes and no, not occasionally but essentially' (MFL 280; Käufer 2007, p. 154).

Enquiry into the nature of freedom-as will require something more than a questioning of the veracity of assertions, a testing of propositions for their truth or falsity. But how strange this is, it might be said! If this study is not solely concerned with testing the truth of assertions, what is the point of this thesis? The point is that a proper appreciation of the nature of freedom must accept that freedom cannot simply be grasped or conceptualised. To use a visual image to exemplify the structure, *freedom-as* only serves as the spokes of a wheel whose hub is not grasped in a full sense. The hub cannot be separately understood from the spokes or the wheel. The spokes of the hub are engaged in the reality that appears, on the whole, as the wheel. In the light of this, the question of freedom in the structure of 'freedom-as' is presented in what follows along two lines of inquiry. The question acquires its initial impulse from some current problems of education that reveal how the idea of freedom is commonly understood. It is the day-to-day practice of education that triggers the question of freedom because it is through this that freedom is experienced. Following this, the inquiry leads us to see freedom as a phenomenon that shifts the emphasis from a concern with the *freedom-of* other things (the child, the oppressed, the educated man), where freedom is in a way understood as detached from human being, as something to be achieved, to a concern with *freedom-as*, where freedom is something experienced by the human being. This may suggest the possibility of an alternative account of education. How does it appear so?

Let us begin with Heidegger's own terms. Heidegger shows that the phenomenon of freedom to be a kind of revealing. Revealing is a phenomenon in which a thing appears as it is. Revealing is close to the Greek notion of truth as *aletheia*, as the unconcealed. Unconcealing is not simply brought about by a kind of human free will; nor does it refer to a kind of ideal stage that human beings should reach at some point. Heidegger attaches the notion of revealing to mystery, which emphasizes the nature of concealing and the veil. Freedom is revealing, and such revealing contains concealing at the same time.

In the light of this and in this way, I want to investigate the Heideggerian notion of freedom and its implications for education. I propose to do this by working through the implications of the phenomenological approach we have now started to consider. This involves disrupting a number of common-sense assumptions about the human being's relation to the world. I propose to adopt five pathways into or across our topic, each of which will effect a kind of phenomenological inversion of those common-sense assumptions, and I formulate each of these as iterations of *freedom-as*.

In a reading of Martin Heidegger and Jean-Luc Nancy, I attempt to take a stance on the idea of freedom as a phenomenon that in education appears 'as' something, rather than in terms of a genitive condition of human being as an outcome of education. In order to illustrate and explore the phenomenon of freedom in education, this thesis analyses the five themes of freedom: as *movement*, as *possibility*, as *a leap*, as *language*, and as *thinking*. In the light of such a phenomenology, education comes to be seen as a practice (or set of practices) in which the play of freedom reveals and conceals. In this way, I shall discuss the nature of education as freedom in action, through which the human being is defined, refined, and renewed. The question then undergoes a shift from the way it appeared at the beginning. We should not deal with freedom as a concept which can be rightly measured and distributed by human beings themselves. We should approach this idea in a different way.

My approach involves not only disrupting common-sense assumptions but also disrupting the forms of discourse in which these things are commonly addressed. In the previous chapter I made the point that making progress with the questions at hand would require entering into the different and very difficult idiom of Heidegger's texts, and that

this difference in idiom needed to be foregrounded. This will not, however, prevent me from returning in each chapter to more familiar discourses of education. I want the friction between these discourses and the language of Heidegger to be apparent, because this is a reflection of the deeper problem, of difference at a more metaphysical level. The variety of educational problems and preoccupations that I introduce in the following chapters helps to show the breadth of significance of the arguments from Heidegger that I am trying to pursue. Let me explain then how I shall proceed.

**In Chapter 3**, freedom is considered as movement. Common-sense and science prompt us to consider movement first and foremost in physical terms. Leaves fall from the trees. Clouds are blown across the sky. In a sense this is incontrovertible. And this physical picture is then extended to the kinds of things that human beings do – such as walking into a room or raising one’s hand, or signing a document, or speaking. But this is to posit a physical universe to which human beings and minds are subsequently added. If one thinks in terms of a purely linear conception of time, then once again this is difficult to resist. Phenomenology, however, will question how such things can come to light. What is presupposed in the perceptions or descriptions just given? The leaves falling from the trees were tacitly pictured from the point of view of ordinary human perception, which in turn presupposes human physiology, and in fact the needs and desires that ultimately derive from this. Falling leaves are the kinds of things that human beings notice, and this noticing of leaves – along with a host of other things – contributes to what comes to appear as the world. Thus, when Heidegger speaks of being-in-the-world, and when he prefers *Dasein* (there-being) to familiar but burdened terms such as ‘man’ or ‘human being’, he is acknowledging a kind of mutuality: what we mean by ‘world’ is not conceivable without its fit with human physiology and functioning. Even to conceive of the extinction of all life is derivative from this holistic conception of the world, of being-in-the-world. One consequence of this is that our common-sense starting point is inverted. The movement of physical objects is not understood in advance of the movement of ourselves in the world, with all the purposiveness this implies. To borrow words from Wittgenstein, ‘the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but about the fixed point of our real need’ (Wittgenstein, 1953, #108).

It is worth acknowledging that the idea of movement is, in any case, scarcely confined to the movement of physical bodies, whether they are planets or leaves or arms or vocal cords. We also commonly speak of political movements or movements in art. And we can also think of the kind of developmental movement that is involved in education, the progress a child makes – ‘progress’ itself being a word whose root implies movement. One response here is to see such uses as merely metaphorical, as if the change in the child were described by analogy with physical movement. But this seems too quick. As we have seen, our starting point could not be physical movement alone as this was shown to presuppose the holistic intentional movement of human beings. Such a holism dispels any idea of a clear separation of the physical and the mental upon which the metaphor would rely. And even those ‘primitive’ movements, such as the raising of an arm, are already characterised by complex purposes, by ideas of achievement and progress: the small child reaches for the toy, and one day succeeds in picking it up.

There is reason to be suspicious of the ways in which, in education, linear narratives license a thinking in terms of cause-and-effect, and of the appropriateness of planning and intervention, all of which presuppose metaphysical assumptions that phenomenology shows to be false. The path that phenomenology takes with the theme of movement is then one way in which we can revise our conceptions. What other avenues might there be?

**In Chapter 4**, which turns around the notion of possibility, the focus of the thesis turns next to the nature of temporality in order to see what this particular path reveals. Once again we find that the common-sense conception of time is of a line stretched out and characterised by datability, the scheduling of time as *chronos*. While there is no denying that such a relation to time is crucial to human beings, and more obviously so in complex societies, this relation does not exist without one that is perhaps more profound: this is a matter of our experience as always having come from something and always being on the way to something, where these orientations will bring different things into focus, with different intensity, at different times. I remember the library books I should have given back, or that today is the anniversary of my friend’s marriage, or that I must complete a paper before 1 February. This will in turn affect my perception of things in

their linear cycles: the last time I saw the full moon I was with a friend in a particular place. Once again we see that there is intentionality and purposiveness in these orientations that themselves occur within a realm of freedom. These are fundamental to human being and to world, insofar as world, as we saw, involves being-in-the-world. Heidegger describes our being-towards-death not as our being free to die, in the way that perhaps Sartre would conceive this, but rather as the precondition of our being free. Chronological time – time as conceived in physics – does not depend upon this, so it seems: yet such a conception of time is derivative from this involved understanding and engagement in the world. Being-towards-death invites us to think about the world differently, and this awareness of our mortality always somehow flickers beneath our everyday absorption in things, conditioning those practices however much this may be concealed.

A further path across our topic is offered **in Chapter 5** by the idea of freedom as a leap. On the face of it we seem once again to be in the territory of metaphor. A leap is surely a physical thing. The deer leaps. The monkey leaps. But if I say that my heart leapt, this is not a metaphorical usage – metaphor, that is, because my heart did *not* move a metre in the air: on the contrary, it is rather that leaping of the spirit that brings us to delight in, and so to notice and name, the physical movement of the animal. The notion of a leap then involves some sense of, say, joy. Of course things need not be so beautiful: the man leaps from the balcony of the burning building. Either way what the leap suggests is something other than the carefully planned route, the carefully judged next step, the next rung of the ladder. The leap is a less conditioned, more spontaneous movement to a place not fully known in advance. Does this sound melodramatic? Let us balance the examples with something that is more everyday – for many people, at least. This is that the leap is there in the very act of translation, in the continuing need to find appropriate words where no rule suffices and no training sufficiently directs us: translation is a constant exercise of judgment, involving continuing risks, little leaps into the unknown. By extension, the leap can be there in our everyday conversations, in the spaces for judgement that continually open there.



**In Chapter 6**, another path through which to think of freedom is discussed, and this is to think of it as language. One has one language or more. We cannot detach language from our daily life. We need language to describe what we experience, think, and feel. We cannot conceive of ourselves without language. Language, however, is not to be understood in familiar philosophical terms as the defining mark of the human being. What makes us human beings is the experience of becoming a language being from infancy – from the state of not being able to speak. Giorgio Agamben claims that language makes the human being historical, on the strength of the differences and discontinuities of being. By becoming a language being, by being enlightened, there is a loss of something. The pure experience of infancy is never retrievable, for instance. We experience something becoming clear whilst the other remains de-focused, dimmed. We tend to focus on language that gives us a clearer vision of the world. But in fact language holds this open possibility because as soon as we hold a clear vision of the world through language, it already leaves us also with an unfocused vision of the world as mystery. Language is not a tool for us to unlock the meaning of the world. The more we know, the more we do not know.

Finally, **Chapter 7** explores how the phenomenon of freedom is experienced in no other way than in thinking. The traditional way of thinking is based on the subject-object division. In this approach, the world and the human being appear to be observable objects whose substance can be examined and calculated, while the one who observes the object believes themselves to be separated from the object. Objectivity as it arises in this conceptualisation of freedom depends upon a certain metaphysical presupposition. Heidegger makes the claim that, within the Kantian way of thinking, both transcendental and practical freedom are understood in terms of an object-world governed by causality. The idea of the object separates the subject from the world and sets up a division as the inner ego vs. the object – that is, the external world. In this, concepts are resting places that are always in danger of becoming too fixed, and then they can become fixations. Thinking is not to be grounded in a subject-object metaphysics but must itself be in movement.

I have now attempted to provide a preliminary indication of the ways in which freedom inheres in the human condition. It is not something that the human being ‘has’, say as a detachable property. It is more like a precondition for human being or, better put, internal to the very possibility of human being. I acknowledge that this is difficult to grasp, but I believe that as my account develops, it will become clearer.

As will have become apparent, my main focus in this study is on both Heidegger's earlier and later work. Now in some ways the project before me would have been easier if I had concentrated instead on the later work, in which language comes to the fore and displaces the earlier focus on Being. It may well be that the central idea I am advancing concerning freedom can be illustrated more easily in relation to language. In the 1950 lecture ‘Language’ (*Die Sprache*), Heidegger makes the point that language is not to be understood as a tool of communication because, although this has a superficial plausibility to it and is true in some degree, it hides what is essential about language. It is not so that human beings speak language but rather that ‘language speaks’. The insight here is one that will be developed in various ways in poststructuralism, but for present purposes it can be explained in the following way. It is out of the early exposure to language that the human being comes into language, and it is from language that her thinking (qua human thought) comes into being. This is seen readily enough if one tries to think without language. Of course one can think musically or pictorially, but such forms of thinking themselves occur against a background of language: music and art are the activities of language beings.

In the light of this, two aspects of language and thought are particularly to be noted. First, the thoughts I have, thoughts in words, are always open to new possibilities of association and connection: this is obviously true when I speak to others and they make connections I have not thought of; but it is true also in my thinking itself, when words make connections in my own mind, ones I have not exactly planned or anticipated. Second, my thoughts are not exactly, or not fully, under my control. Sometimes, of course, I think about something deliberately, but for the most part my thoughts come to me. They come, as it were, out of the blue. And the manner in which they come to me is not exactly like a natural resource – say, like the oxygen in the air I breathe – because they come with

the character of possibility, the possibility of new association and connection, which seems to remain live in them however much I choose to control them.

In some respects what I have said here about language might have been said of the dimension of freedom I am trying to describe in relation to Being. I concede that it is easier to give substance to this through these remarks about language. But I have preferred not to prioritise this emphasis on language because in the end I believe Heidegger's account in his earlier work has a more direct relation to the idea of freedom than is the case with his later work. To say this is not to deny the insights of the later work but to stress how the origins of Heidegger's thinking in this respect are to be found in his earlier account of Being and possibility. It is there that the more fundamental structural importance of freedom is expressed most fully.

I make these comments at this point, then, to explain my strategy and as a potential aid to the reader. This serves perhaps as a guide for what is to come, and I shall return to them briefly at the end of the thesis. I have listed five ways of thinking of freedom: as movement, temporality, a leap, language, and thinking. Chapter 3 to 7 of this thesis, respectively, might be thought of as a set of essays. To call them 'essays' is to draw on the word's etymological connotations of 'trying out' or 'attempting'. Each chapter explores a different way of testing or trying out the idea of freedom in education. As I have made clear, my concern throughout is with the fundamental nature of freedom, and hence the chapters each attempt to cast new light on this. But at the same time I shall try to show that this deeper enquiry also brings into focus the understanding of education and lays the way for a clearer recognition of its practical problems and challenges.

Anyone who expects to find here practical debates about freedom may by now have come to the conclusion that this thesis is absurd and want to say: 'You have not talked about freedom at all.' And of course this may reflect a limit in my ability to address certain deeper meanings of freedom as these arise in the prevailing discussions. But it is also due to the nature of freedom itself. As Nancy puts this, freedom frees itself. The moment you grip it, it is no longer freedom. Once we conceptualise freedom as a concept, we fail to achieve the concept we seek. Rather than conceptualising a new understanding of freedom in this chapter, I have attempted to show the various phenomena of freedom through which we experience freedom. One may also ask how these phenomena are

logically connected. It is true that there is a relation between them, and it may be seen as a logical connection. But then, that is a wrong way to put it. These themes do not function as logical stages in the argument, one step leading to another. It is rather the case that they show a holistic inter-connection in *Dasein*. And these ordinary practical conceptions of each theme, each freedom-as, are derivative from the experience of freedom.

## **PART II**

# **Education in Quest of Freedom-As**

## CHAPTER 3

### Freedom as a Fix, Freedom as Movement

#### **Beyond Fixing: Educational research and Ontological confusion**

On 17th April 2012, at the New York Ideas Forum one of the topics was public education. Evidently all the panellists agreed, writes Dashiell Bennett in *The Atlantic Monthly*, that ‘our schools need help, but they couldn’t agree on much else.’<sup>11</sup> With the American Federation of Teachers President, Randi Weingarten, and the former New York City Public Schools Chancellor, Joel Klein, at the same table, what was heard was ‘much like the earlier discussion about bipartisan gridlock in Washington’. And so, Bennett writes, the only thing to do, rather than watch this re-run of an old debate, was to ‘grab some popcorn’. As Klein put it, however, ‘we can’t wait for Godot’. All the Forum panels were looking for a way to fix the problems in education. The debate in fact was not about what we want but rather on how we can get it. But Bennett was pessimistic about the prospects: ‘How we get there is a debate that is far from over’.

In this chapter, I suggest starting the debate from the beginning: How is it that we have come to see education as something to be fixed? The way that the idea of fixing education has become so comfortably embedded in the protagonists’ views must be our starting point.

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11 Dashiell Bennett, Fixing Education: The Problems Are Clear, but the Solutions Aren't Simple, *The Atlantic*, April 17, 2012. (<http://www.theatlantic.com/national/archive/2012/04/fixing-education-the-problems-are-clear-but-the-solutions-arent-simple/256047/>; Retrieved on August 30, 2012).

In fact, the idea of a ‘fix’ often carries a negative connotation: the idea of fixed potential or a fixed curriculum suggests something that never changes. In this sense, the idea of fixing implies a limitation of the possibility of growth through education. By the same token, the phrase ‘fixing education’ can, on the contrary, refer positively to a process whereby we mend education by resolving the diagnosed problem. Fixing education in this respect implies that something is broken and therefore needs to be put right. To fix education is to sort the problems out. What then does it amount to, and what is entailed in the intention to fix? The aim of this chapter is to ask what underlies the idea of fixing education. This will involve reviewing the idea of fixing across a spectrum of philosophical inquiry. I shall contend that there is a philosophical assumption in traditional ways of thinking about human being and education that is incarnated in the use of the word ‘fixing’. Through a reading of Martin Heidegger, I shall suggest a way of thinking about education that is governed by a more rigorous conception of freedom, by a conception thought through phenomenologically. I shall then sketch a positive account of education in terms of freedom as movement. In so doing, I would like to draw attention to Heidegger’s essay, ‘Plato’s Doctrine of Truth’. This essay is often considered by some philosophers of education to provide a means of understanding the relationship between current educational practices and the Western philosophy tradition (see Roder and Naughton (2015), Kakkori, L. and Huttunen, R. (2010), Riley, D. C. (2011), or Brook, A. (2009)). This chapter shares some similar concerns listed here, however, I would like to focus on Heidegger’s interpretation of Plato’s Paideia in relation with freedom. Let me begin, however, by considering the idea of fixing education.

### **Fixing education with cause-and-effect thinking**

Before anything can be fixed, it is necessary to identify in what sense it is a problem and what has caused it to be a problem. To put this differently, fixing something implies that one first diagnose something as a problem. Education is then understood as something to be diagnosed as a problem or in terms of problems. We endeavor to search for the reasons that have in the first place caused the problem. Solutions that may be said

to address the problem are required to prove their positive effects. Conversely, how we prove these positive effects becomes the primary question in the search for solutions. Fixing education thus implies the application of an idea derived from a specifically proven tool, in such a way as to strengthen (or weaken) the relation between the cause and its effect in educational practices. The practice of searching for the cause of the problem and indeed determining the solution is grounded in the idea that things are to be fixed. The idea of fixing in this respect is based on cause-and-effect thinking.

This idea of fixing education or cause-and-effect thinking is incarnated in current education research methods. Kenneth R. Howe, for instance, criticises the recent milieu of scientific methods or (in his term) experimentism in educational research. Research is good if it has ‘the mark of scientific rigor’, and embracing such a view has increased the size of the education research community (Howe, 2005, p. 307). According to Howe, the adoption of scientific methodology in education research tends to align it with the promise to ‘free educational practice from dependence on folk wisdom and faddishness to a systematic program of quantitative experimental research’ (Howe, 2005, p. 308). A systematic program of experimental research is embraced in cause-and-effect thinking in education. Howe analyses the 2002 National Research Council report *Scientific Research Education (SRE)* in which scientific experimental methods dedicated to uncovering causal relationships were promoted. One question that concerns him especially is the external validity (i.e. applicability from research contexts to other contexts) in causal relationships. But what we can conclude at a minimum level at this stage is that in investigating causal relationships we are disposed to see the whole educational landscape as a panoramic unfurling of cause-and-effect thinking. Howe concludes that SRE not only allies itself with physical science but takes this as its warrant to claim political innocence.

Cause-and-effect thinking is indeed prevalent where the source of study is nature as observable object. The question then follows as to how this way of thinking became dominant in education, where human actions are concerned. Richard Olson offers an historical explanation of how this scientific thinking has affected European ideas and social theories since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Scientism, so Olson claims, is ‘any attempt to extend natural scientific ideas, practices, and/or attributes to social phenomena to be scientific.’ Its methods are *scientistic* rather than *scientific*. Adopting scientific thinking that seeks



‘to produce universally valid and testable knowledge’ in the study of human beings and society, in a manner equivalent to that of the physical sciences, amounts to scientism (Olson, 2008, p. 2-3). As a historian, Olson’s project is mainly to claim that the varieties of scientism that have affected our ways of thinking about human beings in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have their origins in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Olson’s account of scientism provides some suggestion of how scientific methods have become prevalent in education. The pejorative force of such terms as ‘scientism’ and ‘experimentism’ applies to those ways of thinking that regard education as a scientifically approachable object, with problems to be diagnosed and solutions to be found. Education is to be fixed.

In much of his writing and, specifically, in his analysis of environmental education, Michael Bonnett (2013) indicts the scientism that is prevalent in educational research and practice. The real catastrophe is not only the fact that the environment is in an increasing state of degradation, but also the particular way of thinking that this has brought in its train: we think that we can put things right and, in effect, fix the future. Bonnett argues that ‘the thought that we can “fix the future” is both a chimera and an expression of a framing that, in my view, is deeply corrosive of our relationship with the world: an underlying and highly pervasive metaphysics of mastery’ (Bonnett, 2013, p. 191). Such a form of scientism is deeply prevalent in environmental education, where curriculum is characterized by a preoccupation with the kind of objective knowledge that is supposedly universally applicable (Robottom, 2005) and, so some have claimed, by ICT-based teaching methods (Payne, 2006).

In the meantime, broadly scientific approaches to social issues have coalesced with a certain conceptualization of professionalization. The prevailing scientific discipline in education, as Marc Depaepe claims, has generated a dependence on the scientific method and leaves those involved in educational practice mostly ‘in the dark’ (Depaepe, 1998, p. 24). But what is it that cause-and-effect thinking leaves out? What is wrong with fixing education? Before analysing these questions further, I want to consider the possibility that traditional ways of thinking about human beings and the natural world may have buttressed the idea that fixing education requires the employment of scientific

methods in education research. This perhaps will give us a clearer view of what has been missing from education.

## **The Problem of Freedom in Causality**

Cause-and-effect thinking accommodates our dealings with things in scientific ways. Through its procedural lens, science assumes that objects are to be observed and experimented upon in order to discover cause-and-effect patterns in nature. By the same token, scientific research will be applicable to human beings to the extent that they can be regarded as observable objects. The intuitive applicability of cause-and-effect thinking to human actions testifies to the way that we – whether inadvertently or in the full plenitude of knowing – have sometimes been inclined to think of ourselves as objects.

Although ‘fixing education’ may be a phrase used comfortably by many educators, some may confess a reluctance to regard education as something to fix. Such reluctance may draw its sustenance from the idea that education is not to be approached as an *object*. This is not, of course, merely a problem of vocabulary. What we speak of when using a certain lexicon indicates the way we think of it. And the way we think often directs the way we analyse it. The idea of fixing education, thus, represents a particular way of thinking about education accompanied in terms of scientific methods.

In fact we are in various respects observable. But we are not observable objects that are constituted innocently within a singular cause-and-effect system. Cause-and-effect thinking does not fully encompass our actions e.g. producing, building, resisting, etc.: action occurs in the realm of human freedom. This statement already entails a Kantian question: what is then the relation between the cause-and-effect of the world and human freedom? Or, what is the relation between the things out there and ourselves as human beings? The question links with our initial question of how we have become to think about education in ways that are take it to be something to be fixed.

For Heidegger, to begin with, an understanding of the world in terms of cause and effect is inherent in the Western traditional understanding of things. The world is a

world of objects. Truth is a matter of *adaequatio intellectus et rei* or ‘the agreement of knowledge with its object’, understood within the terms of constant presence, i.e. present-at-hand (BT 258). Reality, then, is assumed to be composite of objects, which are present-at-hand and exist in causal relations. In his lecture, *The Essence of Human Freedom*, Heidegger draws attention to Kant’s ontological assumption, according to which the understanding of things is uncritically accepted as relating to the being-present of objects. According to Kant, the nature present before us is subject to the law of causality. This law of causality, the law that a thing given in experience must be caused by another thing, a prior cause, may explain all the movements or events in nature. But there is a problem when it comes to the nature of freedom. For Kant, then, object-governed causality places the concept of freedom in an awkward position. As Heidegger puts this:

Every causation of a cause for its part follows on from a prior cause, i.e. in nature nothing is the cause of itself. Conversely, the *self-origination of a state* (series of events) is an *utterly different causation than the causality of nature*. Kant calls the former *absolute spontaneity*, the *causality of freedom*. From this it is clear that what is genuinely problematical in absolute spontaneity is a problem of *causality*, of causation. Accordingly, Kant sees *freedom* as the *power of a specific and distinctive causation*. The *perspective* which is thus opened up by the fundamental broadening brought about by the problem of practical freedom, i.e. by the positing of autonomy as absolute spontaneity, is that of the problem of *causality in general* (EHF 21).

In comparison to the causality of nature, in other words, the causality of freedom, i.e. absolute spontaneity, is what Kant calls transcendental freedom. And practical freedom is rooted in this transcendental freedom. As Heidegger puts this, ‘If, as Kant maintains, practical freedom is grounded in transcendental freedom as a distinctive kind of causality, then positive freedom, as grounded in absolute spontaneity (transcendental freedom) harbours within itself the problem of causality as such’ (EHF 21). It is, according to Heidegger, that the placing of free will at the noumenal level outside of the causal relations of nature generates the tension with Kant’s practical philosophy. ‘Given this understanding of reality,’ that is, the world of present-at-hand as object, as Guignon argues, ‘the conclusion that the all-pervasive natural order of cause-and-effect makes belief in free will untenable seems unavoidable’ (Guignon, 2011, p. 99). The problem of freedom in Kant is posited in the realm of causality.

It is what is caused by human free will that is at the heart of morality and autonomy. For Kant, free will is understood as a kind of causality as follows:

Will is a kind of causality of living beings insofar as they are rational, and freedom is that property of such causality that it can be efficient independently of alien causes determining it, just as natural necessity is the property of the causality of nonrational beings to be determined to activity by the influence of alien causes (Kant, 1997, p. 54).

Here freedom appears to be the property of the causality of the will. The need for self-legislation in order for the will to be autonomous can be explained only in terms of something other than causal interactions. To be fair to Kant, his transcendental philosophy seems to put human freedom and autonomy in harmony with causality. Free will is governed and governing in the realm of the law of morality, which is different from the law of nature. For Heidegger, however, there is a lack of integrity that means that the realms of the nature and of human being cannot be in unity. As Charles Guignon points out:

On this way of characterizing freedom, the so-called problem of freedom arises quite naturally. If we grant the fundamental principle of physics that all events have a cause (the “principle of universal determination”) and we grant that human actions are events, then we are committed to believing that every human action has a cause, that the causal antecedents of the action are themselves caused by prior events, and that that series of events from a chain that goes back to a time long before the agent was born. And if that is the case, then the agent cannot be held morally responsible for what he or she does. What we do, our deed, are the products of a natural causal order we cannot control. The belief in freedom would then be an illusion (Guignon, 2011, pp. 81-82).

Likewise, when it is conceived as an accessory to the chain of causality, human freedom remains in doubt. Heidegger shows that the internal conflict between freedom and causality in Kant lays the way inexorably for a conceptualisation of things in terms of objecthood and the present-at-hand. Otherwise, as Guignon puts this, the idea of freedom becomes an illusion. For Heidegger, Kant is not the first philosopher who regards freedom within the terms of a traditional ontology, though it remains deeply embedded in his thinking. He then dismisses Kant’s distinctive thought of the categorical imperative as a

mere by-product of the historical and sociological ideology of his time, the Age of the Enlightenment (EHF 197).

Heidegger's criticism of Kant may well explain the embedding of scientific thinking (which, in Olson's terms, becomes scientific) in traditional philosophical assumptions regarding human freedom. Heidegger's project is to show that 'Kant's problem of free will (and, hence, the entire modern tradition of thought about this problem that follows from Kant) is based on the ontological assumption of the reality consisting of objects in causal interactions' (Guignon, 2011, p. 99). By the same token, the cause-and-effect thinking that is found in the scientific approach to educational matters plainly shares these particular ontological assumptions. Making such assumptions regarding human freedom and action – that is, under the aegis of causality – underwrites the scientific way of thinking to education as something to fix. There is reason to be suspicious of the ways in which, in education, linear narratives license a thinking in terms of cause-and-effect, and of the appropriateness of planning and intervention as these have come to be conceived, all of which presuppose metaphysical assumptions that phenomenology shows to be false. The path that phenomenology takes with the theme of movement is, then, one way in which we can revise our conceptions. What other avenues might there be?

## **Freedom and Movement**

As we have seen, Kant posits the problem of freedom in terms of the problem of causality. The reason for this is that he treats the ontological question at the level of present beings. So Kant, as Heidegger pushes the point further, 'already in his treatment of freedom as causality, lacks the metaphysical ground for the problem of freedom' (EHF 134). In other words, Kant sees freedom and being free within the horizon of being present and, as a consequence, fails to pose the question concerning the particular way of being of beings who are free. Heidegger constantly makes the claim that the traditional understanding of being is in terms of the present-at-hand. This, he claims, is not entirely

wrong but constitutes only a 'regional' understanding of being. The question must be posed, then: what other ways of understanding being and freedom might there be?

In terms of being, freedom is to be questioned in two ways: one concerns how the world appears to human beings, and the other has to do with how human beings come to understand the world. These two separate questions are in fact not separable, in terms, for example, of nature and human beings, or observable objects and perceiving subjects. For Heidegger, the project of questioning freedom aims, in fact, at binding the two questions in one. In this relation, freedom is understood as 'freeing things up' or letting them *be*, a releasement of the world in reciprocal relation to human being (EG 126). This means that things in the world come to us as this or that. This phenomenon is what Heidegger calls the phenomenon of freedom. The fundamental problem of thinking in terms of a system of causality within which freedom is implemented is due to this dualism of object and subject. This kind of understanding is derivative and dependent for its intelligibility on a prior grounding of the world that is freedom.

The question of being in *Being and Time*, as the title already makes clear, is linked inextricably with that of time. For Heidegger, the question is transformed into that of the ground of both being and time. The ground of being and time is then indicated by this crucial 'and' in the expression: being and time are co-constituted through freedom. Freedom is the binding force in which the meaning of the world and the sense-making of the world by *Dasein*<sup>12</sup> come together.<sup>13</sup> Freedom no longer operates separately, as an implement with which the human being acts on nature. Freedom is 'the awesome ground in which the disclosure of beings as such and as a whole occurs' (EHF 93-94). This means that it is not the human being who first achieves freedom and exercises this in the world. On the contrary, the human being is the property of freedom. The human being is

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12 Heidegger uses the term *Dasein* (being-there) in preference to 'human being' or 'man' in an attempt to avoid the metaphysical and ontological assumptions that have become attached to the latter terms.

13 From this obscure ontological terminology, Thomas Sheehan (2011) moves to a hermeneutic phenomenological account. Sheehan's project of terminological transformation shares a similar concern with Heidegger when he analyses the phenomenon of freedom: that is, with the question of 'how being itself occurs at all'. Sheehan argues that the phenomenological reduction of being is nothing other than meaning. As Gadamer says 'human being's capacity to make sense of things implies that the things already (must have) entered the realm of language, in other terms, meaning' (2004, p. 407). The phenomenological reduction of 'being' reveals to the meaning of 'is' as something like 'makes sense as' (Sheehan, 2011, p. 44). The term, sense-making, as Sheehan indicates, is to be seen 'either an a priori term as the condition of the possibility of understanding this or that thing, or as an a posteriori term, that is an actual instance of understanding (making intentional sense of) some thing or state of affairs. The latter is the case of (a non-Husserlian) intentionality, whereas the former indicates Heidegger's transcendence' (2011, p. 44). This is named transcendence of freedom 'freely letting the world prevail'.

passively and actively engaged with being, in such a manner that the human being understands the meaning of the world as already given. The human being co-constitutes the 'there' within which being emerges.<sup>14</sup> Heidegger writes:

If freedom is the ground of the possibility of existence, the root of being and time, and thus the ground of the possibility of understanding being in its whole breadth and fullness, then man, as grounded in his existence upon and in this freedom, is the site where beings in the whole become revealed, i.e. he is that particular being through which beings as such announce themselves (EHF 94-95).

In freedom, the possibility of the understanding of being occurs. This is nothing that human beings actively achieve or take a grip of; rather it involves a more passive waiting or, as Heidegger puts this, 'letting-being as it is' (EHF, 207-8).

This brings us to the first question of freedom: how does the world appear to human beings? The initial understanding of being is already hinted in his interpretation of the Greek notion of movement. For 'the problem of movement is grounded in the question concerning the essence of beings as such' (EHF 21). In this respect, the problem of movement coincides with the problem of freedom. In the light of this, it is worth considering how Aristotle interprets the nature of movement. The fundamental nature of movement is change: change from this to that. The possibility of change involves two events: something comes to presence (*παρουσία*) and to absence (*ἀπουσία*). Linguistically, we can find the form of the same word *οὐσία* in both: ab-sence and pre-sence. The concept of *οὐσία* already includes the possibilities of absence and presence. By this, then, *οὐσία* means nothing like presence but essencehood, i.e. 'something which hovers over both without being either' (EHF 42). Heidegger draws attention to the way that Greek thinkers resided in the notion of *οὐσία* and that this is often mis-understood as constant presence. The essence of movement in fact seems to support the idea of *οὐσία* in terms of a default notion of constant presence. It is, however, simply wrong to assume

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<sup>14</sup> Heidegger takes such freedom to be the essence of human being. This point is repeated here: 'At the beginning of these lectures, we viewed man as one being among others, as a small, fragile, powerless and transitory being, occupying a tiny corner within the totality of beings. Seen now from the ground of his essence in freedom, something awesome [*ungeheuerlich*] and remarkable becomes clear, namely that man exists as the being in whom the being in whose ownmost being and essential ground there occurs the understanding of being. Man is awesome in a way that a god can never be, for a god must be utterly other' (EHF 94-95).

that Heidegger agrees with the idea of οὐσία as constant presence. On the contrary, he attempts to reveal how the Greeks came to understand οὐσία as constant presence, and how such a notion subsequently influenced the development of Western metaphysics.

Such an understanding of being becomes problematic when it comes to explaining the event of the accidental, for instance. Even Aristotle recognised the problem of the accidental in the context of the prioritisation of οὐσία, in what he refers to as the modes of beings of *what-being* and *so-being*: these include the constant togetherness or co-presence of materiality, constant non-togetherness, and non-constant presentness, i.e. sometimes present and sometimes absent (which is the accidental). Can there be truth regarding the accidental? For the truth becomes untruth when the accidental was once present and is now absent but in an unpredictable way. For this reason, the idea of the constant presence of being cannot serve the understanding of being as a whole. The understanding of truth remains only a possibility. In these terms, movement reveals this precise point: change is no other than the event of presence and absence. The fundamental nature of movement before its theorisation underlines this point: beings come to us as they are in the event of presence and absence, which I would call the experience of freedom.

This point is echoed in later Heidegger's reading of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus on φύσις (physis). For Heidegger, Heraclitus's interpretation of physis lies in the dynamic interplay of presencing and absencing (Dahlstrom, 2011, p.141). Elsewhere, this is repeated in relation with human being as freedom which lets the world emerge itself.

Letting world prevail in projectively casting it over us is freedom. Only because transcendence consists in freedom can freedom make itself known as a distinctive kind of causality in existing Dasein. Yet in the interpretation of freedom as "causality" above all already moves within a particular understanding of ground. Freedom as transcendence, however, is not only a unique "kind" of ground, but the *origin of ground in general. Freedom is freedom for ground* (EG 127).<sup>15</sup>

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15 It seems clear for Heidegger that his interpretation of freedom has a transcendental meaning. As he puts this: 'We shall name the originary relation of freedom to ground a grounding [*Gründen*]. In grounding, freedom gives and takes ground. This grounding that is rooted in transcendence is, however, strewn into manifold ways. There are three such ways: (1) grounding as establishing [*Stiften*]; (2) grounding as taking up a basis [*Bodennehmen*]; (3) grounding as the grounding of something [*Begründen*]. If these ways of grounding belong to transcendence, then the expressions



Freedom is freeing things up. It lets the world appear. This is in other words a movement of things that are not construed by the essence of presence, but things appear as they are in this or that movement. For Heidegger, 'Freedom alone can let a world prevail and let it world for Dasein. World never is, but worlds' (EG 126). Human freedom, in this respect, is not something one can achieve. Rather, it calls for 'being open *for* beings as they are'. This means being bound 'by what provides the measure for what is and what is not, [which] is in turn the condition for the possibility of *truth* understood as the correspondence of a statement to the "facts"' (Guignon, 2011, p. 102).<sup>16</sup> Heidegger's later claim that 'the essence of truth is freedom' is directed, in fact, at this precise point: the possibility of the understanding of truth occurs in the phenomenon of freedom. The experience of freedom occurs only as a result of change in the world. Such change or movement is not like a matter of constant presence: rather its ontological nature is a matter of presence and absence. Truth is not a matter of constant presence, but only appears as the possibility of the occurrence between both presence and absence. Thus, one should start from change, from the movement of the world that comes to us as it is, as the condition of the experience of freedom.

But why not talk about freedom in terms of factors other than movement? Why do we need this conception of movement to understand the phenomenon of freedom? An easy answer to this is that it is through movement that human beings first start to make sense of the world.<sup>17</sup> Common-sense and science prompt us to consider movement first

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"establishing" and "taking a basis" evidently cannot have an ordinary, ontic meaning, but must have a transcendental meaning' (EG 127). There are some debates among commentators over whether Heidegger is a transcendental philosopher (Han-Pile, 2007, p.80-1). Although taking up Kant's ontological inquiries in many aspects, Heidegger univocally pursues his inquiry in a hermeneutic phenomenological way. This is differentiated from Kant's transcendentalism in regard to the a priori conditions for the possibility of knowledge. Heidegger's transcendence can only be understood in relation to what Tylor Carman (2003) calls 'ontic realism', which appreciates the independence of nature from the human being as well as human being in the world within the hermeneutic circle, a point I shall return to in Chapter 6. In order to hold onto Heidegger's transcendental notion of freedom with its own physicality, I would like to focus on the phenomenon of freedom as movement.

16 In this light, however freedom is not solely praised at the expense of causality. The relationship between freedom and causality has changed as the latter is grounded by the former but not vice versa. Similarly, the idea of a fix in the scientific approach to education would not be abandoned due to its character in causality. What is clear to Heidegger instead is the limit of scientific measurement in understanding human being, for it is through such an approach that the fundamental understanding of being is neglected (See WM 95).

17 The physicality of movement is connected to Dasein's existence with historicity. Heidegger argues that such movement is 'not the motion [*Bewegung*] of something present-at-hand. It is definable in terms of the way Dasein stretches along. The specific movement in which Dasein is stretched along and stretches itself along, we call it "historizing"' (BT 427).

and foremost in physical terms. Flowers are blooming in the garden outside, now as I write this thesis. Clouds are being blown across the sky. This physical picture can be extended to the kinds of things that human beings do – such as walking, or raising one’s hand, or signing a document, or speaking. How do all these movements come to us as meaningful? For Heidegger, the question is how such movements come to light. What is presupposed in the perceptions or descriptions just given? The flowers blooming were tacitly pictured from the point of view of ordinary human perception, which in turn presupposes human physiology, and in fact the needs and desires that ultimately derive from this. Blooming flowers are the kinds of things that human beings notice, and this noticing of flowers – along with a host of other things – contributes to what comes to appear as the world.

Thus, when Heidegger speaks of being-in-the-world, and when he prefers *Dasein* (there-being) to familiar but burdened terms such as ‘man’ or ‘human being’, he is acknowledging a kind of mutuality: what we mean by ‘world’ is not conceivable without its fit with human physiology and functioning. Even to conceive of the extinction of all life is derivative from this holistic conception of the world, of being-in-the-world. The world does not stand still but is in movement, in the movement of physical objects. One consequence of this is that our common-sense starting point is inverted. The movement of physical objects is not understood in advance of the movement of ourselves in the world, with all the purposiveness this implies. In other words, this is what Heidegger rigorously defends in the name of the experience of freedom that occurs as our way to coming to understand the world as movement with this or that way.

So far we have followed Heidegger’s thought, wrestling with the traditional way of thinking. Heidegger tries to avoid ontological assumptions that ground reality in notions of causality. Yet such ways of thinking have been inherited in the vocabulary in educational practices and research, epitomized by the idea that education is to be fixed. I do not want to claim that the idea of fixing entailed in the scientific approach to education should be abandoned. Nor is this criticism simply a blanket condemnation of research methodologies of certain kinds. But what is at least clear is that human action cannot be exclusively delineated by scientific measurement. The ‘beyond fixing’ in my title alludes to what, while we have busied ourselves with debates about fixing education, has been

missed. And it is this more affirmative notion of a beyond that can come to light with proper attention to the phenomenon of freedom as movement in Heidegger's philosophy. Let me be more explicit then about how this notion can help us to understand educational practice.

## Education in the Openness of the Cave

The claim that human actions have been reconstructed philosophically as objects, and that this has inclined us towards thinking of education as something to be fixed, is unlikely to seem entirely new. My attention has been trained rather on what has been missed (or forgotten) in thinking of education in this way. In his essay, *Plato's Doctrine of Truth*, Heidegger expresses a historical and ontological understanding of education in his reading of the myth of the cave. He draws attention to a transformative change that is inherent in Plato's depiction of the essence of truth.<sup>18</sup> This interpretation in turn has an interesting bearing on education, where this comes to be a passage – a turning of the head, a movement, a journey up a path – towards freedom.

Let us begin with the allegory. This appears in the beginning of the seventh book in *the Republic*. In the conversation with Glaucon on the essence of the polis, Socrates tells the story, which goes roughly like this: a chained man in the cave, facing the back wall of the cave against which the shadows of a man-made fire can be seen, frees himself and moves toward the open in the sunlight. Then the man returns to the cave to help free other men. Heidegger offers his own translation, emphasizing two elements of the story: the image of the visible forms (truth) and a series of movements (education). The former illustrates Plato's perception of truth as idea or form (in Greek, *eidōs*), i.e. being itself

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18 The essay therefore consists in both 1) an account of Plato's understanding of education and 2) an exploration of education's relation with the essence of truth. The essence of the truth and the sort of transformation that, according to Heidegger, it undergoes in Plato is precisely what first makes 'possible "education" in its basic structure' (PDT 167). Therefore his project helps us to discover two things: first, the influence of the inherently dynamic nature of truth on the very idea of education in Plato's thinking; and second, the historical influence on educational trends of this transformed essence of truth, including its sometimes pathological tendencies (that is, its inclination to fix things). Regarding the latter, the significant moment is the change from truth as unhiddenness to truth as the correctness of the gaze. My purpose is to pursue the point that Heidegger brings to the fore: his invitation to a re-thinking of the ontological essence of truth in terms of the unhidden.

shows itself (PDT 164). According to Plato, it is this that makes it possible for human beings to perceive things. The fire at the mouth of the cave, which is man-made, makes things visible, just as the sunlight makes things visible outside the cave. The series of movements to which Heidegger draws attention illustrates the dwelling conditions of people ‘inside and outside the cave’ (PDT 165). Along with the movements, the people in the cave are said to become confused and to take some time to be accustomed to the light and conditions as they move to a new place in their journey towards the outside. The movement is not a mere change of place but a ‘process whereby the human essence is reoriented and accustomed to the region assigned to it at each point’ (PDT 166). In Plato, *paideia* (or, *παιδεία*) is defined as ‘leading the whole human being in the turning around of his or her essence’ (ibid.) that is, to put it in other words, a movement from ‘*apaideusia* (an education or, *ἀπαιδευσία*)’ to ‘*paideia* (education).’ In other words, it is a movement from a lack of formation (*Bildung*) to formation. Education is in Plato understood not as a simple programme of inputting or instilling knowledge in human beings: rather it involves an ontology of formation that embraces the entire, sometimes trembling transformation of the human being, shaking the very notion of its essence.

An ontological account of education is found in the word ‘dwell’ (*wohnen*) in Heidegger. It is a particularly important term for him, bringing together, as it does, ideas of belonging and meaningfulness that ‘living in a place’ would not encompass. Education as turning around is a transferral that requires moving into a region which was hidden or unknown. One’s dwelling embraces what was once hidden, and what was once hidden becomes unhidden. The unhidden in Heidegger usually refers to truth, *aletheia* in Greek, a term that refers not to an intellectual agreement with its object, as in the dominant understanding of truth in the Western tradition, but to things, which were originally hidden, revealed to us in dwelling. For example, what becomes unhidden in the cave when the prisoner breaks loose from his chains is that the fact that the shadow on the wall is a shadow. *Aletheia*, truth or unhidden in Greek, already has a relation to the word *alethes*, i.e. the normative. In the four different stages to the mouth of the Cave, what is unhidden (true) is the normative at each dwelling (PDT 168).

Different kinds of truth (or unhiddenness) appear in each movement of passage. On the ascent the way is toward the open, more unhiddenness appears in removing the

chain in the cave. In other words, this is the freedom from the chain. However, this is, in reading of Plato, not the real-freedom. The real freedom is in dwelling in the open so that everything is manifest under the sunlight, i.e. freedom toward the truth. Heidegger claims that real freedom is ‘the steadiness of being oriented toward that which appears in its visible form and which is the most unhidden in this appearing.’ The most unhidden is what Heidegger calls something that is ‘the truest’ (not a kind of) truth (PDT, p. 170). And education as turning around entails turning toward the truth. Heidegger describes education as depicted in the cave myth as a movement of passage towards the truth. And real freedom supports ‘the steadiness of being’ toward the truth.

One should be careful in reading Heidegger’s interpretation of freedom and truth. But this is not a matter of ‘steadiness of being toward the truth’, for this would be another name for constant presence. We should not hastily jettison the ideas of freedom to or from. These are modes of freedoms. But in his interpretation of Plato’s cave, there is I think a third kind of freedom, the movement of passage itself. Heidegger’s account of freedom consists of compartments toward beings that are manifested to us (EHF 207-8). The transfer to another dwelling appears through the manifestation of being. Throughout the transfer, what was once familiar to a man turns out to be unfamiliar. Heidegger claims elsewhere that this sequence consisting of the manifestation and anti-manifestation of dwelling is freedom (see EG 97-135). In these terms, freedom is no longer a conditional status of the human being at some interim stage of orientation toward the truth. The whole process of education displacing lack of education, in which things come to light but then fade from view, in which norms are recognised but then cease to hold sway, is addressed in freedom. This is what I want to suggest by freedom as a movement of passage.

Such movements occur throughout the cave. For Heidegger, the openness of the cave allows the cave to be as it is.

The ‘allegory’ can have the structure of a cave image at all only because it is antecedently co-determined by the fundamental experience of *aletheia*, the unhiddenness of beings, which was something self-evident for the Greeks. For what else is the underground cave except something open in itself that remains at the same time covered by a vault and, despite the entrance, walled off and enclosed by the surrounding earth? This cave-like enclosure that is open within itself, and that which it surrounds and therefore hides, both refer at the same time to an outside, the unhidden that is spread out in the light above ground.

Only the essence of truth understood in the original Greek sense of *aletheia* – the unhiddenness that is related to the hidden (to something dissembled and disguised) – has an essential relation to this image of an underground cave (PDT 172).

The image of the cave, in Heidegger’s interpretation, brings us into the nature of the original Greek notion of truth as *unhiddenness* (*aletheia*). This notion of truth can stand only in relation to hiddenness. Now Plato’s notion of truth and education is recounted in the change of the essence of *aletheia*. In the different kinds of dwellings, i.e. the inside and outside of the cave, one can become wise (*sophos*, σοφός) about what is present as unhidden. This means being astute about the normative in each inside or outside of the cave. In the movement of the cave, being astute about the cave is overcome by being wise about what is outside, in the light of the ideas (Platonic forms). This has become the dominant understanding of Western metaphysics (PDT 180).

In Heidegger’s analysis of the cave, as Iain Thomson (2005) makes clear, there are two projects going on. One is to discover the transformation of essence of truth in Plato and the historical influence on the understanding of education, which limits of space have prevented me from considering in this chapter.<sup>19</sup> The other is to recover an ontological notion of education. But how do we recover such an ontological notion of education? *Paideia* as a movement of passage from lack of education to education suggests that education is nothing that can ever be completed or fixed.<sup>20</sup> The

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19 The following brief remark on the shift of the essence of truth in Plato and in subsequent Western philosophy repays consideration: The movement suggests that one has desire (*philia*, φίλια) to ‘reach out beyond what is immediately present and to acquire a basis in that which, in showing itself, perdures’ (PDT, p. 180). The idea of philosophy (*φιλοσοφία*) is formulated as ‘gazing up at the “ideas”.’ Metaphysics in Plato, therefore, means to think beyond the experienced things in the forms of shadows or images, and to reach toward the ideas, the cause of things, or what makes things visible. The highest idea is named by Plato and correspondingly by Aristotle το θεϊον, the divine. Since then, metaphysics is specifically about the ‘cause’ of beings as God, theology. Corresponding to the idea, *paideia* (education) is concerned with human being and its position among other beings. This becomes a core part of metaphysics and crucial to humanity. In the light of this, freedom, morality, and rationality acquire their historically present meaning. Heidegger writes: ‘The beginning of metaphysics in the thought of Plato is at the same time the beginning of “humanism” ... What is always at stake is this: to take “human beings,” who within the sphere of a fundamental, metaphysically established system of beings are defined as *animal rationale*, and to lead them, within that sphere, to the liberation of their possibilities, to the certitude of their destiny, and to the securing of their “life.” This takes place as the shaping of their “moral” behavior, as the salvation of their immortal souls, as the unfolding of their creative powers, as the development of their reason, as the nourishing of their personalities, as the awakening of their civic sense, as the cultivation of their bodies, or as an appropriate combination of some or all of these “humanisms”’ (PDT, p. 181). A change in the essence of truth that begins in Plato, according to Heidegger, has become the history of metaphysics as well as humanism. And this is not an isolated event of the past but is historically present.

20 The recovery of the ontological education is also hinted to be an ‘awakening a “fundamental comportment” that education stamps us with a character that unfolds within us’. Such comportment is, as Thomson also points out, a form

impossibility of fixing or completing appears to us in the experience of the unhiddenness in each dwelling. Such unhiddenness is not the absolute only truth but is the possibility which is remained itself in relation with hiddenness. In this respect, education is nothing other than the *praxis* of freedom that is discussed as movement. In this, one comes to understand world, which appears as it is.

## Conclusion

The point of my juxtaposition of the initial concern regarding what is embedded in the idea of ‘fixing education’ with the ontological question of the relation between the world and human being should by now be clear. Both the idea of fixing education and the traditional conception of freedom as a means to intervene in the operation of cause and effect reside in the assumption of a world that is present-at-hand as object. By questioning the idea of fixing education, we have come to the question of the meaning of human freedom, a question that has seemingly been occluded by that discourse. Thus how we come to understand human freedom and education becomes crucial. There is reason to be suspicious of the ways in which, in education, linear narratives license a thinking in terms of cause-and-effect, and of the appropriateness of planning and intervention, all of which presuppose metaphysical assumptions that phenomenology shows to be false. The path that phenomenology takes with the theme of movement is then one way in which we can revise our conceptions, find release from the philosophical bondage of scientific methods, and provide a stronger and more coherent basis for educational research.

It is worth appending the thought that the idea of movement is, in any case, scarcely confined to the movement of physical bodies, whether they are planets or leaves or arms or vocal cords. We also commonly speak of political movements or movements in art. And we can also think of the kind of developmental movement that is involved in education, the progress a child makes – ‘progress’ itself being a word whose root implies movement. One response here is to see such uses as merely metaphorical, as if the change

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of receptive spontaneity: an attentive and responsive way of dwelling in one’s environment (OWL 75-6; Thomson, 2005, p. 161).

in the child were described by analogy with physical movement. But this seems too quick. As we have seen, our starting point could not be physical movement alone as this was shown, not only as this is manifested in human action but also as it conditions the revealing of things, already to presuppose the holistic intentional movement of human beings. Such a holism dispels any idea of a clear separation of the physical and the mental upon which the metaphor would rely. And even those 'primitive' movements, such as raising an arm, are already characterised by complex purposes, by ideas of achievement and progress: the small child reaches for the toy, and one day succeeds in picking it up.

If something is beyond fixing, this may imply that the situation is hopeless. But the intention here has been to refer to something beyond the language of fixing. This chapter began by considering what it is to fix something and how we have come to think of education as something to fix.

Thinking in this way has led us to question accustomed ways of thinking of education and standard assumptions in educational research. To think in terms beyond fixing, however, also requires us to attend to the task of philosophy of education. It leads us to ask what has been missed in the thinking of education that has been undertaken in the name of human freedom.

Because of limits of space, the question of truth in Heidegger as it appears in *Plato's cave* has not been discussed as fully as it might be. Without this, there is a danger that some of the thoughts that have been raised may seem to rattle around, as if in an empty vessel. The limit is a setting-off point for further research. I hope, however, that this vessel has at minimum traded its freight and has made clear its implications, in philosophy of education itself but also and in the wider, interdisciplinary fields of educational research. It is a matter not simply of finding technical fixes for educational and social problems but of thinking in a new way, and of inspiring teachers and policy-makers to do so too.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Freedom as Possibility, Temporality:**

#### **A Response to Biesta and Säfström's Manifesto**

The previous chapter attempted to show how educational discourses have succumbed to a language of fixing that is grounded in causal relationships that are characteristic of scientific understanding. This is embedded in both traditional Western philosophy and a causality which takes the human being as object, leading us to think that education is best approached from the vantage point of scientific measurement. Within the language of fixing, I pointed out the tension between human freedom and the idea of fixing education. By contrast, in the phenomenological approach, I have drawn attention to the event of the movement of beings. The physicality of freedom is experienced in the movement or passage that is named as education or *paideia* in Plato. This does not immediately suggest practical solutions to the problems that are embedded in ideas like fixing education but at least it calls us back to attend to a task of the philosophy of education, to question what we do in the name of education. In our reading of Heidegger, questions such as 'what does it mean to be free or to be educated?' have led us to share or bear the weight of the significance of the question: what does it mean to be?

The present chapter discusses our propensity to valorise educational ideals, including a concern for the truth, in relation to time. As Aristotle puts it, 'Time as the

measure of motion, the number of motion in respect to “before” and “after” (Aristotle, *Physics* 219b1-2), has served as the measure for the movement of beings. In this conception of time, one can develop a chronological order of events. In education, the typical understanding of time appears as follows: truth or ideals (freedom, for instance) are to be achieved, sometime in the future, at the end of education. To put it differently, educational practices are often understood through and by association with the chronological measurement of time. So far the hermeneutic phenomenological approach to freedom has revealed to us the dynamic of movement in human being and education. For Heidegger, such movement is in relation to time. In this chapter, I discuss temporality and freedom through a reading of Heidegger in which the time of education is understood in terms of human freedom.

Since it was first published in 2011, ‘A Manifesto for Education’ by Gert Biesta and Karl Anders Säfström (hereafter the Manifesto) has received numerous responses, in various countries.<sup>21</sup> It has been translated into many languages. Many teachers unions have shown their enthusiasm for the Manifesto by republishing it in their journals and newsletters. This passionate response can perhaps be attributed to its attempt to articulate ‘an alternative vision for education from within the field, rather than of education from an external economic or neoliberal perspective’ (Editors’ note, 2012, p. 667). The affirmation of speaking for education in the Manifesto is perhaps a valuable resistance to current movements in education that seek to legitimate education with reference to something outside it – say, to economic prosperity. Meanwhile, on the contrary, education has too often been conceived in terms of tangible or material matters.

Such enthusiasm however is perhaps not purely attributable to the substance of the text but also to the form it adopts. The authors present these ideas through what must count as a rather unconventional educational research format or genre: that of the

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21 In the abstract of the text cited, the authors explain: ‘In November 2010 the authors finished the writing of a manifesto for education. The manifesto was an attempt to respond to a number of issues concerning education, both in the field of educational research and in the wider socio-political environment. This is the text of that manifesto followed by two commentaries in which the authors try to highlight some of the reasons that have led to the writing of the manifesto, and in which an attempt is made to situate the manifesto in a number of discussions and debates.’ The major part of my discussion is concerned with the manifesto itself and with substantive and rhetorical matters issuing from this text. For reasons of space I shall not comment on the important rhetorical effects of its being published alongside the authors’ individual commentaries.

manifesto. It is through this genre that they intend to ‘stand up for education’. They do this with a degree of irony, conscious that what they want to convey is not something that is readily amenable to explicit formulation.

The genre of the manifesto is a powerful means to declare views on political or artistic matters, especially views of a bold and visionary kind. In a sense, then, they have marked out new ground in educational research by exploiting this material form. It fuses the descriptive and the prescriptive, always a sensitive disjunction for educational research. As Biesta puts it, however, nowadays ‘a manifesto can only be performed in an ironic manner’ since:

We know all too well, after all, that no manifesto that has ever been written – be it in the domain of art or in the domain of politics – has ever managed to change the world. . . . As an ironic form – or as an ironic performance – a manifesto can be nothing more than an attempt to speak and, through this, create an opening, a moment of interruption. That is precisely what this manifesto tries to do and what we try to do with this manifesto. We try to speak, not simply about education, but also for education (Manifesto, p. 542).

How does the acknowledgement of irony here work in relation to the claim made in the Manifesto? Questioning the use of the genre, however, is not the sole project of my own thesis. Their suggestion that we should ‘stay in the tension’ is based on the diagnosis of a current problem in education that is tied to the modern understanding of time. I appreciate its attempt to offer criticism based on the link between freedom and temporality in education. The authors suggest an alternative of non-temporality, in which one stays in the tension of the present. In much of what follows I shall discuss the Manifesto in terms of temporality and freedom through a reading of Martin Heidegger. I shall argue for the concept of time in education in terms of human *freedom as temporality*.

## **Why a Manifesto? An Ironic Genre for Freedom**

In this rather unconventional education research format, the selected genre delivers the message that we should ‘stand up for education’. Hence, it seeks to convey

an opinion or gesture to the public in a way calculated to have impact. But how does the form relate to the content? This is a question I shall shortly investigate. But first let me say something about the characteristic features of a manifesto and the way that Biesta and Säfström frame this.

A manifesto typically takes the form of a very short text, concisely expressed in order to deliver a message clearly and effectively. Although such clear and concise texts may be effective in delivering their message, they do this at the price of forfeiting the opportunity for more developed and more lucid discussion. Biesta and Säfström provide such a (jointly-authored) text but then supplement this with their own individual reflections on this. Another characteristic of the genre is that it offers a clear vision or a message, especially regarding a pressing matter or an urgent need. ‘Standing up for education’ is the motto of the Manifesto, and this fits the genre. A manifesto’s motto can function as an exemplary reference for what matters. Guides to how to write a personal manifesto, which one can easily find on Google, stress this: ‘Don’t waste your time on things that don’t serve your manifesto. . . Stay focused on what you want.’<sup>22</sup> The genre itself functions to deliver a visionary image. This is the very nature of the genre, a genre that is plainly prescriptive.

I should confess that, although I was fascinated by the text, almost as if I was kidnapped by it, I found myself looking for more precise discussion. One such discussion that is needed in particular is on temporality, and I return to this in the next section of this chapter.

With this in mind, let us briefly recall what the Manifesto says. The authors analyse two kinds of current criticism of education ‘for not delivering what it is supposed to deliver’, which they identify as populism and idealism. The former, which they connect with ‘what is’, takes education to be a matter of shaping individual abilities, tastes, and aspirations in the light of the existing society and its perceived needs – that is, it is a kind of socialisation. The latter, which they associate with idealism of various kinds (for example, democracy, justice, solidarity), presents education as a utopian dream: this they call ‘what is not’ (Manifesto, p. 540). Their argument is that, with either orientation,

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22 Online at <http://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Manifesto> (retrieved 20 Feb 2013).

education fails to take a proper responsibility for the present. To tie education to ‘what is’ can:

either be adaptation to the ‘what is’ of society, in which case education becomes socialisation, or it can be adaptation to the ‘what is’ of the individual child or student, thus starting from such ‘facts’ as the gifted child, the child with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, the student with learning difficulties, and so on. . . In both cases education loses its interest in freedom, it loses its interest in an ‘excess’ that announces something new and unforeseen (Manifesto, p. 541).

To tie education to ‘what is not’, on the other hand, cannot be a solution since

If we go there, we tie up education with utopian dreams. To keep education away from pure utopia is not a question of pessimism but rather a matter of not saddling education with unattainable hopes that defer freedom rather than making it possible in the here and now. (Manifesto, p. 541).

The authors’ criticism is of the temporality-oriented, prescriptive conceptualisation of education in which what matters for education – freedom – becomes illusory. They suggest, instead, that by retaining the tension between what is and what is not, by living in this tension, freedom in education can be properly conceived. Thus:

To stay in the tension between ‘what is’ and ‘what is not’ is therefore also a matter of being responsible for the present. . . From an educational perspective, both extremes appear as irresponsible. We therefore need to stay in the tension (Manifesto, p. 541).

This suggestion is oriented neither towards the future nor towards a fixed present. To stay in the tension is to consider freedom in education for here and now. In both what is and what is not, education has been conceived as a linear process of growth and learning, and this often serves to divide the present from the future – as, for example, where the mature and the immature are differentiated. It is true that in many contexts educational goals have endlessly been postponed, with the present relegated to the secondary status of the ‘not yet’ or incomplete. The Manifesto attempts to bring freedom back into the educational present, ‘the educational moment’, and this is figured as responsibility for the present.

Their argument thus heads towards the suggestion: ‘Could it be, therefore, that we need to take temporality out of education in order to capture something educationally, something that is neither about what is, nor about what is not yet (but will come one day)?’ (Manifesto, p. 543).

Putting aside the problem of non-temporality, which I shall consider shortly, I find an apparent contradiction between the substance of the message and the form of the Manifesto. The genre already functions in a way that is prescriptive and exemplary, in the name of something that has not yet appeared: in both extremes of what is and what is not, according to the authors, the proper educational moment has been neglected; we should consider the educational moment; in this way we might properly consider freedom in education. Within this structure, and in its exploitation of the genre, the Manifesto becomes prescriptive and exemplary, with criticism of current education problems. But to the extent that this is so, do their criticism and prescription not rely upon a conception of ‘what is not’? Following this logic, the freedom the authors have in mind hardly seems remote from those ideals of freedom they criticise. Biesta and Säfström offer an interesting polemic against the common understanding of time and freedom in education. Appearing as it does in the form of a manifesto, however, their proposal seems to fall foul of one of the avenues of their criticism. The message claims to reject both what is and what is not, but the leading suggestion they make falls into or at least relies on the category of what is not. Commitment to what is not is inherent in their use of the genre of the manifesto. The authors choose a prescriptive genre to challenge the prescriptive nature of education as this appears in what is and what is not, and the irony of this seems to go beyond the irony they intend. But let us examine this further.

Irony in the adoption of the form of the manifesto is not unprecedented. Kathleen M. Jamieson gives the example of the contradiction between content and form when the Founding Fathers deliberately choose monarchical forms while disavowing monarchy (Jamieson, 1975, p. 414). The authors of the Manifesto imply a kind of necessity about their adoption of the genre: they want to speak outside the received language of the academy (the language of psychology or sociology, for example) and in a form that will recognisably speak *for* education. As Biesta puts this, the ironic form of the Manifesto is no more than a way to speak for education (Manifesto, p. 542). But however irony works

in these cases, it does not lessen the responsibility of the person who adopts the genre. As Vatz and Rabin put it, ‘the rhetor is personally responsible for his rhetoric regardless of “genres”’ (Vatz and Rabin, 1975, p. 5; Jamieson, 1975, p. 414). Of course, it will be open to the authors of the Manifesto at any point to remind us that their use of the genre of the manifesto is ironic. But this does not wholly defuse its force as manifesto and the claim to irony must remain a double gesture.

Nevertheless, the irony in the adoption of the genre of the Manifesto should be the subject of our concern less than the nature of its claims. It is not my purpose in this chapter to suggest other strategies that the authors might have used, though surely it would have been possible for them to present their case more straightforwardly, say, in a conventional journal paper or newspaper article. But I do think that the question of the part played by irony does not stop here. The irony is not just to do with use of the genre: it has to do with the nature of freedom itself. The irony arises in the alleged disconnection between freedom and temporality, the idea that one could have freedom without temporality: the freedom advocated in the Manifesto is posited in the realm of non-temporality and yet this is elaborated with temporal expressions such as ‘orientation towards’. Biesta concedes that ‘as the manifesto is only a short text, much is left unspoken and unexplored’ (Biesta, 2012, p. 2), and this proves to be so especially with regard to what it would mean to take temporality out of education.

### **What could be meant by the non-temporality of education and freedom?**

The Manifesto posits the problem of education and freedom in the domain of the understanding of time. In this part, I shall discuss the nature of freedom and temporality advanced in the Manifesto, based on Biesta’s keynote paper at the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain Annual Conference in Oxford in 2012. In that paper Biesta accuses the modern understanding of time of excluding freedom from education. Here again he warns that if education is tied either to ‘what is’ or ‘what is not’ in this modern temporal logic in education, then freedom ‘runs the risk of disappearing from the scene’ (2012, p. 6). And freedom, Biesta contends, is a key concept for education, which

he emphasises with such expressions as ‘what matters educationally in education’ and ‘what makes education educational’.<sup>23</sup> Non-temporality is here developed by Biesta through an evocation of the idea of the modern temporality of education. To do so, Biesta identifies a distinction between what is *not* and what is *not yet*. The distinction is in fact crucial for the mainstay of the argument of the Manifesto. What is not yet refers to what is to arrive in the future. The idea of the ‘*not yet*’ relegates the present to the secondary status of the incomplete, whilst the predetermined future is given a priority. Education, in the meantime, no longer focuses on the present but lurks in wait of the illusory future ideal. Without the *yet*, thus, the *here and now*, as Biesta phrases the non-temporal, becomes a tension between the two: what is and what is not.

This is, however, hardly convincing since this formulation is still tied to the business of what is not. Freedom of this kind is understood in terms of a lack in current educational practice and experience. Freedom is then understood in relation to what is not. The idea of taking the ‘yet’ out of what is *not yet* is drawn from the structures of modern temporality, and this in no way makes it non-temporal but rather invokes a non-*modern* temporality. As Biesta also puts this, the target here is ‘the temporal logic of modern education’ (Biesta, 2012, p. 6). Certainly there is a hint of the critique of *modern* temporality, in the sense indicated above, in the authors’ interest in the freedom of the child. The nature of such freedom is distinguished from other types of freedom thus:

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23 Biesta’s wording here is anticipated in the Manifesto where the authors write of what ‘makes education educational’ or ‘what matters educationally in education’, phrases that they repeat. These pleonastic expressions carry their own rhetorical force, and in certain respects this intensifies the effects of the use of the genre of the manifesto. The authors do not explain exactly how the expression is to be understood, and there is at least the impression that there is something *given* in the notion of education, if rightly understood – that is, understood in the way the authors evidently do. This is problematic partly because it invites the thought that there is an essence to education. It is obviously the case that educational institutions and practices vary and change over time, but clearly and quite reasonably the authors are appealing to some conception beyond these, against which those practices might be judged. This much is reasonable enough, but to concede that this is so is not to accept that there is some timeless essence of education to which appeal can be made. This is probably not what the authors intend, but the use of this phrase is in danger of functioning not as a term whose reference is clear but as a kind of incantation. In this there is a danger of mystification. It is obvious that there is a number of ways in which substantive accounts of education can be provided – as can readily be found in such major philosophical works as *The Republic* (Plato) and *Emile* (Rousseau), as well as in those more close to contemporary philosophy of education such as *Democracy and Education* (Dewey), *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (Freire), and *Ethics and Education* (R.S. Peters). The list could go on. But to assert concern with what is ‘educationally educational’ will not take us far in this. My own view would certainly be centrally related to the temporal nature of human experience especially in respect of freedom, and the concluding section of this chapter will indicate the kind of direction this might take.



Freedom is not license. It is neither about ‘anything goes’ nor about individual preference and choice. Freedom is *relational* and therefore inherently difficult. This is why educational freedom is not about the absence of authority but about authority that carries *an orientation towards* freedom with it (Manifesto, p. 540-1, italics added).

The freedom that the Manifesto has in mind is a matter of individual autonomy. Such freedom is rejected in the Manifesto since it inherently bears the structure of freedom conceived in terms of modern temporality, which places the being of the present in relation to the ‘not yet’. If this is so, a better expression for ‘taking temporality out of education’ might be ‘taking *modern* temporality out of education’.

Let me be clear about this: the case being made in the Manifesto makes sense if the emphasis is put not on temporality per se, but to suggest that temporality in general or as a whole might be taken out of education makes no sense at all. Hence, my qualification of the term with the adjective ‘modern’, the purpose of which is to indicate a particular understanding of time that is dominant in the modern world, is an attempt to rescue the claims the Manifesto makes. Biesta evidently wants to say that non-temporality does not reject temporality or historicity in education: ‘This, as we try to argue, is not to take history out of education, but rather to take history seriously, to believe that history can be made, because history is not the unfolding of a programme, but an imperfect sequence of events’ (Biesta, 2012, p. 2). Hence, by claiming to ‘take time out of education’ Biesta might plausibly be taken to be referring to practices and ways of thinking that remain outside of the confines of a certain kind of temporality. My suggestion is that what he and Säfström are arguing for might reasonably be described as ‘non-modern temporality’.

But the problem persists, as we have seen, in that the authors also use temporal terms to describe the freedom they espouse, such as ‘an orientation towards’. The preposition ‘towards’ implies distance and direction. If my pencil were here with me, I would not make a move toward the place where I placed it before. ‘Orientation’ implies a direction. Hence, if something is oriented or in movement ‘towards freedom’, then freedom is assumed to be detached from it. The nature of the expression here is of particular importance. In the first place, it should be clear that ‘towards’ is essentially a

temporal expression, for the reasons just indicated: I move towards the place where my pencil is. By saying ‘towards freedom’, Biesta and Säfström place the word ‘freedom’ in a comparable grammatical position to the place where I am not yet but where I may possibly be some time soon. Benign though this may seem, it is in fact to trap the notion of freedom within that very frame of thought (modern temporality) that I have suggested they want to overcome, even though they do not use this term. I do agree with the criticism of the modern temporal logic of education. And, furthermore, I realise that to ponder the construction of this kind of refinement of expression may seem to be a somewhat ‘academic’ matter and not really productive. But there is more at stake here than a mere question of expression. If we take seriously the problem of modern temporality, discussion needs to focus on the possibility of an alternative understanding of temporality. Modern temporality can be contrasted with a different, more accurate conception, and more fundamental conception, where freedom is understood not as a place towards which I am moving but as internal to the *possibility* of my being – the being, that is, of Dasein. It seems unlikely that we shall find this in the structures of non-temporality, because the emphasis of non-temporality is on the fantasy of a present, a pure *here and now*. By emphasising the present, non-temporality continuously loses its real sense of time since the present is not separable in this way. Indeed the tendency to emphasise this specific sense of time seems not remote from the problem of modern temporality itself. The rest of the chapter is devoted to an appeal to an alternative conception of time in relation to education, and I shall approach this in the light of the work of Martin Heidegger.

### **Time of Education in Freedom as Possibility**

Biesta (2012) focuses on how education could work *without time*. It is acknowledged that the idea that time might be taken out of education may sound implausible, but he tries to be more specific:

Because education seems to be so fundamentally caught up with a particular notion of temporality – not only at the level of ideas but also at the level of the whole educational infrastructures . . . – the suggestion to take time out of the educational equation may be quite counter-intuitive (Biesta, 2012, p. 6).

Taking this risk, Biesta reminds us that the whole project is concerned with freedom (*ibid.*). Education and freedom are, as we have seen throughout, also linked in the Manifesto: ‘to stand up for education’ means ‘to stand up for the possibility of freedom’ (Manifesto, p. 542). This implies that the possibility of freedom is close to the essence of education itself. The question is how they are related to each other.

Let us, albeit briefly, try to get closer to Biesta’s ideas on how education, in terms of subjectification and freedom, would work *without time*. Subjectification indicates one’s being a speaking subject, which in turn implies the freedom to speak. The speaking subject is not to be understood primarily in linguistic terms, to do with the process of learning a language, as commonly understood. To speak needs to be understood in relation to the experience of being addressed. To be addressed is a matter of *recognising* that the other is addressing me. A speaking subject makes a choice that must be understood in terms of freedom, and this is a matter of responsibility (Biesta, 2012, p. 9). In the light of this Biesta advocates an education conducive to subjectification without time. Such subjectification appears here and now via being addressed and taking responsibility. However, has his claim, the attempt to stand outside time, actually escaped from modern temporality? The more we emphasise the importance of the present, the more we get involved in the business of modern temporality in education. For such a vocabulary is already and inherently embedded in the grammar of a modern understanding of time. What this needs to be contrasted with is the kind of account of time that is found widely in poststructuralist literature, and indeed before this, and which has been explored in education in a variety of ways: this extends through Kierkegaard and Bergson to Heidegger, and from Levinas through Derrida and Nancy, for example. It seems self-evident that none of these accounts of time could fall within what Biesta and Säfström are thinking of when they speak of ‘taking temporality out of education’.

The question that must now then be addressed has to do with *how* time and education are related to each other, for without this the discussion will inevitably fall back

into the discourse of 'what is not'. Questions should first be asked about the interconnected meanings of possibility, freedom, and temporality and their relation to education. In this context our focus will inevitably be on *time*.

The common-sense conception of time is of a line stretched out and characterised by datability as *chronos*. While such a relation to time is crucial to human beings, this relation does not exist without one that is perhaps more profound: a matter of our experience is always having come from something and always being on the way to something, where these orientations will bring different things into focus, with different intensity, at different times. I remember the library books I should have given back, or that today is the anniversary of my friend's marriage, or that I must complete this paper before 1 February. Or simply, 'time flies'. Once again we see that there is intentionality and purposiveness in these orientations that themselves occur within a realm of time. These are fundamental to human being and to world, insofar as world, as we saw, involves being-in-the-world. Heidegger's most celebrated idea is perhaps *being-in-the-world*. An attribute of being-in-the-world is, in fact, *understanding* the world. 'Understanding', is not a simple cognitive process, but 'purposive use of available (*Zuhanden*) things in practical situation' (Carman, 2003, p. 20). In understanding, which has less to do with my mastery of things than with the way I stand in relation to them, there is opened up the possibility of things as much as of my own being. Thomas Sheehan takes Heideggerian questions about being to be no more than questions about meaning and the human being's making sense of the world in the form of phenomenological reduction. To understand things means 'to understand them in terms of their specific form of meaningfulness' (Sheehan, 2011, p. 46). Thus some events can be understood or remembered through their chronological description of being 'before' and 'after'. However, this is only one mode of understanding. Human understanding is not constrained by the chronological and cuts across its sequential character in seeking to make sense of something. Heidegger emphasises Dasein's understanding in terms of possibility.

Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence – in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not to be itself. Dasein has either chosen these possibilities itself, or got itself into them, or grown up in them already. Only the particular Dasein decides its existence, whether it does so by taking hold or by neglecting (BT 33).

But what is possibility for Heidegger? In the first place, possibility is an elusive concept. It tends to be understood as something not yet actualised. More fundamentally, the possible, is neither a set that is complementary to the actual nor a string of events that are not yet actualised but may in the end come to be. Possibility is not to be understood as what is logically possible. Examples such as ‘crossing the Rubicon to conquer Rome’ or ‘picking the apple from the tree of paradise’ (as Leibniz considers) represent possibilities that are only possible in thinking. Nor should we count accidental events or the contingency of something present-at-hand as exemplifying Heideggerian possibility (BT 183). As Christopher Bouton puts it, Heideggerian possibility is an existential possibility, or ability-to-be (*Seinkönnen*) that is ‘far from floating in the atemporal world of ideas, possibilities are ways of being, situated in a ramifying process rooted in the ability to be of *Dasein*’ (Bouton, 2014, p. 150). For example, at the moment I am trying to give up smoking. This is to say both that I *used* to smoke and that I *will be* a non-smoker. My present condition sits unsteadily between these two (even though I have not had a cigarette for months). I am not yet a non-smoker, since I still carry the stain of the habit enough to say that I am quitting smoking. If I had never been a smoker, the question would not even come up – at least, not in the same way. I do not at the moment actually smoke, and so I can thus perhaps claim that I am a non-smoker – but not in the same way as those non-smokers out there who react with horror when they discover someone smoking in a public space. In this respect, my credentials as a non-smoker remain within the possibility of becoming. Now it may seem that what I am saying here is reminiscent of that familiar formula that recovering alcoholics are advised to adopt: ‘I am an alcoholic. I will not have a drink today.’ While there may be a parallel of some kind here, the example of the alcoholic directs the attention towards the more psychological aspects of this, whereas my concern is with the ontological. Hence, what I want to emphasise is that possibility is not a matter of waiting for the arrival of an actuality but an aspect of my being that encompasses my actuality, and this incorporates something of what I have been up to now. The smoking example applies to me, but this general point about possibility applies to all human beings. I think we cannot imagine animals in general existing in this condition, but this *is* the human condition. Furthermore, it is an aspect of being human that comes peculiarly to the fore in contexts of learning. The learner – say, in respect of

the learning of German – is poised unsteadily between an incapacity and the acquisition of an ability. Sometimes in learning, one cannot see how one is going to progress to the next stage.

The smoking example will, I hope, help to show that the condition being described is nothing like, say, the becoming-a-butterfly that is already programmed in the cocoon. The reality is that I understand or experience myself, first, as becoming this or becoming that, and, second, as burdened by a past (my having been a smoker, the student's having been unable to speak German). Possibility in this respect is not so much a dimension of my capacity to make decisions but rather of my *existence*. Possibility, for Heidegger, indicates the mode of the world in which I am.<sup>24</sup>

Such understanding is, ontologically speaking, projecting: 'I understand the world' means 'I exist in the world as projecting.' *Entwurf*, the German for 'projection', etymologically brings to light the sense of throwing something off or throwing something forward; projection is a matter of pressing ahead into some ways to be Dasein, as William Blattner puts it, but this way to be Dasein is not displaced into the future; it is not later to come (Blattner, 2007, p. 314). Rather, it is something like 'designing or sketching some project which is to be carried through' (BT 185). This projecting throws my being towards my possibility. As Heidegger explains, Dasein's projection as 'beyond itself' is a '*Being-ahead-of-itself*' (ibid, p. 236). In Heideggerian terms this might be expressed as follows: Dasein's being-in-the world is *ahead-of-itself-being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside*. This rather complex expression reflects Heidegger's insistent avoidance of a certain traditional understanding of being in relation to the three dimensions of past, present, and future, as understood in modern terms. The 'ahead' carries the futural sense of time, but this is not something 'in advance', which implies 'not yet now – but later'

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24 Existential possibilities are not a matter of one's understanding of one's social status and the opportunities it affords. As Blattner makes clear: 'An existential possibility is a manner of self-understanding with which one is identified in virtue of pressing ahead into it. Social statuses and existential possibilities come clearly apart in the case of the poseur' (p. 314). A good example for this that Blattner shows us is the character Frank Abignale Jr in the film *Catch Me if You Can*. The film shows a man who adopts (with various disguises) a series of occupations whilst he is not understanding himself in terms of these roles and the status that goes with them. Although he is convincingly accorded the social status such of teacher and airline pilot, his understanding of the social role is not necessarily the same as the existential possibility. Social status and existential possibility also come apart in one who has resigned her existential projection, even though she still occupies the social status. If I have resigned or taken back my self-understanding, say, as a father, then I no longer identify with it and no longer press ahead into it, even if my fellows, and the law too, will hold me accountable to the obligations of fatherhood (p. 314).

(BT 375). By the same token, ‘already’ is not ‘no longer now – but earlier’. Blattner puts this:

Just as the “ahead” in “being-ahead-of-itself” describes a future that can never come to be present, so Heidegger argues that the ‘already’ in ‘being-already in a world’ picks out a past that never was present. Dasein’s originary past is, recall, its attunements, the way things already matter to it. I am always already “thrown” into the world and into my life, because I am always attuned to the way it matters to me. These attunements are the “drag” that situates and concretizes the “thrust” of my projection. These attunements, however, are not past events. They do not belong to the sequential past, as the various episodes of my life-history do. In Heidegger’s language, they are not “bygone” (*vergangen*). They belong, rather, to the existential or originary past, after which they slipped into the past. Rather, at every moment that an attunement characterizes me, even at its first moment, I am already thrown into it; it is already past (Blattner, 2007, p. 315).

The terms such as ‘earlier’ or ‘later’ in our common understanding of time has rendered our conception of time something ‘present-at-hand’ that is detached from our understanding of being. For Heidegger, on the contrary, time is not an entity that is set aside in Dasein’s being. Time is Dasein’s ontological structure of care ‘lies in temporality’ (BT 375). In these terms, time is not some kind of fixed axis to serve or measure the events or things, but shows its plasticity upon Dasein’s understanding of the world. This understanding is always in relation with my attunements to what I am.

At this stage, let us, once again, visit Biesta’s account of temporality and historicity for education.

This, as we try to argue, is not to take history out of education, but rather to take history seriously, to believe that history can be made, because history is not the unfolding of a programme, but an imperfect sequence of events’ (Biesta, 2012, p. 2).

I agree with Biesta’s rejection of history as the unfolding of a programme. Furthermore, his claim about history shows an appreciation that historical events are in an imperfect sequence. The imperfectability of the sequence of the events of history needs a careful reading, however. For the term may, with or without the authors’ intention, invite a

conception of time that retains a focus on the perfection or imperfection of a sequence of events that is detached from Dasein's understanding rather than being dependent on it.

To avoid this, time should be understood in the context of ontological inquiry. This means that time is based on the existential possibility of Dasein's understanding. To put it differently again, the question should be both on how an event comes to us as an event and how we understand some events in one way or another. By the same token, Biesta's claim on 'here and now' can be re-examined in the ontological inquiry. The emphasis on 'here and now' is not on 'non-temporality' as they would dramatically put forward. The problem of the modern temporality does not necessarily lead us to conclude non-temporality, but a call for temporality. This is no other than Dasein's existence.

Such temporality is only possible through Dasein's existence. The sense of 'to be-here' is obtained by the temporalisation of one's existence. As discussed above, Dasein exists as possibility. Dasein hears, in projecting, 'one's conscience and project oneself onto the possibility that is most truly one's own: one's death,' i.e. the possibility of the impossibility (Dahlstrom, 2005, p. 155). Heidegger describes finite human being as being-towards-death. This does not mean that we are free to die, in the way that perhaps Sartre would conceive this, but rather the precondition of our being free. Chronological time – time as conceived in physics – does not depend upon this, so it seems: yet such a conception of time is derivative from this involved understanding and engagement in the world. Being-towards-death invites us to think about the world differently, and this awareness of our mortality always somehow flickers beneath our everyday absorption in things, conditioning those practices however much this may be concealed. 'To be-here' is another name for authentically becoming. For this Heidegger exploits different modes of temporality as 'ecstasies' (BP 267). Daniel O. Dahlstrom (2005) interprets ecstasies in both a figurative and literal sense of intentionality. The following quotation illustrates the sense of 'being here' as ecstatic mode of temporality:

As a means of capturing the originally timely character of being-here, of being-in-the-world as the ground level of intentionality, Heidegger construes the modes of timeliness – anticipating, retrieving, and the moment – as "ecstasies" (*Ekstasen*). This use of "ecstasis" (from *ek*: out, and *histemi*: to place) plays on original uses of the Greek term in the sense of displacement, literally and figuratively, as well as on modern connotations of those figurative senses. We



say, for example, that someone is ecstatic when she is “beside herself” with joy or pleasure and so given up to the experience that she gives little or no thought to herself or even to what she is doing. Being ecstatic, one is on the verge of being unconscious, but precisely because one is so focused, so intently engaged in and, in that active sense, given up to the moment. Heidegger’s appeal to these associated meanings is meant to convey how those modes of timeliness – those ecstasies – jointly constitute the most basic level of being-here or, in other words, the prethematic process of being-here in the sense of being outside oneself. Again, as in the case of “being-here,” Heidegger exploits a term with an unmistakably spatial root, while at the same time insisting on the fundamentally temporal significance of the phenomenon so designated (Dahlstrom, 2005, p. 161).

Thus in these ecstatic modes of temporality, Dasein’s possibility (*Möglichkeit*) is characterised by freedom (BT 237). Human freedom is specifically described in terms of possibility, which reveals the mode of Dasein as being ahead of itself – that is, as projecting. For Heidegger, human freedom is experienced in one’s own understanding of existence as possibility.

As existent, the Dasein is free for specific possibilities of its own self. It is its own most peculiar able-to-be. These possibilities of itself are not empty logical possibilities lying outside of itself, in which it can engage or from which it could keep aloof; instead they are, as such, determinations of existence. If the Dasein is free for definite possibilities of itself, for its ability to be, then the Dasein is in this being-free-for; it is these possibilities themselves. ... To be one’s own most peculiar ability to be, to take it over and keep oneself in the possibility, to understand oneself in one’s own factual freedom, that is, to understand oneself in the being of one’s own most peculiar ability-to-be, is the original existential concept of understanding (BT 276).

The existential sense of ‘being-here’ should therefore be understood in the idea of freedom as possibility. Heidegger emphasises that the present can be revealed as future, which belongs to possibility (see Kisiel, 2005, p. 197). In this, possibility does not refer to some static future moment on a line stretching from the present. Through this projecting, through freedom as possibility, we understand the world. As Sheehan argues:

Mortality lets us make sense of ... and in fact requires us to do so if we don’t want to die. The facticity of thrownness into meaning becomes utterly serious when we realize that meaning-making – our very way of staying alive – is possible only because we are mortal; and our mortality is the groundless ground for why we have to make sense (Sheehan, 2011, p. 47).

Human being understands (or makes sense of, as Sheehan puts it) its temporal existence as the possibility of being possible and not being possible, the impossible i.e. the death. Freedom as possibility gives us our understanding of temporality. Heidegger's notion of time and freedom undercuts more than the indeterminate future. Freedom grounds, as in the smoking example, the conditions in which I can be this *and* that, authentic *and* inauthentic, poised unsteadily between the two.<sup>25</sup> In *Being and Time*, freedom is fundamentally neither an ideal to be achieved nor the ground for ethical decision-making. Understanding in this sense is, as we saw, not a matter of mastery: it is the nature of our being-in-the-world. In this light, possibility no longer serves for the conditions in which freedom may appear. Freedom, above all, is not the ability to choose between possibilities.<sup>26</sup> Possibility that is characterised by freedom is a way for Dasein to understand the concept of time.

Freedom as movement, the leading thought in Chapter 3, claims that there are no fixed stages of being but that Dasein comes to understand itself in passages of revelation and concealment. This movement is thus grounded in Heidegger's understanding of Dasein's existence. Heidegger puts this point in a temporal term: 'Dasein stretches along between birth and death' (BT 425). The stretching of Dasein between birth and death is the dynamic aspect of Dasein's movement. It is Dasein's understanding of itself in or through time – as stretching between birth and death, for example, that Dasein

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25 In emphasising this point, my interpretation of Heidegger differs from that of Tyson Lewis (2013), which focuses on Dasein's resolute choice as authentic. Authenticity and inauthenticity do not indicate truth and falsity, respectively. 'But to the extent that this Being towards its potentiality-for-Being is itself characterized by freedom, Dasein can comport itself towards its possibilities, even unwillingly; it can be inauthentically; and factually it is inauthentically, proximally and for the most part' (BT 237). Such possibility thus is not about one's own pure capacity to control whether or not one is authentic; it is the very condition of one's temporality qua Dasein. Blattner also points out that 'originary temporality as such is modally indifferent to authenticity and inauthenticity' (Blattner, 2007, 322). In this respect, I have not attempted to develop the idea of freedom in relation to resoluteness and authenticity. This is partly because of limits of space but also because I wanted not to implicate Heidegger in an anthropological and ethical interpretation.

26 Although Christophe Bouton's analysis of freedom in its relation to time needs to be appreciated, I have a reservation with his initial definition of human freedom as the 'ability to choose between alternative possibilities' (Bouton, 2014, p. 13-14). For freedom as an ability may suggest something to be achieved or developed. As indicated in the Introduction of the thesis, freedom is not identified as something that human beings can achieve. One may wonder about a possible connection with authentic existence. In this respect, 'to be here' can also be thought of as 'authentically becoming', which includes a determination of the sense of genuine (authentic) existence (Dahlstrom, 2005, p. 155). As expressed in the ontological expression of Dasein as ahead-of-itself-being-already-in-(the-world) as Being-alongside, the term 'already' bears the implication that 'I am having been' that is at any given moment always prior to and beyond our determination (Sheehan, 1995, p. 217; Dahlstrom, 2005, p. 158). Further discussion on freedom is discussed in the following chapter.

understands the movement of existence. Such a dynamic aspect of Dasein is in relation to that of temporality (Hoffman, 2007, p. 327). And ‘If there is any categorical imperative of the ‘ought’ then this is only so by pure willing, ‘the ought of one’s existence’ (EHF 198). One’s existence is bound to the world and binding to the world. Being bound to the world is in other words to let beings appear as they are. And in being bound we are given to decide this or that toward whatever is binding and so to let ourselves be bound by ‘whatever is to provide the measure and be binding in one way or another’ (FCM 342). Guignon summarises that:

Human freedom calls for being open for beings as they are for letting beings show up as they are. In letting oneself be bound, we are given the leeway to decide concerning the conformity or non-conformity of our comportment toward whatever is binding and so to let ourselves be bound by whatever is to provide the measure and be binding in one way or another (FCM 342). The openness to being, which is bound by what provides the measure for what is and what is not, is in turn the condition for the possibility of truth understood as the correspondence of a statement to the facts. It is in this sense that the essence of truth is freedom (Guignon, 2011, p. 102).

Freedom as possibility is, let me repeat, to be distinguished from the possibility of freedom. To illustrate: when, for 27 years, Nelson Mandela was imprisoned, he anticipated the possibility of freedom, and this came in 1990, with the end of apartheid in South Africa. But while he was still in prison, his condition, qua Dasein, was inevitably one of freedom as possibility, for without this he would not even have been able to understand where he was or to have entertained the thought of one day walking free. The possibility of freedom, thus, may exist in the chronological understanding of time: but then such freedom should be in the formulation of freedom of something, freedom of walking or speech, etc. Possibility as freedom should be distinguished: this takes its form in hermeneutic phenomenological understanding of human being as a projecting, as a being-in-the-world. This is the temporality of the finite Dasein that freedom as possibility demonstrates.

Before proceeding to the final section of this chapter, I would like to acknowledge a possible complication in the argument, though space prevents full development of this. It is true that at certain points Biesta (2012) enriches his account

with reference to Zygmunt Bauman, and by implication to Emmanuel Levinas, and to the notion that human being is always structured by a relation to 'the Other'. For Levinas, human being is to be understood in terms of the approach of the Other – that is, through being addressed. In this respect, the relation to the Other must be understood as prior to the relation to other things in the world. Heidegger's being-in-the-world seems in this respect not to recognise sufficiently the priority of the human Other over the otherness of things, or of those other human beings alongside whom I happen to stand. The concept of being-with (*Mitsein*), which substantiates for Heidegger the existence of other human beings, is satirised by Levinas as a relation of 'marching together'. Heidegger's being-with implies a relation where one is related to other human beings through a common purpose or through shared characteristics. For Levinas, by contrast, such being-is conditioned by a more fundamental relation: that one is addressed by the Other, always already addressed.

Likewise, ethics, before ontology, is epitomised by the face, which Levinas describes as a 'concrete abstraction'. It is out of this that the here and now is constituted. The face indicates that I am judged, I am under judgement, now and always. Every day is judgement day, which is not an event to be identified on some future calendar: judgment day is now. And this diachronously cuts across the chronology of my being. In this respect it might be claimed that, in contrast to Heidegger's ontology, the significance of the present must be characterised first and foremost in terms of being subject to judgement – hence, Levinas' 'ethics before ontology'. Yet this is emphatically not to say that this present implies a non-temporality, as if we could step outside time. It is essentially temporal in terms of this cutting across of chronological time, so that no present moment is exempt from the time of judgement. Therefore, this criticism of Heidegger's conception of otherness is in no way a denial of projection. It is rather its more rigorous specification, the urgent reminder that our projecting should not be reduced to some kind of unproblematic, common, unidirectional purposiveness. In other words, acknowledgement of the address that comes from the Other, through which one is always already cast in responsibility, does not undermine the argument I am advancing regarding temporality and freedom as possibility. Rather it reaffirms and reinforces the critique of non-temporality.

## Conclusion: Education as Project

The notion of non-temporality is perhaps a rhetorical expression that I have not developed enough of a sense of English to enjoy. However, the negative prefix certainly limits other possibilities of understanding temporality in education and freedom. The final task of the chapter is then to show the positive relation between freedom and education in the light of temporality.

The Manifesto is in part a response to Jacques Rancière's critique of a temporal understanding of inequality, an understanding oriented towards overcoming inequality in the future. Considering the question of equality in education, the authors suggest a non-temporal alternative, along the lines of the principle that 'equality [what is not] co-exists with inequality [what is]' (Biesta, 2012, p. 8). Non-temporality, thus, is an intellectual device that can be used to 'stage' *dissensus* – figured here as the tension between what is and what is not. But this line of argument seems to become more like a conventional critique of what I have called modern temporality in education, where this is characterised by excessive reliance on the programme and the concomitant difficulty of seeing outside its terms. This is perfectly reasonable in itself, but it cannot constitute a critique of temporality itself. In fact, the authors seem to concede as much when they affirm the view that education, like freedom, is fundamentally historical:

It is, therefore, the place where freedom appears. . . To stay in the tension between 'what is' and 'what is not' thus means to take history seriously and to take education as fundamentally historical – that is, open to events, to the new and the unforeseen – rather than as an endless repetition of what already is or as a march towards a predetermined future that may never arrive (Manifesto, p. 541).

Such historicity and freedom is inherently temporal. So the question we must be concerned with is how temporality is to be understood. Previously I considered the point that projecting or being ahead of oneself is the nature of freedom as possibility. Projecting

is that aspect of our being through which we understand the world. ‘As projecting,’ Heidegger claims, ‘understanding is the kind of Being of Dasein in which it is its possibilities as possibilities’ (BT 185). Thus, projecting is not a programmatic linkage to a given task or aim, equality or whatever it may be, but a basic mode of understanding as my being this and that. Possibility is shown through our projecting in the world.

Projecting, as inherent in education, perhaps explains the reason that the traditional understanding of time is tied programmatically to the future. Let us then think of education as a project in this sense, not as a programme or plan. The programme connotes a sense of planning or proclamation (rooted in the Latin, *programma*) or of the written public notice (in Greek, also, *programma*).<sup>27</sup> Education has a certain business with public space, but what the programme tends to emphasise is the fixed, written plan. We must fit into the programme. The outcome of the programme is also expected at the end of the practice. Furthermore, the idea of the programme naturally separates the designer and the user of the programme. The programmer can spend time studying the prospective user in order to develop a better programme – for example, by designing a user-friendly programme. But the designing process is inevitably conceived as separated from the actual usage of the programme. Before releasing the programme the designer may set up beta tests (external user acceptance testing), but still a time-gap between development and usage remains. And this, as the Manifesto also implies, is embedded in the linear conception of time in education.

The project, by contrast, retains the connotation of a throwing (-ject) forward (pro-), as is crucial for the Heideggerian notion of understanding. Projecting preserves its sense of becoming as understanding, an understanding that never settles down and that remains the business of the one projecting. In projecting, time comes to light as essentially futural.<sup>28</sup> Heidegger writes: ‘To be futural [*zukünftig-sein*] means to be “temporal” [*zeitlich*] *sein*]. Here, temporal does not mean “in time” but time itself’ (CT 49). In this,

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27 Online at: [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=programme&searchmode=none](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=programme&searchmode=none) (retrieved 20 April 2013)

28 The futural here, within the structure of freedom in finitude, is a dimension of the historicity of being-in-the-world: ‘Only an entity which, in its Being, is essentially **futural** so that it is free for its death and can let itself be thrown back upon its factual “there” by shattering itself against death – that is to say, only an entity which, as futural, is equiprimordially in the process of **having-been**, can, by handing down to itself the possibility it has inherited, take over its own thrownness and be **in the moment of vision** for ‘its time’. Only authentic temporality which is at the same time finite, makes possible something like fate – that is to say, authentic historicity’ (BT 437).

for Heidegger ‘the basic phenomenon of time is the future’ (Dahlstrom, 2005, p. 160). In other words, freedom as possibility is ascribed to one’s understanding relationship to futural time. Being-ahead-of-myself is a projecting towards the finitude of my being. From the point of finitude, being-in-the-world as possibility becomes meaningful: ‘[it] can thus come to have a clear vision’, Heidegger writes, ‘for the accidents of the Situation that has been disclosed’ (BT 436). The choice that is linked to freedom in Heidegger does not arise in confronting dilemmas or in plumping for this or that, but appears within the understanding of my being as being-in-the-world, and, as we have seen, this understanding is opened up only in relation to possibility.<sup>29</sup>

In Klaus Mollenhauer’s *Forgotten Connection* (2013) the idea of projection (*Entwurf*) is linked to the nature of identity. Mollenhauer claims that identity exists only as fiction (*Fiktion*), not as experience of concrete events. And he emphasises that such fiction is necessary for education. For this fiction, as he explains, represents not a static object, a reified identity, but only my relation to the idea of identity, which is necessarily open to the future in projecting. The fact that education must be centrally concerned with such identity means that temporality is at its core. In this respect, projecting is not to be reduced to the aim of education in an unattainable future, for our engagement in and recognition of the world always inherently involves projecting. Education as projecting thus implies the fact that we initiate things without making any claim to, or any necessary expectation of, becoming this or otherwise that.

It might be thought that the Manifesto itself suggests an idea of freedom as a project of education, of education as project. The authors’ intention of retrieving the focus on freedom in education is, as I have said, to be appreciated. But their attempt to step outside time, to be non-temporal, does not make sense. If non-temporality is not to be taken as a rejection of temporality itself, then it calls for a different concept of time. But

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29 In this light, Felix Ó Murchadha’s reading of *kairos* and *chronos* in Heidegger shows that temporality consists of the *kairos* of initiating time with the *chronos* of continuous time (Ó Murchadha, 2013). In this structure, the future-directed understanding of *Dasein*’s temporality – that is, projecting – is said to entail a *kairological* moment of openness. The possibility of *kairos* (now) is also the focus of a discussion by Lars Løvlie (2002). Taking the Greek meaning of *kairos* in relation to a kind of practical reason, understood as doing the right thing at the right time, Løvlie emphasises that the role of the teacher becomes crucial: the teacher must grasp the moment for a situation to become educationally meaningful. My own purpose in this chapter is similar to this in that I attempt to focus on the nature of education as project, based on the nature of freedom as possibility, the *kairological* moment of openness. Such an educational time of now (*kairos*) needs to be understood in terms of freedom as possibility, which is essentially projecting – or, to put this in Tyson Lewis’s terms, *messianic* (Lewis, 2013).

in a sense the route I have tried to take towards making sense of the authors' position in this way is cut off by the way they broach the matter: the fact that they adopt the genre of the manifesto means that they are already implicated unequivocally in a future-oriented form of text, a text calculated or designed to produce a result. But setting aside the use of this genre, ironic or otherwise, one of the fruitful outcomes of the Manifesto is its success in generating discussion about education and its relation with temporality and freedom. My aim in the chapter has been to reaffirm the ontological relationship between freedom and time, which reveals the nature of education as project. In so doing, the distinction between the possibility of freedom and freedom as possibility becomes clear: one is embedded in a linear conception of time, between possibility and actuality; the other, to follow Heidegger's account, reveals the temporality of human being as the being of projecting, as possibility, and this is characterised by freedom. Freedom as possibility in this respect reveals the reality of education as project, the possibility of becoming. Education as project is inconceivable without time. Hence, freedom is discussed in this chapter not as an ideal or aim – as something to be achieved through education – but, more primordially, as a ground for education.



## CHAPTER 5

### Freedom as a Leap and the Aims of Education

The trouble, however, about singling out aims of education in this way is that they tend to fall in to the hands of rationalistically minded curriculum planners, who try to set them up as 'objectives' in a conceptual framework which may fit running a business or fighting a battle, but makes contact only at marginal points with the contours of an educational situation (Peters, 1973, p. 3).

So far we have discussed the phenomenon of freedom as movement and as possibility. This rather obscure approach has allowed us to avoid the conventional understanding of freedom. An avoidance of conventional thinking is not the only benefit of the approach. It also allows us to understand education in a different way, as a practice that is more than a written plan or a fixing. Education can now be understood as more than a mere tool designed to establish a predetermined future. This claim was made clear in the most radical approach of education in relation with temporality and freedom in the Manifesto. The Manifesto created a tension between temporality and freedom by suggesting that we take temporality out of education. If non-temporality was meant to indicate the modern conception of time, then it calls for a different conception of time rather than non-temporality. The ontological relationship between freedom and time was reaffirmed in freedom as possibility. Following Heidegger's account, this reveals that freedom is not embedded in a linear conception of time between possibility and actuality; and that the ecstatic temporality of human being as the being of projecting, as possibility, is characterised by freedom. Freedom as possibility in this respect reveals the reality of education as projected, in the possibility of becoming.

The previous chapter ends with the claim that ‘freedom is discussed in this chapter not as an ideal or aim – as something to be achieved through education – but, more primordially, as a ground for education’. What is it meant by a ground for education other than aims?

To begin with, in the perennial discussion of the aims of education there has been both celebration of and contestation over the idea of freedom. Celebration is manifested in many of the eulogies to empowerment and choice that are promoted by the agendas of neoliberal policy. But it is also there, in Anglophone discourse at least, in the more considered ideals expressed in progressivism and liberal education. Protagonists for such views may disagree about what freedom consists in: the advocate of liberal education will perhaps see it as a state to be achieved through education, through becoming rationally autonomous; the progressive will emphasise rather the importance of the freedom of the child as a natural condition and, hence, the starting-point for education. Yet both share commitment to freedom as some kind of substantive ideal. In the German tradition the notion of *Bildung* itself has been taken to imply the centrality of freedom to developmental growth as an understanding of education. It may seem then that freedom has widely been taken to be a central – if not *the* central – aim of education.

Yet a number of authors have argued against the understanding of education in terms of *any* fixed ideals. Otto F. Bollnow (2008), for example, in 1959, criticised such a conception of *Bildung*. Some have taken the view that education, by its very nature, prevents the establishment of fixed aims (Hardarson, 2012), while others have warned of the danger of aims-thinking’s becoming ossified (Standish, 1995, 1999). And, most central to the present discussion, Roland Reichenbach (2002) specifically characterises it in ateleological terms. Against any understanding in terms of a fixed *telos*, he emphasises the crucial importance in *Bildung* of a kind of transformation with unknown outcomes. Yet although an ateleological understanding of education may imply education without aims, this is not to deny, Reichenbach insists, the possibility of identifying something towards which one is working:

*Bildung* is no longer perfection, but this is not to argue that it is impossible to postulate legitimate and desirable aims, or to say that such endeavours are of no relevance. Rather, this is to state that the concept in question is still of

importance when one is renouncing the postulation of a classical *telos* or modern substitutes such as the ego-ideal, post-conventional morality, the autonomous subject and the like (Reichenbach, 2002, p. 412).

Not to see that this is so is to miss the nature of *Bildung* itself. This is not to renounce the setting of objectives in educational practice but to resist their excessively rigid determination and zealous faith in the specification of educational ideals. But, in the first place, it is not the case that there is a clear dichotomy between teleology and ateleology, nor that the drawing of a distinction along these lines forces a choice between the quest for the good and its abandonment. If the good is understood necessarily to require the crystallisation and specification of some supreme value, then of course this dichotomy and the ensuing artificial choice will be sustained. And also, in the second, it is a mistake to suppose that, in the absence of any specification of aims of education, there is a wholesale abandonment of the quest for the good. There is no reason why value should not be understood within the terms of particular practices rather than as necessarily subordinate to overarching ideals. Philosophers as wide-ranging as Emerson, Nietzsche, Dewey, Wittgenstein and Alasdair MacIntyre have shown clearly enough that it is a mistake to think of the good in these terms: notions of value and betterment are internal to the idea of a practice, and practices are diverse; they can have sense without reference to some higher good. In interpreting *Bildung* in terms of the allegory of an unfinished building site, in which building comprises both process and product, Reichenbach fully respects this. He draws attention to *Bildung*'s importance as a site for reflection and action without reference to any ideal *telos* of liberty. While the value of liberty is of critical importance in accounts of *Bildung*, there can be no place for the positing of liberty as an ideal or foundation: rather its nature is to be worked out continually within educational practice itself:

Counter-factual or not, without the assumption of liberty, one would have no means of distinguishing theories of *Bildung* from mere developmental theories. *But there is no unquestionable basis to the idea of liberty, so the concept of Bildung itself will always be a building site* (Reichenbach, 2002, p. 412, *italics added*).

Two aspects of this viewpoint need to be noted. First, some kind of account of human liberty is necessary if Reichenbach is to be able to delineate the ateleological sense of education with which he is concerned. What then is to count as human liberty? The fact that the nature of liberty is ‘questionable’ should not be a reason for turning away from the question. Ateleological accounts of education do not in general disagree about the importance of human freedom. But the ways in which freedom so understood is to be differentiated from notions that prevail in more conventional understandings of education (that is, specifically, teleological accounts) warrant further consideration. Second, in the focus on process and product, it is not only freedom that is not fully considered but also the allegorical image of the building site. Questioning the idea of freedom can fruitfully be connected with the image of *Bildung* as a perpetually unfinished building site.

In this chapter I attempt to discuss how freedom might be understood in an ateleological account of education. Ateleological accounts of education, broadly speaking, can be found in such discussions as Standish (1999), Saito (2009), English (2013), and Kwak (2009). Education in this respect is understood as self-transformation, translation, or interruption. Discussions of this kind, which are in line with an ateleological sense of education, attempt to destabilise dominant concepts of language, thinking, and learning. In different ways, such notions are argued for in terms of possibilities that are open or that go beyond calculation or measurement. This present chapter seeks to ask what kind of freedom is inherited or assumed in such notions, if this is not the one that is associated with the conventional sense of freedom. In so doing, I want to juxtapose the metaphor of education as a building site with another: with what has been called *the leap of freedom* (PR; Nancy, 1993). In the light of such ateleological conceptions, I shall examine the way that human freedom appears in education. When freedom ceases to be taken as an educational ideal but remains a key concept in the differentiation of education from narrowly developmental, end-oriented accounts of education, how does it appear and how is it experienced? Through a reading of Martin Heidegger and Jean-Luc Nancy, I shall take a phenomenological approach in order to discuss the meaning of education in terms of the leap of freedom. My project here needs to be understood as something other than classical characterisations of educational aims. My discussion will lay the way for an elaboration of the ateleological sense of education in terms of translation. The

thematisation of translation provides a way of thinking and questioning, a way perhaps of philosophising. While a number of authors have recently taken up this theme, my discussion will seek to account for its importance in terms of the leap of thinking – a leap not towards the best (posited as an ideal) but oriented towards the better. This will draw out a positive sense of ateleological thinking in education.

## **Questioning the Idea of the Aims of Education**

The objection might be raised that such an ateleological way of thinking negates the value of education for the growth of the individual and society. No concrete objective of education – whether it be learning to swim or reading the work of Shakespeare – finds its direction without aims. Without a clear aim, it may seem, education is nothing more than a collection of random activities; it is a matter of whim. If, alternatively, the complaint is that in reality education simply is nothing more than a means to an end, such as getting a qualification for a future job, then education will indeed seem no more than a matter of training. Against the background of such objections, ‘education without aims’ may well seem to be a kind of anti-pedagogy, a way of thinking that eventually denies the need for education. Anti-pedagogy is rooted in the movement of ‘anti-authoritarian or freedom based’ practice in education, which was taken up in the 1960s in many Western countries, even if this specific name was not always used. It questions the necessity of education itself. According to this logic, education naturally occurs in a child’s development, and so the role of the adult must be to respect that development, which in turn will involve accepting the child as a bearer of rights and responding to the importance of emotion in her life. But what is the upshot of this? Klaus Mollenhauer criticises the anti-education paradigm for its wholesale abandonment of the project of education and, hence, its failure properly to question the problems in education practices (Mollenhauer, 2013, p. 7).

Whatever the purchase of such criticism, however, it misses the point that is being made by Reichenbach and the other writers alluded to above. The target of Reichenbach’s criticism is the modernistic idea of the achievement of freedom and autonomy through

education. He defines postmodernity, in this respect, as an exhausted modernity, a modernity that has lost the power of its own *telos*. The ateleological conception of *Bildung* he proposes is one in which autonomy and self-transformation appear only with a certain irony. Following John Dewey, he claims in this light that *Bildung* shares one distinctive feature with experimental activities: that is, that ‘their outcome is not clear’ (2002, p. 412). Similarly, Standish’s ‘Education Without Aims?’ (1999) does not simply reject aims, as the question-mark in his title makes clear. What he is putting in question is the over-confidence that can be generated through excessive faith in such stipulations of aims. Such faith would encourage the idea of education as having the kind of formulaic plot that one finds in certain kinds of heroic films. Standish’s criticism is an invitation to question the way we understand educational ideals and freedom. Neither Standish nor Reichenbach would refrain from affirming the value of education. Neither would deny that education is a matter of value. Their purpose is rather to indicate the problem of having fixed aims. In resistance to prevailing understandings of education in terms of linear development and progress, Reichenbach writes:

all cognitive dis-equilibrations (to use Piaget’s term in an untypical way) can be interpreted as ‘progress’, and every loss of sovereignty and sense of security can be seen as necessary ‘transitional phases’, ‘crises’ and ‘phases of transformation’ on the way to something ‘higher and ‘more profound’, ‘perfect’ and ‘without contradictions’ (Reichenbach, 2002, p. 414).

When the overall goal of action is fixed in this way, the meaning of activities that lead to it becomes narrowed down: they are merely tasks to be completed or fulfilled.

In fact, focusing on given tasks in this way may make for efficiency. But when task-completion gains too much credence, it tends to stand in the way of thinking something new. It blocks questions and inhibits the kind of thought on the part of the learner that other circumstances might allow. Educational activities cannot rightly be analysed and planned in such a way, for educational activities hold open possibilities, possibilities of becoming. Rigid framing of the meaning of educational action closes this down such that when the unexpected does arise, the only response is to treat this as pathological. Possibilities of growth are thereby frustrated.

There are two factors, however, that should be clear. First, Reichenbach goes out of his way to show that an ateleological theory of education need not reject educational aims as such. What is questioned instead is the way in which prevailing conceptions of education see freedom as the end of education. Certainly there is some danger that the reiteration of ideals may become hollow, as if we were using terms that had no real purchase on our lives. Even where we have been alerted to this possibility, however, educational discourse continues to make vague reference to such ideals, and freedom in particular continues to be vigorously defended in these terms. What is required in response, Reichenbach tries to show, is a new discourse of education, whose sense of purpose is not reducible to the fixing of educational aims.

Second, this is not a wholesale rejection of the idea of developmental phases of learning. Rather the purpose is to draw attention to the fact that to conceive the development of learning in the light of a pre-determined and fixed aim does not adequately account for the nature of education. To emphasise these points from the perspective of *Bildung* helps to align it with criticisms made in Anglophone philosophy of education over several decades. In the early 1970s Richard Pring pointed to the limitations of establishing rigid curriculum programmes with concrete objectives. Such an objectives-based curriculum model failed both ‘to take account of the interpretative mechanism of thinking recipients and to respect the transforming quality of any educational ideal’ (Pring, 1973, p. 50). In a variety of texts R. S. Peters, the ardent champion of liberal education, had already taken a similar line (Peters, 1966, 1973). Educational activities are worthwhile for the individual and the society. What is meant by worthwhile activities may vary, but this must relate in some way to renewal. In these and related texts in the literature, education is valued as a kind of transformation; it is not simply a means of reproducing the existing society. Reichenbach’s notion of transformation is very much in tune with this. But to put this somewhat differently, questioning the idea of the aims of education is not the concern solely of those who explicitly espouse this ateleological sense of education.

## Questioning the Idea of Freedom in Education

Across the range of conceptions of education as transformation alluded to here, freedom is also commonly understood as something one *has or will have*: in progressive education it is taken to be there from birth, the child born free, while in liberal education it is seen as something to be acquired through initiation into forms of knowledge and understanding. For all the important differences here, there is common ground in that freedom is taken to be something that, sooner or later, one comes to *own*.

For Reichenbach, the question of freedom is significant, even ‘critical’ and ‘problematic’, for the idea of education (2002, p. 412). Reichenbach entertains the thought that an ateleological conception of *Bildung* implies a suspension of the sense of freedom as an educational ideal on the grounds of the impossibility of providing *any* adequate formulation in such terms. Moreover, such a suspension may perhaps be broader and more pervasive and fundamental in its significance in terms of shifting attention away from the foregrounding of freedom of the will. But even so, as we have seen, freedom still matters for the account Reichenbach wishes to provide. The possession of freedom functions in some degree as a means of differentiating ateleological conceptions of education from developmental theories. Reichenbach expresses the difficulties of questioning human liberty, but is this nevertheless to concede to the prevailing view: that freedom is something one has?

In my view, the appeal to an idea of freedom as something other than an educational ideal, perhaps with references to expressions such as ‘open possibility’, harbours a danger: ateleological accounts depend upon freedom in some way; but if they affirm the value of freedom too directly or take it too much for granted, they run the risk of reinscribing it as an ideal. At the very least there seems to be a rhetorical force at work that obscures freedom’s relation to education. Although most of my sympathies are fundamentally with ateleological conceptions of education, I believe the idea of freedom gets less attention than it deserves. Ateleological accounts of education leave themselves vulnerable to attack through their failure to address head-on the idea of freedom of the will and its limitations. As we have noticed from Reichenbach’s discussion, the idea of



freedom is presupposed and secured in the argument, and this kind of emphasis is not unfamiliar in most ateleological accounts (in terms of ‘open possibility’, a movement ‘towards freedom’, and so on). The celebratory tone of such accounts may also provide a speedy return to the identifying of freedom as an educational ideal. How is this different, then, from the commonly celebrated idea of freedom in other accounts of education? We need to broach the question of freedom in a different way.

## **Freedom as a Leap**

Given that rhetorics of freedom still occupy such a central place in the discourse of education, the question must be how to characterise freedom not as something one has, but rather as something that occurs. This will be shown to be of pervasive importance phenomenologically, as well as of critical importance for our understanding of and practice in education. In so doing, I would like to briefly repeat what has been discussed as the phenomenon of freedom in this thesis.

In Heidegger’s thought, freedom is related directly to the question of being. In 1930, he gives a lecture about what, in contrast to metaphysical speculation, he characterises as a regional question, the question of human freedom. He takes this regional question to be a fitting introduction to philosophy. While the Kantian sense of practical freedom is grounded in transcendental freedom, his own account understands it in relation to causality and to the phenomenon of movement in general. Heidegger attempts to show that the notion of freedom in Kant also presupposes the *ti to on* – that is, the question ‘what is being?’ (EHF 55-56). Heidegger claims that freedom has been understood in terms of (the system of) causality. From this perspective, the dualistic approach towards human freedom and natural causality cannot be resolved. The experience of freedom, for Heidegger, is possible for human being, or being-in-the-world, by understanding the change of the world as a movement in this or that way. This phenomenon is that I suggested freedom as movement.

Freedom as possibility is introduced in Heidegger’s notion of time. In fact, any movement of the world can easily be placed within a sequential order of time. Heidegger

draws attention, in Western metaphysics, to this way of understanding of freedom within the system of causality. His understanding of being *as grounded in* time, which he derives from Ancient Greek thought (BT 242), transmutes into the ‘and’ in his title phrase: *Being and Time*. Thus, he asks: ‘*What is the essence of time, such that it grounds being, and such that the question of being as the leading question of metaphysics can and must be unfolded within this horizon?*’ (EHF 81-82) Throughout the discussion of freedom in Kant, Heidegger suggests that the essence of freedom is prior to being and time: freedom constitutes the ground of the possibility of existence, Dasein, the root of being and time. In this sense, freedom cannot be a property of man; rather man is a possibility of freedom. Freedom is the ground in which the disclosure or unconcealment of beings as such occurs (EHF 93-94). Heidegger’s understanding of human freedom as the ground of the possibility of existence is given a new turn in Jean-Luc Nancy.

Rather than seeking for the substance of freedom, in the manner of Heidegger, Nancy approaches freedom as ontological and phenomenological. He acknowledges the necessity of the question of freedom but recognises major obstacles to its articulation. Freedom has often been regarded as a matter of free will, and hence as a determination of subjectivity and as a field for the actualisation of potential. In such ways, different conceptions of freedom – for example, the classic notion of liberty or emancipation from the oppressor – have, with ‘a collection of rights and exemptions’, charted the lineaments of history (Nancy, 1993, p. 2). Of course, it might be claimed that there are many kinds of freedom – for example, positive freedom (freedom to) and negative freedom (freedom from) – in what might be called an ‘index of freedom’; but it is such accounts that Nancy criticises as providing ‘an infinity of figures or modes of a unique freedom’, not as accounting for any common substance (p. 57). He suggests that ‘we must free ourselves from this freedom [i.e. from the conventional understanding of freedom] and consequently draw freedom back to itself’ (Nancy, 1993, p. 6). Following the basic definition of phenomenology, Nancy’s conception of freedom is oriented by the ‘*to the thing itself*’ principle of phenomenology, which lays the way for an understanding of things as they appear in our experience, through which their meaning arises. For Nancy,

in this respect, freedom is a fact, a fact of existence that can be experienced.<sup>30</sup> Such experience of freedom is, as Nancy puts this, the praxis of thought.

In this phenomenological approach, Nancy advances a rather strange understanding of freedom: *Freedom withdraws being and gives relation* (Nancy, 1993, p. 68). What does this mean? And how does this kind of freedom offer a better understanding of education and its aims? Before discussing the experience of freedom in education, it will be worth taking some time to ponder the phenomenological sense of freedom, which is claimed here to withdraw being and to give relation. Let us consider this phrasing again: ‘Freedom withdraws being and gives relation.’ The weight of these six words is too great to be measured adequately in this chapter. And to dwell on them too much would risk leading our discussion to an odd place, one that would be less relevant to educational practice. But I do want to see how far some consideration of this sentence can help in sketching the phenomenological sense of freedom and its relation to education.

I shall address this in three stages – *first*, in relation to the question of freedom itself. In his reading of Heidegger, Nancy claims that freedom is to be equated with the withdrawal of being. In the withdrawal of being, a free space is opened in which the human being is singularised. But what is meant by ‘singularity’? How is this to be understood? This is singularity in the sense of Heidegger’s *Jemeinigkeit* (often translated as ‘mineness’ and associated perhaps too much with conventional notions of authenticity). *Jemeinigkeit* is not to be understood in terms of the sovereign ego or Kantian subject. It refers instead to the way that my existence is singularised in *time*: *Dasein* exists ‘each time just this *once* as my own’, and this realises existence as existence, taking me out of myself. And mineness is the basic mode of *Dasein*’s existence. It is this that makes being-in-the-world possible (BT 68). By contrast, an immanent being, self-contained, has no singularity. If being existed only in a kind of continuum and with no possibility of withdrawal, there would be no such thing as singularity. Singularity assumes separation

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30 For this experience indicates, in an etymological sense: ‘[an] attempt executed without reserve, given over to the peril of its own lack of foundation and security in this ‘object’ of which it is not the subject but instead the passion, exposed like the pirate (*peirātēs*) who freely tries his luck on the high seas. In a sense, which here might be the first and last sense, freedom, to the extent that it is the thing itself of thinking, which cannot be appropriated, but only pirated, its seizure will always be illegitimate’ (Nancy, 1993, p.20). By experience, Nancy implies freedom that is not to be gripped but pirated since freedom already frees itself as soon as one attempts to grab it.

and disconnection. A sense of time as continuous or linear could not indicate the particular moment of time, which is not an extensionless point on a continuum but something that cuts across time understood in that way – that is, chronological time, the time of the clock. The withdrawal of being allows the disruption of chronological time. In this, there is no continuous time: each particular time, each moment in time, stands in *relation to other time*. As Nancy writes, ‘Singularities have no *common being*, but they *com-pear* [*comparaissent*] each time *in common* in the face of the withdrawal of their common being, spaced apart by the infinity of this withdrawal – in this sense, without any relation, and therefore thrown into relation’ (p. 68). Singularity, in this respect, is always in the mode of ‘being-with’, *Mitsein*. Free spacing between existents is the withdrawal of being, and it allows the event of singularity. As Nancy puts this, ‘freedom is the withdrawal of being, but the withdrawal of being is the nothingness of this being, which is the being of freedom’ (Nancy, 1993, p. 68).

Freedom, as we saw, ‘gives relation’. But how is *this* to be understood? Is this relation something to be given and taken? Of course this is not a matter of relations being established and stored, as if ready for distribution: it is in the exercise of freedom that relation *occurs*. In the moment of withdrawal, in relation *to an other time*, the birth of singularity occurs out of nothingness, and it is in this that singularity, rather than immanence, becomes possible. Each singular being exists only in a shared relation with the withdrawal of being. The shared relation is not something like a shared right or a shared property aside from singular being: the very existence of the singular being is possible only in virtue of its sharing, and conversely such sharing divides each singular being. ‘Freedom is the withdrawal of the properness of self,’ Nancy claims, ‘and the opening of existence as existence’ (1993, p. 70). Singularity appears each time in the withdrawal of common being, in freedom.

*Second*, let us turn to the idea of the action of freedom. To repeat, freedom does not produce something but produces itself. Freedom, as we saw, is withdrawal of being. Such withdrawal is not a matter of finding an opening to something or a way out of somewhere, as if freedom were to be found in some higher, say, transcendental place. Freedom is ‘not ek-static,’ Nancy claims, ‘and existent freedom is not ek-sistent, but it is the insistence of a burst’ (1993, p. 58). As the word ‘insistence’ suggests, then, it is a

rupture from within. Freedom takes place here and now, as a presence that would be like the singular presence of a blow or a sudden leap. It is for this reason that the phenomenon of the withdrawal of being can be seen as the leap of freedom.

The idea of a leap carries strong, mostly positive connotations. We may, *in extremis*, leap to our death, but more commonly we leap for joy. The child leaps in the womb (Luke, 1:41). That there is a leap of freedom, however, does not by itself say anything of its consequences as good or bad. The leap of freedom is beyond measure. It simply allows the present event here and now. Yet the leap of freedom is not just a rhetorical expression. The leap of freedom is rather a metaphor for the phenomenon of freedom, which cannot be described other than through metaphor itself. The withdrawal of being and the outburst of relations are realised in the leap of freedom.

Freedom leaps as an opening up of time. For Dasein, each time on its own in shared relations, is grounded in this leap of freedom – not as a leap that happens once and for all but as something that happens continually. Nancy characterises freedom as a recurrent beginning:

The opening of this scene (and the dis-tension of this relation) supposes a breaking open, a strike, a decision: it is also as the political that freedom is the leap. It supposes the strike, the cut, the decision, and the leap onto the scene (but the leap itself is what opens the scene) of that which cannot be received from elsewhere or reproduced from any model, since it is always beginning, each time. Freedom is a beginning (Nancy, 1993, p. 58).

The leap of freedom identifies freedom as a beginning. Freedom does not produce something else but produces itself as a giving relation. In action itself, freedom is neither an opening to nor a passage from; it is neither direction nor origin. It is not the human being who achieves freedom, but freedom that gives human relation.

And *third*, the leap of freedom makes possible the leap of thinking. Nancy claims that freedom is not something to be achieved but something that can only be thought through experience. Such experience is the ‘praxis of thinking’; and such thinking is in the leap of freedom. Thinking cannot work through an accumulation of thought but rather requires a leap. As Nancy tries to show, thinking leaps towards the unknown, towards open possibilities. It becomes the leap of thinking.

The idea of a leap comes from Heidegger's interpretation of 'the principle of reason' in Leibniz, the principle that 'Nothing is without reason'. In the light of Leibniz's statement, Heidegger analyses how, with regard to the principle of reason, Western philosophy has changed its tone, especially in the course of processes of translation: from Greek to Latin and to modern philosophy, from *logos* to *ratio* and from 'reason' or 'ground'. In his critique of this principle, Heidegger adverts to a change that he understands precisely in these terms: 'Behind the change in tonality is concealed a leap of thinking. Without a bridge, that is, without the steadiness of a progression, the leap brings thinking into another realm and into another manner of speaking' (PR 53). This change in tonality, from the realm of the principle of reason into the realm of a principle of being, illustrates a leap of thinking. The leap of thinking in Western philosophy comes to light quintessentially in the work of translation in the idea of *Logos*, which I shall discuss later of this chapter.

Because the leap of freedom is nothing other than the spacing of nothingness, the relation given by freedom has no fathomable ground. What thinking can do in freedom is to leap on the groundless ground. There is no bridge in being but the leap of thinking. What accounts for the leap of thinking in this groundlessness becomes clear in Heidegger's interpretation of thinking. Thinking can be interpreted figuratively as seeing and hearing. Of course thinking itself is not perceivable by our sense organs, our eyes and ears. Seeing and hearing, however, can still carry the implications of thinking, as is caught in such everyday expressions as 'Oh, yes, I see!' Heidegger describes the vault from the realm of sensible perception into that of non-sensible perception – that is, the realm of thinking – in terms of metaphor, and this is to indicate a kind of transposing or carrying across (*μεταφέρειν*). Thinking then might be understood as a 'transposing [of] the supposedly sensible into the nonsensible', which seeks interpretation (PR 46-47). Freedom in this respect appears in the place of the leap thus:

The passage from the ordinary tonality of the principle into the unusual one stands, as a leap, under no compulsion. The leap remains a free and open possibility of thinking; this so decisively so that in fact the essential province of freedom and openness first opens up with the realm of the leap. Precisely because of this, we are obliged to prepare the leap (PR 93).

A leap of thinking is toward unknown, open possibilities. The idea of open possibilities should suggest not consequences within a field of action but the openness of possibility itself. This, to reiterate Nancy's phrasing, is the leap of freedom. For Nancy, in this respect, the experience of freedom appears through a leap of thinking. Any change of being shows the action of freedom. Nancy, however, diverges from Heidegger at this point by distinguishing, on the one hand, the understanding of the leap *as* freedom from, on the other, an understanding of it as a movement *towards* freedom. For Nancy, freedom is prior to thinking and is the source of its prodigality. He writes: 'Thinking expends, since it comes from "the abyss of freedom"' (Nancy, 1993, pp. 52-53). Freedom is *experienced* through the leap of thinking, yet it is always beyond our grasp. Nancy's clarification of the leap as freedom is not, however, against Heidegger's notion of the leap of thinking. Rather what it clarifies is the relation between freedom and thinking. Freedom precedes thinking. The leap of thinking is toward freedom, and yet freedom frees itself such that it can never be fully gripped by thinking.

Let us come back to the notion of the ateleological sense of education. The metaphor of *Bildung* as an unfinished building site implies human labouring as a task that will never be completed (Reichenbach, 2002, p. 412). In focusing too much on the action of building in terms of process and product, in the manner that Reichenbach understandably encourages, we risk missing the nature of human liberty.

When education is claimed to have no fixed aims but rather to be ateleological, to go beyond the known or the expected, this is supported by this conception of human freedom as a leap of thinking. This is by no means attributable to a deficiency in human beings, but rather to do with the effects of freedom itself. One must then humbly admit the uncertainty of the world. With this, education cannot be teleologically oriented. The nature of uncertainty is grounded in the phenomenological sense of freedom: freedom frees itself. It is, as we have seen in the discussion so far, freedom that precedes thinking, and this frees itself at the moment when we think we own freedom. Freedom as a leap describes the phenomenon of education in its own possibility toward the unknown and undiscovered, and towards what can never be fully discovered. And if this is the nature of education, freedom cannot be fixed finally as education's *aim*, fixed, that is, as some kind of *telos*, because it is the nature of freedom always to break open to something new.

In the light of this, the following part of this chapter will discuss the meaning of education in terms of the leap of freedom within educational practices.

## **Interpretation and Translation: The Leap in Practice**

Freedom as a leap as discussed in this chapter has an essential role in the ateleology of education. Let me pause over this expression, however, because it may, on the one hand, be an overstatement to say that the leap is essential, or prove, on the other hand, to be no more than an ornate expression for something that has been understood in psychology textbooks for many years. It is, I concede, an overstatement to say that there can be no ateleological conception of education without some notion of the leap: does not Dewey (read in a certain way, at least) provide us with one? And psychologists have drawn attention to the now familiar notion of the ‘Aha!’ moment in learning, when something new comes to light unexpectedly. This much is to be conceded. But I do want to hold on to the idea that the notion of the leap plays a key role in at least a certain conception of education in ateleological terms. Let me try to legitimate this claim by exploring two ideas of education that have been expressed with some force in recent years, ideas with which I am broadly in sympathy, alongside an idea of my own.

Certainly it is to be acknowledged that the leap of freedom does not directly or by itself determine the content or the outcome of educational practice. Nor can it be configured in terms of developmental processes of learning. Of course, we should not minimise the value of developmental learning: for example, learning in mathematics or chemistry proceeds reasonably in many respects from Stage A to Stage B. So in freedom as a leap, how does educational practice appear? In particular, of what kind of educational practice might it be said, first, that its aims are not fixed and, second, that this non-fixity does not entirely preclude ideas of developmental process but casts them in different terms? In order to refine the characterisation of what the leap of thinking might mean, I shall, as indicated, take these ideas forward by way of a brief acknowledgement of two interesting accounts in the research literature: Duck-Joo Kwak’s exploration of the leap of thinking in essay-form and David Lewin’s evocation of the idea of the leap in



epistemology. These accounts do indeed seem close to my own, but, as I shall try to show, they diverge in significant respects. Finally, then, I shall make my own attempt to elaborate on the leap of thinking in relation to the topic of translation.

### a) The Leap in Essay Form

In her *Education for Self-Transformation* (2012), Duck-Joo Kwak provides a rich account of thinking, phrasing the change she is concerned with in terms of self-transformation. In her discussion she elaborates Georg Lukács' notion of the soul in relation to Plato's *Symposium*. She draws attention specifically to the dramatic importance of the unruly entry of Alcibiades at the end of the dialogue, after the apparent high-point of Socrates' magnificent recounting of Diotima's speech. The soul is described by Lukács as having two aspects: the longing metaphysical self and the living empirical self. Due to the conditions of corporeal human being, according to Kwak, longing is 'not destined to be fulfilled but rather to remain in a form of questioning' (Kwak, 2012, p. 50). Such longing instead becomes materialised in the work that the human being creates.

Powerful though it is, the use to which Kwak puts the example of essay form retains in some degree a traditional notion of the self. The clear division between the metaphysical and the empirical self supports this impression. Rather old-fashioned terms like 'soul' and the 'metaphysical self' here seem no other than reflective detachments of the self from itself. And such a reflective self is posited as something destined to be longed for, to be longed for rather than achieved. In contrast to this, the idea of the self should be understood in terms of the leap of freedom. Nancy writes:

Freedom is the transcendence of the self toward the self, or from the self to the self – which in no way excludes, but on the contrary requires, as we can henceforth clearly see, that the 'self' not be understood as subjectivity, if subjectivity designates the relation of a substance to itself; and which requires at the same time, as we will show later, that this 'self' only takes place according to a being-in-common of singularities (Nancy, 1993, p. 30).

What is crucial here is that subjectivity is not to be understood in terms of securing the self: it cannot be a matter of the transparency of the self to itself through a process of introspection or reflection. Rather the self needs to be understood in terms of a movement – where freedom consists in ‘the transcendence of the self toward the self, or from the self to the self’, and where it is realised not in an identification of defining characteristics but through a ‘being-in-common of singularities’. This is the condition of human being, and it is inseparable from freedom. To live in realisation of the ways that we are singularised by experience is to acknowledge the leap of freedom.

Her point here is framed within a discussion of the nature and significance of essay-form. Essay-form is a way to raise a question, to try out thoughts in relation to a topic, to essay a new possibility of life, even a new possibility of philosophy. Philosophical writing of this kind (that is, in essay-form) can suggest, she wants to say, something of the possibilities of good educational practice. This is the case because it, and the essay-form in which it is expressed, addresses the concerns of life.

This is in many respects a compelling account, but if Kwak takes the metaphysical self to correlate with a substantive sense of the good – that is, especially with humanism – this is different from my concerns and at odds with the direction of the present argument. The essay form, however, suggests a practice in which one seeks for something better: it is an attempt, a trying out of possibilities, a venturing into something new, an *essai*. Ateleological ideas of education do not rule out the sense of the good, but emphasise the idea of ‘longing for’, of hope. The extent to which I agree with Kwak with regard to longing requires further explanation, especially because conventional usage of ‘longing’ or ‘hope’, like that of ‘soul’, may resuscitate a substantive sense of the good. Kwak takes Lukács’ description of the soul as a longing for the authentic self as implying something other than a longing is for the absolute or for God, as in the cases of Pascal or Kierkegaard. Longing in Lukács is rooted in an antagonism that confronts ‘the pettiness and shallowness of the bourgeois way of life’ (Kwak, 2012, p. 50), and this she finds evident in Lukács’ life itself. It is, by contrast, the metaphysical antagonism in longing that, in my view, is developed in Heidegger’s thought. In his analogy of ‘good and evil’ with ‘brightness and darkness’ of longing, Heidegger claims that the brightness of the illumination derives from the darkness of longing (STF 132). In a moment of illumination,

as Heidegger puts, where all seems to be brightness, ‘there is a separation... Light opens up darkness’ (ibid.). In longing there is already a separation of brightness and darkness. This metaphysical antagonism in longing reveals the separation of beings, which Heidegger understands as the becoming or creation of beings. Hence, while Kwak’s reading finds the antagonism of longing in Lukács’ own experience, my own emphasis is on the metaphysical interpretation that is foregrounded in Heidegger.

To this it might be added that Kwak finds the value in educational practice to lie less in problem-solving than in problem-raising. In the encounter with the duality or hierarchy that pertains between the higher self and the corporeal self, which she adopts from Lukács, the challenge, as she suggests, is not purely to reach or obtain the higher self but to realise the practice itself of longing for the higher self through its transformation as creativity. In the light of Lukács’ imperative, ‘Strive to go beyond it, knowing you cannot fully fulfil it’, it might be said that freedom might be understood in terms of a leap.

### **b) The Leap in Epistemology**

Although Kwak does not use the expression ‘the leap of thinking’, the broad line of her account and her emphasis on transformation seem partly compatible with the line being developed in the present chapter. If we turn to an interesting recent article by David Lewin (2014), we find explicit use of the phrase ‘leap of learning’ in relation to the hermeneutic circle. He connects this specifically with an account of ‘epistemological affirmation’. Lewin’s strategy here is a welcome one in that this emphasis on the epistemological is presumably designed to resist or counter-balance the ontological associations of hermeneutics, perhaps making it more palatable for the Anglophone and pedagogically-oriented reader. Based on this hermeneutic understanding, Lewin elaborates the meaning of education through his evocative autobiographical description of learning the martial art, Tai Chi. Learning is experienced as a leap, he attests, in the experience of submission to the master that Tai Chi requires.

Whilst I agree with Lewin's general stance regarding the nature of education, I believe that what he says here gives too much away and that there is a need to redress the balance: his emphasis on what he calls epistemological affirmation distracts, in my view, from the ontological dimension of educational experience of the leap. In what remains of this chapter, then, I shall seek to advance a third account, drawing on the development of the idea of the leap in earlier sections of this chapter.

### **c) The Leap in Translation**

The essay-form of writing and the leap of learning require a certain transition in thinking. They suggest perhaps a desire to inscribe the longing self in the material form of the essay. But there is no means of transferring the desiring self onto a piece of paper. What is going on is rather, I suggest, a transition of a different kind, and I want to phrase this in terms of a kind of translation.<sup>31</sup>

Translation is most commonly taken to occur as translation from language A to language B, where these are understood to be more or less independent and self-contained (or pure and uncontaminated). In ideal cases it is assumed that the meaning of the term used in language A is fully recreated through the substitution of an appropriate term in language B. This would be a perfect translation. But, as anyone involved in translation will know, this does not happen. Languages divide up the world differently, and terms have different fields of significance. Inevitably, then, translation involves a shift in meaning, however slight this may sometimes be. The translator is typically in a position where there is ultimately no rule to determine their selection of this expression rather than that one, but where their exercise of judgment is crucial for the way that meaning is realised. Moreover, it is not as if terms operate in isolation because a choice made over

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31 The idea of translation and the educational aspects of this have received considerable attention. Naoko Saito explores Stanley Cavell's ideas in relation to inter- and intra-cultural reflection to show that translation undermines the myths of self-identity and of language as having a fixed nature (Saito, 2007, 2009). Following Cavell, she relates translation to the work of autobiography, involving a kind of self-transcendence. Claudia Ruitenberg's understanding of translation takes it as a way of knowing – a way of questioning and of doing philosophy (Ruitenberg, 2009). Lovisa Bergdahl's discussion focuses on the theme of mutual responsibility amongst citizens in relation to the secular and the religious. She characterises translation in terms of risk, asymmetry, and uncertainty (Bergdahl, 2009). Stephen Dobson examines Walter Benjamin's translation theory in relation to inter-linguistic practice in education (Dobson, 2012). In the present account, translation is discussed in terms of freedom and the leap of thinking.

one term will alter the significance of other terms in what is being said and the range of their possible connotations. In fact, however, the point can be strengthened further. We began with the commonly held assumption that translation occurs between more or less self-contained languages, imagining that a language could be pure and uncontaminated. But what language is like that? Natural languages inevitably interact with one another, and they are in a constant process of development through this – that is, through their incorporation of forms of expression from other languages and through their influence on those languages. In spite of the efforts of such bodies as the Académie Française, which purports to legislate over what is correct French, it is clear that languages exist in a fluid and dynamic state, which is rule-governed but not in a systematic or entirely stable way. The relation of terms *within* a language is not determined by a kind of calculus but exists in this dynamic state. *Within* languages there will be substitutions of expression, through which meaning can be enlarged or narrowed, distorted or, at least, changed. And this swerving of sense, the openness of connotations it provides, is internal not only to the language's development but to the thought and lives of its speakers. What this helps to show is that translation is something that occurs not only interlingually but also intralingually. It is already at work in our everyday thought. Even though this is not the most familiar sense of translation, to say this is not to speak metaphorically.<sup>32</sup>

The work of the translator in this respect serves as a supreme example of responsible judgment in the absence of a rule. The idea of responsible judgment in the absence of a rule is in fact of immense importance in our lives more generally, not least in our moral lives. Unless one subscribes to the most prescriptive, rule-governed idea of right and wrong, the moral life typically confronts one with the need for judgement of this kind.

The exercise of judgement that is ongoing at a micro-level in our everyday lives means that that we proceed not in a smooth linear path but rather by ways of little leaps of thought. Cavell's discussion in *The Claim of Reason*, in the sections entitled 'Learning a word' and 'Projecting a word', is absolutely to the point (Cavell, 1979, pp. 168-190).

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32 The leap of thinking is to be taken metaphorically. Because the leap of thinking is an action that is to be experienced rather than an abstraction that is to be thought, it is only through metaphor that it can be evoked. It is, however, certainly something more than mere metaphor. In the light of the profound connection between thinking and language, translation is a practice of taking leaps.

When a child learns a word, it is quite unlike a baby lion learning the different signs that adult lions use. The sign the child is given is one that she will play with, connect in unforeseen ways, adapt to new uses and so amuse her elders. This much is unstoppable. In fact, Cavell says, there is a fierce ambiguity to ordinary language. The 'routes of initiation' are never closed (1979, p. 180). When the child learns the word 'kitty' (for baby cat), this does not foreclose the associations and uses to which she and others will subsequently put the term. If, Cavell says, she had never made such leaps she would never have walked into speech (1979, p. 174). What this shows is the pervasive nature of this dimension of language and its fundamental importance in our lives. The leap of thought could be elaborated also as an operation of the imagination below the level of our critical consciousness, where the imagination involves continually seeing things in a new light and drawing connections in original ways. This, we might say, is the engine of culture. Without it, we could scarcely make sense of education. An ateleological sense of *Bildung* attempts, it would seem, to articulate something both of this dynamic quality of our lives and of the kind of education this must require. The leap of thinking is inherent in this process. It is a leap of freedom inseparable from education.

## **Conclusion: Traversing the contours of educational situations**

Freedom, with its openness of possibility, can be elaborated in educational practice in terms of the translation inherent in the action of the leap of thinking. In Latin, translation (*translationem*) indicates 'a carrying across, removal, transporting; transfer of meaning'. Translation in general indicates the transition between source language and target language. This common usage of translation plainly traverses incommensurable terms in the manner of a leap of thinking over groundless ground. Such moves are not smooth but discontinuous and sometimes sudden: the transitions may become little leaps. Both the essay form and the leap of learning are consistent then with ateleological accounts of education.

This chapter has focused on two problematics: the understanding of educational aims and the place of freedom within this. Ateleological conceptions of education raise

doubts about predominant ideas in education and help to analyse the nature of education beyond fixed aims. The idea of freedom as a leap cannot function as a *telos* in the light of which educational activities are conceived: freedom cannot be an ideal. Conversely, the leap of freedom does not exclude the possibility of growth, and this naturally calls for translation in its continual beginning of new stories. But where does this go? Where is this beginning headed? There is no guarantee. What is imperative is that we accept that judgement must be exercised at every point, that we must take responsibility. To shy away from this – to acquiesce in formulas of good practice or, say, in the assumptions embedded in international measures of excellence – is to stifle the challenge of the aims of education and to fail to live up to the responsibilities this exacts.

A better understanding of the idea of the aims of education requires this more careful attention to the pervasive importance of freedom in our lives. This chapter has tried to show that realism about the contours of educational situations, of the kind that Peters urges, requires response to the fact that ‘nothing is less articulated or problematised, in turn, than the nature and stakes of what we call “freedom”,’ as Nancy so richly demonstrates.

Before we move on to the next chapter, it may be helpful to have a pause and look back at how the discussion around freedom has been developed in this thesis. It is perhaps worthwhile acknowledging the possibly misleading nature of the discussion. One may want to ask, ‘well then, is it simply a naming issue in finding a suitable word for the concept of freedom?’ The answer is yes and no.

This is certainly a naming issue of freedom that most translators may have encountered. For translators, the main concern is what target word would be suitable for this original word. It is hardly surprising to hear of particular difficulties for a translator of Heidegger’s works due to idiosyncratic use of words. A good example would be *Principle of Reason* (or *Der Satz vom Grund*). Finding a suitable word is quintessential, for a word is not mere a word but carries something what is unsaid. The translator of the book, Reginald Lilly, for instance, translated *Satz* at various points in the book as ‘principle,’ ‘sentence,’ ‘proposition,’ ‘movement,’ ‘leap,’ and ‘vault’. As he puts it:

In the course of his exposition, it becomes clear that *Satz* must also be understood in the sense of “leap,” such as when of the *Satz vom Grund* as a *Satz* in *das Sein*, a leap into being. Given this, it becomes more difficult when Heidegger speaks of the *Satz vom Grund* as a *Satz über das Seiende*. Understood in the traditional way, a *Satz über das Seiende* means a “principle about beings.” But inasmuch as the principle of reason as leap into being is concerned with being rather than beings – a fact that Heidegger holds has been obscured in the traditional understanding of the principle of reason – the *Satz über das Seiende* could be correctly translated as the “leap over beings” into being. As such a leap over beings into being, the *Satz vom Grund* is a *Satz vom Sein*, which could be rendered as a “principle of being,” as well as a “leap of being,” a “leap from being,” or even an “address from being” (Lilly, 1996, p. xiii).

As expressed in the translator’s note above, I would like to point out that, at different times, we need other words to understand the phenomenon of freedom. And this is to say, to repeat, that the project of this thesis is to discuss the phenomenon of freedom in the form of freedom-as. The discussion has developed in a form of freedom as movement, possibility, and a leap. Each phenomenon aims to capture the experience of freedom at any moment in educational practices. This is not, however, to replace the phenomenon of freedom by using other words. By replacing it, freedom does not disappear. Freedom ruptures itself to be free at any moment once established as a concept. By the nature of this phenomenon, freedom can only be understood in some sense like a hub of a wheel which has several spokes. If one claims to understand freedom, this means one experiences freedom as a wheel which is only working in co-operation with the spokes. Bearing this point in mind, the remainder of the thesis will discuss the phenomenon of freedom that is experienced in human language and thinking – for, as this chapter has tried to show, translation is internal to language, and translation involves a process of leaps.



## CHAPTER 6

### Freedom as Language:

#### The Drama of the Leap, “*Kaspar Hauser Exits the Cave*”

It would be easy to become melodramatic here. Language is translation. Translation involves leaps. A leap is a drama. It is an exit from the cave. . . This could easily sound like too much, and it could easily *be* too much. But I want to hold to something along the lines of the thoughts sequenced here, albeit that all this occurs for the most part at a more muted level than these stark sentences might imply. It occurs in the little adjustments that we are constantly making, in speaking and thinking, as well as at those more obviously dramatic moments, moments that are to be sure in evidence in the film I am about to consider – though this should not blind us to the ways that the film also illustrates that more subtle movement and change that I am seeking to evoke.

The previous chapter discussed the nature of teleological understanding in the discourse of educational aims. The discourse tends to have a strong relation to the conventional notion of freedom, where the freedom to do things is understood as a capacity that is owned: a person *has* this freedom. Hence, in Chapter 2 I referred to this as a *freedom-of*, a freedom of the person who has this capacity; and in education this capacity is understood as something that the learner comes to have or own, and so that freedom is to be achieved or to be realised through a process of education. By way of a phenomenological approach, however, we have discussed freedom as a leap. Like the singular presence of a blow, or a sudden leap, freedom is, as Jean-Luc Nancy suggests, a recurrent beginning or an open possibility. Freedom thus conceived allows us to consider two dimensions of this leap as it appears in language and thinking. In the light of this I

briefly examined the idea of the leap in practice in terms of translation and interpretation, transfer of meaning. The remaining two chapters focus on two dimensions of the leap of freedom in terms of language and thinking. This starts from a scrutiny of the assumptions that govern teaching and learning practices in contemporary education, assumptions that have permeated our understanding of language and educating rational being. In this chapter, I shall discuss the phenomenon of freedom in connection with the mystery of our relation to language.

### **Language and *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser***

In 1828, a strange teenage boy was found wandering in the streets of Nuremberg, Germany. A letter found on the boy, addressed to the Captain of the 4th squadron of the 6th cavalry regiment, stated that the boy had been in the custody of the author of the letter since 7 October 1812 when he was an infant. The author had instructed the boy in reading, writing and religion, but never let him take a step out of the house. The letter stated that the boy would like to be a cavalryman as his father was, and left the boy's life to the decision of the Captain of the cavalry regiment, either to take him in or hang him. The boy could answer few questions and had a limited vocabulary, but he could write his name – that is, Kaspar Hauser.

Once discovered, Kaspar Hauser initially gained some attention from the people in the town. He lacked the ability to speak, to walk, or to behave properly in the ways that were expected of people of his age. Hauser also attracted the attention of scholars, the clergy, and the nobility. He was offered a home and some education, but was then physically attacked twice by an unknown man. The later attack caused his death, upon which there resulted a great debate and much controversy. The headstone of his grave was inscribed in Latin: 'Here lies Kaspar Hauser, riddle of his time. His birth was unknown, his death mysterious. 1833'.

Public curiosity over Kaspar Hauser's life has run through nearly two centuries. Naturally, the story of his life has been adapted many times – in music, television programmes, and films, fictional and non-fictional, most of which have in some way

addressed the question ‘Who was Kaspar Hauser?’ One theory regarding Kaspar Hauser’s life links him with the princely family of the House of Baden, and in the 1990s there were several attempts to find a biological match between Kaspar Hauser and the descendants of the family of the House of Baden. The resulting evidence proved no family relation between them. The nature of the public curiosity surrounding Kaspar Hauser indicates that curiosity regarding his case will never be exhausted, regardless of the thoroughness and accuracy that scientific research offers.

Kaspar Hauser’s story has most famously been adapted as a film by Werner Herzog, with the title: *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser* (1974).<sup>33</sup> The film follows the life of Hauser but makes no apparent effort to convince the viewer to accept any of the existing assumptions regarding Hauser’s life. Although there may be symbolic and rich aspects embedded in each scene, the film seems to focus on simply revealing how Hauser’s life appeared to the people in the town, and hence to us, the viewers. What the viewers can see or imagine of his life must be drawn from Hauser’s testimony of his own life, as opposed to being taken from the supposedly objective observations of scholarship or scientific enquiry. The film itself is plainly frustrating for anyone seeking to uncover the ‘truth of Kaspar Hauser’s life’ – that is, for anyone who expects its secret story to be revealed. But this is, as the title indicates, the enigma: there will be no evidence sufficient to reveal the truth of the matter. There will be no answer to the question of the truth of Kaspar Hauser, but the film will acknowledge the enigmatic nature of his life.

The nature of the curiosity surrounding Kaspar Hauser’s life might be thought of as a public scepticism. He seems to have managed to learn many things that are offered to him. When he learns how to speak and write, he is asked about his past, and it is clearly expected that he will provide a succinct answer to the question – though clearly he fails to do this. In consequence he is condemned for lying about himself. Regarding the attacks that Hauser receives, one of which has left him with the fatal wound, the people in the

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33 The original German title of the film is *Jeder für sich und Gott gegen alle* (*Every man for himself and God against all*), which is reported to be taken from a novel *Macunaíma* by Mário de Andrade. In this respect, the English translation, *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*, may have lost the original source of inspiration embedded in the German title, which was a quotation from the novel. The English translation however still carries the gist of the German title, which I read as follows: the world of human being is mysterious: to the gods the human condition is a matter of indifference. To put it differently, human beings are inclined to do something conducive to their own wellbeing, whereas the gods care nothing for this. This indicates that human life remains mysterious since the human world is not destined, because the gods are indifferent.

town accuse of him of lying to cover his attempt to commit suicide. The people evidently find it reasonable not to believe what Hauser says but rather to imagine who Hauser really is.

This is scepticism that education, scientific knowledge, or one's testimony would not satisfactorily resolve. It seems, then, to disappoint anyone who holds hope in education, the hope for enlightenment. The life of Hauser shows that this is not possible even with education, even with the acquisition of language. There still remains the enigma of his life, which no one can solve and which ends up being reduced to the traps of doubt and rumour.

Hauser's case here leaves us with doubt regarding the belief that we, as rational beings, become human beings in the world through language. It seems to suggest that there is something other than the acquisition of language that is at stake. This is not, however, to suggest reading Hauser's case in a sociological or psychological way – for example, that it is the people's prejudice against a suspicious, abandoned man, or that it is Hauser's vulnerability that makes him lie, that motivates the story and explains the case. Rather, we are prompted to look again at the nature of language itself.

Doubts regarding Hauser's life and experience invite us to question the nature of language and education. This chapter, inspired by the film *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*, focuses on the enigmatic nature of Kaspar Hauser's life in terms of language and education. In a recent comparison of Stanley Cavell and Giorgio Agamben, Joris Vlieghe and Stefan Ramaekers (2014) have connected the idea of the educable being with the notion of the leap of language. In it, they discuss the idea of freedom as finding oneself without any sense of destination. Following this theme, I shall develop the nature of the educable being within the relationship between language, education, and freedom with reference to Martin Heidegger. In so doing, I would like to identify three dimensions in the relationship between them in terms of becoming, leaving, and beginning.



understanding of the nature of language runs in the veins of the history of Western philosophy. Language is the critical factor that distinguishes human beings from other animals. Aristotle's definition of the human being as *zoon echon logon* directly points at language (*logos*) as the distinguishing feature of human species, as the rational animal. The notion of the rational animal runs through the concept of humanism in Western Philosophy.

Immanuel Kant in fact takes up the notion of humanity based on the idea of rational animal, and places the idea of pedagogy in service of the developing of a child's animality towards human nature. He writes:

Discipline or training changes animal nature into human nature. . . [S]ince the human being is not immediately in a position to do this [intelligent conduct], because he is in a raw state when he comes into the world, others must do it for him. . . Rather it is a certain raw state in that the animal in this case has so to speak not yet developed the humanity inside itself (Kant, 2007, 9: 441, *parenthesis added*).

And this not-yet stage of the child suggests that human nature or humanity is to be developed through education. Being educated, in other words, indicates nothing other than the developed state of the language being – that is, the human being that has exited from the state of having no language, from animal being. In this respect, the definition of human being in Kant is based fundamentally on the acquisition of language as a result of the help of others, which is to say through education. Of course it is now known that children acquire language simply through exposure to a language community and without any explicit practice of teaching. Yet the young child is from the start brought into practices that involve caring for it in some degree, and hence the helpful intentions of older people are necessarily there in some degree.

At this point, it should be acknowledged that Kant draws attention to, what is called, the pedagogical paradox (Løvlie, 2007; Kristjánsson, 2007). The paradox lies in the tension between constraint and freedom in educational practices. Lars Løvlie sums up such tension as the difference between 'what we say' and 'what we do' in educational

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(PDT 181). Adopting his interpretation of education in relation to humanism, I have constructed the schema above, which triggers a question about education, language, and freedom.

practices. For instance, a teacher says to students, ‘do whatever you want’, and some instructions are followed by a hidden thought that ‘but I have the right answer for you’. Thus, the paradox is not a logical problem, but a pragmatic one. Kant’s pedagogy, according to Løvlie, acknowledges the paradox and urges teachers towards a careful practice in education aimed at the development of autonomy. This is because Kant presupposes that, unlike other animals, children need a degree of freedom and autonomy to blossom as autonomous beings. Kant thereby draws a distinction between education and training based on the autonomy he identifies in children.

Whether we agree with Kant or not, the relationship between language, education and freedom in his thought is clear: rational being (or language being) is to be developed through education. And that the educated being is rational is evident in the exercise of her autonomy, through her free will, in freedom. Before getting too amused by the reality of this paradox, which is one of the typical experiences that one must have had in one’s education, we should ask ourselves how we understand the notion of autonomy or freedom. As discussed in Chapter 1 and 2, a variety of educational debate and kinds of discourse is found within the traditional understanding of humanism. Within humanistic understanding, the notion of freedom has a clear purchase in educational thought. Such purchase has the effect of shifting or recasting the economy of thought regarding the logic and the practice of education and regarding how problems are constituted. The problems can only be seen as a paradox only within this specific understanding of humanism. The pedagogical paradox reaffirms the particular way of thinking attached to freedom, education, and language.

In the understanding of humanity in relation with language, in fact, Kant is not alone. The ability to speak is acknowledged as a key factor for humanity. According to Arnobius the Elder in the 4th Century, inability to speak suggests that the human being is no different from animals. As he puts it, ‘if a child were raised in total isolation on a simple diet, he would emerge after 20 or more years “as baffled and mindless as an animal, a piece of wood or a stone”’ (Kitchen, 2001, p. 6). Kaspar Hauser’s case is an example of this conception of humanity: as a young man and still without language, he is treated as not yet human.

And yet, language being does not refer solely to linguistic ability. Civilisation is epitomised in the acquisition of language. But in the work of many writers, this is construed in terms of the acquisition of language at a greater level of refinement. There is, according to R. S. Peters, a gate of civilisation that children must enter. For Peters, children are ‘in the position of the barbarian outside the gates’. The problem as he see it is:

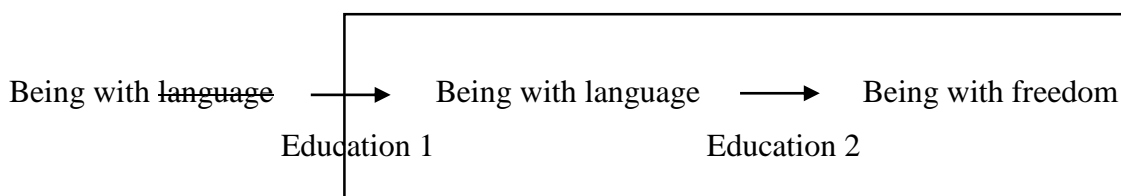
to get them inside the citadel of civilisation so that they will understand and love what they see when they get there. It is no use concealing the fact that the activities and modes of thought and conduct which define a civilised form of life are difficult to master (Peters, 1963, p. 43).

What is this gate? What is it for children to master it? This is understood by Peters, as explained in an earlier part of the same lecture, as based on the acquisition of language. As he argues, ‘no man is born with a mind; for the development of mind marks a series of individual and racial achievements. ... In the beginning it was not at all like this. Such an embryonic mind is the product of initiation into public traditions enshrined in a public language, which it took our remote ancestors centuries to develop’ (Peters, 1963, p. 34-35). Barbarians are definitely not animals; they are language beings. Peters wants to separate them from that class of language beings who also have the forms of knowledge and understanding, etc. In his account, language is something more than linguistic ability. This includes the forms of knowledge and understanding that have come down to us, roughly in the familiar range of academic subjects. On this view, humanity comes to be understood in terms of a state that is realised through education. There is, according to Michael Peters, a typical association of pedagogy with humanism embedded in a particular understanding of language in Western philosophy (Peters, 2015, p. 6). The account R. S. Peters provides here should not, however, be left without further comment. Peters’ concern is plainly with providing an account of education addressed to the legitimisation of the kinds of systematic practice that should, on his view, characterise modern developed societies; and in consequence he sets the bar for entry into the ‘citadel of civilisation’ high. The barbarians who are excluded surely have language, but they do not have that refined form of language – initiation into the forms of knowledge and understanding that have come down to us that would characterise the ‘educated man’, in his conception. Hence, the focus of his concerns is somewhat different, and he does not



address the more fundamental questions that have been the preoccupation of this thesis. They do not reach the more fundamental questions regarding freedom and language that are my concern. The point of including them here, however, is to provide a further illustration of the structuring of thought, the constitution of problems within humanistic traditions, that I have tried to explain in the present chapter.

Across a vast range of political agendas, in this process of acquiring language, education is placed at the centre: it is taken to be a basic but powerful means of recuperating our lost ‘humanity’, and this is often represented in politics as some kind of truth or freedom. To safeguard against oppression, to become an autonomous individual, one needs to be *properly* educated. And the nature of human being, or humanity, in Western philosophy is often understood in terms of what is included in the box below:



The box emphasises the conjoining of these ideas such that they become internally related to one another. ‘Education 1’ refers to the early education of the child and its coming into language, while ‘Education 2’ refers to the later sophistication of this, when such refined forms of expression and discourse as academic subjects are gradually acquired. It is the latter that is oriented towards humanism, in which we find a conjoining of language, education, and freedom, a conjoining such that these three ideas are mutually dependent. The schema naturally prompts a series of questions, so let me try to address the point differently. First of all, what is the nature of this activity named ‘education’ in relation to language? And what, above all is meant by ‘freedom’? The nature of education in relation to language and freedom becomes the question. Furthermore, and to complicate matters, different understandings may arise from the various kinds of humanism, such as humanism of Marx or in Christianity and so on. As Heidegger points out:

But if one understands humanism in general as a concern that the human being become free for his humanity and find his worth in it, then humanism differs

according to one's concept of the "freedom" and "nature" of the human being. So too are there various paths toward the realization of such concepts (LH 245).

Heidegger draws attention, however, to the metaphysical assumption shared by different kinds of humanism, and he does this in the following way:

However different these forms of humanism may be in purpose and in principle, in the mode and means of their respective realizations, and in the form of their teaching, they nonetheless all agree in this, that the *humanitas* of *homo humanus* is determined with regard to an already established interpretation of nature, history, world, and the ground of the world, that is, of beings as a whole (LH 245).

The question of what is meant by freedom should be based on the metaphysics that condition each concept (language, education, and freedom) assumed in these different incarnations of humanism.

Before discussing such matters, however, let me return to the schema I constructed above. Its purpose is to express the relationship between language, education, and freedom as conventionally understood in Western philosophy. And this coincides with the way I found myself naturally imagining Hauser's exit from the cellar, connecting this with Plato's allegory of the Cave and expecting to see Hauser settling down into a normal life. Kaspar Hauser's experience is of a transformation from his status as a non-language being to that of a language being with a kind of freedom to live on his own. Of course the connotations of freedom outside the cave will vary depending on the quality of the language or knowledge gained. It seems clear, however, that there is apparently a very practical relation between learning language and the values attached to humanity – that is, truth and freedom. The acquisition of language in this respect is the indicator or threshold of the educated human being who deserves, or is predicted to receive, the benefits of truth and freedom.

Regardless of what has actually happened in history, this is the scenario that education has taught us. Thus, by discussing the relationship between language, education, and freedom, I would like to show how the enigma of Kaspar Hauser is not only a matter

of his mysterious life, but also to do with the mysterious nature of language and freedom, and thus education itself.

## **The Becoming of Language and the Leap**

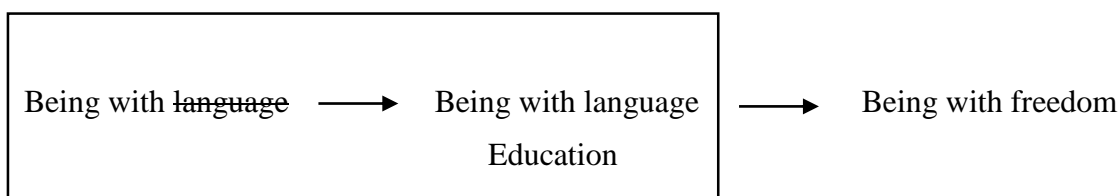
From what we have seen so far, there is nothing special in the claim that ‘being without language’ becomes ‘being with language’ via education. But the claim becomes problematic if such a distinction is incorporated into or becomes the *definition* of humanity, with the human being conceived as the language being. Was Kaspar Hauser not yet a human being – or not enough of a human being – when he was without language in the cellar and in chains? In Kant’s statement, Hauser is not yet a human in a full sense, but in need of education in order to turn his animality into humanity. For the understanding of the human being as a language being excludes ‘being without language’ in its definition.

It is in rather different terms that Giorgio Agamben claims that the transition from pure experience to language is essential to human being. In other words, the *experience* of turning into the ‘being with language’ from the ‘being without language’ constitutes the nature of human being. Human being in this respect is not defined by language itself, but by the experience of *becoming* a language being.

Animals do not enter language, they are already inside it. Man, instead, by having an infancy, by preceding speech, splits this single language and, in order to speak, has to constitute himself as the subject of language – he has to say I. Thus, if language is truly man’s nature (and nature, on reflection, can only mean language without speech, genesis syneches, ‘continuous origin’, by Aristotle’s definition, and to be nature means being always – already inside language), then man’s nature is split at its source, for infancy brings it discontinuity and the difference between language and discourse (Agamben, 2007, pp. 60-61).

In his analysis of human infancy in terms of pure experience without language, Agamben claims that language makes the human being historical, on the strength of the differences and discontinuities of being. Such discontinuity is not between the non-human and the human, but between ~~language~~ and language. In his emphasis on the discontinuity between

language and language, Agamben addresses the nature of humanity and historicity. What defines the human being, as it is compared to the animal, is the experience of becoming a language being. Based on this discontinuity, there is a dynamics of becoming. The differences between infancy and language shows that what makes the human being a language being is not ascribable entirely to the nature of pure language, but to the movement from pure experience to language.<sup>36</sup> In this view, the emphasis in the definition of humanity is on *becoming*, in terms of movement from the condition of non-language being to that of language being. Thus, in Agamben's notion of humanity, the formula is to be adjusted thus:



This different positioning of the box indicates that infancy, being without language, continues to be internal to the human condition: it is not a deficit peculiar to early childhood (or, on Peters' account, barbarians). Putting aside the question of the freedom in this schema which I shall come back to in the last part of this chapter, the question follows as how the movement between 'being with language' and 'being with language' appears in the process of education. To put this differently, let us ask: what is happening in the process of becoming a language being to be named as educational action?

Stanley Cavell's discussion of Wittgenstein suggests a conception of the relation between language and human being similar to that of Agamben, and the point of connection is to be seen specifically in his remarks about the open possibility of language as a leap. Cavell describes a child's learning experience of language. His example of a child learning a word, 'kitty', as was discussed in chapter 5, shows how the child plays with the word rather than straightforwardly identifying its meaning. In the child's playing with the word, in many other contexts, 'kitty' is not fixed such that it solely refers to a baby cat but extends to other things that related in terms of their being warm, soft, or

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<sup>36</sup> In Agamben's account, infancy is also to be understood as the moment of a potentiality and an impotentiality that constructs a new form of emancipation and education. See Lewis (2011).

furry. He claims from this example that such play is made possible through the little leaps that the child makes with the word. The meaning of each word, in other words, is not pinned down like matching the object *x* to the word *Y*. For him, language does not rest on fixed meaning but on leaps of connection and association.

It also shows that we language beings play with words rather than grab a fixed meaning or pronunciation. A further factor in Cavell's expression of the example is more subtle. He writes: 'If she had never made such leaps, she would never have fallen into speech. Having made it, meadows of communication can grow for us' (Cavell, 1979, p. 173). The phrasing here indicates something of the way that the sounds of words themselves prompt further association, with 'leaps' rhyming with 'speech' in the first sentence, and then with the more subtle connection, forged by the parathyme, with 'meadows' in the second. The 'ea' in 'leaps' is pronounced as something closer to /i/, while in 'meadow' it is pronounced as /e/. The pronunciations and spellings do not perfectly coincide, and the turning of the rhyme here parallels the movement of thought.<sup>37</sup> Likewise, the meaning of each word is left open await for this and other leaps. As Cavell puts it, 'we do not know the meaning of the words. We look away and leap around' (*ibid.*). The notion of leaping in Cavell in a way substantiates Agamben's sense of humanity. It is especially the nature of discontinuity of language that is explained in terms of the phenomenon of the leap, and there is something gratuitous or, at least, non-determined about this.

A playful and spontaneous leaping, to a large extent, suggests the phenomenon of the dynamic of becoming as a very ground of humanity. Compared to the traditional understanding of humanity, the emphasis of humanity now is on the becoming of the language being as a leap. An approach to Kaspar Hauser's case should, in this respect, be focused on his experience of learning language. Due to his unfortunate circumstances, however, he was not properly considered as a human being who was visibly experiencing becoming a language. In the film the nature of his misfortune is made doubly clear in the behaviour of the doctors who examine his body and dissect his brain: they are apparently articulate and utterly secure in their diagnosis of his 'case'. If, in this renewed understanding of humanity, education is not mere a process of turning a child into a

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<sup>37</sup> I am grateful to Paul Standish for this example.

human being from a condition of animality, how does education appear in the process of becoming a language being? The primary suggestion from Agamben and Cavell is in terms of the becoming of language and the leap. Based on this, the question to be raised must be to do with how education contributes to or substantiates this dynamic.

## **The Pedagogy of Becoming and Leaving**

Cavell's notion of the leap illustrates the phenomenon of becoming a language being. This very point, in Vlieghe and Ramaekers' (2014) terms, is the moment of turning into an educable being. As they suggest, it is the transformation of being within a condition of self-loss. Within self-loss, one becomes disempowered, and this disempowerment turns one into an educable being. Although I agree with the notion of self-loss, I would like to speak of this in relation to a process of *leaving*.

To leap, one needs to have a ground to jump across. Cavell emphasises that 'where you can leap to depends on where you stand.' (Cavell, 1979, p. 172) The movement of leaping, in other words, involves the ground that one jettisons. Without the moment of jettisoning, leaping is not possible. Based on this, Cavell's argument focuses on the language community: language is a matter not only of acquisition but also of bequest. In this respect, language comprises both the language of the community with the criteria it supplies and the ground that one is to leap across and jettison.

The process of the leap suggests a distance between A and B. The phenomenon of letting go in leaping prompts a questioning of the ground that is left behind. Leaving allows us to question what is left behind in the leap. Having a distance is the basic condition for one to question and examine the other. Questioning about what one has left behind becomes possible on the strength of the distance that is achieved through leaving.

There is a danger, however, if we imply hastily a kind of fixed ground that we can examine after we have left it. This would be a mistake in that it might imply that there is some more or less fixed ground from which we have come. To make a similar point following Vlieghe and Ramaekers (2014), self-loss may suggest, as it were, that there is

a concrete 'self' to lose. However, it is not fixed criteria or a fixed ground (or a fixed self) that one has left behind. For such criteria and factors will themselves constantly change. It is not clear what is left behind in the moment of leaping.<sup>38</sup>

The place where we leap from is not seen in the same way after the leaping as it was before. In his analysis of being, ground, and reason as understood in Western philosophy, Heidegger points out that these are in fact the same thing. Throughout the history of Western philosophy, the focus has shifted, as if with a leap in thinking, from being, to ground, and to reason. This is the Age of Reason. In our entrapment in this, technology has emerged with unprecedented power. I shall discuss this further in Chapter 7. In such leaping, Heidegger claims, 'The leap is always a leap from... That from which the leap of thinking leaps is not abandoned in such a leap; rather, the realm from which one leaps first becomes surveyable when one makes the leap – surveyable in a different way than before' (PR 60). To take Heidegger's account, the process of leaping creates a true accessibility to the ground that one jumps from, but the ground will not be looked on in the same way as before. The process of the leap is a kind of leaving after which there will be no way back.

I have on several occasions used the term 'language' with a strike-through to indicate non-language. The strike-through is intended to suggest that it is not possible to describe non-language being other than through language. Pure experience will no longer be able to be explained without language, except this language with a strike-through. In Agamben, the experience of infancy is wordless pure experience or experience without language. Indeed infancy etymologically means the inability to speak. The infant, therefore, can be seen to be a 'pre-linguistic subject'. The experience of the infant, pure experience, can only be described or captured through language *after* infancy. This does not, however, set up a perfect division between language and infancy. Agamben argues that language and infancy co-exist in the experience of human being. As he puts this:

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38 In tune with this, Paul Standish addresses the nature of childhood adopted from Lyotard (1993). Thus: 'The infant cannot speak for itself, cannot represent itself. Once childhood is brought to consciousness, it becomes progressively less like childhood. Our childhood exists as something that starts before we are aware of it: a necessary unrecoverable background, like the inevitable background there must be to all our knowledge and understanding. This background seems deficient in the light of our ideals of fullness of knowledge and self-awareness. It is seen as lack, and education tries in its different ways to replenish this' (Standish, 2000, p. 160).

The idea of infancy as a pre-subjective ‘psychic substance’ is therefore shown to be as mythical as a pre-linguistic subject, with infancy and language seeming to refer back to one another in a circle in which infancy is the origin of language and language the origin of infancy. But perhaps it is in this very circle that we should seek the site of experience for human infancy. For the experience, the infancy at issue here, cannot merely be something which chronologically precedes language and which, at a certain point, ceases to exist in order to spill into speech. It is not a paradise which at a certain moment, we leave for ever in order to speak; rather, it coexists in its origins with language – indeed, is itself constituted through the appropriation of it by language in each instance to produce the individual as subject (Agamben, 2007, p. 55).

This negativity of language, or pre-linguistic experience, captures the nature of the discontinuity in language. This is the point where history begins.<sup>39</sup> It begins from the experience of language in its co-existence with infancy. And this negativity of language appears to be so as a part of leaving.

Turning into the educable being with self-loss, therefore, suggests the inevitable departure of living, or leaving. In this leaving, in a form of self-loss, no concrete self or language criteria appear or are captured in the same way as before. The process of turning into an educable being already incorporates the negativity of language. Through this letting go, things become surveyable, understandable, and approachable. Becoming language being can properly be grasped by looking at the past through the angle of the present language. And the past is seen as detached from the now-perspective. This is why the past is presented as a form of negation.

And this is not a linguistic ability to obtain once and retain ever after. Becoming a language being is a kind of circle that we experience in daily life. This phenomenon of letting go is already entailed in the experience of becoming a language being, as an educable human being, through a pedagogy of becoming and leaving.

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39 The discontinuity of language is the very starting point of history. As Agamben puts this: ‘It is infancy, it is the transcendental experience of the difference between language and speech, which first opens the space of history. Thus Babel – that is, the exit from the Eden of pure language and the entry into the babble of infancy (when, linguists tell us, the baby forms the phonemes of every language in the world) – is the transcendental origin of history. In this sense, to experience necessarily means to re-accede to infancy as history’s transcendental place of origin. The enigma which infancy ushered in for man can be dissolved only in history, just as experience, being infancy and human place of origin, is something he is always in the act of falling from, into language and into speech. History, therefore cannot be the continuous progress of speaking humanity through linear time, but in its essence is hiatus, discontinuity, *epochē*. That which has its place of origin in infancy must keep on travelling towards and through infancy’ (2007, p. 60).



Becoming is always within in an oscillation between arrival and departure.<sup>40</sup> If one becomes a language being, this obviously means the leaving of a language. A pedagogy of becoming and leaving does not expect any sequence of developmental outcomes in a fixed or chronological order. Becoming and leaving remain within the hermeneutic circle. Becoming a language being is hermeneutic in the sense that Dasein's being is constituted in understanding (Zaborowski, 2011, p. 30) – that is, in the sense of understanding not as comprehending but as standing in the way of something. And it is the hermeneutic circle in particular that indicates the integrity of our understanding of the movement of the world. Or to put it in ontological terms, such understanding constitutes being-in-the-world.

This circle of understanding is not an orbit in which any random kind of knowledge may move; it is the expression of the existential fore-structure of Dasein itself... The 'circle' in understanding belongs to the structure of meaning, and the latter phenomenon is rooted in the existential constitution of Dasein – that is, in the understanding which interprets. An entity for which, as Being-in-the-world, its Being is itself an issue, has, ontologically, a circular structure (BT 195).

In this circle, the pedagogy of becoming and leaving suggests something of what Heidegger calls 'how we become what we are'. This means, in an ontological sense, that I am what I am becoming. This self-tautological (or hermeneutic circular) term refers, as Thomas Sheehan interprets it, to the temporality of Dasein in the structure of understanding (Sheehan, 1994, p. 217). For Iain Thomson, this is the Heideggerian sense of 'real education' or 'sojourn'.<sup>41</sup>

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40 The image of oscillation is echoed in his later work in the image of the path: 'Upwards and downwards belong to one another, not as two separate pieces, but rather in the sense that to the upwards belongs already the downwards, and the downwards in its manner unfolds in itself the upwards' (CPC 108). In these terms, becoming and leaving are not two separate events, but belong together.

41 For this Thomson makes a direct quotation from Heidegger's essay, *Plato's Doctrine of Truth*: 'Recall Heidegger's succinct and powerful formation: "Real education lays hold of the soul itself and transforms it in its entirety by first of all leading us to the place of our essential being and accustoming [*eignewöhnt*] us to it." This for Heidegger is how we become what we are' (Thomson, 2005, p. 158-9). The Heideggerian sense of 'real education' is described in terms of ontological education, a *Gelassenheit* or letting-be-education (Kakkori and Huttunen, 2012). Although the terms are different, there runs through them common understanding of the conception of education found in Heidegger. In these terms, there is a resistance to the traditional understanding of humanism in favour of an appreciation of human being as in relation to being.

Genuine education leads us back to ourselves, to the place we are (the Da of our Sein), teaches us ‘to dwell’ “there” and transforms us in the process. This transformative journey back to ourselves is not a flight away from the world into thought, but a reflexive return to the fundamental “realm of the human sojourn [*Aufenthaltsbezirk des Menschen*]” (PDT 168/ GA 9 219) (Thomson, p. 159).

In Thomson’s terms, the pedagogy of becoming and leaving echoes the real education that is ‘to bring us full circle back to ourselves’ (Thomson, p. 159). Sojourn [*Aufenthalt*, translated as *dwelling* elsewhere] here indicates a temporal stay, a stop-over, or a spatio-temporal abode, whose limited term is a reminder of finite human being.<sup>42</sup> To put these thoughts together, language is not an instrument to be used to get something. We are in a process of continuous becoming, becoming beings who sojourn in language. This is famously phrased as ‘Language is the house of being. In its home human beings dwell’ (LH 239). This point will be the focus of the following part of this chapter.

Within the relationship between language and education, we have discussed humanity as a becoming that is grounded in the pedagogy of leaving. Even so, this pedagogical picture, however, is not exactly optimistic. To remind ourselves of Hauser’s case, even with his limited ability to speak, his fate was not friendly to him. He disappointed the villagers for not being able to provide the true story of his own life in the past. And he was accused of lying, and he died as the result of an attack by an unknown person. His life story in a way frustrates those educational believers who claim that freedom comes through education. This may sound like a bit of an exaggeration. Of course even the most ardent advocate of autonomy would not imagine that this makes one immune to an attack or invulnerable to bad luck. What I am trying to capture in Hauser’s case perhaps resonates with a certain belief illustrated in Plato’s cave – the man freed from chains reaches the mouth of cave. This is a characteristically sun-lit image of education as a process through which the human being is led to the truth: freedom consists

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42 Thomson finds the term ‘sojourn’ important in considering what the work of art means for Heidegger. He also finds the significance of the finitude of our existential journey through intelligibility gathered in the term. In particular, the sense is implied of coming full circle back to oneself (Thomson, 2005, p. 159). The idea of a sojourn is also of clear significance in Heidegger’s other work, *Country Path Conversations*. Bret Davis draws attention to the idea of sojourning as ‘the temporal-topological understanding of the relation between being and human being’ (Davis, 2010, p. xvii). It is worth adding that the idea of sojourning is also very prominent in Thoreau’s account of his experience in *Walden* and in the broader philosophy he develops from this. It is beyond the scope of the present discussion to pursue the similarities and differences here, or any possible lines of influence.

in the perception of truth and goodness; and this also finds expression in Neo-Platonist articulations of Christianity, as we shall shortly see. And perhaps this is why, while watching the film, I was hoping or expecting the happy ending to Hauser's life. In the light of this, the last part of this chapter discusses the phenomenon of freedom in the process of learning.

## **Freedom as Language and Its Beginning**

We have reached a point in the present discussion where the nature of human being can be understood not as the animal with language, but as the becoming-language-being. And the leap of language is a turning into an educable being, which I want to style as a pedagogy of leaving. 'Being with Language' suggests the nature of leaving that is only conceived, differentiated, and finally negated, in retrospect as it were, via the present 'being with language'.

The earlier schema – the process of being with language becoming being with language, and reaching towards being with freedom via education – seems inadequate to explain the Kaspar Hauser's case. There was no drama of exit from the cave. Being with language does not guarantee us freedom. Rather, as we saw, Hauser gradually gathered more suspicion upon himself: the more he spoke, the more suspicion attached to him. Is there then a higher, more appropriate notion of language and education that gives grounds for freedom? To understand the nature of language and freedom in relation to education, we should look at it in a different way. Traditionally, especially in Christian history, language and freedom have been seen in terms of a particular mutual bond, and in relation to the idea of truth, in the light of which it is imperative to endorse the necessity of education, and its alliance with truth.

Language in this respect also affects the understanding of education in Christianity. Learning scripture (divine writing, holy texts), is a crucial activity. Education is the way to learn God's word in order to reach the realm of truth, and it is through this that one will be free. Truth and freedom are replaced by light. In biblical terms, language often represents the light, which presents such grand-scale values as the

truth, freedom. The Book of John, for instance, starts with the description of the genesis of the world: 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made' (John 1:1-3). The word creates the world. It is the inception of the world. Prior to it, no man exists. And men come to exist through the light of the word: 'In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it' (John, 1:4-5). But man shall remain in the light. John reports that Jesus said, 'If you continue in my word, then you are truly disciples of mine: and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free' (John, 8:31). Language represents the truth, and thus freedom, and is the light of the world. And light is shed upon the darkness to make things clear, visible, and thus truthful. This naturally implies that the educated human being is enlightened being, enlightened through the light of the word. As we see also in the everyday expression 'oh, I see!', which implies a shedding of light so that what we see can be understood. Being educated then indicates standing in the light and overcoming darkness. Within this metaphoric of light, freedom obtains the value of truth. To be brought into the light and enlightened, human beings must persevere. In these terms, the notion of freedom serves both possibilities: it grounds the power of human will to reach the truth and it also refers to a coming into the light – that is, the truth.

For Heidegger, however, this is not quite the case. While sustaining the image of the relation of light to language, he puts emphasis on the opposite side of light, the shadow: Light dispels the darkness, but the darkness does not go away: it remains as hiddenness. For him, language is:

not the utterance of an organism; nor is it the expression of a living thing. Nor can it even be thought in an essentially correct way in terms of its symbolic character, perhaps not even in terms of the character of signification. Language is the clearing-concealing advent of being itself (LH 248-9).

The process of lighting involves a degree of shadowing or darkening.<sup>43</sup> The advent of being comes with a clearing-concealing. For Heidegger, being is understood in terms of language as the house of being. Elsewhere, this phenomenon is named as freedom:

All revealing belongs within a harboring and a concealing. But that which frees – the mystery – is concealed and always concealing itself. All revealing comes out of the open, goes into the open, and brings into the open. The freedom of the open consists neither in unfettered arbitrariness nor in the constraint of mere laws. Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing there shimmers that veil that covers what comes to presence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils. Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any given time starts as revealing upon its way. (QCT 25)

Freedom, for Heidegger, is the mysterious realm where the exceeding and withdrawal of revealing appears. For this reason, Jean-Luc Nancy interprets Heidegger's freedom in relation to language, or *logos*: 'freedom is the specific logic of the access to the self outside of itself in a spacing, each time singular, of being. It is in *logos*: "reason," "speech," and "sharing." Freedom is *logos*, not alogical, but open at the heart of *logos* itself' (Nancy p. 70). Nancy here addresses two aspects of freedom: one is that freedom is language, and the other is its singularity, or beginning. Let us discuss each point.

### a) Freedom as Language

'Language is the house of being. In its home human beings dwell' (LH 239). Heidegger's so called anti-humanism does not refer to an inhumane thought. What 'anti' negates is all those kinds of humanism that are rooted in the traditional Western metaphysics, of which the idea of the rational animal is the hallmark. For Heidegger the essence of humanity lies not in the rational animal but in human being's *existence* (BT 42). Existence for Heidegger is not a concept opposed to essence. The existence of Dasein

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43 The image of light and darkness is repeated elsewhere in Heidegger as follows: 'Wherever we may look, the discussion of the principle of reason becomes obscure with its very first steps. And that is how it should be. For we would like to elucidate the principle of reason. What is lucid and light needs the obscure and the shadowy, otherwise there would be nothing to elucidate. Goethe once mentioned a sentence of Johann Georg Hamann, the friend of Herder and Kant. Hamann's sentence reads: "Lucidity is a suitable appropriation of light and shadow." Goethe added to this briefly and concisely: "Hamann-Listens!"' (PR 9).

is an *ek-sistence*, a standing out; for the human being it is 'to be'. Ek-sistence means standing out in the open, in the truth of being.

Metaphysics closes itself to the simple essential fact that the human being essentially occurs in his essence only where he is claimed by being. Only from that claim, "has" he found that wherein his essence dwells. Only from this dwelling does he "have" "language" as the home that preserves the ecstatic for his essence. Such standing in the clearing of being I call the ek-sistence of human beings. This way of being is proper only to the human being. Ek-sistence so understood is not only the ground of the possibility of reason, ratio, but is also that in which the essence of the human being preserves the source that determines him (LH 247).

The ek-sistence of human being is introduced ontologically as 'Da-sein'. Da sein's *Da* indicates the site, or the 'here,' 'there' [*das* "*Da*"], that is, in Heidegger's terms, the clearing of being (LH 248). Dasein's being is understood through language, and being is cleared or opened for the human being in ecstatic projection, which is already a thrown projection (LH 257). The thrown projection of Dasein has been described earlier in Chapter 4, in terms of freedom as possibility. In the light of this, language can come to be sein – in Dasein's ek-sistence, in the clearing of being – as the leap of freedom. In this phenomenon Dasein encounters entities by understanding possibility.

'Ek-sistence thoughtfully dwells in the house of being' (LH 274). The abode of Ek-sistence is not somewhere else but in daily life. In every day, ek-sistence or 'standing out' emphasising the openness of being. Heidegger directly quotes Heraclitus: 'The (familiar) abode for humans is the open region for the presencing of god (the unfamiliar one)' (LH 271). In the openness of being, world appears. This is the freedom that '*alone can let a world prevail and let it world for Dasein*. World never is, but *worlds*' (EG 126).<sup>44</sup> Heidegger's 'being-in-the-world' is another name for becoming a language being, and this as the experience of freedom.

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44 Guignon emphasises at this point that freedom cannot be an accomplishment of human being although human being co-constitutes the openness of being through language: 'Freedom as grounding is what first lets entities appear on the scene as what they are, including the entities that we ourselves are, human beings. For this reason, grounding and freedom cannot be thought of as an accomplishment of humans, though humans co-constitute the "there" or "site" in which being emerges. They can contribute to the being of the There (Da-sein) if they come to fulfil their proper path of unfolding ("essence")' (Guignon, 2011, p. 103).

## b) The Beginning of Freedom

Secondly, Nancy emphasises singularity which is discussed above in chapter 5. Singularity is only possible where freedom withdraws itself and gives relation (Nancy, 1993, p. 68). This phenomenon is what I would like to identify as the beginning of freedom. In the event of singularity, freedom as language suggests that the human being is not the owner of language, but becomes a language being, and this continually, each in its own way. This suggests ‘what throws the subject into the space of the sharing of beginning’. It is on the basis of freedom as spacing that the idea of the self, singularity, appears.

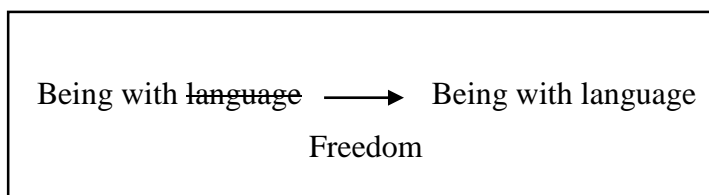
But if freedom is on the order of fact, not right, or if it is on the order in which fact and right are indistinguishable, that is, if it is truly existence as its own essence, it must be understood differently. It must be understood that what is interminable is not the end, but the beginning. In other words: the political act of freedom *is* freedom (equality, fraternity, justice) in action, and not the aim of a regulative ideal of freedom. That such an aim could or should belong to this or that pragmatic of political discourse (it remains less and less certain that this would be a pragmatically desirable and efficient mediation or negotiation with the discourses of Ideas) does not impede the political act – as well as the act that would decide to have a discourse of this sort – from being *at the outset* freedom’s singular arising or re-arising, or its unleashing (Nancy, 1993, p. 77).

In this shared space, freedom as language is the beginning that is not the same as the origin (p. 78). For Nancy, freedom is not the origin to which one gets back or that one achieves. For freedom cannot be grasped in a concept since freedom frees itself. Thus the human being will not fully grasp the concept of freedom by thinking. Freedom is a fact, a fact of existence, that is experienced. Nancy’s reading of Heidegger’s concept of the *Geschick* (destining) of being is attached to freedom. As Nancy concludes, ‘Freedom cannot be awarded, granted, or conceded according to a degree of maturity or some prior aptitude that would receive it. Freedom can only be taken: this is what the revolutionary tradition represents. Yet taking freedom means that freedom takes itself, that it has already received itself, from itself. No one begins to be free, but freedom is the beginning and

endlessly remains the beginning' (Nancy, 1993, p. 77). For Nancy, freedom refers to nothing other than the rupture of the event. The beginning of freedom then echoes what we discussed in connection with Agamben's notion of the experience of the circle of language and infancy.

But perhaps it is in this very circle that we should seek the site of experience for human infancy. For the experience, the infancy at issue here, cannot merely be something which chronologically precedes language and which, at a certain point, ceases to exist in order to spill into speech. It is not a paradise which at a certain moment, we leave for ever in order to speak; rather, it coexists in its origins with language – indeed, is itself constituted through the appropriation of it by language in each instance to produce the individual as subject (Agamben 2007, p. 55).

In this respect, the relation between language and freedom should be re-phrased as follows:



One should note that, in the process from the being with ~~language~~ to being with language, there is a shift of emphasis: education becomes the experience of freedom. It is through this that we become what we are. The relationship between language and freedom shows that freedom is the heart of *logos*, indicating the sharing of beginning. A combination of shadow and light is of the essence of freedom. Based on this, in Heidegger's essay *The Essence of Ground*, freedom is seen as kind of grounding. Dasein co-constitutes the openness of being by a participation that, in ontological terms, binds entities in its understanding; Dasein's binding is possible only by being bound by them. This particular nature of bindingness is introduced as the origin of grounding.

Now, Heidegger further says that insofar as freedom is the origin of bindingness, it is also the origin of ground, or of reasons. 'The originary phenomenon of ground is the for-the-sake-of that belongs to transcendence. Freedom, holding



the for-the-sake-of out in front of it and binding itself to it, is freedom for the ground' (GA 26, 278). This means that Dasein, being bound by entities that it understands out of possibilities, encounters these entities in terms of ground-relations (whatever those relations may be; Heidegger explains several modes in which entities can metaphysically ground or be grounded). Heidegger thus posits a metaphysical version of the principle of ground: 'the ground-character of ground in general belongs to the essence of being in general' (GA 26; 283) (Käufer, p. 153).

Such grounding does not, however, constitute *a* ground, a fundamental basis. This grounding is groundless. In other words, freedom here is the origin without origin. But, for Dasein in its ek-sistence, this freedom as language each time opens the world: 'each time' refers to the event of singularity that, for Nancy, is the event of the sharing of being. The event of singularity indicates a beginning of the event that makes Dasein's being each time its own. Freedom is the beginning, but this is not to posit it as the ground on which our existence becomes steady. Freedom is a ground only for the burst of beginning.

If we now return to *The Enigma of Kaspar Hauser*, we can see that this point is depicted well. Hauser's life is visualised in the singularities of a beginning that he himself cannot re-visit directly but can only imagine. Through the imagination, he forms and adapts his own history, which is subsequently condemned as a lie. Eventually the story arrives at his deathbed, and the typical scene is portrayed. There are priests, caretakers, and a child witnessing him dying. The objects in the scene can serve as the self-depiction of his life: big windows with white curtains through which sunshine comes, some pictures in the frames on the wall, a piano, some chairs, etc. On his deathbed, in a typical moment for confession, Hauser expresses something unanticipated and seemingly improbable. Let us briefly explore how the film reveals the story itself. The priest asks:

- If anything is burdening you, please tell us now

Hauser answers 'yes', and goes on to say:

- There is something, a story. It's about a caravan and the desert, but I know only the beginning.

The priest encourages him to speak more, so Hauser says:

- I see a caravan coming through the desert across the sands. And this caravan is led by an old Berber tribe man. And this old man is blind.

And now the scene shifts to the dream. With Hauser's narration, the dream is depicted as follows:

- Now the caravan stops because some believe they are lost and because they see mountains ahead of them. They look at their compass, but it's no use. Then their blind leader picks up a handful of sand. And tastes it, as though it were food. 'My sons,' the blind man says, 'you are wrong. Those are not mountains you see. It is only your imagination. We must continue northward.' And they follow the old man's advice. And finally reach the city in the north. And that's where the story begins. But how the story goes after they reach the city, I don't know.

We should not take the scene as if it were retrieved from historical fact. We can safely say that this is an interpretation of Hauser's life by the film director. This scene symbolically depicts the life of Kaspar Hauser as a life that is full of mysterious beginnings: his journey to becoming a language being is such that no one knows of his purpose or of what he has done. Freedom as language, at this point, suggests that freedom *is* the beginning of education rather than something to be achieved at the end of education.

The cinematographic effects of the scene draw the attention. The dream scene depicts the story with a blurred or murky sky, blurred with the sandstorms of the desert. This obviously hinders visibility, with the film itself continuously flickering. The flickering scene recalls the fact that this is a series of images. This draws attention to the fact that the film comprises a series of images, each in its disconnected or closed frame. Between the images, as the film runs, there is a jump, and it is this jump, this leap, that lets the story go on. The dream scene is a reminder of the burst of beginning in its singular event. This brings us to a point to which we can relate a dialogue of Heidegger about the enigma of language:

*Older man:* If we give room to this thought [the being of an age of devastation in relation with the abandonment of being], then we must think the following: the being of all that is, remains ambiguous to the core.

*Younger man:* And we must think this without initially being able to find out wherein this ambiguity is based, and whether with this characterization the slightest thing is said of being itself. Presumably we are speaking here only of a predicament of human understanding [*Deutens*] in relation to being, but not of being itself. It is enigmatic (CPC 138).

Let me give some context to this excerpt from the conversation. This is an artificial conversation that Heidegger conceives of as occurring between an older man and a younger man in a prisoner of war camp. The two speakers ponder the way that the understanding of being is abandoned in this age of devastation. They find that the difficulty of such thinking is due the lack of human understanding. They address the enigmatic nature of being and thinking. I shall return to this in the next chapter. What I would like to emphasise here is that the enigmatic nature of language is, in Heidegger's eyes, rooted in the core of being, just as, reciprocally, the enigmatic nature of being is rooted in language. The last part of this chapter discusses how we can understand education in relation to freedom as language.

## **Conclusion: The Ownership of Learning**

Through the reformulation of the schema – between being with ~~language~~ and being with language in freedom – we have discussed the way that education is the experience of freedom. To put it differently, the beginning of freedom is the very moment of and momentum for educational experience. In this understanding, it is placed at odds with the way that freedom is typically understood in educational theory and practice, where, as we saw in Chapter 5, freedom is often regarded as an educational ideal, an end of education. The problem of this understanding lies in the idea that freedom is to be owned. The ownership of learning is a kind of commodification of what is learned or perhaps an inflamed version of authenticity, i.e. in the idea that we master the subject. In this light, freedom is to be owned through education. Yet learning relates fundamentally to what cannot be fully owned.

My rejection of the traditional notion of humanism is based on this assumption: that the acquisition of language is the necessary condition for becoming a rational being. In the discussion of the relation between freedom, language and education, we have come to the view that human being means becoming a language being. This is not to own the language or settle down in the language community. Becoming a language being indicates the nature of learning in a double sense: that language is and will be neither fully owned nor fully known. This leaves us with the mystery of language. Or, to quote Derrida, ‘I only have one language; it is not mine’ (Derrida, 1998, p. 1).

Freedom as language elaborates the pedagogy of becoming and leaving. To put this in Heidegger’s terms: ‘Certain other possibilities are thereby already withdrawn from Dasein’ (EG 128). Heidegger calls this the transcendental testimony to the finitude of Dasein’s freedom. We experience something becoming clear whilst the other remains out of focus or dimmed. We tend to focus on the kind of language that gives us a clearer vision of the world. But in fact language holds this possibility open because, as soon as we hold a clear vision of the world through language, it already leaves us also an unfocused vision of other aspects of the world: it depends upon a background mystery. Language in this respect is not a tool for us to unlock the meaning of the world. The more we know, the more we do not know.

With the phenomenon of the leap, the world becomes accessible and understandable. But, as Cavell shows, there are ‘unnoticed turns of mind, the cast of phrases’ that block out other possibilities, and these pass through from generation to generation, through infinite interpretations (Cavell, 1979, p. 175). Hauser’s life is highly suspicious from the beginning. His life shows the nature of language as a leap that is enigmatic. What is left at the end becomes a dream, something imagined, something illusory. The nature of language – with its rifts, its jumps, its leaps – constitutes a part of the enigma of Kaspar Hauser, this mysterious man. The enigma lies not only in the life of Hauser but in the nature of language itself. It is through open possibility that finite beings like us experience the enigma of language.

It is in this light that the following chapter will discuss the relation between freedom, language and thinking. Let me close here, then, with words of Heidegger that indicate the path to be taken:

For thinking in its saying merely brings the unspoken word of being to language.

The usage “bring to language” employed here is now to be taken quite literally. Being comes, clearing itself, to language. It is perpetually under way to language. Such arriving in its turn brings ek-sisting thought to language in its saying. Thus language itself is raised into the clearing of being. Language thus *is* only in this mysterious and yet for us always pervasive way (LH 274).

## **CHAPTER 7**

# **Evidence-Based Education and the Ideal of Freedom – Meaning and Mystique**

The previous chapter discussed the leap of freedom as it appeared in language. It drew attention to the exceptional example of education provided by Kaspar Hauser. Hauser's case was taken to exemplify the common belief that we, as rational beings, become human beings in the world through language. Although the example of Kaspar Hauser is exceptional, it helped to reveal that the most common features of language can be enigmatic, and it seemed to suggest that there is something other than the acquisition of language that is at stake in our becoming human beings in the world. Hauser's case reveals the way that the phenomenon of freedom as the enigma of language: the more we know the more we do not know. The nature of thinking that I argue for in this chapter reveals a similar kind of enigmatic resistance to the human will to know, understood as a kind of possessing of the world, a desire that is apparent in both educational practice and research.

To this end, this chapter considers prominent forms of discourse in educational research and the nature of their force. I begin by examining a dimension of research that has at times seemed to crowd out the rest – Evidence-Based Education (EBE). The critique of EBE, not least within the philosophy of education, is familiar enough, but in fact my concern here is somewhat different. Indeed I want to emphasise at this point that my purpose is in no way to adopt a blanket criticism of EBE, much of which is clearly work of value. My purpose is rather to show a certain vulnerability, within the discourse

of EBE, a vulnerability that is, in a way, the shadow side of its power and importance today. This vulnerability has to do with its susceptibility to developing a kind of aura. This is an aura that can easily impress the outsider more than its effectiveness should warrant and that can lead its adherents to be less critical of their own methodological presuppositions than they might be. I shall turn the line of criticism I develop in respect of EBE towards research that is markedly different in kind: the preoccupation with freedom, which is indeed prevalent in the philosophy of education and found especially in humanistic ways of thought. This chapter discusses the kind of aura that is attached to these ideas, embedded as they are in the western metaphysics of volition. The mystique that is at work in ways of thinking in EBE and freedom hides what is in fact a nihilistic conception of the transformation of both human nature and the will. In a reading of Martin Heidegger, I shall offer a positive account of freedom as thinking. This will, I hope, provide an ontological perspective on thinking, which will cast light on the potential understanding of education, beyond the confines of mystique.

## **The Debate around Evidence-Based Education**

Since the 1990s, the idea that educational research should provide scientifically sound evidence as a basis for educational policy and practice has been strongly advocated within both academic research and government documents, not only in the US and the UK but in many other European countries. Criticism has in part been focused on the lack of dissemination of the products of such research to practitioners and policy-makers (Hargreaves, 1996; Hillage *et al.*, 1998) and in part on the its alleged methodological inadequacies (Tooley and Darbey, 1998). In the US, the advocacy for such an approach has been presented in a more strident, evangelical tone, especially in the National Council Research (NRC) paper that laid the way for No Child Left Behind: this argued that all educational research could and should be at least in part scientific (Feuer *et al.*, 2002). The integration of the scientific educational research methods with the needs of

practitioners and policy-makers has come to be known by the name ‘Evidence-Based Education’ (EBE).<sup>45</sup>

Although it is hard to provide a single definition of EBE because of the variety of methods in understanding and approach, and differences in tone amongst these different agencies, I believe it is possible to identify two general features of EBE: first, there is the priority given to the Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) as a research method (Goldacre, 2013); second, there is the effective dissemination of the findings through systematic research review (Davies 1999; Oakley, 2001). In the light of these two factors, it is commonly believed that educational research is to be oriented towards finding out ‘what works’ rather seeking to understand ‘why it works’. This is a professedly pragmatic approach, modelled in part on medical.

The discourse of ‘what works’ has aroused multiple reactions. There has been concern about the rise of faith in science and rationality (Thomas, 1998, Standish, 2000) and about government involvement in these developments (Lather, 2004), while a series of doubts and questions have been raised regarding whether enquiry into education can be approached in the same manner as other social science and medical research (Hammersley, 1997; Elliott, 2001). The tension between scientific and democratic control over educational practice and research as well as the politicising process that is inherited in the discourse of ‘what works’ has also been questioned (Biesta, 2008; Oancea and Pring, 2008).

The debate between the proponents and the opponents of EBE reveals obvious gaps in the understanding of crucial concepts in education, including the role of the educational researcher, the nature of practice, and the substance of education itself (Oancea, 2005, p. 158). A further significant difference between the parties to these debates has to do, as Philip Hodgkinson has noted, with ontological and epistemological

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45 A range of initiatives for narrowing the gap between research, practice, and policy-making in education has been established in the United Kingdom. Most of these have been set up with government funding, as for example is the case with the London Institute of Education Evidence for Policy and Practice Information and Co-ordinating Centre (the EPPI-Centre), the Economic and Social Science Research Council (ESRC) UK Centre for Evidence-Based Policy and Practice and its Evidence Network, formerly at Queen Mary College and now at King’s College London, and the Durham University Evidence-Based Education Network (EBE) (see Oancea and Pring, 2008, p. 19). In the United States, since the advent of NCLB, the website Best Evidence Encyclopedia has been created by the Johns Hopkins University School of Education’s Centre for Data-Driven Reform in Education (CDDRE), also funded by the US government.



problems: he accuses EBE of adopting a Cartesian approach (1998, p. 17). And in some ways this smacks of the Two Cultures debate between science and the humanities. As Alis Oancea (2005) puts it,

at least two discourses emerge and consolidate [in educational research], one lamenting the misbehaviour of educational research from a managerial perspective (associated with a 'big science' model of knowledge production and an 'engineering' model of knowledge use), and the other attempting to defend it in the name of academic freedom and right to diversity, or to reinstate it through a humanistic model of knowledge transfer (Oancea, 2005, p. 157-8).

Although I have more sympathy with the critique of EBE, the purpose of this chapter is not to argue for one instead of the other; I am not setting out to advance the antagonist's case. My sense is that the nature and form of this debate may be a distraction from thinking about more fundamental problems. Rather, I would like to claim that there is an ironical similarity between this conception of scientifically approved evidence and the ideal of freedom found in the humanistic model of knowledge transfer. In both, as I shall try to show, there is something that is not only *mystificatory* but carries the quality of *mystique*.

In this chapter, I am not questioning the validity of evidence by itself or the value of freedom, but discussing the kind of aura that is attached to these ideas. It is this, I shall try to show, that – in practice and in advance – validates these ideas. Gary Thomas has argued that the myth of rational research is generated and secured by an uncritical faith in science and rationality (Thomas, 1998). While the term 'myth' is certainly apt here, my view is that this does not quite explain the nature of the mystique that is generated. Moreover, I want to suggest that a similar mystique is found elsewhere: it attaches to the idea of freedom in the humanistic understandings of education of the kind that Oancea appears to have in mind. I shall try to show that the core characteristic of the mystique in both is rooted in a rigidity of thinking, in the understanding of human being. Finally, through a reading of Martin Heidegger, I shall offer a positive account of freedom as thinking. This will, I hope, provide an ontological account for *thinking*, which will cast light on evidence-based education.

## The Mystique of Evidence-based Education

In the Oxford Dictionary ‘mystique’ is defined as ‘a quality of mystery, glamour, or power associated with someone or something.’ And in its sub-meaning, mystique indicates ‘an air of secrecy surrounding a particular activity or subject that makes it impressive or baffling to those without specialized knowledge’. A concept or way of thinking acquires mystique when it becomes immune from doubt. A certain understanding or explanation is adopted of a kind that makes sense only in the already established framework of thinking. And that kind of understanding is often developed or normalised through political rhetoric. None of this is to imply conspiracy; rather it reveals something of the allure of these forms of thought. My purpose is to draw attention to the way that glamour or power is generated in EBE discourse. This implicitly excludes ways of thinking that do not conform to the discourse of ‘what works best’. To do so, and in view of the extensive range of research that has developed around EBE, I shall pay specific attention to a recent paper by Ben Goldacre: ‘Building Evidence into Education’ (2013).

This is a government-backed report that seeks to demonstrate the effectivity and effectiveness of Randomised Controlled Trials (RCTs) and systematic reviews. Through a comparison with medical research, of the kind advanced through Evidence-Based Medicine, Goldacre attempts to show that education should also pay attention to the evidence-based practices with scientific experiment.

In countering the numerous criticisms this approach has received, Goldacre (2013) draws attention to what he takes to be a common *myth* or misunderstanding that is attached to EBE. This myth includes four main claims: (i) on the strength of a combination of experience and common-sense, policy-makers and practitioners already know what works in education; (ii) RCTs are costly, and this is unnecessary expense; (iii) their adoption as a method of enquiry into educational practice is ethically questionable; and (iv) they are difficult to run. Myths of this kind, he claims, may to our shame prevent the effective application of RCTs in EBE research, thereby hindering advances in educational practice.

The correction of such myths is expounded extensively by Goldacre elsewhere, and it involves a series of denials and counter-claims (see, for example, Haynes *et al.*, 2012, pp. 15-18). First, ‘*we don’t necessarily know “what works”.*’ The authors claim that the effectiveness of the intervention cannot be assured without sound evidence. Second, ‘*RCTs don’t have to cost a lot of money.*’ Instead of showing how much expenditure is involved in RCTs, the authors reiterate the question, ‘what are the costs of not doing an RCT?’ And this implies that the cost caused by the trial must be trivial compared to the costs incurred later by policies that turn out to be less effective or even harmful. Third, ‘*There are ethical advantages in using RCTs.*’ The authors claim that RCTs are used where the effectivity of a treatment is not yet established. They also argue that RCTs are ethical in that ultimately they generate high quality information on the effectivity of the interventions. Fourth, ‘*RCTs do not have to be complicated or difficult to run.*’ Against this, the authors argue that RCTs are the simplest kind of investigation to run in a straightforward manner. Such difficulties as there are can be overcome with the benefit of expert advice. Indeed it is in the light of this that the UK government has established several such expert centres.<sup>46</sup>

The logic in the defence can be summarised as thus: although we do not know what is best, sound evidence obtained through RCTs can help us to identify this. Although some of the misunderstanding surrounding RCTs may be clarified in the responses offered by Goldacre (2013) and Haynes *et al.* (2012), the clarification they provide does not even address or even consider the fundamental problems, where a particular way of thinking about education and human being is in question. The nature of the clarification that is offered is such as to fit the criticisms into the framework of the ideas being proposed, which by its very nature excludes other possible ways of thinking or squeezes them into the wrong categories.

It is, therefore, held to be reasonable to establish a research centre in order to correct the misunderstandings rather than investigating other possibilities or venturing other suggestions.<sup>47</sup> Hence, this kind of ‘clarification’ does not begin to address other

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<sup>46</sup> Goldacre’s paper was in fact written for the occasion of the opening of such a centre.

<sup>47</sup> To the advocates of EBE ‘other possibilities’ already sounds problematic, for there is no concrete evidence to support the idea of alternatives (Oakley, 2001). In her rejoinder to John Elliott’s criticism on Hargreaves’ TTA lecture, Ann Oakley criticised Elliott for the lack of reference to ‘the real literature and the actual methodological positions of the side he attacks’ and for simply ‘setting up a straw man and then knocking him down’ (2001, p. 575).

ways of thinking or questioning, and this blocking move is one step in its shrouding of itself in mystique. This kind of mystique has nothing to do with the lists of the myths that are addressed above. Rather, the mystique is generated through this mantra-like reiteration of RCTs central tenet, the veracity of which is plainly in question. To put this in other words, what we have here smacks of the assertion of an idea that makes sense in the context of unquestioning faith in an already established framework of thinking, and this might be called ideology; but it becomes mystique through its self-promotion and glamorisation, and through its generation of an aura of clarity, the terms of which effectively exclude and obscure more carefully reasoned responses. Its way of thinking is often normalised through political rhetoric. This is the nature of the mystique I find surrounding EBE.

Let us revisit some of Goldacre's counter-claims.

#### **a) The discourse of 'what works best'**

In EBE, evidence is sought to prove the effectiveness of the funded programme, intervention, or treatment (Slavin, 2002). But sometimes evidence does no more than to loosely point towards possible practice in an 'actionable' form (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 412). Although Pring (2000, 2004a) has consistently called for the attention to the differences in what can count as evidence in difference aspects of educational practice, in EBE discourse the meaning of evidence is taken as relatively unproblematic: it is a matter of the effectiveness of the policy or practice in question, and this is evidence of 'what works best'.

The discourse of 'what works' is based on a pragmatic understanding of the role of the teacher. According to David Hargreaves, this would be oriented, as it is in the case of medicine, towards asking 'what works in what circumstances' matters (Hargreaves, 1997, p. 410). Researchers are expected to provide the specific evidence of what is working. Yet there are inevitably certain restraints on enquiry because the questions researchers can pose are already bound by assumptions (Biesta, 2008; Smeyers *et al.* 2008). As Gert Biesta claims, 'Evidence-based practice provides a framework for

understanding the role of research in educational practice that not only restricts the scope of decision making to questions about effectivity and effectiveness but that also restricts the opportunities for participation in educational decision making' (Biesta, 2008, p. 6). The evidence of effectiveness of funded programmes may also engender an immunity to doubt on the part of practitioners and policy-makers. The 'what works' question narrows down to an enquiry into what works best, rather than to why it works or indeed why it is in the first place that this particular outcome is sought. Within the 'what works' discourse, the scientifically proven programme generates a mystique that clouds the idea of judgement, reducing it to convenient assumptions that this is right and that is wrong.

#### **b) The reliance on science**

There is, in EBE discourse, a tendency to rely on and celebrate a narrowly constrained conception of rationality (Oancea, 2005, p. 176). In her discourse analysis of EBE, Oancea argues that there is a tendency to equate good research practice with scientific soundness, explicitness, rationality, and the avoidance of bias and partisanship. In fact, it is a common criticism on the part of EBE that existing research is 'biased' or fragmented, especially as a result of its combination of elements from different methodologies (Oancea, 2005, p. 164); it is in contrast with this that RCTs and systematic reviews are held to be scientific. In his criticism on the rationalism of this approach, however, Gary Thomas (1998) refers to a 'tyranny of method': this, he believes, should at least raise doubts about the claim to objective rationality. The products of this supposed rationality include: (1) the injunction to researchers to adopt conventional tidying methods in their own thinking, and (2) the assumption of the accessibility and rationality of the human mind (p. 142-3). In his analysis of Thomas Kuhn's account of the 'myth of rationalism', Barry Barnes also makes the point that the myth lies in the belief in a homogeneity of thought and activity across different aspects of experience (Barnes, 1990, p. 86; Thomas, 1998, 151). Enthusiasm for scientific evidence of the effectiveness of funded programmes should be reassessed in these terms. In EBE discourse, researchers are bound to ask questions within the terms of their own constrained conceptions of scientific method and

rationality, and this disables any consideration of the mystique towards which that discourse tends. Its self-referential, self-perpetuating tendencies are further evidence of this mystique.

### **c) Normalisation through political rhetoric**

Oancea also claims that in EBE discourse there is a political rhetoric (Oancea, 2005). According to Hodkinson (2004), the onward march of EBE indicates a ‘new orthodoxy’ in educational research, and this smacks of the political or propagandistic (Oancea, 2005, p. 170). Moreover, it has proved to be an effective way of normalising ways of thinking, allegedly with the benefit of scientific evidence. The direct politicisation of the EBE discourse is evident in a number of EBE initiatives. Their setting up has involved major investment on the part of government, as is seen, for example, in the case of the EPPI-centre and EBE in Durham, and as is apparent in various government reports.<sup>48</sup> Major government involvement in EBE in some countries extends to the legislation of scientific method in enquiry into education (Lather, 2004, p. 759; Gallagher, 2004), which is often legitimated in terms of the interests of taxpayers. Of course, taxpayers have reason to be concerned that appropriate attention is given by the government to state education, but government-led RCTs are scarcely free doubts about the neutrality they claim. Such trials can be set up in such a way as to provide the kinds of evidence the government wants to see. Pring also argues that:

Ironically, the moral imperative behind this enterprise – namely, a liberation of people (teachers, say) from the control of those who sponsor research and use its results in the interest of management – creates the very opposite of such a liberation. Of course, it is true, and worth pointing out rigorously, that educational arrangements are increasingly organised (and their description ‘reconstructed’) to serve economic and social interests as these are conceived by political leaders (Pring, 2000, p. 256).

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48 See, for example, Goldacre, 2013; Haynes, L. et al., 2012; Cabinet Office, 2013.

This kind of concern is expressed in Biesta as ‘a tension between scientific and democratic control over educational practice and educational research’ (Biesta, 2008, p. 5). In the end the political impact of EBE on education research and practice may be based not purely on its purported scientific thoroughness but rather on the force of its political rhetoric – a rhetoric that may simultaneously shore up government policy and secure EBE’s own good. A problem with the rhetoric of EBE is the speed with which it becomes a politicised and moralised, effectively outlawing approaches that do not conform to its method.

These authors claim that this now prevailing discourse is increasingly overt about its political dimension, which is manifested in the way it presents itself as *the* way of thinking in educational research. Mystique can appear even in the most apparently scientific research – or even, let us say, in the professed espousal of scientific rationality. The mystique derives from the way such research is constructed, disseminated, and promoted. Serious critical questioning is dissolved in the acid test of what works. And so the real problem becomes one of how this way of thinking is chained or fixed in a certain kind of thinking without questioning. My purpose in this chapter is not to promote scepticism about science or to eulogise some kind of ‘creative thinking’ in educational research. There are ways of thinking to be considered critically in both scientific and humanist forms of enquiry. If we think of research of a more humanistic kind, it is worth acknowledging how mystique can also enter there – as, for example, in the discourse of freedom. In the next section, then, I shall turn the attention to the way that the idea of freedom also is subject to mystique.

## **The Mystique of Freedom**

It may seem absurd to bring together such different things, but in terms of mystique there is a similarity in the way the discourses of EBE and freedom have developed: they have in common a particular way of thinking about education and human being. I shall shortly try to illustrate the nature of this connection, but I need to lay the

way for this first by saying something about the debate that emerged between progressivism and the idea of a liberal education.

Let us begin with the idea of autonomy as discussed in chapter 1. Robert Dearden (1968; 1972; 1975) professes its importance as an educational aim. He considers the values inherent in autonomy insofar as it constitutes an educational ideal. Broadly speaking, Dearden's account of autonomy is Kantian. Freedom is a necessary condition for autonomy. No autonomous activities can take place purely as the result of external influences. To position freedom as a necessary condition emphasises its negative sense (as '*freedom from*'). At this stage, then, one might expect a fully Kantian perspective on freedom, autonomy, and morality, and Dearden's own account encourages this expectation in some respects. He pays less attention, however, to the relationship between autonomy and positive freedom. What interests Dearden more in this discussion is whether freedom is also a necessary condition for the *development* of autonomy:

Attempts to identify the two more closely lead to a version of 'positive' freedom which may make a kind of sense but which is ill-advised. For when autonomy has as yet no psychological reality in a person, coercion may then be passed off as liberation, as being what he 'really' wants or wills, and thus as needing no further justification. Discussion of different positive ideals of character, or worthwhile exercises of freedom, will also be confused by each view claiming that it alone gives a true account of what freedom is.

What is more interesting from the point of view of autonomy as an educational ideal is the question of whether freedom is a necessary condition for the development, as opposed to the exercise, of autonomy (Dearden, 1972, p. 11).

The quoted passage seems that the relationship between freedom and autonomy requires a clear account of each, but Dearden does not in fact discuss freedom in any depth. I have considerable sympathy with his cautious approach; but this in itself would not serve to justify this neglect, and the result is that freedom comes to be discussed in largely quantitative terms. This in effect blocks the path to a radical re-appropriation of Kant in the meaning of freedom in education.

Among Dearden's achievements in thinking through autonomy, however, the extension of autonomy to include daily activities or life needs also to be appreciated. His attention to daily activities rather than meta-theoretical questions about autonomy



presumably extends the relevance of the concept in education. Nevertheless, his account reveals relatively little of how autonomy is grounded in freedom. For the sake of a supposed practicality in educational discussions, in the meantime, modernist assumptions regarding human being are somewhat uncritically adopted or tacitly assumed, with consequences manifested in the conceptualisation of subject/object relationships, of agency, and of free will. This apparent practicality has the effect of exempting its proponents from serious reflection on, for example, freedom in relation to determinism or on the cogency and consequences of the dichotomisation of subject and object in Western metaphysics.

In Dearden, in particular, freedom is conceived as a necessary condition for autonomy, a condition by which the focus of educational questions is determined in advance. For instance, the debate between liberal and progressive educationalists developed around the question of the *amount* of freedom that should be given to children to encourage their autonomous development. Although understanding freedom as a necessary condition for autonomy, Dearden emphasises that it is *not* necessary for the development of autonomy (1975). Freedom should not be given freely in childhood at a time when children are influenced by peer group or cultural pressures. Rather, for Dearden, a strict upbringing may be required for the development of autonomy. Victor Quinn (1984) rejects Dearden's idea of how to develop autonomy. For Quinn, autonomous behaviour involves the exercise of skills, and these need to be practised in the course of education, from the early years. In this respect, a reasonable amount of freedom needs to be given to children so that they can exercise and develop their autonomy. The debate goes on within what amount of freedom is to be given for upbringing.

As we have seen, in this debate, freedom functions as a necessary condition for autonomy, but it then more or less disappears from Dearden's account. Freedom for the development of autonomy becomes a matter of the physical conditions for children's daily lives – say, in free time or leisure. The core of the debate becomes a matter of the physical conditions of freedom. In these restricted terms, which keep at bay any consideration of freedom as a necessary condition for autonomy, the debate becomes fruitlessly self-propelling.

The bypassing of a more fundamental discussion of freedom can also generate mystique of a kind: it can fix a way of thinking, where standard arguments are rehearsed and where practical implications are duly identified. The mystique of freedom in education then attaches to the idea of the educated being as autonomous. In spite of the understandable reputation that Dearden's work on the meaning of autonomy in educational contexts has gained, his contribution has lent credence to the circumscription of deeper questioning of freedom in education. This then seems to have led, with the exception of politically-oriented debates, to a conceptualisation of the meaning of freedom in education that is somewhat impoverished.<sup>49</sup>

The notion of freedom, understood and activated in these terms, is not far then from what Paul Standish calls the iconic. Standish draws attention to signs or signifying practices in education in which a particular force operates in addition to the sign's 'purported descriptive value' (Standish, 2014, p. 179). Icons generate this aura. Roland Barthes seeks to show, in his examination of such signs the working of 'myth today'. Standish finds this happening in educational research methods.

While these [current research conventions] are perfectly legitimate and reasonable parts of scholarly activity, they are plainly prone to narcissistic forms: self-referentiality or deferential citation can easily become the norm, and then the iteration of names acquires something like a moralistic force, coming to sound more like a liturgy (Standish, 2014, p. 183, *parenthesis added*).

There is, to put it differently, this aura attached in both the content of education and its research methods. In line with Standish, and by viewing the discourse of freedom in education as characterised by this iconic force, I would like to draw attention to the aura, which I have claimed is a form of mystique, in both EBE and freedom. The mystique that

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49 Albeit that there is a different texture in the political rhetoric of Paulo Freire's account of the freedom of the oppressed, his idea of freedom has become normalised as a kind of political liberation with professedly educational aims (e.g. Freire, 1972). Here again I find the elements of mystique. In the wake of Freire's pioneering and evangelising work, it is reasonable to ask about possible constraints. The difficulties attendant on the discourse of freedom in political philosophy constitute, as Karl Popper (1966) correctly notes, following Plato, the paradox of freedom. Richard S. Peters (1966) summarises the paradox in the witty formula 'it takes a constraint to catch a constraint' (p. 186). But once again this is to think of freedom in quantifiable terms. He also acknowledges Popper's lead in understanding that freedom in education encounters this problem, the problem of justification of freedom in education. There is of course nothing wrong in adducing a political sense of freedom. This also requires us to think about what ground we assume when we consider the idea of freedom. Without this, like the paradox of freedom, one may get the illusion of the idea of freedom as never achieved. Would it be too strange, then, to question whether the unachievable is due to the idea of freedom itself or the way of thinking on freedom?

I have identified in the discourse of EBE extends then not only from the natural sciences to the social sciences but also to the humanities. It should, however, be acknowledged that there are difficulties in bringing these different kinds of discipline together under one umbrella criticism.<sup>50</sup> Yet one can find an element of mystique in the discourses of both EBE and freedom in education. This kind of thinking is not new with the advent of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Across the scientific as well as humanistic understandings of man, as Jacques Derrida (1982) points out, there is a ‘grand tradition’ of metaphysics that is embedded in this way of thinking: as Thomas phrases this, ‘Derrida attempts to deconstruct by examining the falsity of supposedly natural oppositions such as speech and writing, mind and body, literal and figurative. One might add theory and practice to the list’ (Thomas, 1998, p. 148). The problem, in this respect, lies not simply in the polemic of ‘qualitative vs. quantitative’ research methodology (Pring, 2000). It is more deeply entrenched in a certain tradition of thinking. And, as Emma Williams has shown (Williams, 2015), and contrary to a number of critics (Oancea and Pring, 2008; Biesta, 2008; and Issitt, 2007), this is something beyond an epistemological matter. The question of on what grounds evidence is counted needs to be put in the same manner as it must be asked on what grounds freedom is understood. To put this differently, the particular way of thinking that underlies the ideas of both of evidence and freedom is the question.

## **The Rigidity of Thinking**

The origins of mystique can be discovered in the traditional way of thinking whose basis is left unquestioned or unthought but which nevertheless functions as a ground. What is the common ground of this mystique in both freedom and the scientific research in education? And why, it might be asked, is this such a problem? The problem

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<sup>50</sup> Although there is an attempt to analyse the connection between the EBE discourse and the notion of autonomous being (see Issitt, 2007), the difference in tone of discussions and debate on EBE, on the one hand, and freedom, on the other, is far too great, it might be contended, for them to be addressed in terms of the same characteristic. In his reading of Foucault, Issitt analyses the idea of the ‘autonomous learner’ within the ‘evidence-based’ movement, via the powerful scientific discourse of cognitive psychology – in particular through the notion of ‘metacognition’ (p. 381).

is that these traditional ways of thinking have settled and fixed the way we understand the world and ourselves.

The first affirmation of the traditional way of thinking in both EBE and freedom is based on the subject-object division. Such a division is first found in the vocabulary in EBE. In the EBE discourse, it is rather obviously marked in the claim that EBE methodology is the objective, scientific, and unbiased approach (Hargreaves, 1997). In this approach, the world and the human being appear to be observable objects whose substance can be examined and calculated, while the one who observes the object believes themselves to be separated from the object. If this is readily apparent in the discourses of EBE, objectivity as it arises in the conceptualisation of freedom depends upon a certain metaphysical presupposition. Martin Heidegger makes the claim that, within the Kantian way of thinking, both transcendental and practical freedom are understood in terms of an object-world governed by causality. Heidegger insists that this is a traditional assumption made on the basis of an object-construing truth (BT 258). In Kant, this way of thinking is not far from installing freedom as an object (KPM 224). Having a sense of the object in this way already consolidates the sense of the subject. The idea of the object separates the subject from the world and sets up a division as the inner ego vs. the object – that is, the external world. Heidegger claims that the objectivity of objects is based on subjectivity. And such subjectivity affirms for itself ‘the essential lawfulness of reasons’, which in turn provide ‘the possibility of an object.’ (PR 80). The way of thinking that is based on the idea of the subject-object division coincides with a certain idea of reason. Yet the subject-object correlation does not constitute a simple pair, as we shall see.

The second affirmation is rooted in the consequence of the subjectification of human being. Bolstered by reason, the human being has an active subjectivity. The active subject is the one who can achieve freedom, and the one to view the world calculatively, on the basis of evidence. The creation of this active subject has been understood in philosophy, ever since Nietzsche’s declaration that ‘God is dead’, in terms of modern man (WN 107). The human being has become the active subject, willing dominion over other objects.

For this active subject, there is an unsolvable problem. Is the world determined prior to human free will? It is unsolvable not because of the lack of philosophical

investigation into the matter, but because such forms of questioning cannot escape from the metaphysics from which the question is raised. Both are, according to Charles Guignon, ‘drawn from the worldview formulated by modern science’ (Guignon, 2002, p. 321).<sup>51</sup> To put it differently, the tension between free will and determinism is deeply embedded in modernist assumptions. This does not mean, however, that science itself is wrong. It is rather that

the view of reality we get from science, for all its great advantages, gives us a distorted view of things when it is applied to our everyday, pretheoretical lives. On this view, if we can get clear about the nature of our everyday lives, we will also see what we initially took to be free will is not really what we want when we speak of valuing freedom (Guignon, 2002, p. 321).

On this view, as Heidegger puts it, ‘modern technology is a challenging, which puts to nature the unreasonable demand that it supply energy that can be extracted and stored as such’ (2013, p. 14). The relation between science and technology is clear in Langdon Winner’s words:

Science and technology do not grow of their own momentum but advance through the work of dedicated hardworking, creative individuals who follow highly idiosyncratic paths to their discoveries, inventions, and productive innovations (Winner, 1977, p. 53).

Here Winner emphasises the active subject whose will leads the advance of science and technology. When scientific methods are translated into modern technology, the role of the will in traditional way of thinking becomes apparent, and this can be seen in both EBE and freedom. In relation to the debate about the driving force of the technological advance between human free will (instrumentalism) and technology itself (Substantivism), therefore, David Lewin finds a ‘continuity between the problem of agency in the philosophy of technology and the general philosophical question on human freedom’ (2006, p. 519). Such continuity is based on the shared assumption of the free rational subject (*ibid.*, p. 524). The problem is that this free rational subject, contrary to the beliefs

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51 This is what Daniel Dennett calls the conservative default ontology of contemporary reductionist naturalism, according to which ‘patterns are patterns of prior elements, even if you don’t know what those elements are (yet)’ (Dennett, 1993, p. 214).

of the modernism, is no longer the controller of the technology or the world. As Iain Thomson argues,

the transformation of modernity's vaunted subject into just another intrinsically meaningless resource awaiting optimization results from the fact that we late-moderns have turned the practices developed by the moderns for objectifying and controlling nature back *onto ourselves*. Once modern subject dominating an objective world begin treating *themselves* as objects, the subject/object distinction itself is undermined, and the subject is thereby put on the path toward becoming just another resource to be *optimized*, that is, "secured and ordered *for the sake of flexible use* (Thomson, 2005, p. 60).

In the age of technology, Thomson's analysis indicates, the subject becomes objectified. Freedom of the will is not exempt from this process. Free will becomes something measurable or instrumental, at the service of the resourceful subject. But this is steeped in the nihilism Nietzsche identifies: it comes about that there is no other to the will to technology, and this 'folds back on itself – a closed and self-validating universe of thinking, willing, judging, and destining – that brooks no earthly opposition because it is a will, and nothing else' (Kroker, 2004, p. 8). Tyson Lewis also finds nihilism along in a similar way:

A Neitzschean metaphysics of the will that places the burden of meaning-making (or shine) on the shoulders of the individual and his or her powers presents us all with an impossible task, one that is destined to fail and plunge us into nihilism. The sacred cannot come from within but must come from without, or even better, it can only come from the indeterminate zone that lies below the subject/object split that the will rests upon (Lewis, 2013, p. 26).

In educational practice, in particular, will becomes 'a faculty responsible for the optimization of outcomes' (Lewis, 2013, p. 27).<sup>52</sup> On this tendency, Luce Irigaray claims that this is:

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<sup>52</sup> Lewis (2013) finds this tendency in the kinds of educational practices advocated by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (where the relationship between student and teacher is identical with that between humanity and God in the exercise of free will), William James (where willing is the ethical quality of thought), and Jacques Rancière (where the possibility of pedagogy depends upon the student's will to learn). Lewin summarises that 'indeed, the emphasis on wilful self-production found in progressive and radical educational theories does not seem to promote freedom so much as reproduce the metaphysical preconditions for technological enframing and ontological leveling' (2013, p. 31).

The imperialism of the sciences and techniques, but also that of customs and habits, and of opinions or beliefs. And an arrogant criticism too which leads to a worse nihilism and sometimes amounts to personal psychic problems or cultural decay. And a wish to act our Western tradition: granting primacy to the mind and forgetting concrete and sensible experience; privileging appearance and visibility to the detriment of invisible reality, wanting to actively master without agreeing to passively receive, etc. (Irigaray, 2008, p. 235).

Thus, one should not reduce the criticism of EBE to its self-styling as scientific research. The criticism must be addressed to the traditional way of thinking based on the subject-object division. And such a division is manifest not only in scientific ways of thinking. It is inherited also in the way freedom is conceived in education – that is, as something to be measured and distributed in the right amounts in order to develop autonomous human beings. This is the rigidity of traditional ways of thinking, which enjoins us to think of the world and ourselves in this particular way. Because of this rigidity, one no longer questions the way of thinking but resides within a realm of thought within which the discursive matters are already circumscribed. The common ground of the mystique in both freedom and EBE is found then in modernist assumptions about the world. Or, to put it differently, it is the child of the traditional western metaphysics of willing. ‘Evidence’, etymologically, refers to something being gained from vision, to a thing’s being made apparent or visible.<sup>53</sup> In such action, the agent’s free will is always already implicated. The search for the evidence can be distorted or become obsessed. Consider Shakespeare’s *Othello*, who, in the extreme of jealous suspicion regarding his wife, Desdemona, implores: ‘give me the ocular proof.’<sup>54</sup> The ocular proof can only be possible within this mystique; we are too busy in finding evidence to re-think what is embedded in such thinking. Thinking within this metaphysics of willing is bound for that

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53 *The Etymology Dictionary* suggests that in Latin, ‘evidentem (nominative evidens) is “perceptible, clear, obvious, apparent” from ex- “fully, out of”’. Videntem (nominative videns) suggests ‘present participle of videre “to see”’. [http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=evident&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=evident&allowed_in_frame=0) (Retrieved 6 August 2015).

54 This is the moment when Iago, the antagonist in the play, provokes Othello to doubt the fidelity of his wife Desdemona, and Othello, in his obsessive rage, asks for proof of the claim. The full line is as follows:

Villain, be sure thou prove my love a whore,  
Be sure of it. Give me the ocular proof  
Or by the worth of mine eternal soul  
Thou hadst been better have been born a dog  
Than answer my waked wrath!  
(*Othello*, III, iii, 369-373)

As the story goes on, the flimsy ‘ocular’ evidence serves to lend support Iago’s plot rather than to recognition of the truth of Desdemona. I am grateful to Paul Standish for bringing me to this example.

nihilism in which human being is actively or decisively reduced to resources for technology. Free will, meanwhile, drives us to the obsession for clarity. We find ourselves in need of proof for clarity as a resource. This is the mystique, exposed in the above discussion of both EBE and freedom in education, that distracts or hinders us from seeing the nihilistic transformation of willing.

## **Freedom as thinking; and beyond**

Although this chapter questions whether in the discussion of EBE and in the idea of freedom we are thinking enough, its purpose is not to suggest that we need some better thinking *skills*. Critical thinking itself is not free from the traditional way of thinking (Williams, 2015). So does it not seem, then, that my discussion has merely rejected everything, pushing all ideas to the edge without offering any alternatives? For the sake of brevity, I draw attention on the traditional thinking in terms of the subject-object division. Such a division has positioned human beings as active subjects. The active subject has been crowned as the measure of the world and the calculator of it as resources, and it is this that characterises modern technology.

The upshot of the rise of modern science has been a cluster of basic assumptions that color our understanding of ourselves and our world. We understand ourselves in terms of the subject/object dichotomy, according to which we are entities who are set over against, though interacting with, the surrounding material world. We assume that reality, at its most basic level, consists of material substances in causal interactions. We believe that even if all phenomena are not reducible to the physical level, the physical constrain what can count as an explanation in any area. We think that the kind of explanation found in classical physics is the paradigm for explanation in any area of inquiry. And, consequently, we assume that making things intelligible is a matter of showing how those things are caused to be, where the relevant causes are seen as law-governed efficient causes (Guignon, 2002, p. 327).

But if the traditional way of thinking is thus attached to the subject-object division, how can we re-think the ideas of object and subject? In his analysis of the epistemological sense of object, Heidegger draws attention to a metaphysical distinction that arises in the



translation of the Latin *objectum*. According to him, the translation of *objectum* can be both *Gegenstand* and *Gegenwurf*, a distinction that is marked somewhat unsatisfactorily in the English translation as ‘object’ and ‘Object’. These two terms have a different tone to them. The former indicates the object that is thrown against ‘the recognizing I’ and available for investigative examination. Such objectivity is determined (in Kant) by the sufficiency of reasons (PR 81). In these terms, the object is ‘the representational throwing-over-against’ *rendered* by the subject. The idea of object makes us think that it is possible to see things objectively, or from the third person perspective. Even further, ‘the objective, materialistic, third-person world of physical sciences,’ according to Daniel Dennett, is ‘the orthodox choice today in the English-speaking world’ (Dennett, 1987, p. 5). The latter, Object, by contrast, is not to be understood as what the subject renders. The Object as ‘thrown over against and brought to the cognizing subject simultaneously stands on its own’. In other words, the Object is ‘the over-against’ as that ‘against’ reveals itself to the perceiving, viewing, hearing human being, over those who have never conceived of themselves as a subject for an Object (*ibid.*). Heidegger puts the distinction as follows: the former is what the subject counters [*Gegen*], and the latter what the subject ‘encounters’ [*Be-gegenen*].

The distinction is of help to us in realising the tyranny of the traditional way of thinking. The traditional way of thinking positions the human being as the active subject who counters the other in the world and converts it into the measurable form. The Object, on the other hand, brings us to the point where the subject is also recognised by the other in the moment of ‘encounter’. This is not, however, to degrade the position of the subject. The point, first and foremost, is to recognise the receptivity of the subject in the moment of encounter. As Williams (2015) points out, the human being is receptive insofar there is an ‘opening up and revealing of the presented *to us*. Hence receptivity bears witness to the co-dependency between us and the world’s coming to light’ (p. 153). In thinking along these lines, the human being is no longer regarded as the active subject but stands in wait of such openness. But what does such openness or ‘the receptive human being’ tell us? Let us hear what Heidegger has in mind.

We let technical devices enter our daily life, and at the same time leave them outside, that is, let them alone, as things which are nothing absolute but remain

dependent upon something higher. I would call this comportment toward technology which expresses “yes” and at the same time “no,” by an old word, *releasement toward things*...

There is then in all technical processes a meaning, not invented or made by us, which lays claim to what man does and leaves undone. We do not know the significance of the uncanny increasing dominance of atomic technology. *The meaning pervading technology hides itself*. But if we explicitly and continuously heed the fact that such hidden meaning touches us everywhere in the world of technology, we stand at once within the realm of that which hides itself from us, and hides itself just in approaching us. That which shows itself and at the same time withdraws is the essential trait of what we call the mystery. I call the comportment which enables us to keep open to the meaning hidden in technology, *openness to the mystery* (DT 55).

For Heidegger, the authentic relationship with technology is expressed in a releasement toward things (*Gelassenheit*), toward which we say yes and no. Because it is not entirely human will that occasions this, there is mystery in this releasement; it is not purely or primarily a matter of human mastery. In line with this, Heidegger speaks of a non-willing, beyond the division of subject and object. It is a matter of something ‘outside any kind of will’, of a willingness to renounce willing (DT 59-60). In connection with this Lewis points ‘beyond the metaphysics of willing to a mode of being that is more willing to be responsive, sensitive, and thankful for what is offered up by the world’ (Lewis, 2013, p. 29).<sup>55</sup> On Heidegger’s account this, the force of the idea of releasement is such as to enable us to understand freedom in terms of the mystery of letting be.

The essence of freedom is originally not connected with the will or even with the causality of human willing.

Freedom governs the open in the sense of the cleared and lighted up, i.e. of the revealed. It is to the happening of revealing, i.e. of truth, that freedom stands in the closest and most intimate kinship. All revealing belongs within a harbouring and a concealing. But that which frees – the mystery – is concealed and always concealing itself. All revealing comes out of the open, goes into the open, and brings into the open. ... Freedom is that which conceals in a way that opens to light, in whose clearing there shimmers that veil that covers what comes to presence of all truth and lets the veil appear as what veils. Freedom is the realm of the destining that at any given time starts a revealing upon its way (QCT 25).

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<sup>55</sup> Lewis clarifies the meaning of ‘more willing’ compared to the modern notion of will or wilful as follows: ‘Being more willing is, in my argument, being open to letting beings be the beings that they are. It is not simply more willing or willing differently that get us out of the metaphysics of the will that permeate today’s educational landscape, but rather a letting loose of the promethean thesis. In other words, letting beings be is to remain open and receptive to what presents itself without the interference of wilful self-production’ (Lewis, 2013, p. 29).

Freedom is mystery as it reveals and conceals itself in openness. This mystery should be distinguished from what I call *mystique*. Mystery indicates a phenomenon that happens beyond human will, which is also in need of our receptive attention. *Mystique*, on the contrary, as implied in this chapter, involves a certain aura or force that is attached to or supported by our ways of thinking in the age of technology, a thinking without questioning. We have found this kind of *mystique* in both EBE and the notion of freedom in education.

But what can this freedom do with thinking? For Heidegger, ‘Nothing if we conceive thinking in the traditional way as re-presenting. Yet perhaps the nature of thinking we are seeking is fixed in releasement’ (DT 62). The nature of thinking is to experience and dwell in this releasement. Jean-Luc Nancy puts this thinking as the prodigality of freedom:

Freedom is not the vertiginous ground of the abyss, opened and revealed to comprehension. Freedom arises from nothing, with thinking and like thinking, which is existence delivered to the “there is” of a world. It is from the outset the limit of thinking – thinking as limit, which is not the limit of comprehension, but which, according to the logic of the limit, is the *il*-limitation of the prodigality of being. Thinking is at the surface of this *il*-limitation of the “there is,” it is in itself the unleashed freedom in accordance with which things in general are given and happen. This is why thinking does not have freedom as something to be comprehended or to be renounced from comprehension: yet freedom offers itself in thinking as what is more intimate and originary to it than every object of thought and every faculty of thinking (Nancy, 1993, p. 52).

Thinking expends what is offered as thought. For Nancy, freedom is something not to be known, but to be experienced: ‘Freedom is primarily prodigal liberality that endlessly expends and dispenses thinking. And it dispenses thinking primarily as prodigality... Freedom gives thinking’ (Nancy, 1993, p. 53). Put differently, freedom is experienced through the prodigality of thinking. In such prodigality, there is no such ground or concept to rely on. Thinking is not something one can actively advance or conceptualise for freedom conceals itself (WCT 211).

The call to think determines what the word “to think” calls for. Yet the call which commends our nature to thought, is not a constraining force. The call sets our nature free, so decisively that only the calling which calls on us to think establishes the free scope of freedom in which free human nature may abide. The originary nature of freedom keeps itself concealed in the calling by which it is given to mortal man to think what is most thought-provoking. Freedom, therefore, is never something merely human, nor merely divine; still less is freedom the mere reflection on their belonging together (WCT 132-133).

In this respect, freedom is not something that the human being can achieve as an autonomous being at the end of education, but rather something to be experienced through thinking. Thinking is not to be grounded in a subject-object metaphysics but must itself be found in the oscillation between revealing and concealing: it is not something one has but is experienced in the encounter, and this experience is freedom.<sup>56</sup> Concepts are resting places that are always in danger of becoming too fixed, and then they can become fixations. This generates mystique, and mystique arrests thought.<sup>57</sup>

Is this thinking ethical? Like the mystique attached to the terms in EBE and Freedom, this by itself may confine our question within the traditional way of thinking. For, the very term, ‘the ethical’, may reinstall the picture of the active subject, obliged to exercise free will, at the right moment. Cognizant of this, Heidegger claims that thinking is in itself an ‘originary ethics’ (LH 272).<sup>58</sup> In his reading of Heraclitus, Heidegger finds

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56 Elaborating on this is beyond the scope of the present chapter, but the matter is taken up in Chapter 5.

57 A similar line of thought regarding mystique is found in Gramsci’s notion of hegemony. Gramsci employs this term to denote the way of thinking that is designed by the dominant class to control the subordinate class; this is, not by force, but accepted by the subordinate class as ‘common sense’ and ‘natural’. ‘Good sense’ on the contrary is another name for the philosophy of praxis. This involves ‘intellectual unity and an ethic in conformity with a conception of reality that has gone beyond common sense and become, if only within narrow limits, a critical conception’ (Gramsci, 1971, p. 333). The idea of good sense is in fact in line with what I would like to argue in respect of thinking, but as Coben points out, the distinction between common and good sense is more epistemological and sociological (Coben, 1998, p. 213). This aspect should be fully discussed in relation to ontology, which is beyond the scope of this chapter. A stronger claim for this reservation is found in Paul Standish’s analysis of the ‘name of Thought’, initially formulated by Bill Readings. In his resistance to the nihilism in the contemporary university, Readings deploys the notion of ‘the name of Thought’, a term whose capitalisation implies a thinking with no precise or determinate contents. As a name only, it avoids including any contents or presumption that might result in a concrete or fixable meaning. While appreciating Readings’ attempt to address the possibility of a signifier that ‘blocks its too-easy filling out with simplistic sets of connotations or formulaic received ideas’, Standish raises a question: ‘Does it not succumb, however, to some of the problems it attempts to subvert?’ (Standish, 2014, p. 187). The emphasis on Thought may not be an escape from the current ways of nihilistic thinking but rather be in their service, like the example of the debate between free will and determinism within this thinking. In order to avoid this possibility, I would like to focus on the ontological aspect of thinking which is receptive in relation with the mystery of the truth of being.

58 Heidegger also points this out, along the following lines: ‘This language even falsifies itself, for it does not yet succeed in retaining the essential help of phenomenological seeing while dispensing with the inappropriate concern with “science” and “research.” But in order to make the attempt at thinking recognizable and at the same time understandable for existing philosophy, it could at first be expressed only with the horizon of that existing philosophy and the use of its current terms’ (LH 271).

the etymological roots of ethics in ethos (ἦθος), which has the connotations of custom, habit, or abode: ‘The (familiar) abode for humans is the open region for the presencing of god (the unfamiliar one)’ (*ibid.*). This is thinking that dwells in the openness, and in readiness for a new opening. Thinking, thus, experiences mystery; and it is a guard against mystique.

This is the way that educational research presents itself. There is an allure to EBE, to its discourse, to the profile of the research, to the status it has acquired with government and other bodies – status that carries the air of a hard-headed and conscientious practicality. Would-be researchers are drawn into this discourse, and they soon learn that if they become fluent in its use, they will be received warmly by its adepts: they will speak the language of the tribe. In philosophy too there can be a self-conscious rhetorical style that easily recruits enthusiasts. No one would accuse either Dearden or Quinn of being in the grip of this rather crude, macho, argumentative rhetoric or of jargon-ridden vagueness, both of which sometimes beset philosophy of education. On the contrary both are eloquent and measured in their expression. But to the extent that I have exposed the limitations in their views and the presence of mystique there too, it should be apparent that the point being made here will be all the more significant. My purpose has not been merely critical, however. I have tried to move from the exposure of mystique to the provision of a positive account of thinking that is entwined with an elaboration of the idea of freedom.

**Part III**  
**Conclusion**

## CHAPTER 8

### Education at the Crossroads of Freedom

*Dearest Father,*

*You asked me recently why I told you I was afraid of you. As usual, I didn't know what to say, partly because I am afraid of you and partly because the grounds and constituents of this fear are far too numerous to keep track of while talking. And if I now try to give you an answer in writing, it will still be very incomplete, because even when I write, the fear and its effects hold me back – and because the magnitude of the matter goes far beyond the scope of my memory and understanding.*

*(Adapted from Kafka, 1953, p. 7)*

This epigraph is from Franz Kafka's unsent letter to his father. This emotionally charged letter was written when Kafka was already 36 years old and an acclaimed author. This imagined conversation does not, however, aim to charge or judge the father who is the obvious cause of "the fear and its effects." For such is as he acknowledges beyond the scope of his memory and understanding. While reading his letter, I recalled my past. My mother was strict, principled about her life and religion, but not someone who inspired fear in me. And yet I feel I could now write: "Dearest Mother ..." Is this my quest? Is this what I am in quest of?

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Klaus Mollenhauer begins his book, *Forgotten Connection: On Culture and Upbringing* (2013), with this epigraph with following remarks:

All of the autobiographies written over the past five centuries bear testimony to the fact that, apart from being grateful to our parents for the upbringing they gave us, we also have reason to find fault with what they did to us. Each individual's *Bildung* is at once a process of broadening and enrichment as well as a narrowing and impoverishment – a question of what might have been. Adults are more than mere midwives to the development of a child's mind and spirit: they also act as all-powerful censors of the adult that the child ultimately becomes (Mollenhauer, 2013, p. 2).

The purpose of education, for Mollenhauer, thereby is to ‘further the cause of memory’. By memory, he indicates both the collective – ‘the common cultural heritage whose core themes education attempts to tease out: its principles, viewpoints and norms around which memory can orient itself’ and the individual upbringing. Education, therefore, as Mollenhauer goes on, ‘should focus on cultural and biographical memory, and should seek lasting principles in this memory that develop the child’s potential. Finally it should also find a precise and suitable language for these tasks’ (*ibid.*). The present thesis is, in a way, a response to Mollenhauer in attempting to find such a language for the task. In recollecting my personal memory of childhood, I have attempted to find the principles of education that are commonly and culturally accepted and understood. Therefore, the question in this thesis is placed not in the arbitrary but across a very individual and existential experience, albeit one that is expressed through a particular socio-economic understanding of education. This appears, for Mollenhauer, via the individual and the collective memory of upbringing. The economic term ‘over-educated society’, therefore, should not be limited to the economic studies, but should be considered as an expression of the collective memory. This thesis was initiated by a question from the economic term ‘over-educated society’. We should now ask once again: what is meant by ‘over’ here?

Firstly, one should focus on the expression regarding the quantity of education. An over-educated society indicates the exceeding number of PhD holders in a society. In the economic terms this can be translated as follows: supply has exceeded demand. The profit or value of supply, as a result, has been degraded. The diagnosis of the overeducated society shows that this is the era in which education is now quantifiably measured. This is not limited to the economic sphere but is found across the language of education practice and studies is revealed in this thesis in terms of fixing, achieving aims, and evidence etc. Richard Freeman therefore predicts, as we saw at the start of this thesis, that, within the exceeding supply of education, the common belief in the expansion of higher education as a trusted way of boosting a nation’s economy and individual prosperity will be no longer be borne out so fully by reality. Here we find a second meaning of the ‘over-educated society’: the economic reward from educational achievement is *over* or at least less likely. Although Freeman restricts the term ‘over-educated society’ to within



economic terminology, I find its validity beyond the economic signification. For there are ways in which the notion of ‘over’ may apply not only to individual and societal levels but also to an understanding of human being, values, and beliefs in education which calls for our attention.

The common belief in education is that it will bestow certain kinds of rewards. One may find it awkward to look at education in such an instrumental or a quantitative way. Especially in philosophy of education, it would be more palatable to hear that there are things of greater value than economic outcomes in and through education. Is it really so? In this thesis, I have attempted to make the point that there is a particular way of thinking supporting or buttressing the common belief in education in the modern society. This thinking places education in an instrumental role for the sake of its rewards. These rewards include not only material or economic benefit but also the ideological aims, goals, or values. Grand ideas such as autonomy, freedom, or morality also give education its functionality. There are, in differing degrees, various kinds of rewards across both the materialistic and ideological terrain: the functionality of education penetrates its core conceptualisation. Once established, this no longer reflexively questions itself but tends to make education busy in glamorising these rewards. This thesis has claimed that the logic of education in this over-educated society calls for attention. This logic runs through the collective memory of education in Mollenhauer’s terms.

## **Freedom and Education in Hermeneutic-Phenomenology**

From the individual and collective memory of education, I drew attention to the question of freedom in education. Freedom has been found to be doubly problematic. For this has served as one of the ideals of education that is attached to the logic of the belief in education that I described above; and it has also served as the traditional metaphysical ground of the logic of human being and education. In reading Martin Heidegger, this thesis has attempted to shift this practical and metaphysical relation between freedom and education. The question was devised as the structure of freedom-as. This was intended to avoid pre-assumptions or value judgements attached to freedom in which thereby the

entire package of metaphysics is followed. In the structure of freedom-as this thesis has interpreted how freedom appears in education practice. Each chapter has revealed the problematic nature of freedom or the beliefs of freedom in educational discourses. This often appears in the language of educational studies and practices: fixing, realising or achieving the aims or evidence of education. I have attempted to show the literal or figurative relation between such terminology and the thinking that lies behind it. For this I have deployed a particular range of terminology in juxtaposing the current debates as they relate to freedom. In particular, i.e. that freedom makes sense to us as movement, possibility, leap, language, and thinking. Each phenomenon aims to capture the experience of freedom in our understanding of educational practice.

The themes of freedom-as are organically interwoven. They are the ways in which human being experience freedom as it is, and at times freedom becomes an issue for human being. In its existence, human being understands and experiences freedom. The structure of *freedom-as* however does not over-state its claims: it is not that freedom is the same in respect of each theme. This structure only makes it possible to interpret and understand what freedom is. Interpretation is what Heidegger calls the development of understanding, particularly in terms of the structure of ‘as’ (BT 188).

That which has been circumspectively taken apart with regard to its “in-order-to”, and taken apart as such – that which is explicitly understood – has the structure of *something as something*... The ‘as’ makes up the structure of the explicitness of something understood. It constitutes interpretation (BT 189)

What is discussed in the as-structure is, again, not the *only* interpretation of freedom in Heidegger and his focus of interest in the question of freedom changed over time. In his earlier work, as the above quote attests, Heidegger considered freedom as transcendence, or freedom for the ground of being. Expressed here in *Being and Time* as freedom toward death, for instance, heroic resoluteness is possible for the finite human being. In his later work, Heidegger appears to abandon the question of freedom. One finds a faint hint of the main question of his earlier work in ‘the free space’ of *Gelassenheit*, letting beings be. One may therefore reasonably expect to see a shift of his thinking in the thesis. However, the distinct themes of freedom as presented in this thesis do not correspond to such a shift.

Such work is already available in Seo (2010) and Kouppanou (2014). Thanks to the earlier achievement of Heideggerian readings in education, this present thesis is instead focused on showing the hermeneutic circle of the question on freedom across Heidegger's earlier and later work.

One may reasonably wonder whether Heideggerian freedom is good enough to be encouraged or promoted in educational practice. Is freedom good or bad? It is tempting to speak of freedom as an alternative aim of education. Yet this fails to avoid the criticism levelled against the teleological understanding of education. It is also tempting to abandon freedom as an aspect of an occidental metaphysics which has led us astray in our understanding of education. In the light of a declared position that certain beliefs in education can no longer be grounded, what is available to us now? It looks as though freedom becomes irrelevant to the practice of education on the whole. As Nancy points out, freedom is even more deeply buried (1993, p. 41). From the educational perspective, education has lost both its aims and the fundamental ground of its thinking. We are doomed to be cynical or sentimental about education in our collective and individual memory. Before answering this question, I would like to draw attention to another 'Heidegger controversy'. The reason for doing so at this juncture is that it will open up for us another possible way to answer the question: what is available to us to think from our memory.

## **Freedom and Politics**

In the course of writing this thesis, I had several occasions to present papers at conferences and of course a number of questions and criticisms have arisen. Some of these are perhaps not unreasonably predictable but I feel I should acknowledge and address them. Let me begin with two important issues: Heidegger's political views and his ethics in relation to freedom.

Firstly, while reading Heidegger, one should not and cannot neglect the fact that Heidegger was charged for his commitment to German National Socialism. It is

unfortunate and yet undeniable that, in 1933-1934, Heidegger accepted his tenure as the Nazi Rector of Freiburg University. It goes without saying that this political commitment by itself requires some explanation in terms of the need to acknowledge responsibility for the fatal consequences of the regime. And yet it goes further in that it puts Heidegger's readership at odds with itself or at the very least in an uneasy position with regard to the question of the extent to which Heidegger's philosophical stance is pertinent to his political affiliation to National Socialism. The lines of argument, of prosecution and defence, in relation to Heidegger's philosophy were soon formulated and continue to run through to the present day.<sup>59</sup> As Iain Thomson observes it, this binary polemic in the Heidegger controversy has taken hold in the public imagination whilst in reality 'in complex matters the truth is usually located between the opposing extremes, and so is unfit for the polemical purposes of demagogues on either side' (Thomson, 2005, p. 79). Heideggerians, keen to gesture away from the debates, have come to separate Heidegger's philosophy from his politics. Richard Rorty, Reiner Schürmann, Jean-François Lyotard, Otto Pöggeller, and Frederik Olafson all employ this strategy according to Thomson, 'thereby seeking to insulate Heidegger's important philosophical achievements from what he later called his life's greatest stupidity' (2005, p. 81). This separation of Heidegger's philosophy from politics may however, as Thomson concludes, have formed 'the basis of the accusations that his politics represent an arbitrary decisionism (Wolin), careerist opportunism (Pierre Bourdieu), and even the fundamental betrayal of his philosophy (Marcuse)' (*ibid.*).<sup>60</sup> There are some scholars like Michael Zimmerman, Hans Sluga, and Domenico Losurdo who have attempted to link Heidegger with contemporary German intellectuals whose ideas implicitly or actively contributed to the rise of the Third Reich. For example, Nazi ideology was already hinted at and implicit in Heidegger's

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59 Most recently, in March 2014, for instance, a set of notebooks written by Heidegger, known as the Black Notebooks, was published. This is reported to have added fuel to the debate about Heidegger and his relation with Nazi ideology, including his anti-Semitism. See news articles: Philip Oltermann, 'Heidegger's 'black notebooks' reveal antisemitism at core of his philosophy'. <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/mar/13/martin-heidegger-black-notebooks-reveal-nazi-ideology-antisemitism> (13 March 2014 The Guardian); Paul Hockenos, 'Release of Heidegger's 'Black Notebooks' Reignites Debate Over Nazi Ideology' (24 February 24, 2014, The Chronicle of Higher Education) <http://chronicle.com/article/Release-of-Heidegger-s/144897/> (Both retrieved on 30 August 2015). Whether Heidegger was an anti-Semite is a kind of question that will never be exhausted by the amassing of this or that evidence from either side of Heidegger controversy, as I have tried to argue in Chapter 6. What is more important to us in reading Heidegger is whether his philosophy has any significance for the ethics of living today.

60 Wolin (1992, p. 52); Bourdieu (1991, pp. 70-3); Marcuse (2009, pp. 1-30).

language as early as 1927. Terms like struggle (*Kampf*), people (*Volk*), community, fate, and destiny in *Being and Time* are not unfamiliar to National Socialists.

For Heidegger, however, such terms initially operate, not so much within the scope of the political, within the question of being. Fate (*Schicksal*) for instance is not the opposite possibility to one's own freedom of choice but is authentic historicity which is inherited from the historical situation in which one is temporally constituted. Terms like authentic historicity are suggested in order to find a historically appropriate bulwark against nihilism, not only at the individual level but also at the level of the collective, which he expresses as destiny. Heidegger writes: 'But if fateful Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, exists essentially in Being-with-Others, its historizing is a co-historizing and is determinative for it as *destiny* [*Geschick*]' (BT 436). This means we understand ourselves through historical events and affects such events in our historical understanding together in community. Heidegger finds the way as follows: 'Only in communicating and in struggling does the power of destiny become free. Dasein's fateful destiny in and with its 'generation' goes to make up the full authentic historizing of Dasein' (BT 436). Historical acting with a community of a people is what he calls 'responding to destiny'. These passages apparently reveal why there was the potential for a close relation with National Socialism. Yet this was at least initially intended to address the growing problem of nihilism that Heidegger observed in Germany and in Europe. Heidegger found the practical response to this in the project of radical university reformation in 1933 (Thomson, 2005, p. 105). Heidegger presumably thought accepting the Nazi position of Rector of Freiburg University from the Nazis was his own response to destiny, which appeared to him as the historically appropriate way to redeem the nation from nihilism. It is therefore important to make sense of Heidegger's philosophy in relation to his politics.<sup>61</sup> It is Heidegger who should take responsibility for what he was politically committed to no matter how short the period, but it is for us to decide what use to make of it or to what lessons we can draw from consideration of Heidegger's choices.

Let us focus on one of the more politically controversial lectures of Heidegger's from 1935. Eighteen years later in 1953, the summer semester lecture was published as

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61 A range of literature on the relation of Heidegger's philosophy to his politics has been published. See, Derrida (1987); Levinas (1987); Lyotard (1990); Zimmerman (1990); Lacoue-Labarthe (1990); Sluga (1993); Dallmayr (1995); Young (1997); Losurdo (2001).

*Introduction to Metaphysics*. Many intellectuals at the time expressed their fear that such an action might trigger an attempt to rehabilitate Nazi ideology. In this lecture Heidegger speaks directly of politics in the philosophical question of being where his philosophical transition toward his later conception of a history of Being was made. Politically too, it is also a moment of transition. At several points Heidegger repeats parts of his Rectoral address of 1933 in the lecture. Both lectures address the spiritual crisis in the West and the endangering of Germany's historical mission in its resolution. In both lectures Heidegger expresses his belief in the usefulness of philosophical questioning for resolving political dilemmas and securing a political grounding for Dasein. The impassioned political tone, however, is diminished in the lecture in 1935 when he acknowledges that philosophy 'can never *directly* supply the forces and create the mechanisms and opportunities that bring about a historical state of affairs' (IM 11). Although politically less passionate than the Rectoral address, the publication of the lecture is alarming in the light of its political implications. In the German press, therefore, the question was how to interpret this politically charged text: 'How are we to read sentences from 1935 in 1953?' (Kisiel, 2001, p. 239). Habermas found this publication unwelcoming for the possible bad influence on or misunderstanding it might create for a younger generation. Habermas (1993, p. 197) was further concerned with the fact that such problematic notions in Heidegger were not yet fully judged or settled.<sup>62</sup> For there was, as Habermas put it, a potential misunderstanding of the history of being that might justify the event of the mass murder. Habermas' concern is still valid within Heidegger's own text. What is historical Dasein? Let us try to make sense of Heidegger's understanding of politics and the role of philosophy for our historical being. Consider the following:

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62 Habermas therefore ends his essay concerning the publication of the lecture as follows: 'In view of the fact that students are today again exposed to misunderstanding that lecture, we are writing this essay reluctantly and, for our past, susceptible to being misunderstood ourselves. It serves only one question: can the planned murder of millions of human beings, which we all know about today, also be made understandable in terms of the history of Being as a fateful going astray? Is this murder not the actual crime of those who, with full accountability, committed it? Have we not had eight years since then to take the risk of confronting what was, what we were? Is it not the foremost duty of thoughtful people to clarify the accountable deeds of the past and keep the knowledge of them awake? Instead, the mass of the population practices continued rehabilitation, and in the vanguard are the responsible ones from then and now. Instead, Heidegger publishes his words, in the meantime eighteen years old, about the greatness and inner truth of National Socialism, words that have become too old and that certainly do not belong to those whose understanding still awaits us. It appears to be time to think with Heidegger against Heidegger' (Habermas, 1993, p. 197).

The point is to restore the historical Dasein of human beings – and this also always means our ownmost future Dasein, in the whole of the history that is allotted to us – back to the power of Being that is to be opened up originally; all this, to be sure, only within the limits of philosophy's capability (IM 44).

The historical Dasein seems to be restored from what Heidegger diagnoses as a spiritual crisis. According to Heidegger's diagnosis, Europe, in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, was caught between the pincers of Russia and America, an entrapment that Heidegger identifies metaphysically in terms of being caught between 'unchained technology' and 'the rootless organization of the average man' (IM 40). This historical Dasein can be seen as a Western European, male German who has become a main target of attack from feminism and post-modernism. The historical Dasein is not thereby assumed in an abstract neutral way but is realised from the particular concrete experience of the thinker. Therefore, the historical Dasein is not taken to be defined as Western, European, German, intellectual man, but is defined by a thinker's understanding of himself at that time. Heidegger's Eurocentric terminology is not particularly difficult to tolerate in comparison with the political methods he colluded with in the restoration of historical Dasein. The question was how to restore it. Was this what was in his mind?

Philosophy, for Heidegger, can be 'a thoughtful opening of the avenues and vistas of a knowing that establishes measure and rank, a knowing in which and from which a people conceives its Dasein in the historical-spiritual world and brings it to fulfilment' (IM 11). The question of being is therefore not just an abstract question but is a for-awakening of the spirit of the historical Dasein. In this, the political problem appears to be historical and metaphysical. And he perceived the spiritual destiny of the West in National Socialism in the following terms:

In particular, what is peddled about nowadays as the philosophy of National Socialism, but which has not the least to do with *the inner truth and greatness of this movement* [namely, the encounter between global technology and modern humanity], is fishing in these troubled waters of 'values' and 'totalities' (IM 213; emphasis added).

In this passage, to what 'the inner truth and greatness' referred remains shrouded in controversy. As Habermas remarked earlier, 'this movement' must have been understood

by Heidegger as National Socialism. Some audiences also support the claim as it was so in the original version (Kisiel, 2001, p.241). Given the notions in the brackets, it seems to suggest that Heidegger intended to indicate, by this ‘movement’, the encountering of the problem of technology and modern humanity. His philosophical reading of current politics, therefore, is in line with his criticism of the philosophy of values. To put it another way, Heidegger’s philosophical diagnosis of the cause of the current problems is a philosophy of values which is dominant and hinders the philosophical mission of the awakening of the spiritual destiny of the West. The question is then whether Heidegger saw in National Socialism the political resolution for his philosophy.

Heidegger’s criticism of the philosophy of values requires a closer look here. For this criticism precisely represents Heidegger’s philosophy of freedom which is relevant to this current thesis. As constantly repeated in this thesis, Heidegger points out the ontological groundlessness of values or ideals. Value theories are conventional ways of adopting the traditional metaphysics of the separation between Being and Ought that runs from Plato’s determination of being to Kant’s categorical imperative.<sup>63</sup> What makes values valuable? Are values inherited in human being or do they come from outside? There have been many philosophical attempts to resolve the problem. In such attempts values need to be grounded somewhere else to give a force and presuppose the assumption of a substantive good. Habermas (1991), for instance, also seeks to ground a moral Ought transcendently. Heidegger’s criticism, of the search for the valid ground of values, is that such theories tend to conclude that the ‘validity is still too reminiscent of validity for a subject. In order to prop up yet again the ought that has been raised to the level of values, one attributes a Being to values themselves’ (IM 212-3). In this way, being, the absolute value, is assumed as nothing other than ‘the coming to presence of what is present at hand’, which supports the traditional metaphysics. In value theories, the question of being is untenable, which he expresses as fishing in the troubled waters of ‘values’ and ‘totalities’. Heidegger emphasizes that Being is not simply attributed to values but itself is ‘dynamic in nature and that the distinctions of position, status, and rank will open themselves up only in the ordinary struggle that characterizes Being’ (Sluga, 2001, p. 221). In his ontology, therefore, values are not pre-given to us to distinguish or judge

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63 The ontological dilemma in the moral imperative is discussed in Sluga (2002, pp. 219-20).



things. It is Being in whose struggle the determination of the things opens up themselves with different ranks and positions.

Heidegger's denial of absolute values was a target of criticism from both National Socialism and the other that opposed National Socialism.<sup>64</sup> Scholarly criticism from value theorists was rather obvious ever since he publicly rejects value theory in *Being and Time* in 1927. For the National Socialism theorists who sought a philosophy of values to support their ideology, Heidegger was problematic too. For them, he was not a true National Socialist but a nihilist whose theory fails to offer the philosophical ground for ideology (Sluga, 2001, p. 221).<sup>65</sup> For the other, those opposed to Nazism, his very denial of objective values masqueraded as a defence for seemed to his falling in with the Nazis. Karl Löwith, Heidegger's former student, finds opportunistic decisionism in both Heidegger and the political theorist, Carl Schmitt, who offered legal advice to the Nazis. Löwith identifies opportunistic decisionism as follows:

What Schmitt defends is a politics of sovereign decision, but one in which content is merely a product of the accidental *occasio* of the political situation which happens to prevail at the moment; hence content is precisely not a product 'of the power of integral knowledge' about what is primordially correct and just, as it is in Plato's concept of the essence of politics, where such knowledge grounds an order of human affairs (Löwith, 1995, p. 144).

Schmitt's political being, according to Löwith, is identical with Heidegger's existential ontology in terms of opportunistic decisionism where their problematic conception of politics is rooted. Furthermore, Heidegger's value criticism does not fit in with Nietzsche,

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64 Heidegger's criticism of absolute value lies in what he calls the historical era that fell most dramatically into nihilism. The symptom was apparent not only in the capitalism and communism of 'the pincer of American and Russia' but also in the National Socialism of Germany. Heidegger, later, claims that it was implied in his lecture: 'When the farthest corner of the globe has been conquered technologically and can be exploited economically; when any incident you like, in any place you like, at any time you like becomes accessible as fast as you like; when you can simultaneously "experience" an assassination attempt against a king in France and a symphony concert in Tokyo; when time is nothing but speed, instantaneity, and simultaneity, and time as history has vanished from all Dasein of all peoples; when a boxer counts as the great man of a people; when the tallies of millions at mass meetings are a triumph; then, yes then, there still looms like a spectre over all this uproar the question: what for? – where to? – and what then?' (IM 40) The 'tallies of millions at mass meetings' is apparently an allusion to the Nuremberg rallies, as depicted, for example, in Leni Riefenstahl's film *The Triumph of the Will*.

65 Bruno Bauch, in 1934, called for theorising value theory in favour of National Socialism and racism for the following reasons: 'Only on the assumption of values that hold supra-individually, generally, and objectively can one speak of the meaning of a folkdom, of a nation as a meaning-structure, can one distinguish between superior and inferior races and nations, can one even make the distinction between good and bad genetic endowment' (1934, p. 122; Sluga, 1993).

in whose eyes values are created by great artists, philosophers, and legislators (Sluga, 2001, p. 223). For such created values may serve as measure by which things are determined and judged. Sluga interprets Heidegger's political thinking in terms of the paradigmatic in that 'to think in paradigms means to think historically':

*Heidegger's practical thinking in ethics (if you will) and in politics is, in this sense, paradigmatic in nature and not based on the assumption of transcendental Oughts of absolute or created scales of values. To live a worthwhile life means, for him to struggle with history and the paradigms it provides (Sluga, 2001, p. 224).*

To locate Heidegger within the political paradigm shift of his time, Heidegger belonged to the generation that was disappointed by the political situation in Weimar Germany as being irresolute or inauthentic in constituting the united nation. Hitler's movement looked, to Heidegger, like a resolute way to respond to history, to rehabilitate the nation in his time. Heidegger chose to respond historically to what he thought to be 'Destiny' by intervening in university politics, as Thomson points out.

Rather belatedly, however, Heidegger became suspicious of this kind of politics within his philosophy. His philosophical direction was thereby transited from 'resolute commitment' to 'releasement' (*Gelassenheit*). The meaning of resolute commitment in a direct relation or application to political decision is less valid as Heidegger points out that philosophy 'can never *directly* supply the forces and create the mechanisms and opportunities that bring about a historical state of affairs' (IM 11). Freedom, which was once understood as the transcendental ground for Dasein's resoluteness, appears subsequently to have been abandoned. Instead, he emphasises the role of philosophy as the means by which we can respond to being in the open realm, of releasement, that is, of being in the mode of waiting. Heidegger still holds onto the term 'resoluteness' in later work, and this appears in the term 'willing non-will' of releasement. Freedom therefore appears at times to be the ground of being, and the open realm of what is revealed and concealed. The shift of ideas developed in the thinker can be distinguished chronologically. The phenomenon of freedom that I would like to emphasise appears in these five ways that I have discussed carries at the same time both resoluteness and

releasement into the existence of Dasein. We interpret freedom by our resolute existence, but this remains always conditional for such an interpretation is only possible in accordance with being's openness.

To return to Heidegger's politics, in his struggle with history, Heidegger was apparently enemy to both Germany's enemy and Germany too. Perhaps this dispositionality to both enabled him to survive in dramatically opposed political regimes during and after National Socialism. Whether this was tacitly understood by the thinker can be answered only by Heidegger. For us, while his political judgement was regrettable, what is meaningful is that his reading of his time as symptomatic of the technological era of human mastery is still present and ever more growing. It is unfortunate that Heidegger mis-interpreted his historical paradigm in his attempt to overcome the symptoms of nihilism he identified and terribly misjudged the dreadful impact of Nazism. As Rorty (1998) judged, Heidegger will be read 'for centuries to come, but the smell of smoke from the crematories – "the grave in the air" – will linger on these pages'. Nevertheless, whilst Heidegger's misjudgement in political matters is to be regretted, his philosophical interpretation of the history of being carries sufficient warning for us to continue to be vigilant of the risks of nihilism in an age of technology.

## **Freedom and Ethics**

Putting aside the political implication of Heidegger's philosophy, another problem is whether his philosophy has any bearing with ethical issues. In educational practices, we want to understand why this precise action is valuable or meaningful. This is a difficult task since Heidegger himself wrote very little about ethics. In addition, his political affiliation to National Socialism leads us to doubt whether he is capable of contributing anything to ethics. To discuss such matters is beyond the scope of this current thesis. In this part, I would like to focus on the relation between freedom and ethics in Heidegger. I shall draw attention to the ethical dimension of Heidegger's thinking and its limits in relation to Levinasian ethics.

Can his philosophy of freedom directly respond to ethical issues? To answer this question, we need to examine Heidegger's understanding of finite human being. In Heidegger, the possibility of ethical concern is designated through Dasein's existence as being dying, human finitude. In *Being and Time*, Heidegger shows the structural totality of Dasein as care [*Sorge*] as an impasse in case of one's death. For Dasein cannot exist or experience such a mode of being dead. The incomplete totality of Dasein is experienced only by a mood: anxiety. Stephen Mulhall therefore points out that "what anxiety reveals about us is not just our elemental unity", but also the inauthentic and authentic ways of our lives (Mulhall, 2005, p. 297). As we can no longer exist when we are dead, the only way to understand death, as hinted at by anxiety, is from Dasein's being as being-with-others. The ethical dimension of Heidegger is based on his analysis of finite human being. Dasein as being-with-other is essentially ethical insofar as it is its being dying which is its concern.

Dasein's care for the other is essentially different from care for the thing. The human being encounters the ready-to-handness of things through concern and encounters the Dasein-with of Others in solicitude (BT 237). There are different modes of solicitude [*Fürsorge*] toward the other. A common form of interaction can be a kind of solicitude. This can be a domination of the other when solicitude takes away 'care' from the other (BT 158). There is another form of solicitude which avoids domination but cares with a respect for the other.

In contrast to this, there is also the possibility of a kind of solicitude which does not so much leap in for the Other as *leap ahead* of him in his existentiell potentiality-for-Being, not in order to take away his 'care' but rather to give it back to him authentically as such for the first time. This kind of solicitude pertains essentially to authentic care – that is, to the existence of the Other, not to a "what" with which he is concerned; it helps the other to become transparent to himself in his care and to become *free for* it (BT 158-9).

This kind of solicitude is what Heidegger calls authentic care. Authentic care is triggered by human freedom as possibility (Chapter 4) that is experienced as 'freedom toward death'. Authentic care is only possible in Dasein's freedom. Finite human freedom signifies two facts: the singularity of being and the finite other. Such freedom is what Heidegger calls resoluteness: Dasein takes on a role of un-locking the possibilities of a

situation, as ‘resoluteness’ (Schalow, 2001, p. 258). The distinction between authentic and inauthentic solicitude lies in human being’s will. Resoluteness is precisely will for non-will. In other words, resoluteness is a will only for letting beings be. Letting beings be does not exclude Dasein’s role from the event, but Dasein takes an active role in the event’s opening. As Heidegger claims of ontological difference, the relation between human being and being is reciprocal: ‘Understanding of being effects a distinction between being and beings; being is there only when Dasein understands being’ (MFL 152) The finite human being resolutely takes a role in the event of being’s openness. Schalow finds the resoluteness of the finite human being as governing.

Dasein’s finitude – the governing of its freedom by its limitations – that first disposes the self to address ethical concerns. The reciprocity between freedom and governance, decision and lawfulness, sets the boundaries in which a concern for the good can first arise (Schalow, 2001, p. 260).

In the authentic care, Dasein’s freedom responds the ethical issues in the other’s emancipation. This is what Schalow calls freedom’s polyvalency of letting be and resoluteness (2001, p. 261). Heidegger rejects the conventional notion of ethics interwoven with values which can serve as a standard or a measure to determine things. Away from such metaphysics of values or the theory of ethics, discussed in *On the Essence of the Ground* (EG 133-4), Heidegger understands human being as what Schalow summarises as follows:

Dasein is unique not only because it embodies the movement of temporality and exhibits its trajectory (transcendence), but also because it directly participates in the “openness” engendered by the interplay of its temporal ecstasies (future, past, and present) (Schalow, 2001 p. 253).

This is what we have discussed in this thesis as the phenomenon of freedom experienced in human being’s existence. The understanding of freedom has shifted from something to have, to something to experience by existence. The theme of freedom in this present thesis has accordingly developed following this uniqueness of Dasein.

In Heidegger’s later writings, freedom is regarded as something reciprocal to being as the ecstatic realm of openness. The essential character of freedom is a gift, an

endowment for which human being is reciprocate. This means that the power of freedom is distributed in the way of sharing between the self and the other. The only ethical ground is this sharing of freedom which calls on us to respect the other's existence as much as our own.

The openness of freedom is the ground not only for good but also for evil (ST). This means that such a realm of openness is not necessarily always good. The event of freedom can be good or bad. Human being is in the mode of waiting to respond to the openness of being. The question is then, as Schalow puts it, 'in what sense can it correlate with the ethical and political concerns raised by human being and designate the possibility of good as well as evil?' (Schalow, 2001, p. 260). Can this freedom for good and evil justify evil action? This is in effect to reiterate Nancy's question: 'did Heidegger silently justify Auschwitz?' (1993, p. 132). I have shown that there are answers to these questions, and most of the criticisms can be rebutted. Yet, we cannot ignore the questions about ethics in relation to freedom for the reasons that Schalow and Nancy raise. Rather than defending Heidegger, at this stage, I would like to turn to Levinas, whose criticisms are levelled at this very matter.

For Levinas (1987), such an ontological account of finite being fails to address ethical issues. For prior to the recognition of the finitude, human being is conditioned by a relation of the Other, being addressed by the Other. Therefore the concept of being-with (*Mitsein*) for him is conditional, something sharing a common purpose, which looks like a relation of 'marching together' (perhaps toward death). In contrast, for Levinas, ethics is prior to ontology and this is epitomised by the face. By this, I am judged, I am under judgement. Every day is judgement day. The ontological notion of death as impossibility of possibility by Heidegger does not recognise the fact that I am judged by the Other. For Levinas death can be ethically addressed as the possibility of the impossibility of the other. Further discussion on Levinas is beyond the scope of this thesis and requires another fully developed paper. The fundamental difference between Levinas and Heidegger is on the significance of the other in relation to the self. For Heidegger, the other is, in terms of finitude, a being equal to the self. For Levinas, this is not to be conceived as a relationship of equals. The other exists prior to the self, and it is through being addressed by the other that the self comes to be. The other is the ethical measure. By contrast, as Levinas rightly

observes, Heidegger's resolute letting be, thus, cannot ethically serve as an alternative measure for ethics.

Heidegger's question is at least a response to where the ethical-ontological concerns begin. In *Letter on "Humanism"*, Heidegger finds that thinking is identical with ethics. 'Thinking accomplishes the relation of being to the essence of the human being' (LH 239). Ethics in its originary form is a dwelling near being, a seeking or thinking about being. Heideggerians therefore read Heidegger's notion of freedom as the very possibility of ethics, the originary ethics (Hodge, 1995; Olafson, 1999; Lewis, 2005).

The possibility of ethics is conditional on the existence of an entity, for which being is an issue. This entity is the site of a lack of determination, the site of a nothingness, out of which there emerges ethical questioning and the possibility of freedom. If that entity fails to engage in ethical questioning and fails to accept the conditional nature of its freedom, it fails to respond to its own negativity and to accept responsibility for it. The consequence is nihilism and destruction. The description of such an entity is as much an ethical as a metaphysical project (Hodge, 1995, p. 202).

Although the possibility of ethics in Heidegger does not provide a direct answer to the ethical issues, receptive responsibility for freedom calls for an action of thinking (Nancy, 2002; Ruin, 2008). Schalow thus puts Heidegger's freedom at the crossroads between ethics and politics. Freedom in education appears in the interpretation of the times through the record of the individual and the collective memory of upbringing. The task of education is to cultivate what is thought to be good for us and the next generation in the practice of freedom. Such is Nancy's expression of the hope of thinking. Thinking is not possible without hope.

If there is a hope of thinking, without which we would not even think, it does not consist in the hope of a total liberation of freedom that was to occur as the total mastery of freedom. The history of a similar wait is over. Today the threat of a devastation of existence alone has any positivity. Yet the hope of thinking signifies that we would not even think if existence were not the surprise of being (Nancy, 1993, p. 147).

What is hope? Once we reject freedom as an educational ideal, is there any hope left for us to claim? One should not, first of all, underestimate the positivity of education's

functionality. Education can claim for or bestow equal opportunity or even offer a social ladder in some cases. At the individual level, and at this stage of writing, I cannot deny that I still hope for a good life. We should not deny the possibilities that education offers in this respect. What is to be rejected, to make this clear, is the fixed way of thinking that is oriented to the illusions of ideology under the name of a hope. Freedom, instead of being an educational ideal, reveals the possibility which calls for our attention and interpretation. This is a hope that cannot be achieved solely by my free will. The real business of education occurs when I come to understand this or that event as a part of hope. This does not mean that I should live in some kind of false hope but rather that I live in a kind of affirmation: that I am ready to have a go, ready to essay. This might mean giving up any grand ideas but not by becoming cynical or succumbing to being sentimental. This hope of thinking is a way of responding to Levinasian messianism. As Strhan suggests

Levinas's understanding of messianism is focused on both the present and its interruption by what is never present, as beyond being and presence. The messianic, breaking the closed circle of totality, can be seen as what is implied by the ideal of prophetic politics, a politics that would be vigilant against the violence of totalisation and work towards peaceful, fraternal communities (Strhan, 2010, p. 243).

Through the discussion of freedom, I hope this thesis can serve as a positive space for further discussion: beyond the discursive scope of autonomy in traditional metaphysics, the discussion has led us to the open realm of freedom in which education appears as an interpretation. In the way we learn, in the way we come to understand the world, there is more than we can understand which calls for our interpretation. This is the practice of education. In these terms, the education of the over-educated society is over, and it is time to begin again.



## **Afterword: Liberal Education, Progressivism, and Freedom**

I take the opportunity to add a coda with this final comment, for there is a further potential objection to my account that I would like to address. This is the question of whether my account of freedom has any purchase on the debate between liberal education and progressivism, precisely the debate described in Chapter 1. Does what I have had to say have anything to do with the kinds of preoccupations they have? My answer to this is an emphatic yes, though I can well understand that this may not be obvious to readers unfamiliar with Heidegger or unsympathetic to the nature of his concerns. Let me try to say why my account should disturb – and I believe ultimately enhance – the work of the two groups of educational theorists I am considering.

The point I made in the opening chapter was that the commonality in their stances consists in the fact that they share the idea of a freedom as something that one has. This, I tried to show, has deep origins in Western metaphysics, with the upshot that Western educational practice has emerged from that background. It is by shaking this metaphysics that the idea of education is shaken too. It is by working around what I have called this hope of thinking that I have come to see that freedom is not the measure of value but rather that freedom is the precondition within which world and value emerge. In education this is the space for us to test out the possibilities and the hope of thinking.

But what does this mean, the sceptic will say, in terms of the practicalities of thinking? The liberal educator and the progressive are at odds with one another over what should be done in the classroom, partly because they disagree about the nature of freedom. Where do I stand in relation to this?

What I am saying has implications, I believe, for the way that the curriculum is conceived and for the way that teacher education is undertaken. It involves above all recognising the productive nature of language, that language is productive of world, that the kind of language we use shapes the world we have. Now, to put this in more

specifically curriculum terms, this would imply greater attention to the words we use – in the curriculum, in the substance of subjects that are studied, and in the language of the teacher in relation to the student. It would involve, to use a Heideggerian idiom, listening to the word.

But again, I hear the critic: what does this amount to? I suggest that it involves, as a first step, revising the methods of assessment that dominate education at present. It involves giving greater space to the kind of open-ended task typified by the essay, where this is assessed in a way that does not reduce it to a check-list of criteria but is alert to the open exploration that the form embodies. In relation to the substance of the curriculum it would involve choosing curriculum materials that are ‘textually rich’. I use this expression to refer to the kinds of material that are, on the whole, not amenable to easy assimilation, that, on the contrary, require one to return to them, to dwell with them, in order to work out what is important and what is not. Such can be found most obviously in classic literary texts, but I want to suggest that this is not the only place. A careful gradation of problems in mathematics, for example, or nicely judged examples in the science class, the presentation of contrasting accounts in history – all these can be occasions in which the student and the teacher are exposed to the demands of thought and criticism. They are occasions for conversation.

This is a way not of settling the differences between child-centredness and liberal education but of strengthening and making more realistic the kinds of accounts they can give. It also puts them in a position better to diagnose, expose, and contest the current problems in education. They can do this especially by considering the way that the logical conception of education as a sequential relation between content, teaching and learning (method), and assessment is effectively reversed by prevailing policy and practice. There is a danger that assessment now drives everything. A proper attention to the nature of freedom, in full cognizance of its inseparability from language, opens a way to reconsidering this structure and to realising how much is at stake.

Perhaps it will be obvious that much that I am recommending here will require not less but rather more of the teacher – not necessarily with longer hours of work or more meticulous lesson-planning, but more in terms of the kinds of judgement that the teacher is required to exercise. In recent years the range of that judgement has been pared back,

with series of systematic reforms and a progressive deskilling of the teacher's role, whatever lip-service may have been paid to increasing professionalisation. The judgement I am referring to is there precisely in the experience of translation, where it is necessary to make a decision in the absence of clear rules and guide-lines or where whatever rules we have are in one way or another incommensurable. Such judgement is rarely value-free, and indeed it is difficult to see how it could be. In the experience of the teacher, this judgement is ethical in its very nature, whether concerned with a child's academic progress – her grasp of a point, her developing body of understanding, her application to her studies – or with her wellbeing and personal development as more broadly understood. Such judgement involves the taking of risks. It involves little leaps on a daily basis, and sometimes some larger ones too. All this requires confidence in a way that is largely missing from current teacher education. In place of the perhaps overly technical emphasis on the skills to deliver the curriculum as prescribed, attention needs to be given to this more fundamental ethical and existential challenge. This would give us a better idea what teaching and learning really involve, and why they are critical in our response to the freeing of thought and world that is education's precondition.

## List of Publications

Material in various chapters has been published elsewhere, and a list of these publications is as follows:

Yun, S.I. (2014) Education, Freedom, and Temporality: A Response to Biesta and Säfström's Manifesto, *Journal of Philosophy of Education* 48(3), pp. 385-399.

Yun, S.I. (2014) The aims of education and the leap of freedom, *Ethics and Education* 9(3), pp. 276-291.

Yun, S.I. (Forthcoming, 2016) A Shift of the Question: from freedom-of to freedom-as, the Third International Symposium on Phenomenological Research in Education, Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany.

Yun, S.I. (Forthcoming, 2016) The Drama of the Leap, "Kaspar Hauser Exits the Cave", *Philosophy of Education Society Yearbook* (2015).

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