

## PHILOSOPHICAL EDUCATION AS A DYSFUNCTION OF SOCIETY<sup>1</sup>

*Abstract: This paper tries to extricate philosophical education from the restrictions of social and school systems and to commend some independent and subversive views. This is to be accomplished through a conceptual dissection of the term 'education'. On the one hand, there is education seen as transmitter of the tradition, where to be educated is seen as being able to fit into an established community. There is also another education to which the authority of tradition is a permanent target of resistance, always trying to undermine any educational uniformity. This second history of education, genuinely philosophical, is radically opposed to the history of institutionalized mass-education. However, intention of this paper is not to proclaim this as an "alternative" model, or to build it up as a new mythology. On the contrary, it is being written as a history of continuous subversion. Viewed from this vantage point, autonomous philosophical education is not a subsystem of a social system. This education has itself as a measurement, and always resists the wider community (the environment) that has accidentally befallen it. Its honor is exactly in this attitude of resistance, in being watchful against any conscription and integration. Understood in this manner, philosophical education is not a useful "implemented" function of society, but is rather its dysfunction.*

Key words: *education, society, philosophy, school, enlightening.*

The very title of this article already provoked some confusion. The text is basically part of a longer work, about (neo)anarchism and enlightenment, whose title was intended to be "Philosophy as a dysfunction of society." Which was, as it now turns out, the least unclear of the suggested titles. For this occasion I had, in fact, first proposed a topic that seemed to me somewhat milder in tone,

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and more practical: “Philosophical Education as a Healing Dysfunction of Society”. My friends who read the proposal reacted immediately, in a characteristic manner. Was I trying to say that the society is dysfunctional, and philosophy is capable of curing it? No, I was not. In the end, I omitted the word “healing” and what remained was just the “Philosophical Education as a Dysfunction of Society”. And there also remained, of course, this deliberately dissonant tone, dissonant as regards the occasion that is devoted to celebrating the eternal social relevance of philosophy and strengthening its social activism; a view that philosophy, and the practice of philosophy, and the teaching of philosophy, have always been and always should be somewhat detached from (or contrary to) the social relevance. And that, to this extent, any effort to portray philosophy as socially functional, or desirable, or even essential, is a battle lost before it began, a defensive strategy doomed to fail and to compromise the vocation of philosophy.

A thesis, therefore, aiming to be provocative and perhaps insolent. It keeps safe the dignity and pride of philosophy, but seems so “extreme”, and so ruthless and blinded, that it approaches autism. Putting philosophy outside of, or even in opposition to, the environment in which it must inevitably dwell. But perhaps the problem lies elsewhere: in our reception? Perhaps we are already too accustomed to toadying, to being self-defensive, forever justifying ourselves and attempting to prove, in the face of a relentless social and educational apparatus, that philosophy ought to exist; and thinking we are successful if we win a little more space for philosophy in the overcrowded educational curricula. Perhaps a different, less combative and at once more autonomous and indifferent approach might do less injustice to the “substance” and character of philosophy itself, than the sinewy straining to “apply” philosophy to something somehow, even at the cost of losing any recognizability. This calmer approach might even prove more successful in winning more space for philosophy in the educational programs and practices.

### *Dis-organization*

Arguing in favor of this thesis, let us first look at the very notion of education, keeping in mind all along its philosophical prove-

nance. A rather crude dichotomy could be posited for this purpose. There is and surely there always has been something that we might call “official education”, education as a tradition to be handed down through generations. The social agents who carried out this education were, and still are, those who can verify that a person is initiated into the community. From there we could develop an argument – as is usually done by the “left-wing” critics, if we may collectively call them so, of institutional education – that, historically, the agents of teaching and education have inevitably manufactured precisely the sort of individuals who are most needed for the survival of society. In various times, such individuals were labeled variously as “slavish souls”, “subject mentalities”, etc. From Plato’s gerontocratic vision, to the Christian theocratic vision of Aurelius Augustinus, and all the way to the post-industrial civil society based on the spirit of technocratic enterprising, nothing essential has changed in this respect, although there was a progress from personalized to abstract and impersonal authority, and progress in making the educational strategies always more perfidious so that the teaching for obedience should begin to seem rational and inevitable. Max Horkheimer provided perhaps the most vivid description of this task of education: “The self-will of the child is to be crushed, and the child’s original wish to develop, freely, his or her own impulses and abilities should be replaced by an internal compulsion to perform all duties unquestioningly.”

But education did have, and we believe still has, another, different face, too. We might actually detect, by observing the course of the past history, this other, equally real, (co)existing education, this other, parallel or opposed line of being educated, with a permanent point of resistance against the authority of tradition, and with a critical potential aimed against some of the fundamental structures of social life and against the established culture. Instead of education as conveyor-belt manufacturing of authoritarian characters, perhaps we could then follow the history of undermining such manufacture, a history of persistent sabotage of any educational “casting from a mold.” This other, parallel history of education, or a history of one aspect of education, was suppressed, concealed, and disguised, and yet, the germ of such a notion of education in which “the very critique became tradition” survives, in spite of all.

The educational history that we have in mind here would oppose, radically, the history of institutional, systematic education, and is only to that extent “alternative”, but would not wish to take its place as a new mainstream. It is being written as a history of incessant subversions. Loyal to the Enlightenment imperative of demythologization, it does not want to turn this principle into another mythology and install itself as a new epochal avant-garde, with its own new beginning, new high priests and hierarchy, as a new ruling Party which would establish an attitude, a system, with demands, tasks, aims and methods, with an affirmative profile. This new educational history has no compulsion to achieve any definitive realization, no housewifely instinct to clear the terrain, nor the neurotic need to strive efficiently towards the intended result. On theoretical plane, it would rather stay away from any eschatology, or even oppose it; on the social plane, it would unhesitatingly describe as “parasitic” its own subject, which is: education as a natural habitat of anti-nature, inside the heart and bloodstream of the body; a disorganizing of all the organs in the body; refusal to have a planned system, because a planned system would castrate the embryo inside, whose servants the organs are supposed to be; education as defensive force of that embryo, that must be seen by the organism as a selfish intruder, an infection, a virus, a cancer.

To continue the metaphor, this history would show one thing: that education is not an organ, not a subsystem of some social organism or system. In that sense, education is not at all a social phenomenon, a corporative matter. Understood in this manner, education finds its own measures in itself, always resisting the community which happened to be there (which does not mean that the community does not influence the forms of education, namely, the forms of resistance it takes). The only honor that education has, its only fidelity, its sole fundament and justification, is this attitude of resistance, of being alert against any seduction or integration without free will. In short, to make a slogan of this, education is not a function of society, it is a dysfunction of society. Even today, when things do not seem to be so, education does sometimes resist; it defends itself even at the cost of campus ghettoization; it may or may not reject the financial or political sponsorship, offered by the structures of power, but at least it rejects, from time to time, a few of the attempts of those

structures to meddle into the research projects and autonomous free skills. In the best, most desirable variation, education will not only reject all attempts of the society to influence the educational programs, it will also refuse the futile, empty dance of justifying its own existence, social usefulness and importance.

### *De-legitimizing*

A brief history of such educational sabotage, a history of education as a sabotage against society, would apparently have to begin with the ur-Enlightenment, a spiritual movement appearing around the V century B.C. in some Hellenic polises, first in Athens. This first upswing of education in our civilization, as all the subsequent ones, was directly linked to a demolition of the existing state authority and, in consequence, with a crisis of state-sponsored education. This came out most dramatically in the teachings and practices of the sophists, the “founders” of the skill of educating young people. The emergence of the idea of education, in their time, coincides with the split between culture and faith, two phenomena that, previously, were thought to be one. “Protagoras’s relativization of the traditional norms of life, and his resigned understanding that the puzzle of religion is unsolvable” – admits Jaeger, otherwise not very sympathetic to the sophists – “is not by accident connected with his magnificent idea of man’s education.” The bringing into question the educational values which used to be supreme until then, and the examination of what the traditional norms meant, led to the abandonment of a self-confident and self-understood pedagogical teleology. Thus was undermined the value of the State law as a source of all the norms of human life; the virtue of the individual became untied from the virtue of the citizen; and the original unity of the reason of state and personal ethics became disharmonized.

Since then, the autonomization and specialization, intellectualization and a rebel-like emancipation of the individual became the lasting antidotes to any and all attempts of glorification or return of united aims and virtues, any continuation or promotion of a monism of values, any cementing of a social totality. In short, any nostalgic projection of a perfect unity of society with a “unified *arete*”, all-encompassing meaning, totality of life, and, based on this totality or

at least harmonized with it, a universalism of *paideia*, could no longer hold under occupation, unquestioningly and completely, the entire “kingdom of spirit”. Let us add here something that is too often forgotten: that the anomie or, more precisely, the interplay of various *nomoi*, was the true homeland of education, and, we believe, is the medium in which education exists. If this is so, then the anomie was and is a most frightening and uncomfortable situation only for the thinking that have on mind an aim far more horrible: a peace as neat as a graveyard, with all-encompassing editorial interventions as a sure road to get there.

In this sense, in the sense of dis-integrating the once united, unquestioned life, Socrates, with his diabolical ecstasy of dialog, is truly a sophist: both a witness and a supporter of a great split in two. It is very symptomatic that Socrates is the exemplary, model case for almost all pedagogical orientations, even though they differ amongst themselves quite a lot. But we believe that Socrates – as, for instance, Nietzsche after him – is “the best teacher” precisely because he is not “a pedagogue”, specifically because he really and categorically refuses to be a pedagogue. Socrates is not pretending, nor is he sending a particularly wise message, when he refuses to admit that he is an embodiment of all the principles that people see in him. When in his *Apology*, and elsewhere, he says that he never claimed that he wanted to educate the people, that he never had educational aspirations, he really means just that. The idea of any school and any pupils, a school lesson and a school program, no matter which particular “school” considered itself to be continuing his “teaching”, is really incompatible with Socrates. For this reason, there probably isn’t a more perfect (than Socrates) “negative pedagogue”, a teacher of nothing in particular, an asker of questions rather than a doctinaire. He is the teacher who refuses to be teacher, he is, oh how blasphemous it sounds, a pediatric obstetrician, eager to stimulate the birthing contractions in his adolescent philosophical “delinquents” of society who became pregnant because of him. He is the pimp, and master of ceremonies, a *régisseur* and the amateur-actor protagonist in the grand bordello of thought. He seduces the young, leading them with his communicative imagination into a lustful *phrontisterion*, into a public boudoir of Athenian gathering places, for whose existence and atmosphere he was, personally, largely responsible. He is

seducing the people to think for themselves, he more disables than enables the young “heroes” to do anything operational, he is not teaching – he is asking; he allows himself to be questioned; with his collocutors/friends he embarks upon research (although it may be make-believe, sometimes), and he readily admits that he never starts from any knowledge, and often arrives at no results whatsoever.

All who criticized Socrates were right: his useless and futile pedagogic midwifery was a class-1 danger for them, a betrayal of the established order, an undermining of the fundamental structure of society. Socrates problematized and de-valued the values that had until then been above any suspicion; he measured the existing society against an ideal of the mind; and, indeed, from the point of view of a community perfectly arranged for all eternity, he was an arch-enemy, deserving to be hated and killed, his wasp-like provocation to be slapped down. Timeless is Hegel’s understanding that the conflict of these equal rights, the clash of the authority of these disparate laws, this unsolvable dissensus, must produce a tragedy. But this, in turn, means that Socrates has already entered the mythology of a new Olympus which is just being made. Therefore, as Sloterdijk described perhaps the most skillfully – Socrates had to be pacified and incorporated into the philosophical and educational engineering.

Plato adjusted Socrates to his own research needs, ascribing to him, impertinently and boastfully, results. Interpreting the purgatory of ignorance as an interlude to a dash forward to announce the final knowledge, the knowledge around which Socrates circled gently and circumspectly, Plato wished to get out of the unendurable tension, and to give back to science, and to life, the lost unity. Craving for a positive outcome, for a solution to riddles, for a removal of magical mists from all mysteries, for knowledge as a firm basis, Plato created a self-confident spiritual sovereignty which, however, in reality remained socially powerless. He failed to position himself as a law-maker of a society too lively; insulted, he compensated this by a micro-community, the educational one. A handicap was turned into a privilege, the shortage of efficacy was compensated by the privileges of brotherhood. But now this brotherhood yearned to be socially legitimized, recognized, certified. Teachers and pupils, now established, do step forward onto the stage, but with a crucial difference from the pre-Socratic ones.

## *De-monopolization*

Namely, you could send a child into Plato's Academy – and then into Aristotle's all-systematizing Lyceum, into subsequent mon-asterial teaching places, and into modern standardized schools – without a fear that the child might “go astray”. Not so with Socrates. Anyone could be his pupil once; nobody exclusively. The attitude to him and his “teaching” was rather respectful distance. Probably it was not easier, in previous times, to let your child go into the weird sect of the Pythagoreans, to join them. And what to say of advisability of attending the classes, had there been any, with some sage such as Democritus, who was plucking out his own eyes, or with volcano-jumping Empedocles, or with a misanthrope and possibly a misopede Heraclites... Legend has it that a certain Onesikritus from Aegina sent one his son to the famous Cynic Diogenes of Sinope in Athens and, seeing that the boy is not returning, sent another his son, and finally went personally to rescue them, but, instead, enchanted by the teacher's magnetism, remained to practice philosophy with them.

Socrates is the paradigm of such seducers, the *Voland* types who seduce the young, but seduce them only to a path away from the much-trodden one of question-less social vegetating, and only those who volunteer to be his co-travelers in a *hodos* without destination, but with *pathos* and with a certain protocol of the journey. It was different with those who are not necessarily, or not only, the seducers, and are primarily the recruiters. The earliest Christian communities were of two minds about that, but later, when Christianity became legalized as the State religion, socially institutionalized, they, too, began to seduce for the purpose of recruiting, to take away in order to bring in. Let us not forget, in Christianity, also, at the beginning you had to step from the cozy world of the Roman provinces into the world of renegades. Some respect is due to such self-denial, which also involved the war with the social environment, lots of tears in the parents' eyes, threats, and, well, when it came right down to it, being thrown into the arena with lions. If it was an independent act, chosen in free will and in full awareness, if the attendees, devoting themselves to an education through devotion, knew the price, then such education is rightly inscribed in a history of saints. But, the great martyrs of all confessions are still far from the Teacher of one Teaching.



What separates them decisively is exactly this pupilish sacrifice for devotion, this self-denial, readiness to testify with your whole life that your choice was right. As we understand it, such readiness is the “trade mark” of education, and the degree to which this readiness is forgotten, or replaced by a solidarity of the guild, and by the integration in salary classes, is the measure of how much the education is violated.

Something else, though, constituted the difference between Christians and Socrates (and other Greek lovers of wisdom). You could also be a Stoic, or an Epicurean, without thinking that everybody else must or should be the same as you. You were willing to engage in a dialogue, and a battle of theories, but not in a physical battle, and very rarely did it come to a claim that your opponents were worthless and disqualified as people. You believed that, in one path, your light may advance the cause of Truth, but you did not reject the right of others to pursue other, different paths; you considered them also plausible, potentially equally true or wrong as your path. But Christianity opted to exchange loyalty for efficacy, and to gain political power at the expense of devotion; so, it organized itself as an institution not of seduction, but of recruitment. Christians did not merely seduce people away from the blindness of a miserable life, they also impelled everyone to accept, willy-nilly, the only truth, belief in the one and only God. Monism gave birth to a monolog and to universe. The Greek multiverse of education was replaced by a University of Knowledge. Research changed itself into hermeneutics, and dialogue into a vote by which the canons were confirmed, after which all heretics had to be persecuted for their deviations from it. A new oath of education was established. That’s where the “functional” deception about the educational institution began; and, in the name of one or another gathering point, the deception continues to this day.

This system produced, and persecuted, a kind of illegal community, an “underground”. But, in time, the underground did step out into the light of day, triumphantly. Something definitely changed in education with the Renaissance, and, quite obviously, with the 18th-century Enlightenment. But, something in the self-image of the protagonists remained unchanged, something of deeper essential importance. You can instead of the Trinity of Godhood deify Nature, and you can devote yourself to the reading of this new Holy Script, for which you must know the mathematical alphabet, but you still

have not abolished the warm sanctity of the Truth which lies hibernated somewhere and awaits to be finally thermally processed. The open spirit of education then continued to live not so much in the articulated philosophy, as in the literature and painting, in reaffirmation of the body, in immediate entertainment, in what Italo Calvino termed “lightness”, the ease with which you could, non-religiously, hop over the millennial grief of ghostly, grim, life-renouncing monastic scholasticism. The science of physics aside, Galileo perhaps did something even more far-reaching and lasting for the idea of education, education at that time enmeshed firmly in the ropes of One and Only Education, when he wrote an epigram in which he was lobbying, in protest, for uniforms to be taken off, because experiments are conducted by that which is under the uniforms, and are not conducted by the nomenclature of status, uniformly fabricated and dressed.

You may also replace the Revelation with Reason, and, although it was an essential characteristic of the education in ancient Greece, you can understand it as your grand declaration. The Jacobins did that, and, in fact, the goddess of Reason is no less a Moloch than the other cruel gods of the East. If Christianity has canonized the learning of its teachings, the Enlightenment merely reacted, nervously and directly, to the light of Mount Tabor in Israel, replacing it with *lumen naturale*. And in both (Christianity and Enlightenment) there are deviations from the prescribed norm, from the orthodoxy, but, in both are very rare, and strongly marginalized, the advocates – such as Montaigne, for instance – of the suspension of Knowledge itself, those skeptical about the belief that one day everything will be discovered, if only we dig with sufficient persistence. Like moles, we dig on and on, the mole mechanism is busy, and it will sooner or later bring us to an “absolute knowledge”. The truth awaits us, and we spread our legs properly, to be penetrated by it, and so qualify to get its blessing, with a certificate by the learned persons who, in one way or another, have been methodologically prepared to conscript us and bring us to it – to The Truth.

### *De-naturalization*

Pantocraticism thus remains the emblem of modern education too. Corporate forces, always in a conspiracy to maintain, extend and

adjust such pretensions in education, have just become more skillful and strong. The organization is now so strong that it can and will hungrily devour and incorporate, in advance, any heretical rebellion, and even the fiercest rebellions turn out to be quite tolerable and integratable. Revolutionary projects are passed over in silence; or, they are commercialized; and, simply, there is such an inflation of them, now; in this manner, the sharp edge of any criticism is not just tolerated without damage, it is even digested by the system, and then the system burps with satisfaction. We are in the advanced stages of a “repressive tolerance”: all attacks on the educational system are spent already, reduced to predictable responses and to expected, futile gestures from tamed pockets of resistance; the rebels are the somewhat impish, infantilized students who reside in a kind of reservation.

Nobody would send Socrates to court today, because nobody would take him seriously. Nobody would notice that Socrates is spoiling the young, because nobody takes education seriously any more. If we were to take education seriously, it would mean – let’s put it brutally – sending your child into a school, to join the “Order of the Knights of Culture and Science” with an awareness that the child will thus be lost irretrievably. In today’s educational idolatry, which is, like any idolatry, a *post festum* (re)construction, people approve of, and glorify, things that the parents, the society, and the school – the holy trinity of anti-education – would never even tolerate. For instance, disregarding “one’s own interests”: which reminds us of a nostalgic note written down by a doxographer who says that Greeks celebrated Anaxagoras and Democritus because these two men, “possessed by the longing for philosophy, allowed their farming fields to become the grazing land for sheep.” The intense concern of Archimedes for his circles was never, actually, recommended as the thing to do when an enemy comes at you with a sword ready, and yet, it remains one lonely move deserving of respect, in a prosaic epic story of those who cherish a teacherish life. Kids will be punished if they attempt, from a balloon, to catch lightning, but Benjamin Franklin will still be respected like some hero of a movie of historic fiction. We have more understanding for the reasoning of Schopenhauer senior – who would not allow his son Arthur to enroll in a gymnasium, because, said he proverbially, a scientist and a pauper have always been brothers – than we have admiration for the dis-

obedience of the son who went to gymnasium, persisted stubbornly, and finally achieved quite some success. Not even an insanely ambitious Serbian parent will suggest to his offspring the rhythm of work and sleep practiced by Nikola Tesla, no matter how proud they might be of Tesla's achievements. Admittedly, those icons are seen only in the Temple of Education, but, on the other hand, isn't it also true that in an educational enterprise, no other icons should exist? They testify that you cannot become educated "along the way" while doing something else, and that the candidates ought to leave on the ground, in front of the door of that temple, any hope they might have had of big financial success or big social promotion. The alternative is to go to some other temple, or to a course, organized by instructors authorized by an organization, with the authorization consisting in the fact that this organization instructed them in the first place.

By universal enlightening, the Enlightenment devalued precisely the light that it meant to celebrate. "Socialization ends with breaking your spine", a talented pupil once wrote. The Enlightenment is perhaps even prepared to undersign this funny aphorism, but in fact it is the kind of socialization that the Enlightenment introduced through the mass education. Total school for a "total personality". Linear democratization of education made it, if not automatically fascist, at least unified and uniformed. The *instinct aristocratique*, whose demise Tocqueville regretted such a long time ago, has now definitively been buried; the nobility of the educated has abolished itself, by complete affirmation and popul(ar)ization. In a big battle, suffused by poignant optimism, against inherited nobility, social parasites, unearned and shameless privilege, ignoramuses in positions of authority, etc., some heavy artillery was used, force was used beyond reasonable limit of self-defense – and with a pretension, still aggressive, to colonize the "lifeworld" one more time, but now with a full justification of "criticism". How lost those noble illusions were, became apparent only when the promised happiness was achieved. The Enlightenment ways of thinking did not become merely wrong, they became, if we follow Lyotard's procedure, simply "obsolete". The school was the main bastion of Enlightenment, whose apostles believed that school would "strengthen the civil liberties, eliminate the particularisms, prevent wars", but now, look at the situation of the school, despised as it is, it speaks more

than enough: nobody expects the school to educate enlightened citizens any more, it must educate only professionals who will achieve better and better results. "Ignorance is not a sin any more, and knowledge is acquired as a professional qualification promising a better salary."

The educational project of the Enlightenment abolished itself by fulfilling its intentions, it drowned in the plentitude it invited. Only after the "schooled man" became the official norm of the new epoch, and the declared education of everybody had advanced to the point where it overpowered and banished what used to be called "the darkness of mind" and "obtuseness", did an answer arrive, in sub- and counter-cultural movements (and perhaps the most clearly with Homer Simpson): an answer from the banished guy, the one who did not agree to the obligatory educational circumcision; the reply from all those things for which the global enlightenment is blind and never sees them; the answer from everything that remained outside of the global factory of schooling, outside of the *gleichmacherei* which wants to make everyone identical; outside of the leveling of everyone-literate-now; outside of a schooling system relying on omniscient and omnipotent sciences and manual-manufacturing skills, but without any other prerogatives under God. *The thrill is gone*. No more is there the educational subversion that existed at the onset of Enlightenment schooling: now, the only available version of man, and the only faith of the educated world, is the individual, a person educated to perform specific operations. Subversion moves on, changes sides: it remains possible only as a radical naturalism, a selfish refusal of any kind of surrender to the educational process of molding and forming (as an extended hand of a more general social process of molding and forming), as an urban guerilla joyful to be stinking, as an immediate, shortcut way to find happiness in what used to be considered, until recently, a shame: namely, in a freely chosen renouncing of any self-shaping and self-forming. The two and a half millennia old provocation, consisting of an autonomous education that you choose for your own reasons, aimed against the imperialism of society, has been incorporated into the established social norm, and, in doing so, it left a residue of anti-educational counterpoint as the last heritage of the traditional educational rebellion.

## *De-monization*

And so has education, as a provocateur and barometer of the social crisis, lost both its advantages: the ability to observe, and the ability to criticize. Together with its empowered agent, the school, education has, facing the advanced socialized society, acquired a bad reputation, and, as a sluggish pivot and perhaps the most vividly obvious representative of the “ancien régime”, sank also into a crisis, one of complete bankruptcy. Dewey just rammed the stake into the heart of the vampire of the old Enlightenment, opening the “court proceedings” as to who will grab which chunk of inheritance. Through a special irony of history, the philosophy of education has, with pragmatism, finally given full satisfaction to the sophists, those same sophists whom it despised: nibbled by bad conscience because of the real outcome of the big promises of happiness for all, it readily paid the price, derogated and cancelled all the ambitious and perilous programs and projects of (re)education, in exchange for smaller but more reliable gain of immediate efficacy and better living without the ballast of utopianism. The belief, by Helvétius and by Condorcet for instance, that education would be omnipotent, had to take many steps backward. As things turned out, the public teaching failed not only in achieving the desired liberty, equality and brotherhood, but failed also to incite any, even elementary, interest in any universal values (beyond pop-culture) that school might attempt to promote. Democratization ended in dehumanization, not entirely without justice, when you look at the heartless industry known as “the school system”. When the shaping of individual persons is reduced to equally measured chops on the conveyor belt, then all that’s really individual must reside outside the industrial plant. In the age of the “technological reproduction” of education, individual qualities have been debased to the level of whatever is unschooled, to biological, physiological, neurological phenomena. The lowest things of life have executed, quite in accordance with the laws of nature, a revenge upon the Enlightenment’s haughty, hubris-like ambitions of rushing directly and collectively, all together, to the highest aims. Finally, the worst of the worst happened to the Enlightenment: its reference points of orientation, its operators, its vocabulary, with all the highs and lows, entered a period of its diarrhea, an ecstatic demolition in favor of “anything goes” logic.

Besides justice, there is some truth in there, also. After the catastrophic experiences of a pretentiousness which grew into a megalomania, after the many crashes of the universalist and emancipationist euphorias, the time arrived for a break-off, a rupture, similar to the theoretical achievements reached in the twentieth century precisely with the dismantling of the Enlightenment project. But, deconstruction (already itself becoming a fashion, a vogue) seems to arrive the most slowly into the fields of education. Here, deconstruction would mean the undermining of great pedagogical tales, and of global designs to make children organized and happy; abandonment of industrial growing of human material which is now being prepared to join this or that class or mass of humanity. In this field, also, bankruptcy could be announced of all the images of an ultimate haven which might be reached, after all the energetic strainings of the big educational pundits – soon, very soon, they are almost there – when the Grail of the final formula of Education is found. The calling-off of this planning may turn a consistently negative pedagogy into a device for correcting the far-gone fantasies of good-intentioned, all-knowing planners; the result might be a caution, an alertness, a closing twilight for the fatal strategies of teaching. And a voluntarily abstain from putting any other punditry into the vacated places, because it denies the very pigeon-holing and directive logic itself.

Which also means a rejection, a non-acceptance, of any irreplaceable social role of education; a refusal of the *pathos* of a final rescue, final emancipation. Such *pathos* was an element in, or the summit of, many critical examinations (or projects for reforming) of education, until now. But we should take seriously the fact that modern, non-religious school, founded on skepticism, is *not* a privileged locus of raising and perpetuating The Truth. Rather it is a place where truth must be made relative, divorced from authenticity, proliferated, multiplied; a place whose ethos might be the ethos of sabotage, of knowingly-fucking-about with the truth, not an ethos of defeating all the adversaries and thus reaching salvation. This is an ethos of play, not an ethos promising to us tranquility after a decisive fight. This ethos ought to introduce disorder into everything which wishes to be ordered; and it should never promote itself, not for a moment, into an announcer or into a traffic-cop of some new mileniarism. This ethos is aware that it lives on destructive impulses,

but is not incapable of constructive ones either, if they find in themselves the ability to correct themselves. This ethos accepts and builds positions, but does not feel a compulsion to stand firm on any one position, because the un-abolishable play of education is not a play of converting your encampments into permanent fortifications. This ethos brings all such fortified encampments face-to-face with their own falsities, without imagining that it knows the real Truth. It is not an exclusive ethos, nor is it pagan. It persists with the process of education, but does not insist on any particular result. It is loyal, verging on its own disintegration, to the idea of a pluralistic and “permanent” education, a non-final, never-ending, multi-directional, exploratory education, education as exploration.

In this voluntary abdication, in abstaining from one-sided usurpation of educational legitimacy, in giving-up of the turnkey prerogatives of a self-proclaimed status, in such a reinterpretation of the phenomenon of education, perhaps a reaffirmed idea of being educated may begin to shine through. This idea starts from the fact that the history of education is not the same as the history of the social formations known to us as educational institutions. As soon as education becomes institutionalized, ideas are given up in exchange for power, freedom is shunned in favor of establishing a structure. This idea does not have to assume that some perennial evil intent stands behind such transformations, some impenetrable conspiracy of the establishment-loving fraudulent ecclesiasts or of social architects who have a surplus of empire-making impulses instead of adrenaline. But, even if the intentions were good, they should not extinguish that sense of the word “education” which dwells beyond any State-sponsored or other social organizations, beyond the symbiosis of school and State so monolithically heralded by Plato, but so farcically realized only with a militarization and étatization such that every kid is recruited into a school without any right to conscientious objection. The “negative wisdom” of such a philosophy of education (and of such education for philosophy) will reveal to us the lie of every technologization of education, but its “truth” is not diminished by not having its own “positive” attitude. To introduce a “light disorder” into the system, of teaching and schooling and social system too, but never to become a sentinel guarding any system – that’s probably the best definition of what, and how, the philosophical education ought to do. In order to remain what it always was.



Predrag Krstić

## FILOZOFSKA OBRAZOVANOST KAO DISFUNKCIJA DRUŠTVA

*Sažetak*

Rad nastoji da izdvoji filozofsko obrazovanje iz ograničenja društvenog i školskog sistema i da sugerise mogućnost njegovog nezavisnog i „subverzivnog“ sagledavanja. Potonje se postiže pojmovnim razlaganjem termina „obrazovanje“. S jedne strane, postoji obrazovanje kao transmisija tradicije, u kom slučaju se obrazovanost vidi kao sposobnost da se uklopi u ustanovljenu zajednicu. Postoji, međutim, takođe i jedno drugačije obrazovanje, u čijem registru je autoritet tradicije permanentna tačka otpora. Ono istrajno pokušava da potkopa svaku obrazovnu jednobraznost. Ova druga istorija (izvorno filozofskog) obrazovanja, radikalno je suprotstavljena istoriji institucionalizovanog masovnog obrazovanja. Namera ovog rada nije, međutim, da nju proglasi „alternativnim“ modelom ili da je uspostavi kao novu mitologiju. Naprotiv, ona je pisana kao istorija neprestanih diverzija. Sa ovog staništa sagledana, autonomna filozofska obrazovanost nije podsistem društvenog sistema. Ovo obrazovanje ima svoju meru u samom sebi i uvek se odupire zajednici koja ga okružuje i koja ga slučajem dopada. Njegova čast je upravo u ovom stavu otpora, u budnosti prema svakom podvođenju i integraciji. Na ovaj način shvaćeno, filozofsko obrazovanje nije tek na jedan određeni način „implementirana“ funkcija društva, već pre njegova disfunkcija.

*Gljučne reči:* obrazovanje, društvo, filozofija, škola, prosvetčivanje.