Learning and its Discontents: Three Theories of Study and the Figure of the Studier

by

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Abstract

This thesis discusses alternatives to educational discourses that promote educational growth, self-actualization and the accumulation of knowledge that is observable and measurable. These learning discourses are evident in talking about the people we teach as learners, to schools as places of learning, to teachers as facilitators and to the curriculum as learning outcomes. The logic of learning has permeated educational discourses and placed emphasis on treating education as the means for students to develop skills in order to compete in the global market, which has led to impoverished perspectives on both education and the people we teach. In this thesis, I will argue that it is necessary to re-think the learning discourses and to discuss alternative educational experiences. I will refer to this kind of educational experience as *study* that unfolds without predetermined outcomes. It is necessary to make space and time for study in education because study is an educational experience that needs to be supported for its own sake. First, I will describe study as the experience of the human subject's (im)potentiality whose function is to suspend the neoliberal logic in education that insists on the actualization of one's potential in the name of generating more capital. Second, I will argue that the literature on study in education so far has not properly acknowledged study as a form of practice. So I will highlight another function of study as a practice of thinking. Next, I will develop a new theory of study as an educational experience that can shift the way we perceive the world and open new possibilities for being in the world. I will conclude this chapter with a call for a 'new universality' in education that acknowledges study as a legitimate form of education rather than as a waste of time and potential. Finally, I will discuss what can be done under the assumption that the people we teach are neither learners nor students but are rather *studiers*. Studiers are the human subjects of education who resist any classification and suspend the notion that we are willful human subjects always oriented towards action and the production of speech.

Keywords: potentiality – Agamben - Bartleby - Zizek – Event – emancipation - Ranciere

Dedication

Dedicated to my father

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1.

The Secret Life of the Student: The experience of study within the logic of learning

Introduction

A particular kind of educational logic has permeated educational discourses. This educational logic promotes educational growth, self-actualization and the accumulation of knowledge that is observable and measurable. Education tends to be treated as a means to generate competencies necessary to find employment and to be a productive citizen (Simons & Masschelein, 2008, p. 391), and the purpose of education is reduced to meeting the demands of global capital (Ford, 2016a, p. 52). Within this particular educational logic, or the 'logic of learning,' education is founded upon predetermined ends and outcomes, and its focus is on endless production, progress and the development of competencies (Ford, 2016b, p. 3). I will call these kinds of discourses as the learning discourses. I have been thinking about the learning discourses for some time, and doing research to find out if there are alternatives that might provide more options to me as a teacher.

I have been a language teacher for over two decades and have taught in a variety of educational contexts. I have taught children, young adults and mature students. I taught in elementary and high schools, and volunteered as a language teacher to recent immigrants and refugees at community centers. I worked as an English and German language teacher at private schools and heritage language schools, and taught undergraduate education classes as a sessional instructor in the Education department at Simon Fraser University in Burnaby, BC. But I have spent most of my career working as a teacher of English as an additional language in university settings.

It was when I was teaching on contract at a small local university that I started to think more about the educational discourses whose primary focus was on learning outcomes and on student success. At the time, my classes consisted of about twenty to twenty-five adult international students whose goal was to master enough English in

order to be able to study as either an undergraduate or a graduate student at an English-speaking university.

While working as a language teacher at this small local university, I became bothered by how much time I spent talking to both my students and my colleagues about assignments, exam schedules, criteria, grades, percentages, learning outcomes, and so on. It was such an impoverished way of talking about people and about education. It was happening daily and it seemed that both my colleagues and my students genuinely believed that the language courses that we offered were a means to an end. Stated differently, the language courses were seen solely as the means for international students to succeed in regular university classes.

When grades and assignment schedules were not the topic of our conversations, I would find myself answering my students' questions about why a particular activity is useful to them and how it would help them pass exams. I could understand the kind of pressure my students were under. My students had to either pass standardized language proficiency exams or earn credits in the English language program in order to get admission into the university of their choice and the stakes were high. It was then that I realized I want to do more research into alternative educational experiences whose focus is not on the relentless pursuit of test results, grades and credentials. I was convinced more than ever that there is more to education than student achievement and learning outcomes.

I had been familiar with the topic of study for some time but it seemed appealing to do more research and to write about it in greater detail. I am not an education policy reformer or anyone in power, really, to affect the kind of change that is necessary to overhaul the discourses and practices of learning. Rather, I am a teacher thinking about what I can do in my own classroom to counteract the logic of learning.

I strongly believe that it is important to examine alternatives to the discourses of learning because there is a risk of completely reducing education to a means to an end. There is already a growing trend of advertising language programs as pathways to the university and, in turn, university courses are promoted as pathways to the job market. If the trends persist, it will be only global markets that dictate what our students have to learn in order to develop the appropriate competencies to compete and function in an

ever changing world. Furthermore, I feel that these trends have led to impoverished ways of thinking and talking about education and about the people we teach.

This thesis will discuss a unique educational experience that can suspend the predominant discourses and practices of learning. In this thesis, I will refer to this kind of educational experience as the experience of *study* that unfolds without predetermined ends and outcomes even for the student himself or herself. From the outside, it may appear the student is not doing much and nothing observable and measurable is being produced but this seemingly passive state suspends the logic of learning with its focus on endless production, signification, and labor.

Towards the experience of study in education

The notion of study can be described in at least two ways. In one sense, studying within the logic of learning is the equivalent to accumulating knowledge and putting it to use. For example, when I walk around the university where I work now, I see posters advertising upcoming workshops for improving one's study skills. In this context, if students learn how to study well, they will acquire the knowledge and the competencies to pass exams, graduate and find work. Within the logic of learning, the experience of study is equated to learning and its focus is on putting knowledge towards instrumental and economic ends. In this sense, studying is acceptable and encouraged.

In this thesis, however, I will advocate for another way of thinking about study. I will offer a description of study as an experience that unfolds without predetermined outcomes. As such, study might not be seen as an educational activity within the logic of learning. Philosopher of education, Tyson Lewis (2013a), who has written extensively on study, comments:

> If we think of learning as oriented towards the measurability of determinate, reliable skill sets, studying suddenly appears to be a "useless" activity, devoid of quantifiable significance in the life of the student. And if we think of progressive education as a kind of willful pursuit of one's interests and desires in the name of self-determined subjectification, then studying, which does not desire ends and thus appears to be indifferent, seems rather odd, if not anti-educational. (p. 12)

Lewis (2013a) describes study as an experience that may be seen as anti-educational because it disrupts the educational expectations that students must actualize their potential and because it suspends definable learning outcomes indefinitely. Lewis claims that study might come across as an anti-educational experience but only within the logic of learning. However, despite its lack of predetermined outcomes, study is actually a very educational experience when understood outside of the context of learning.

The educational values of study have been discussed in the literature of philosophy of education since at least the early 1970s. In his 1971 essay *Toward a place for study in a world of instruction*, Robert McLintock writes that education has been reduced to teaching and learning. McLintock argues for more space and time for study and for replacing questions of what ought to be learned with questions about what opportunities for study ought to be offered (Lewis, 2013a, p. 13). Questions of what one receives as result of good teaching should be replaced by the question of what a person acquires during study (ibid.). In other words, McLintock's argument is not to think of education in terms of teaching and learning but rather in terms of studying.

The central argument of my thesis is that educators should devote more space and time to studying as I am convinced that study is an educational experience outside of the learning society and that it needs to be supported for its own sake. In the chapters that follow, I will outline three perspectives on the notion of study and highlight what is educational about studying when understood outside the logic of learning.

Study is an educational experience that has different functions and by 'function,' I do not mean that study has a purpose. To say that an educational experience has a purpose means that the student has concrete intentions to achieve predetermined goals and then deliberately sets out to meet those goals. On the other hand, study is an aimless activity that has at least three different functions. This is to say that the experience of study operates in certain ways and has certain features that are valuable within the educational context. In this thesis, I will describe three functions of study: as a form of resistance to the neoliberal logic in education, as a form of practice and specifically the practice of thinking, and, finally, study as an experience that results in a

shift in the way we perceive reality, thus opening new possibilities for the student to be in the world.

I will begin this thesis by describing a comprehensive theory of study developed by Tyson Lewis (2013a) and then offer two more theories of study that will highlight the dimensions of study that have not been discussed in detail in the existing literature on study so far. In one of the theories, I will highlight the link between study and practice, and argue that study is a practice of thinking. In the fourth chapter, I will contribute to the existing discussions about study in education by developing a new theory of study that is grounded in Lacanian psychoanalysis and in the work of the philosopher Slavoj Zizek.

Finally, one of my concerns is the impoverished way that educators talk about the people we teach. The focus of discourses about the human subjects of education is almost solely on student success, on learning outcomes and on student performance. The people we teach are often construed as 'learners' who lack certain skills and competencies. The task of the educators and educational institutions is to fill that lack, usually in a methodical way and according to predetermined success criteria. I strongly believe that it is necessary to re-think the learning discourses about the people we teach.

Thus, I will discuss alternative educational discourses about the human subjects of education and describe how the notion of study is embodied in the figure of the studier. In other words, I will discuss how the notion of study can be articulated both in how we talk about the people we teach and in what we think the studier looks like. I will describe the person who studies as a *studier*, which is a word distinct from other terms we might use to call the people we teach: as learners, students and speakers. Until the final chapter of this thesis, I will mostly be using the more common word 'student' to refer to the people we teach and in the last chapter, I will elaborate what it would mean to talk about them as studiers. In this thesis, I hope to provide a richer sense of the experience of study and describe alternative ways of talking about the people we teach.

Study as an educational concern

I have chosen the experience of study as an educational concern because I was motivated by my teaching practice. I have already described some of the general

concerns I have about treating education as a means to an end and I will further discuss my motivations for choosing to write about the topic of study in my thesis. I teach English as a Second Language to young adults who come from abroad to pursue undergraduate and graduate degrees in Canada. Most of my students need to take standardized tests that show they are proficient enough in English to function in regular university classes. Our language classes are not that big and there are usually no more than twenty students in each class. The language program where I work at the moment offers language classes that train students how to effectively read and write in English and we also offer listening and speaking classes, all with the goal to improve our students' English language proficiency.

I believe that our students are treated as 'learners,' or as people who lack the linguistic competencies necessary to study at Canadian universities. Universities in Canada have an English Only policy when it comes to displaying disciplinary knowledge, or in other words students must use only English in their academic studies in order to graduate. Because of the language policy, the number of preparation programs for academic success have proliferated and I teach in one such program. While schools normally provide students with the necessary skills and competencies in order to successfully function in the real world, I teach students the necessary skills to function in undergraduate and graduate classes. In other words, our program consists of classes that prepare students for more classes.

For a long time, I believed that students whose mother tongue is not English are treated unfairly because equality is deferred and our students are denied direct entry into the Canadian university system. However, now that I have done some research on the insistence of schools for students to actualize their potential, I think of my position differently. Though I cannot change the fact that my students are not treated equally to native speakers of English and that preparation for university classes can have the effect of 'hooking' people on schooling, I began to look for ways that I can treat my own classes differently. I treat my classes as opportunities to come together and to prepare for more education thus deferring self-actualization and fulfilling potential. In other words, we remain in potential.

This, however, does not mean that there are no assignments and deadlines like in 'regular' university classes. I do feel under pressure to produce language for my students, such as giving them my feedback and grades. I also feel pressure to pressure my students to produce speech too. Thus, it struck a chord with me when I first read about Jean-Francois Lyotard's notion of 'terror of democracy' in Derek Ford's (2016a) work on communist study.

By 'terror of democracy,' as he writes in one of his postmodern fables, Lyotard (1997) means the tendency of the 'general life' to force people to expose themselves, to articulate their opinions, to explain themselves, or in other words to produce speech. Lyotard writes that we live two lives: the secret and the general life. First, there is the 'secret life,' when

> …man lives at intervals unchecked, in freedom and in private, alone or with someone, be it for an hour a day, an evening a week, or a day a month; he lives for that private, free life of his from one evening (or day) to the next. (p. 115)

This secret life, according to Lyotard, is a right "…to remain separate, not to be exposed, not to have to answer to someone else" (p. 117). It is called a 'secret' life not because one prefers not to say what one knows but rather because it is "…'free,' because you don't know what *should* be said" (p. 116). But we also live 'general lives,' where we speak up, protest, articulate our thoughts, use language for all kinds of purposes, and such life also needs to be lived. However, as Lyotard writes, "…it's when general life seeks to take hold of the secret life that things go bad" (p. 118). General life is akin to that common expression of 'Publish or perish,' or in other words, "…if you are not public, you disappear; if not exposed as much as possible, you don't exist. Your no-man's land is interesting only if expressed and communicated" (p. 120). Lyotard's 'terror of democracy' is the tendency of the general life to see to it "…that we are all stationed on the edge of ourselves, turned toward the outside, benevolent, ready to listen and to speak, to dispute, to protest, to explain ourselves" (p. 120).

Ford (2016a) extends Lyotard's discussions to education and points out that in traditional, progressive and critical classrooms, students are under constant pressure to both actualize their potential and to bring their opinions and identities to signification, as are the teachers. There is little to no room for people to live out their secret lives and to

choose whether or not they want to articulate their opinions, identities and knowledge. Ford writes that the reason behind this constant pressure in education to put language to use is because "…like the demand for actualization, capital demands that the subject be made public, express itself … and represses the subject's secret life" (p. 10). Ford describes the secret as a region "…that we can't exactly *know,* that we can only *encounter:* it's a place of study" (ibid). Studying is an experience that belongs to the person who is not required to report back to anyone and to bring their knowledge to signification. In other words, studying provides the space and time for one to dwell in this 'no-man's land.' Though demanding speech from students and evaluating their learning is often seen as desirable in education, my research into the notion of study has helped me see educational practices and discourses in a different light.

Description of study in educational settings

I stumbled upon the topic of study by chance, and I will describe my own experience as one of the three examples of what study might look like in educational settings. My interest in Tyson Lewis's (2012b) essay on pirates and exo-pedagogy prompted me to attend his presentation of his paper *Studied Perception and a Phenomenology of Bodily Gesturality* (2013b) at the Philosophy of Education Conference in Portland, Oregon. At the time, the topic of study did not register with me. In other words, I was not aware that my study of study had already begun. Some time later chance intervened again and I bought Peter Sloterdijk's book *The Art of Philosophy* at my university's bookstore book sale. I was familiar with the author because I read a lot about his work in Slavoj Zizek's books. I had first wanted to read Sloterdijk's *Critique of Cynical Reason* but as luck would have it, the bookstore only had Sloterdijk's short but dense book on the art of philosophy. It was only as I was reading Sloterdijk's book that I began to remember what I heard in Portland and make connections.

This particular example illustrates what I mean when I claim that study is an aimless activity. Put differently, I did not set out to study study with an end in mind. Writing a thesis on the topic of study at the time was the furthest thing from my mind. There were no predetermined outcomes or motivations for me to attend Lewis's session or to read the books and journal articles that I was reading. Rather, I was driven by my own interests and curiosity more so than by finishing a dissertation. In other words, my

interest in study was not motivated by instrumental ends but was rather the product of chance encounters and luck.

The second example of what study might look like in educational settings is based on my experiences in the library and it illustrates what it means to dwell in what Lyotard calls 'no-man's land.' I began spending more time in the library and started wondering why I should not treat my class in the same way. When I walk into the library, studying is already in progress and when I leave, studying continues without me. Studying does not begin with me walking into the library but in my role as a teacher "educating" begins when I walk into my classroom. I am tasked with greeting the students, setting the agenda, getting the discussion going, checking homework, making sure students are following, measuring their learning by eliciting language from my students and then giving them feedback, and learning stops when I announce so. This would be the typical model of how a class is called to order and what is commonly expected of teachers to do during class.

However, when I walk into the library, nobody looks at me as a cue to start studying. It is already in progress and nobody asks me to check if they are on the right track or to ask for feedback. Everyone there is lost in thought, contemplating something and I have no idea what is going through their minds and I am not expected to. Every person seems to be living their secret lives and is not required to answer to anyone at that moment. When I walk into the library, I feel welcome and part of the community without any qualifications. Though it is quiet, I never feel lonely. There are regulars who recognize me and then there are ones who stay for a few minutes, never to appear again. And if we ever want to talk, we do so in a designated space and then we resolve back into our secret worlds.

The third and final example of what study might look like in an educational setting is the group I have belonged to for a few years called 'Lacan Salon.' We are a group of people with diverse backgrounds and interests, and we gather twice a month to discuss Jacques Lacan's seminars. We have a regular meeting space that is normally used as a classroom at the university. Attendance is not mandatory and there are no assignments, teachers or students, and no tuition fees. The group consists of artists, poets, professors, undergraduate and graduate students, writers, filmmakers, and we carefully

read and discuss Lacan's texts. As with any group, some people are more animated than others but there is nobody 'teaching' and nobody is 'learning.' For each of our meetings, there is a different facilitator who begins the discussion and brings in additional materials. The facilitator does not observe and evaluate anyone's speech but rather jumps in when the conversations die down or brings us back to the text when we get off track. Our discussions are thought-provoking and informative, and yet I do not feel that anyone gets anything from our discussions except the enjoyment of being together, exchanging ideas and finding out more about Lacan's work. We sit together for two hours at a time, read and discuss, and we go back to our regular lives until next time. I have gained many insights from attending Lacan Salon and formed life-long friendships. This is the model of a classroom where students gather, share space and circulate ideas, and it is a model I try to incorporate in my own teaching practice.

Features of study

These three examples illustrate how studying might look like in educational settings and they also provide some insights into how I think about education. Based on these descriptions of what study might look like in educational settings, I will now summarize some of the more salient features of study. I believe that studying unfolds without predetermined outcomes or, in other words, one does not necessarily set out to study a subject matter with a specific end in mind. Rather, studying is driven by curiosity and interests, and what comes out of studying is the product of chance encounters and luck. As I mentioned previously, studying provides room to live out our secret lives where we are not obliged to answer and to articulate to anyone what we get out of studying. Studying suspends the insistence that we must bring our thoughts to signification.

"The secret is, by definition, incommunicable, but this in no way prevents it from being a common region" (Ford, 2016a, p. 10) or, in other words, we can live our secret lives both in solitude and with others. My example of studying in the library illustrates how we dwell in this 'no-man's land' largely in solitude while the example of Lacan Salon demonstrates that we can study with others. During our discussions at the Salon, there are no teachers who demand speech from others and there are no learners whose language is evaluated against predetermined criteria that measure how successfully one has mastered a subject matter. Rather, we study as friends who exchange ideas and

enjoy being together. In my own practice, I try to treat my own classes in the same way. I try to position myself not as the teacher who demands speech but rather as another student who enjoys studying alongside fellow students.

The example of studying in the library illustrates another feature of study which is that it is always in progress. Studying is already in progress when I enter the library and it continues without me when I leave: "One does not need to be enrolled in any credits to study. Study is always taking place, even for the student who happens to be matriculating credits, studying is taking place before the credit hours begin" (Ford, 2016a, p. 57).

The library is one of those places where there is no teacher who calls the class to order and announces when studying begins and when it should end. The act of calling the class to order might seem like a small gesture that most teachers, including myself, probably do not think about in greater detail. However, this gesture poses certain problems. Stefano Harney and Fred Moten (2013) argue that the moment the teacher calls the class to order, he or she becomes the 'instrument of governance':

> My position, at that moment, what I am supposed to do is at a certain point become an instrument of governance. What I'm supposed to do is to call that class to order, which presupposes that there is no actual, already existing organization happening, that there's no study happening before I got there, that there was no study happening, no planning happening. I'm calling it to order, and then something can happen – then knowledge can be produced. That's the presumption. (p. 126)

In other words, the act of calling the class to order does not seem to take into account all the studying that is already in progress before the teacher walks in. As Harney and Moten (2013) describe it, when the teacher arrives, there is already the murmur of students talking about something of interest to them or writing or looking up information online, and so on. Calling the class to order does not take into account all the studying already taking place and unfolding without any predetermined ends. Harney and Moten rather propose that instead of announcing that class has begun, the teacher just acknowledge that class has begun, such as "Well, here we are," or even "Why are

we here?" The simple gesture of refusing to call the class to order would open up possibilities for something new and unexpected to emerge:

> How hard it would be, on a consistent basis, not to issue the call to order – but also to recognize how important it would be, how interesting it might be, what new kinds of things might emerge out of the capacity to refuse to issue the call to order? (Harney & Moten, 2013, p. 216)

And this is my favorite part of studying in the library. There is no cue for when studying ought to begin or when it should end. Studying is always in progress.

I have listed some of the salient features of the experience of study and I will be adding more in the chapters that follow. One of the most appealing aspects of study is that it is "…a contradictory, endless, and generative undertaking that takes place in a state of suspension and permanent sway. In this way, it resists the capitalist command to actualize being, to put it into practice" (Ford, 2016a, p. 56). The one who studies is always on the lookout for enclosures that allow the space and time to resist the capitalist command to produce speech and to actualize one's potential.

Such enclosures can be found even within the university, such as the library, which I see as an example of Harney's and Moten's 'undercommons': "The undercommons is what exists and persists and within all capitalist enclosures, whether they be spatial enclosures of property, temporal enclosures of production, or identitarian enclosures of subjectivity" (Ford, 2016a, p. 56). Studying is taking flight from learning and being a fugitive: "The one who studies – the student – is always on the run" (Ford, 2016a, p. 57). In this case, Ford specifically writes about being on the run from debt, which Ford sees as one of the components that make up the current structure of capitalism as "… a triumvirate of capital, learning, and debt. … the logic of learning and the rhythm of debt prop up and reinforce capitalist relations of exploitation and domination" (2018, p. 9). I rather think of studying as being on the run from learning outcomes, grades, student success, credentials, and all that comes with the logic of learning.

Statement of the problem

As already pointed out, within the educational logic of learning, individuals are formed according to predetermined criteria and are treated as resources to generate more capital. The focus is on endless production and signification. There is little room for the aesthetic experience in education and for enjoyment in being together. Education is reduced to being a means to end, which is to say that acquired knowledge must be put to use primarily for economic ends. In the following example of a university mission statement, education is construed as a means to cultivate certain qualities in individuals according to predetermined criteria. The knowledge that people learn is put to use towards becoming productive citizens who can navigate their way in a challenging world. My intent is to highlight an example of how education is talked about within the educational logic of learning and to describe the frame through which we see and experience education. The mission statement is as follows:

> To be the leading engaged university, defined by its dynamic integration of innovative education, cutting edge research, and far-reaching community engagement. Engaging Students: Equipping students with the knowledge, skills and experiences that prepare them for life in an ever-changing and challenging world. Engaging Research: Being a world leader in knowledge mobilization, building on a strong foundation of fundamental research. Engaging Communities: Being Canada's most community-engaged research university. (Simon Fraser University Mission Statement, 2018)

While Plato's Academy was founded on the premise of creating space that will accommodate absent-mindedness and contemplation, today's universities strive towards action and engagement with the world. Universities tend to distance themselves from the image of the "Ivory Tower," which signifies a community of intellectual elite who are disconnected from the world. Universities often highlight that it is not only their students that will engage with their communities. The educational institutions see themselves as putting their own research to use and they strive to actively engage with the community, contribute to the societal good and make a difference for the wider community. Within the logic of learning, one must act, produce, do something. Contemplating and interpreting the world far removed from the everyday existence is fine as long as it

results in action. In other words, universities are portrayed as spaces where one comes to learn rather than to study.

According to the above mission statement, people go to school to acquire the competencies necessary to adapt to a challenging world and to be socially responsible citizens. Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein (2008) describe universities as part of the knowledge economy that supply sufficient knowledge base and produce useful 'knowledge workers.' The knowledge described in the example mission statement is the acquisition of the skills and competencies needed to adapt to a changing world, and to actively engage with the community. Students' learning is measured by how successful they are in academic settings, or their Grade Point Averages (GPAs), how successful they are in finding employment and how active they are in the community. Some university programs organize activities that have students go out and engage within their own communities, and they are then evaluated based on their work outside of the classroom. The purpose of education is not solely about finding employment, but also about learning to adapt to a changing world and becoming a productive citizen and individual. Within the educational logic of learning and skills-acquisition, the individuals are required to self-actualize as both skilled workers and responsible citizens.

'Technological enframing' in education

Lewis (2013a) references Heidegger's term technological enframing for several reasons, one of which is to describe the view that individuals ought to be used as resources to achieve instrumental ends. Heidegger's notion of technological enframing in Lewis's work is used in order to describe a particular frame through which we see education.

There are many ways of interpreting Heidegger's 'technological enframing.' The term 'technological enframing' can be understood as a point of view that sees the world as meaningless until a willful human subject comes along and imbues it with meaning, and I will discuss this interpretation in the second chapter of this thesis. Another interpretation, as I will describe in the following paragraphs, is that technological enframing is a point of view that treats both the world and the individuals as something to be calculated and comprehended. Technological enframing is a particular kind of

perspective that treats individuals as resources to replicate and maintain the world as it is. Lewis claims that as a result of technological enframing, we are stuck in understanding education as *Bildung*, a German term that means to form and to cultivate. Education as *Bildung* is the perpetual improvement of self in accordance to predefined criteria, always oriented to the future in order to meet specific ends.

Slavoj Zizek (2014) describes Heidegger's technological enframing as the frame of a fundamental fantasy which structures the way we relate to reality and writes: "At its most radical, technology does not designate a complex network of machines and activities but the attitude towards reality which we assume when we are engaged in such activities: technology is a way reality discloses itself to us in contemporary times" (p. 29). Within Heidegger's technological frame, "...the human being reduced to an object of technological manipulation is no longer properly human; it loses the very feature of being ecstatically open to reality" (ibid.). For Lewis (2013a), individuals within the technological frame are treated as resources to achieve instrumental ends, whether it is to become productive citizens who work towards the betterment of society or skilled workers who generate capital and contribute to the economy.

An example of technological enframing is a model that I will call the 'school to workplace pipeline' because education is treated as a means for economic and corporate ends, and because it really is about pipelines. The 2014 document published by the British Columbia government entitled *BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint: Re-engineering Education and Training* describes in detail what direct entry from school to the workplace looks like. In this example, education is construed as supplying the skills and competencies to individuals so they can find jobs from which big corporations will ultimately benefit. At the beginning of the Jobs Blueprint, the former Premier of BC Christy Clark summarizes the purpose of the blueprint: "As part of our goal to maximize the potential of our existing workforce and our young workforce of the future, we have developed a plan that will give our young people a seamless path right from school through to the workplace" (2014, p. 2). The purpose of the document is to identify in-demand jobs and to align training with the demands of the labor market.

The document is the result of BC government's consultation with labor and industry leaders who estimated the number and kinds of jobs needed in order to grow

the province's economy. The projected workforce demand is based on input from corporations that include Shell Canada, Pacific Northwest LNG, Chevron, Imperial Oil and Fortis BC. The blueprint is specifically designed to meet the demands of the Liquefied Natural Gas (LNG) industry and lists in-demand jobs, such as welders, pipefitters, truck drivers, heavy equipment operators, purchasing agents, among others.

There are already pipelines in the province of British Columbia running through First Nations land, causing a public uproar over environmental concerns, and hundreds of protesters have been arrested at proposed drilling sites. Though the blueprint does have positive aspects, such as providing equal employment opportunities for both men and women, for at-risk youth, for people with disabilities and Aboriginal youth, the blueprint illustrates how individuals are treated as resources for economic ends, and how corporate interests permeate education.

Thus, looking at education through the frame of technological enframing poses problems. One of the issues is that within this frame, "…the subject is captured as a resource for the world; his or her choices become nothing more than reflexes of the needs of the world to replicate itself" (Lewis, 2013, p. 7). And, as Zizek has written, within this frame we are not properly human anymore because we lose our poetic receptivity to the world.

Another issue with the technological enframing is that schools are treated as the supplier of the knowledge economy and education needs constant renewal necessary for economic development and productivity (Simons & Masschelein, 2008). Within the logic of learning, people get education in order to develop qualities and skills necessary to find their place in an ever-changing world, and it falls on the individual to constantly renew their skills in order to stave off social and economic exclusion. In other words, one never stops learning. 'Lifelong learning' is highly valued in education even though it has the potential to create dependency on learning and on perpetual schooling.

To illustrate what such dependency might look like, I will give a brief example when I was asked to maintain the website for Lacan Salon (n.d.). I agreed to regularly update the website even though I had no prior experience developing or maintaining websites. As soon as I took on this responsibility, my mind immediately went to finding a course on website development. It is ingrained in my psyche that we need to go to

school to develop a certain set of skills and competencies, and though not everyone's mind will go in the same direction as mine, I began to examine more closely my own mindset. I began to wonder why I did not immediately think that I am going to play and tinker, figure out the website through trial and error, find information online, or ask a friend. It did not occur to me straight away that I can study how to maintain a website. Experiences such as these have made me wonder if there are more enriching ways of thinking and talking about education that go beyond the logic of learning.

Outline of the chapters

In the following chapters, I will outline three theories of study, describe the functions and highlight the educational values of study. My discussions will primarily be informed by philosophy, philosophy of education and psychoanalysis. The first theory that I will describe is a comprehensive theory of study developed by philosopher of education Tyson Lewis and is based on the work of the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben. The second theory of study is grounded in the theory of practice by the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. I will propose the term 'studious practice' to capture the dimension of study that, in my opinion, has been neglected so far. I will discuss study as a form of practice, and specifically as a practice of thinking. In the fourth chapter, I will develop a new theory of study that is based on the theory of the Event developed by the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek and is grounded primarily in Lacanian psychoanalysis. This chapter is my contribution to the existing discussions about study. I believe that Zizek's work has not been utilized enough in the literature on study so I will use Zizek's theory of the Event as a useful framework that can assist us in enriching discourses about study in education.

These three theories of study have diverse orientations and discourses. My goal is to use this diversity of discourses to illuminate the experience of study from multiple angles and to highlight the multiplicity of study's educational values. I will treat each as a point of view that illuminates another educational angle of the experience of study. I acknowledge that in some instances the three frameworks overlap but in others they diverge. My intention is not to reconcile their differences or to highlight their similarities but rather examine how each perspective *adds* to my own understanding of the educational values of study. In the final chapter, I will explore what it means to refer to

the people we teach as studiers and describe my own experience with a studier in the classroom. I will end this introductory chapter by discussing in broad strokes the theories of study which will form the bulk of my dissertation.

Study as experience of (im)potentiality

In the second chapter of this thesis, I will discuss Tyson Lewis's (2013a) theory of study and describe how this form of study suspends the logic of learning in education. Lewis defines learning as the actualization of students' potential in measurable forms while study is the experience of one's (im)potentiality that has no predetermined outcomes. Lewis explores several dimensions of study that include its temporal, spatial, methodological, aesthetic and phenomenological dimensions.

It is common to think that the purpose of education is to fulfill one's potential and to help people become the best they can be: "In fact, a "good" teacher is someone who is capable of pinpointing a student's potential, and in turn, can help that student actualize this potential in relation to an educationally productive end" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 2). Potentiality is understood as a positive capacity to achieve certain ends through taking specific actions and as such provides a structure that is essential for the dominance of learning (Lewis, 2013a, p. 5). Within the frame of potentiality, freedom is the ability to choose to become this or that as long as one develops the right skills and competencies to become whatever one wishes to become. Study, on the other hand, is an experience of potentiality that is accompanied by (im)potentiality (Lewis, 2013a). To be in a state of (im)potentiality does not mean being or feeling impotent. It means that a person has the skills and capacities to act but *chooses* whether to put those skills to use or not. Freedom within the frame of (im)potentiality is the freedom to choose to act or not, to know or not to know, or in other words, it is the freedom to actualize one's potential or not.

The experience of study resists and suspends the logic of learning by taking off the pressure to self-actualize, to grow and to fulfil one's potential. Study is a rhythmic and aimless activity that disrupts educational expectations, suspends definable outcomes and interferes with the notions that one must self-actualize as a productive citizen and individual. In practical terms, study can be described as beginning to learn

something with a goal in mind, such as write an assignment or learn to play an instrument, but the end retreats as soon as one begins to study and one ends up engaged in an activity that might have little to do with writing or playing an instrument. Within the logic of learning, this is labelled as procrastination and a waste of time whereas the experience of study is precisely the interruption of learning for a purpose.

The student roams through information, gets lost in thought and along the way discovers new information the student never intended to learn. The student is engaged in what Lewis calls 'studious play,' or tinkering and playing without knowing what one might learn. The student is curious, responsive, and indifferent to outcomes and ends. This lack of predetermined outcomes makes it difficult if not impossible to observe and measure what the student gets out of studying. The experience of study infuses education with the aesthetic experience because education is treated as pure means that awakens one's interests, desires, curiosity, and as a result, the student discovers new ways of being in the world.

Study is a self-organizing event that can happen anywhere and is shared with friends who circulate suggestions rather than demands. There are no goals to be achieved or outcomes to be met, and most importantly there are no debts to be repaid. Friends owe nothing to each other as they share space, care for each other and circulate ideas. While conserving their potential and living in the present, friends tinker, experiment and play, thus suspending definitive ends and outcomes of whatever they are engaged in. The notion of studying with friends opens up not only the social but also the ethical dimension of study: "Friendship is an ethical and political practice that does not constitute inequality between teacher and student so much as equality between study partners" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 137). In other words, one studies with friends as equals. Community of friends is an inoperative community of equals who remain in potential, study with no goals in sight, circulate suggestions, and take pleasure in being together and studying.

Study as a practice of thinking

In the third chapter of this thesis, I will describe a theory of study as a form of practice we engage in to sharpen our thinking. I believe that the link between study and

practice has not been discussed enough in the literature on study so I will add to the discussions by proposing the term 'studious practice' that could be used to refer to studying.

Practicing is common in education and can range from repeating the alphabet and multiplication tables to repeating words in the language classroom in order to practice the correct pronunciation of words. In this chapter, however, I will argue that there is more to practicing than repetitions and that there is, in fact, a close link between practice and study. I will portray practice as a hybrid between repetitions and a contemplative stance toward the world. I will primarily draw on the work of the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk (2012) and his discussion of what it means to practice "theoretical behavior," or life devoted to thinking. I will describe studying as a form of practice that allows us to shift from the common everyday existence to theoretical behavior by bracketing our preoccupation with the everyday. If the theoretical attitude, or life devoted to thinking, is a matter of practice, then the primary exercise is that of withdrawal (Sloterdijk, 2012). The student observes and takes in images from the everyday only to withdraw into an inner world and recollect the images captured while observing and contemplating. Study as a practice of thinking combines both active processes, such as repeating, listening, reading, or writing, and contemplative behavior that includes observing, meditating, daydreaming, and getting lost in thought.

The notion of study as shifting from the everyday to a contemplative stance toward the world can be traced back to Greek antiquity. I will turn to French historian of philosophy Pierre Hadot (1995) to describe a form of practice called spiritual exercises that were, in my opinion, a form of study the Stoics and the Epicureans engaged in so that they could figure out how to handle misfortunes and enjoy existing. Even though there were no textbooks, class schedules or evaluations of progress, spiritual exercises were still educational and transformational experiences that enabled the Stoics and the Epicureans to transform their perspectives on their surroundings. Spiritual exercises illustrate how studying can be seen as a form of practice and how practicing can include both active training and contemplation.

If study is a practice of thinking, then it is necessary to outline a theory of thinking. For this, I will turn to Hannah Arendt and her work *The Life of the Mind* (1978)

as one of the most comprehensive discussions on the topic of thinking. Arendt writes that thinking, along with willing and judging, is one of the three basic mental activities. Arendt draws on Kant's distinction between *Verstand* or the intellect and *Vernunft* or reason which is the faculty that makes us think. While the intellect tries to understand what senses perceive, reason tries to make meaning of sensory input. The intellect is driven by cognition and the quest for knowledge while reason is concerned with the unknowable and with finding meaning. Thinking is sheer activity of the mind and is reason's need or "…the inner impulse of that faculty to actualize itself in speculation" (Arendt, 1978, p. 69).

Arendt's discussions are useful to think about what it means to make time and space in education to practice thinking. We can construe time and space in terms of everyday topology, such as providing actual physical space and time for students to slow down and to practice thinking. For Arendt, however, ordinary topology does not suffice to describe where we are while we are thinking and the best way to describe where we are when we think is Nowhere, as in being homeless.

Arendt claims that while we are in space, we are also in time, collecting and remembering what is no longer present to the senses. The time for thinking is not to be construed in terms of time in ordinary life and its continuum from the past to the future. Rather, the time for thinking is the immovable present or *nunc stans* when one can retreat and find the quiet Now away from clocks and calendars, and devote oneself to an activity. Arendt's theory of thinking might not be the most useful discussion to help educators to literally arrange the optimal space and time for study. However, and more importantly, Arendt's discussions of space and time for thinking illuminate the nature of thinking and the educational values of study as a practice of thinking.

Study and the Event

In the fourth chapter, I will take a look at the experience of study in an 'evental' way. Put differently, I will discuss study by using Slavoj Zizek's (2014) theory of the Event as a useful framework that will assist me in developing a new theory of study and in enriching discourses about studying. I believe that the psychoanalytic dimension of Zizek's work has not been utilized enough in the existing literature on study so I will use

Zizek's theory of the Event, which is grounded in Lacanian psychoanalysis. I will also describe three specific features of study: as being captivated by an idea, as radical self-withdrawal and as getting lost in thought.

Another value of applying Zizek's theory of the Event to the experience of study in education is that it acknowledges the role of fantasy and the unconscious when we study. Finally, an evental approach to study is useful because it highlights an often overlooked aspect of education. While the logic of learning pivots around the accumulation of skills and competencies, the theory of the Event can assist in illuminating the dimension of study that is also about loss and undoing. The student can indeed acquire new knowledge while studying. However, this knowledge is fragile and can be undone. In other words, when we study, we not only gain knowledge but we also lose it because we can forget, repress, ignore, change our mind, and there are biological reasons for losing what we get out of studying too, such as traumas, brain illnesses, and so on.

My argument in this chapter is not that study *is* an Event. Rather, I will establish a link between studying and the Event and use Zizek's theory of the Event as a lens through which I will take a look at the experience of study. I will establish the connection between study and the Event by first discussing Agamben's (1995) claim that study is akin to a crash, or shock of impact, when the student comes across something new that leaves the student uncertain about how much he or she actually knows. Agamben's claim is that this shock reveals the never-ending and fragmentary nature of study and that it makes the student feel 'stupefied.' My claim is that the shock Agamben describes is an Event that rearranges the student's past knowledge and retroactively infuses student's previous experiences and perceptions with new meaning. This Event is neither study itself nor the beginning of study but is rather an integral and educational part of study because it retroactively changes how the student views and understands their past, and makes the student question their own perspectives.

According to Zizek, an Event can be anything from a natural disaster to falling in love or making an intimate decision that shifts our perspectives and, as a result, we reach a new level of being. One of the three main features of an Event is its circular structure, or in other words, it is an effect that exceeds its causes. Second, it is a

22

miraculous emergence of something new that alters not the material reality itself but rather our perceptions of it. Finally, an Event is an occurrence that undermines what Zizek calls 'the stable scheme' that we rely on to perceive ourselves and our surroundings. I believe that this stable scheme is another word for 'perspective' or 'point of view' that consists of the unconscious that frames our perceptions of material reality, and of fantasy that regulates our access to it. An Event is an intrusion whose impact sends ripples all the way down to our unconscious and to our fantasies, and we begin to see ourselves and the world in a new way.

I believe that the Event corresponds to the so-called Lacanian Real that should not be construed as material reality but rather as a sudden intrusion that resists signification and knowledge. The Real is one of the three dimensions of the human psyche as described by the French psychoanalyst Jaques Lacan (2016). In the fourth chapter, I will describe the Lacanian triad that consists of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, and highlight the correspondence between the Event and the Real.

The Event is like the Real that suddenly intrudes into our lives, much like a traumatic experience, and the human subject is unable to make it fit into the existing symbolic universe. Such an experience corresponds to someone who studies and comes across something so new that they cannot wrap their mind around it and cannot yet put it into words. Put differently, the student *encounters* rather than learns, and needs the space and time to 'digest' what he or she is experiencing. In the fast-paced world of the learning society where students have to learn and bring their knowledge to signification in order to demonstrate mastery, the encounter that I am describing might be labeled as procrastination and a waste of time. My claim is that, on the contrary, students need to slow down in order to encounter something new and make space for new experiences in their symbolic universe.

The Studier

In the final chapter, I will address the educational discourses about the people we teach. I have described some of my motivations to write my thesis on the topic of study, one of which is my concern about the impoverished ways that teachers and administrators tend to talk about the people we teach. One of the most common words

that is used is the term 'learner.' In the fifth chapter, I will discuss why I believe that this term is problematic and why it is necessary to think about alternative ways of talking about the people we teach.

I will propose that we use the term *studier* instead of the more commonly used terms, such as the 'learner' or the 'student.' I will begin my discussion by first situating the word studier among other terms that can be used to talk about the people we teach. Philosopher of education Gert Biesta (2010b) has written on the importance of language when it comes to how we talk about the human subjects of education. Biesta argues that term learner is problematic because it embodies 'stultifying pedagogy.' Learners are construed as people who lack skills and competencies and the task of the teacher is to fill that lack, usually by means of explications. The premise is that the inequality between the learner and the teacher is the starting point of education and that the purpose of explications is to bridge that gap. Biesta claims that the term student is somewhat better but that studying is not enough in itself. Biesta proposes that we should use the word 'speaker,' which is rooted in French philosopher Jacques Ranciere's (1991) emancipatory education. The speaker embodies emancipatory education that begins with the premise that our students do not need to learn to speak. Rather, they are *already* speakers. Emancipatory education begins with the assumption that there is no gap to bridge. It begins with the assumption of equality among all speaking beings.

In the final chapter of this thesis, I will continue the conversation by adding a term that is missing, namely the term studier. To continue the conversation, I will first highlight and problematize two persistent themes in Ranciere's emancipatory education, which are also reflected in Biesta's proposal that we refer to human subjects of education as speakers. The two persistent themes concern the centrality of will and of speech in education. I will then suggest another term that opens up an indeterminate space in educational discourses and that is distinct from other terms as they are used in Biesta's work. The studier is someone who is neither a learner nor a student, but not a speaker either. The term studier resists any sort of classification of educational subjects.

To illustrate what a studier might look like, I will use the story *Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall-street* written by Herman Melville. The protagonist of the story, Bartleby, has been described as the embodiment of Agamben's theory of study (Lewis,

2013a; Ford, 2016a; Vanhoutte, 2014) and referred to as the quintessential studier. I will add to these discussions by offering the interpretations of the story by the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1997) and the Slovenian philosopher and Lacanian psychoanalyst Alenka Zupancic (2011). I believe that Melville's story provides food for thought about how teachers relate to the human subjects of education, and is an occasion to reflect on the educational discourses about the people we teach. I will conclude my discussion by describing the features of the human subject of education that I would call the 'studier' and describe my own experience with a studier in my classroom.

Towards the three theories of study and the figure of the studier

As the title of this thesis *Learning and its Discontents: Three Theories of Study and the Figure of the Studier* suggests, my uneasiness with the learning discourses and practices prompted me to do more research on alternative educational experiences that can provide more options to me as a practicing teacher. I cannot reconcile myself to thinking about education as a means to an end. I cannot imagine spending any more of my time in the classroom or at the office discussing grades, exams schedules, learning outcomes, assignment criteria and deadlines. I am convinced that there is more to education than meeting learning outcomes and I believe that there are more enriching ways of talking and thinking about education and the people we teach.

I strongly believe that educators should make more space and time for studying in education and I hope that my thesis will contribute to enriching educational discourses about study. Although study unfolds without any predetermined outcomes that can be measured, it is still a valuable and educational experience that should be supported for its own sake. In this first chapter of my thesis, I have described some of the instances in my own experience when I felt that studying was taking place, such as at the library or at Lacan Salon where we spend hours deeply engaged in highly stimulating discussions without reaching any definitive conclusions. We enjoy being together and studying. I believe that educators can make more space and time for study in their classrooms and recognize moments when to suspend their educational expectations, to allow students to tinker with possibilities and to imagine their worlds as 'otherwise than.' However, I am not claiming that making room for study is an easy task. In the final chapter of this thesis,

I will describe my own experience with a studier in my classroom and discuss how difficult it can sometimes be for a teacher to set aside her occupation as the teacher and let go of her expectations and judgments in order to make room for studying. Carving out space for studying in the classroom is no easy task. It is my hope that the theories of study presented in this thesis will assist educators not just as theories but rather as 'pedagogical instruments' that can help teachers navigate educational settings and relationships.

Chapter 2.

Study as experience of (im)potentiality

Introduction

The word *study* comes from Latin 'studium,' which means to be busy, to concentrate and to devote oneself to an activity. Dictionaries yield different results about what it means to study. The online resource Dictionary.com describes the methods of study as the application of the mind to the acquisition of knowledge by reading, investigation or reflection. Similarly, the Merriam-Webster dictionary defines study as the application of mental faculties to the acquisition of knowledge, and the Oxford online dictionary describes study as devoting time and attention to gaining knowledge of an academic subject, usually by means of books. In all instances, study is equated to the acquisition and the application of knowledge in order to learn a subject matter in some depth. In other words, the experience of study is synonymous to the learning and the mastery of a subject matter.

However, recent discussions in philosophy of education do not treat study as learning, or the purposeful acquisition and the application of knowledge (Lewis, 2011, 2012, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c; Ford, 2016a, 2016b). In this chapter, I will first discuss what is understood by learning in philosophy of education and outline the reasons why the logic of learning is problematic. I will discuss why it is necessary to suspend the discourses and practices of learning, and describe one of the most comprehensive theories of study as the experience of one's (im)potentiality. This theory of study was developed by the philosopher of education Tyson Lewis (2013a), which is grounded in the 'idea of study' by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1995). The theory of study as the experience of the human subject's (im)potentiality posits study as an educational experience that provides opportunities for educators and students to suspend the logic of learning and its insistence that students' potential *must* be actualized through constant performance testing. The function of study in this case is to suspend the neoliberal trends in education, or the insistence on actualizing one's potential in the name of generating more capital. The benefit of creating more space and

time for studying in education is that study provides more opportunities for students and educators to devote themselves to educational activities without the imperative to actualize their potential.

According to Lewis (2013a), study is an aimless activity that infinitely defers mastery of a subject matter and the actualization of one's latent potential. While it may seem anti-educational within the context of learning, study still has educational benefits. Lewis's project is to rethink and reconnect potentiality with a practice of education beyond the logic of learning, to rethink freedom in education and to portray education as an aesthetic experience that is not overshadowed by skills training and the fulfillment of one's potential. These three pillars of Lewis's work will assist me in highlighting the educational values of studying.

The problem with the logic of learning

First, I will discuss how learning is described in philosophy of education and discuss why it is necessary to introduce alternative educational experiences. Recent critiques about the learning discourses and practices reveal several problems with the logic of learning. For instance, philosopher of education Gert Biesta has written extensively about the dangers of what he calls the "learnification" of educational discourses (2005, 2008a, 2010a, 2014). Biesta (2008a) claims that the past two decades have witnessed the rise of the concept of learning:

> This rise of what I have called the 'new language of learning' is manifest, for example, in the redefinition of teaching as the facilitation of learning and of education as the provision of learning opportunities or learning experiences; it can be seen in the rise of the word 'learner' instead of 'student' or 'pupil'; it is manifest in the transformation of adult education into adult learning, and in the replacement of 'permanent education' by 'lifelong learning.' (p. 37)

I have witnessed this rise of the language of learning at the university where I work. For example, the department I work at recently changed its name from 'Continuing Studies' to 'Lifelong Learning.' Another example is a gathering place called 'The Learning Hub' at the university where students meet to study, work on their homework, or connect with peers. A further example is the course outline that I have to submit to the

administration and to my students at the beginning of each term. The course outlines describe what students will study and these descriptions are always framed in terms of 'learning outcomes.' The purpose of the course outlines is to inform the students of the learning outcomes and to describe how their performance will be evaluated. Biesta (2008a) writes that this "…rise of the new language of learning is part of a wider process of the 'learnification' of education, a process which is increasingly having an impact on educational policy and practice itself" (p. 39). The 'learnification' of education refers to the shift in vocabulary that frames everything that has to do with education in terms of learning. Biesta (2005) identifies two broad problems with 'learnification':

> One problem is that the new language of learning facilitates an economic understanding of the process of education, one in which the learner is supposed to know what he or she wants, and where a provider (a teacher, an educational institution) is simply there to meet the needs of the learner or, in more crude terms: to satisfy the customer. (p. 60)

The language of learning construes the people we teach as 'learners' who lack, for example, the necessary skills and competencies to pass exams or find employment. During my own teacher training courses, I have been told time and again that I need to identify what my students lack and assess their needs so that their education becomes more relevant and meaningful to the students.

> The first reason, therefore, to be against learning – that is, to be against a language which makes it possible to present education in terms of 'meeting the needs of learners' – is that the underlying assumption that learners come to education with a clear understanding what their needs are, is a highly questionable assumption. (Biesta, 2005, p. 59)

This is not to say that students are clueless about what they want. Rather, as Biesta (2005) writes, education comes with a risk that students might not learn what they wanted to learn, that they might learn things they never imagined they would learn and perhaps that they learn something about the world or themselves that they would rather have never learned (p. 61). One of the problems with framing education in terms of learning is that education has come to be seen as a transaction between the learner who supposedly knows what he or she wants to learn and the teacher or an educational

institution. The premise is that (adult) learners come to class knowing what they want to get out of their education and the job of the teacher is to satisfy their demands. The language of learning frames education as a means to an end and the educational relationship is framed as the relationship between the consumer and the provider.

The portrayal of educational relationships as a transaction between the learner, or the consumer, and the teacher as the provider also diminishes the role of the teacher who is reduced to being "…'a guide on the side' and according to some, even the 'peer at the rear'" (Biesta, 2016, p. 387). If the premise is that the learner knows what they want, then the teacher's role is to be on stand-by and assist only when necessary. The rise of the language of learning and the subsequent decline of the concept of education have turned teaching into facilitation of learning: "Teaching has … become redefined as supporting or facilitating learning, just as education is now often described as the provision of learning opportunities or learning experiences" (Biesta, 2005, p. 55).

The second problem "…with the logic of the new language of learning is that it makes it difficult to raise questions about the content and purpose of education, other than in terms of what 'the consumer' or 'the market' wants" (Biesta, 2005, p. 60). Biesta (2014) argues that the language of learning refers to processes that are empty in regards to content and purpose of education:

> The danger with the rise of the language of learning in education is that these questions are no longer asked, or they are already answered (for example on the suggestion that the only relevant content is academic content, that the only relevant purpose is academic achievement, and the only relevant relationship is for teachers to train students so that they generate the highest possible test scores). (p. 234)

The language of learning has replaced questions about the content, purpose and relationships in education with managerial discourses about the efficiency of learning processes which are empty and primarily driven by the global market. Biesta (2010a) continues:

> Such discourses often appear to be about the quality of education – think, for example, of discussions about the effectiveness of education or on accountability

in education – but in fact never address the question of good education itself. They rather displace the *normative* question of good education with technical and managerial questions about the efficiency and effectiveness of processes, not what these processes are supposed to be for. (p. 2)

The prevailing contemporary educational imaginary is that learning is a smooth process that can be managed by making sure that the transaction between the consumer and the provider is efficient and based on consumer's needs. As Biesta (2005, 2010a) has argued, the difficult questions about the content and purpose of education have been neglected in favor of meeting the demands of the global market. The language of learning seems to have neglected that "…the point of education is not that students learn, but that they learn *something*, that they learn it for particular *reasons*, and that they learn it *from someone*" (Biesta, 2014, p. 234). Biesta's (2005, 2008a, 2010a, 2014) project is, thus, to jumpstart the conversations about the content and purpose of education and to redefine the role of the teacher in education (2012, 2016).

For Biesta (2005, p. 60) the learning discourses facilitate an economic understanding of the process of education where education is equated to the transaction between the consumer and the provider. While for Biesta the learner is the consumer who must be provided with the skills and competencies that they lack, Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein (2008) portray the learner as someone who is under constant threat of social and economic exclusion. Within the learning society, the learner must be capable of adapting to the ever changing work environments because the threat of unemployment is always looming. In other words, for Simons and Masschelein, learning is not about consumption but rather about survival.

Within the learning society, learning does not end with graduation. Rather, skills training demands continual reinvestment in order for the learner to stave off the threat of social and economic exclusion (Simons & Masschelein, 2008):

To live an entrepreneurial life is not about having a position (in a normal, socialized structure), but is about moving around in different environments or networks in order to remain employed in the "continuous business of living." Moving in an environment (whether the environment of the family or the family network, the working environment, the environment for leisure, the cultural

environment, or any other) requires that one possesses a set of skills and knowledge or competencies. (p. 410)

The skills and competencies necessary to cope in a changing world require constant renewal and:

…learning becomes an organizing principle for optimizing labor productivity, and in turn the citizen becomes first and foremost a learner within a flexible, knowledge economy that demands constant "retraining" or "reskilling" to fulfill high-tech, informationally rich jobs. With the rise of the learning society, everyone is put under heightened risk, and survival becomes the ultimate imperative. (Lewis, 2011, p. 586)

Learning is the fundamental force that has "…become a matter of both government and self-government" (Simons & Masschelein, 2008, p. 393). Learning is managed by adults themselves because "…the changing society and the need to be able to cope with changes build the horizon for stressing the importance for self-regulation to one's learning" (Simons & Masschelein, 2008, p. 399). In this context, the learner is regarded not only as someone who acquires the adequate competencies and skills but also as someone "…who is capable of renewing this knowledge base permanently, and learning is regarded as a condition for economic development and productivity" (Simons & Masschelein, 2008, p. 397).

Learning comes with a promise of freedom: "Learning becomes regarded as a *condition for individual freedom*, and people are addressed as being responsible for their own learning and for regulating their learning. This could be regarded as an attitude of "responsibilization" toward learning" (Simons & Masschelein, 2008, p. 399). And if one acquires the necessary skills and competencies, they are free to choose to become this or that, free to move around and adapt to ever-changing environments. However, the authors suggest that we should value another kind of freedom – the freedom from learning itself: "Rather, we find it necessary to free ourselves from learning itself, specifically from the experience of learning as the fundamental force that is necessary for our freedom and for collective well-being" (p. 415) and conclude that what is needed today is "…to liberate ourselves from our obsession with learning" (Ibid).

In sum, the two critiques of the learning society and the learning discourses paint a picture of the learner as the consumer (Biesta, 2005) and as someone who is under constant threat of being excluded, which requires continual renewal of skills and competencies in order for the learner to survive (Simons & Mascchelein, 2008). Lewis (2011), however, portrays the learner as an infinite potentiality that *must* be actualized: "The major problem with neoliberalism is not that it views the child or the student as a lack but rather that it views the child as an infinite potentiality that *can* and *must* be actualized through constant performance testing" (p. 587). Lewis examines the learning society and the learning discourses by addressing the commonly held belief that the purpose of education is to fulfil one's potential. Lewis (2013a) writes that potentiality provides a certain structure necessary for the dominance of learning:

> Potentiality is linked directly to the question of economic viability and human capital. To realize one's potentiality is to actualize it in terms of a clearly identifiable skill set that serves an economic function within a globally competitive market. Potentiality is transformed into a commodity that is to be managed in order to be made productive for a predetermined, economically driven end. All potentiality that counts as potentiality must be translatable into utilizable skills. In other words, skills training and fulfilling potentiality become completely synonymous. (p.3)

The commonly held belief that the purpose of education is to fulfill students' potential can be seen as the effect of capitalism's insistence "…on the actualization of the subject, which forces the subject into an already-existing identity, into being x or y, or into the production of a new identity that can then be captured within the capitalist production and circulation of value" (Ford, 2016a, p. 52). Furthermore, the problem with learning in the name of actualizing one's potential is that:

> …learning is about inculcating students into a predetermined role in society, limiting education to the goals of social efficiency and the dictates of human capital. Learning is about transferring the skills, knowledges, dispositions, habits, bodily comportments, and so on that will facilitate the transfer of the student into the world. Thus, there is a violence done to both the student and the world within the learning regime, wherein the student and the world are deprived of the

33

opportunity of the event—the birth of the radically new. This violence can happen

through various forms of education, including constructivist, progressivist, and

critical ones. (Zhao & Ford, 2017, p. 110)

Lewis (2013a) claims that learning is a form of biocapitalism, which:

…is a particular form of capitalism that does not depreciate or use-up one's labor

power so much as continually invests in the production and reproduction of such

power through a total integration of one's potentiality into an economic/learning

structure that emphasizes continual reskilling in order to survive within

competitive global markets. (p. 4)

In Lewis's view, within the learning society, students are not treated as lacking

knowledge and skills but rather as infinite potentialities that can and must be actualized

through constant performance testing and lifelong learning. Lewis (2014) finds the logic

of learning problematic: "While learning in and of itself is an invaluable educational

experience, when it becomes a dominant apparatus, other educational activities either

(a) are ignored, or (b) become subsumed within the overarching and all encompassing

logic of learning" (p. 163). Lewis (2013a) critiques the learning society also because:

…there is no room for the possibility that potentiality might resist the process of

managerial control and skill-based implementation, or that the pleasure of

learning might not coincide with the fulfillment of potentiality in the form of

measurable, identifiable, and commodifiable skills, or that social betterment might

lie outside the framework of perpetuating a successful economy within global

capitalism. (p. 3)

Within the learning society, "…students lose the opportunity to experience their

potentiality as such – potentiality that *prefers not to* abide by the rules of the neo-liberal

learning university" (Lewis, n.d.). To find alternatives to the discourses and practices of

learning, Lewis (2013a) turns to the theory of study by the Italian philosopher Giorgio

Agamben who offers an alternative to the neoliberal demands that students *must*

actualize their potential in the name of generating more capital. Instead of fulfilling our

potential, Agamben suggests that we conserve it: "According to Agamben, the stakes

are very real, for it is in a state of prolonged potentiality that we can begin to feel inspired and once again experience our freedom to be otherwise than" (Lewis, n.d.).

Study as alternative to learning

As mentioned, Lewis's project is to rethink potentiality and reconnect it with a practice of education that will go beyond the logic of fulfilling one's potential. Lewis describes such a practice of education as study. Study is the experience of one's (im)potentiality which "…is not simply impotence, but is an active capability for not-doing or not-being" (Lewis 2013a, p. 8) and its function is to suspend the predominant discourses and practices of learning. Agamben (1995) defines study as a rhythmic activity that has no end and does not even desire one:

> Study, in effect, is per se interminable. Those who are acquainted with long hours spent roaming among books, when every fragment, every codex, every initial encounter seems to open a new path, immediately left aside at the next encounter, or who have experienced the labyrinthine allusiveness of that "law of good neighbors" whereby Warburg arranged his library, know that not only can study have no rightful end, but does not even desire one. (p. 64)

Agamben describes certain qualities of study. Agamben (1995) writes that study has a rhythm: "This *festina lente,* this shuttling between bewilderment and lucidity, discovery and loss, between agent and patient, is the rhythm of study" (p. 64). The experience of study is accompanied by feelings of sadness because study is incessant and there is no end in sight:

> …nothing is bitterer than a long dwelling in potential. …The end to study may never come – and in this case, the work is stuck forever in the fragmentary or note stage – or coincides with the moment of death, when what had seemed a finished work reveals itself as mere study. (Agamben, 1995, p. 65)

Justin Clemens (2010) describes this moment of death when the studier believes himself or herself a master of a subject matter only to realize that he or she has just begun studying:

The scholar, smacked across the forehead by an unexpected enigma, who is no longer convinced that he or she knows what he or she is supposed to know, compulsively pursues his or her stupefaction through the texts that he or she may once have thought that they had known, deranged by details which now shift and crawl and become other than they are meant to have been. (p. 7)

As a rhythmic activity that does not even desire an end, study is the experience of moving forward only to withdraw from certain aims. As such, studying might be labeled as procrastinating, doing nothing and wasting one's potential within the learning society. Ford (2016a) provides a description of study as the deferral of aims:

When we roam in the archives, follow link after link after link on the internet until we end up watching obscure YouTube videos, the ends of our project are distanced or, more accurately, they are suspended. In the learning society, such wandering is interpreted as procrastination. We tend of think of what is studying as getting distracted and sidetracked. This interpretation follows directly from the obsession with actualizing potential and from the demand that learning contribute directly and immediately to the functioning of capitalism. (p. 53).

As an interminable experience, study goes against the predominant discourses and practices of learning that construe education as a straightforward path from student's potentiality to its actualization. While learning is concerned with ends and identifiable outcomes, study on the other hand is incessant and is all about pure means:

Whereas learning is always concerned with and determined by *ends* (learning goals, outcomes, etc.), studying is about *means:* it is definitional of studying that when one engages in the act one does not have an end in mind. When one sets out to study there may be an end in sight (a dissertation or a book, or a piece of information or a theoretical development), but as one begins to study the end retreats. (Ford, 2016b, p. 455)

Because it is incessant, study interrupts educational expectations and suspends definable outcomes indefinitely (Lewis, 2013a, p. 12).

Study is a kind of weak educational logic that does not desire ends, prefers not to be quantified, and thus falls outside the standard approach to learning, learning

outcomes, and learning assessments. Because of this, study is often viewed with suspicion in the ends-oriented framework that dominates most educational practices and evaluations today. Yet for scholars concerned with study, this most obscure of practices grants the studier unique opportunities to experience his/her potentiality, passion for ideas, and educational freedom from ends. (Lewis, 2017, p. 231)

As I wrote in the previous chapter, although study may appear anti-educational within the learning society, I believe that it is still an educational experience when looked outside the context of the logic of learning. As an educational experience, study suspends the imperative of the learning society that the student must actualize his or her potential. Instead of actualizing our potential, Agamben proposes that we conserve it.

Aristotle's two potentialities

Agamben (1999) writes that the concept of potentiality has occupied a central position in Western philosophy at least since Aristotle who opposed potentiality to actuality (p. 177). Potentiality, Agamben argues, has held this central position because:

For everyone a moment comes in which she or he must utter this "I can," which does not refer to any certainty or specific capacity but is, nevertheless, absolutely demanding. Beyond all faculties, this "I can" does not mean anything – yet it marks what is, for each of us, perhaps the hardest and bitterest experience possible: the experience of potentiality. (p.178)

Aristotle distinguished two kinds of potentiality (Agamben, 1999; Ford, 2016a; Lewis, 2013a). The first is called generic potentiality, which is to say "…that a child has the potential to know, or that he or she can potentially become the head of State. …The child, Aristotle says, is potential in the sense that he must suffer an alteration (a becoming other) through learning" (Agamben, 1999, p. 179). The generic potentiality informs the "…discourses of the learning society, which emphasize investment into potentiality in order to fully actualize this potential in the form of constant measurement of performance outcomes" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 6). The logic of the generic potentiality is that the child is 'not yet' that 'must be': "…not yet an adult, not yet a citizen, not yet a productive member of society. Thus the child must suffer an alteration through learning

that destroys the not yet in order to fully actualize a latent potentiality for adulthood, citizenship, or productivity" (Lewis, 2011, p. 588).

For Lewis (2011), the paradox of generic potentiality is that "…to actualize potentiality is to destroy it. In this schema, potential in other words becomes subordinate to actuality' (p. 588). Thus, the child's potential must be eliminated "…in order for the passage to the act to be complete and for the learner to rightfully take a place within the allotted order of things (either in relation to the economic, the political, or the social). To fulfill potentiality is to destroy it in the name of efficiency and effectiveness, commanding and controlling the possibilities offered by potentiality according to a sovereign logic (the logic of biocapitalism)" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 6). Learning "…concerns deadlines or lines that end with the death of potentiality. Tests are therefore grave markers - not markers of what has passed out of actuality but rather of what has passed into actuality" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 6). In other words, once potentiality passes into actuality, it becomes indistinguishable and the student no longer has potential.

Agamben (1999) writes that Aristotle was not interested in generic but rather in 'existing potentiality' that is "…not simply the potential to do this or that thing but potential to not-do, potential not to pass into actuality" (p. 180). It is the kind of potentiality that is "…freed from the actualization imperative" (Ford, 2016b, p. 3). This existing potentiality in Aristotle's work rests on the notion that one has the knowledge or an ability and at the same has the freedom to choose whether to use this knowledge or not: "In this sense, we say of the architect that he or she has the *potential* to build, of the poet that he or she has the *potential* to write poems" (Agamben, 1999, p. 179). Contrasting generic to existing potentiality, Agamben (1999) writes:

> Whoever already possesses knowledge, by contrast, is not obliged to suffer an alteration; he is instead potential, Aristotle says, thanks to a *hexis,* a 'having,' on the basis of which he can also *not* bring his knowledge into actuality by *not* making a work. (p. 179)

In other words, an architect and a poet who conserve their potential "…equally have the capability to bring knowledge into actuality and not bring knowledge into actuality" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 7).

38

Existing potentiality is a kind of potential that is accompanied by (im)potentiality or the active capacity not to be, say, an architect or a poet: "…the architect is potential insofar as he has the potential to not-build, the poet the potential to not-write poems" (Agamben, 1999, p. 179). Existing potentiality is the potential that is not actualized and thus exhausted but rather potential that is conserved:

> By conserving itself, potential remains (im)potential. (Im)potential in my usage is not simply impotence, but is an active capacity for not-doing or not-being. To experience (im)potentiality is therefore the experience of not-writing that enables the poet to develop proficiency through sustained reflection, planning, speculation, imagination, etc. (Lewis, 2011, p. 588)

The existing potentiality is not something to be overcome and treated as a stumbling block towards actualizing one's full potential so that an individual can flourish, contribute to the economy and become a productive citizen. Rather, the value of conserving potentiality is that it "…permits a new relation to one's own impotency. Thus, all theories of potentiality must also and equally be theories of the (im)potential, for it is the (im)potential of potentiality that enables free choice" (Lewis, 2011, p. 588). Establishing a new kind of relation to one's (im)potentiality, or the active capacity not to be or not to do, allows one to experience a kind of freedom that the logic of biocapitalism forecloses: "…because it disrupts the demand for performativity and efficiency" (Ford, 2016b, p. 3). As Lewis (2011) points out, by foreclosing one's freedom not to be and "…in their constant quest for actualization of latent potentiality, markets strangle the (im)potential of the student and thus leave the student without the sense of agency, without a sense of freedom" (p. 590).

Freedom in education

Study is an educational experience because it allows the student to experience freedom, and specifically the freedom to not-be or not-act. Its educational value is that it:

> …enables us to retain our (im)potential, and in turn recognize that our very potentiality to not be is in fact our greatest form of freedom. Thus if the lesson of learning is to become a self-regulating entrepreneur then the lesson of study is to

become nothing at all but rather remain within a pure capacity to be or not to be. (Lewis, 2011, p. 587)

The experience of study as described in Agamben's work offers a new notion of educational freedom because it allows us to establish a new kind of relationship to our own (im)potentiality. While studying, the imperative to actualize one's potential is suspended and the mastery of a subject matter is infinitely deferred. Rather than actualizing potential, the studier conserves it and it is this "…giving of potentiality to itself that is the experience of freedom" (Lewis, 2011, p. 588). Studying suspends the logic of learning and its insistence on mastery, the actualization of one's potential and the measurement of students' performance:

Education has become obsessed with the measure of what someone *can* do in order to fulfill a particular role within the economy, yet for Agamben, this obsession with assessment and verification of actualization is itself a form of evil that destroys the students' freedom to not be. (Lewis, 2011, p. 589)

The 'Whatever Being'

Study is an educational experience because it teaches us what it means to have a sense of agency and freedom. For Agamben (1999), freedom resides "in the abyss of human potentiality" which is "…first of all potential not to act" (p. 181):

To be free is not simply to have the power to do this or that thing, nor is it simply to have the power to refuse to do this or that thing. To be free is, in the sense we have seen, *to be capable of one's own impotentiality,* to be in relation to one's own privation. (p. 183)

A being that is capable of one's own (im)potentiality is what Agamben calls a 'whatever being' that "…is special, or a pure singularity, because it does not belong to any set or class. …To be special is to remain indistinct and unrepresentable, and free of any determination to be or not to be set in advance" (Lewis, 2011, p. 589). The term 'whatever' (Agamben, 1993) stems from Latin *quodlibet* whose:

common translation as "whatever" in the sense of 'it does not matter which, indifferently' is certainly correct, but in its form the Latin says exactly the opposite: *Quodlibet ens* is not 'being, it does not matter which,' but rather 'being such that it always matters… The Whatever in question here relates to singularity not in its indifference with respect to a common property (to a concept, for example: being red, being French, being Muslim) but only in its being *such as it is.* (p. 1)

The 'whatever' being is not a particular subject with a set of predicates, such as being x or y, but not a universal subject either: "Thinking of the subject *such as it is* is to think of the singular not in its identity or difference, but in all of its singularity … without being reduced to a universal subject" (Ford, 2016a, p. 48). Agamben (1993) describes this in-difference in the following way:

Whatever is constituted not by the indifference of common nature with respect to singularities but by the indifference of the common and the proper…In-difference with respect to properties is what individuates and disseminates singularities, makes them loveable (quodlibetable). (p. 19)

The universal and the particular, or the "…genus and individual are only the two slopes dropping down from either side of the watershed of whatever" (Agamben, 1993, p. 20). The 'whatever' being is based on Agamben's neither-nor logic, which is to say that the 'whatever' is neither a particular nor a universal subject. Jacob Meskin and Harvey Shapiro (2014) describe the whatever being as "…a being that is at once connected to or affiliated with a broad concept (being red) and yet at the same time *singular* (just this red here)" (p. 424). Thus, the 'whatever' being is neither particular nor universal and, as I quoted Lewis (2011) previously, the 'whatever' being resists rightfully taking a place within the allotted order of things. It is, rather, in-different and unrepresentable, a pure singularity.

As such, the 'whatever' being is free to be this or that or nothing at all. Whatever does not belong to any category or class, resists classification and conserves its potential:

…it is not capable of only this or that specific act, nor is it therefore simply incapable, lacking in power, nor even less is it indifferently capable of everything, all-powerful: The being that is properly whatever is able to not-be; it is capable of its own impotence. (Agamben, 1993, p. 35).

Agamben's use of the 'whatever being' "…is an ardent critique of all theories of generic potentiality that reduce potentiality to a means to an end (an act) … Agamben is working to define potentiality as a means without end, a pure immanence without measure" (Lewis, 2011, p. 589). Experiencing our (im)potentiality means experiencing freedom to remain special without "…predetermined conditions of belonging ... In letting life be special, we undo "the original sin of our culture" which consists precisely in "the transformation of the species into a principle of identity and classification" (Ibid).

Stupidity and study

A 'whatever' being is capable of maintaining a relationship to his or her (im)potentiality and the freedom to not be. This (im)potentiality can manifest itself as boredom: "What, for example, is boredom, if not the experience of the potentiality not-to-act?" (Agamben, 1999, p. 181) or as a kind of 'stupidity.' Agamben (1995) gives a brief etymology of the word study, whose roots can be traced to the Latin word *studium* which:

> …goes back to a st- or sp- root indicating a crash, the shock of impact. Studying and stupefying are in this sense akin: those who study are in the situation of people who have received a shock and are stupefied by what has struck them, unable to grasp it and at the same time powerless to leave hold. The scholar, that is, is always 'stupid.' (p. 64)

While studying, the outcomes and mastery of a subject matter are infinitely deferred, and as Agamben claims, study remains in a fragmentary stage with no aim in sight. Study can thus induce this stupefying feeling in the scholar who feels "…a pain not unfamiliar to anyone who has undergone intense and concentrated research – without clear direction, without a clear methodology, without an end in sight" (Lewis, 2011, p. 592). Because study is incessant and the end is deferred, it might get confused with

lifelong learning which is highly valued by the learning society. Lewis (2011) draws a distinction between study and lifelong learning:

> Life-long studying is not the same as life-long learning. If the latter emphasizes outputs and performance assessments to meet the constantly changing needs of the economy, then the former resists such instrumental ends and instead dwells in the moment of stupidity without end. (p. 592)

The 'stupid' scholar is neither ignorant nor a master of a subject matter: "When studying one is no longer ignorant but is not yet a master. Studying pushes toward and withdraws from the command of knowledge" (Ford, 2016b, p. 4). Stupidity, as Agamben describes it, is neither about ignorance nor mastery. Rather, this 'stupefying' feeling provides one with a sense of freedom because one can experience his or her (im)potentiality. Studying, as Lewis (2011) claims, makes us stupid but this stupidity is also "…a gift that thought gives itself in order to remain (im)potential. Stated differently, it is the guarantee that thought can actualize itself without extinguishing itself" (p. 592).

So far, I have discussed the educational value of studying as an experience that suspends the dominant discourses and practices of learning that are organized according to the means-ends principle where education is construed not only as a means for adapting to the global market but also as a means for maintaining the world as it is:

> Whereas learning is always directed by predetermined and measurable ends, studying is about pure means, about exploring, wandering, getting lost in thought, forgetting what one knows so that one can discover that the world exists otherwise than the way that one knows it. (Ford, 2016a, p. 57)

One of the reasons why there should be more time for studying in education is that the experience of study allows us to imagine the world and ourselves as 'otherwise than.' Within the learning society, human subjects are treated as infinite potentialities that can and must be actualized through constant observations and performance testing. The skills and competencies that learners gain require constant reinvestment in order to stave off the threat of social and economic exclusion. While the learner comes to believe

that he or she is capable of everything, the learner becomes estranged from his or her (im)potentiality and at the same time from feeling free and having a sense of agency.

Studying, on the other hand, is the never-ending and stupefying quest for knowledge without an aim in sight, and is the experience of "…our capacity to be otherwise, to think otherwise, to live otherwise" (Lewis, 2011, p. 590). Lewis (2011) claims that it is necessary to turn to the twin concepts of (im)potentiality and Agamben's theory of study in order to challenge the common (mis)conceptions of educational freedom and to critically think "…against the grain of the dominant neo-liberal discourse on learning" (p. 587). As a pure experience of one's im-potentiality, study "…offers a radically different notion of educational freedom" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 12). Within the logic of learning, we are free when we acquire the necessary knowledge and skills, and then use those competencies for instrumental and economic ends. However, as Lewis (2011) points out, "…what the liberal democratic learning society sacrifices is not equality or potentiality but rather our (*im)potentiality,* our ability *not to be*" (p. 587). The educational value of studying is that it allows us to establish a new kind of relationship to our own impotence, which in turn allows us to experience our freedom to not-be or not-act.

From being willful to being willing

Until now, I have discussed market forces as one of the principal reasons for the instrumentalization of education. However, there is also a metaphysical claim that underpins the belief that education is a means to an end. The underlying belief is that we are inherently purposeful and willful subjects who are driven by intentions that orient us toward action. This metaphysical claim, thus, places the will at the heart of education and reduces education to the training of the will. In what follows, I will discuss such metaphysical claims and describe how Agamben's theory of study can assist us in rethinking the nature and the central position of the will in education.

Lewis (2013a) claims that the will is a persistent and central theme in modern Western educational philosophy (p. 17). The will is seen not only as a solution for overcoming inequality and alienation in education but also as a problem in the sense that educators need to find ways to train the students' will: "From Rousseau onward, the will becomes a central issue for educational philosophy and practice. It is both a problem

(how to direct the will) and a solution to multiple problems, including the problem of self-determination, attention, and so on" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 17). The metaphysical claims that the will is a central human faculty and that people are inherently willful and purposeful beings demand that education concern itself with the training of the will (Lewis, 2013a). Such metaphysical claims are "…not restricted to any one field of educational philosophy, school of thought, or a particular political agenda. Rather, we find its residue in the most progressive forms of pragmatism and the most critical of radical pedagogies" (Lewis, 2012a, p. 91). Lewis (2012a and 2013a) argues that the centrality of will in education has not been problematized enough. Lewis (2012a) writes:

> The theorists of educational will fail to address the relationship between the metaphysics of the will and the logic of the technological age. Technological "enframing," according to Heidegger, reduces meaningful and significant entities into mere resources to be used at will, in order to achieve instrumental ends. (p. 95)

Within technological enframing, reality is, according to Lewis (2012a) reduced to:

> …raw materials to be controlled by humans. One particularly important mode of such control is scientific research … Only that which can be calculated, assessed and thus controlled, counts as an entity. In this sense, scientific or technological research stands over and above things and considers them as mere objects to be manipulated through calculation. (p. 95)

This is not to say that technological enframing *is* scientific research but rather that scientific research is one mode of such enframing. Technological enframing is the frame through which reality is perceived as meaningless until it is infused with meaning by a willful subject. Lewis (2012a) claims that there is a coincidence between the rise of the technological age and the view that humans are willful beings:

> There are explicit connections between the rise of technology and an understanding of the human as a willful subject. … Modern technologically defined humanity impatiently stands against the world as mere meaningless, raw material, which can only be animated through a will. As a result, the world

becomes a kind of mute resource, which is given life by the willful and able subject. (p. 95)

The problem with prioritizing the training of the will in education is that it sacrifices the aesthetic experience in education. There is little to no room left for curiosity and desire, to listen to our surroundings, to let the mind roam without end and to suspend our intentionality. We lose our 'poetic receptivity to the world' (Lewis, 2013a) and the world becomes something that needs to be comprehended, usually in a methodical manner. The modern learner has lost the ability to listen, to wonder, to be curious and responsive. Thus, Lewis (2012a) embraces Heidegger's move from being willful to being willing:

Being more willing, in my argument, is being open to letting beings be as the beings that they are. In other words, 'letting beings be' is to remain open and receptive to what presents itself. …If the more willful subject transforms the world into an object to be imbued with meaning by willing productivity and spirited command, the more willing subject turns to the world in order to listen, receive grace, and *allow* things to shine. (p. 98)

Instead of suggesting to traverse technological enframing and return to a poetic age, Lewis (2012a) argues that Agamben's theory of study opens up the possibility of a *profane* solution "…one that is no longer within the logic of technological "enframing" and yet not outside of it either" (p. 100). Agamben's profane solution is the experience of study where "…the world is taken as it is: without significance, composed of remnants or fragments of meaningless resources. Yet this state of leveling becomes an *opportunity* as much as a crisis for opening up and sustaining a new notion of freedom" (Lewis, 2012a, p. 101). The student stands before the world that has gone:

…mute, allusive, and dark, yet limitless and alluring, without end. For the studier, who is lost in the interminable rhythms of study, there cannot be: a) a desire to realize certain latent potentials, b) a will to guide one's studies toward educational growth, or c) a command to verify the equality of intelligences. (Lewis, 2012a, p. 100)

46

The student is quiet, "…listening to this collapsed world, which no longer affords meaning, rule or measure for what counts" (Lewis, 2012a, p. 101). The student is indifferent to outcomes and feels "…a willing openness to the potentiality of the world … without forcing any particular actualization of this potentiality" (ibid.). The stupefying feeling that studying induces leaves one a bit melancholic: "The studier lacks a will and thus, from the outside, the studier appears to be melancholic or passive" (ibid.). Perhaps, the student is also deaf because he or she does not hear any calls for action and "…when all ontological differences disappear (thus nothing calls for action), all that is left is a clearing for new possible uses" (ibid.). This clearing opens up the time and space for studious play that allows new meanings to emerge. In what follows, I will describe studious play and its educational benefits.

Studious play and its educational benefits

Lewis (2011) writes that "Agamben asserts the radical separation of studying from labor, and instead suggests that all study is a form of play" (p. 594). Studious play is not just playfulness but a practice that suspends the logic of both ritualized testing and free play: "Studious play is therefore neither simply free play nor ritual but rather the zone of indistinction that lies between the two" (Lewis, 2013b, p. 205). In the traditional classroom, the emphasis is placed on actualizing students' potential through ritualized testing that concerns itself "…with the transmission of specific content and skills. … This model of learning concerns the maintenance of values and norms in the name of perpetual progress, perpetual profits and perpetual growth" (Lewis, 2013b, p. 205). Free play, on the other hand, offers a model of education that is:

> …based on nothing more than the accumulation of events or instances without any connection to the past. In this sense, free play suggests the impossibility of transmission. Students live in the perpetual present of their own concerns cut off from the past or the future, exposed to moments that are free-floating. (Lewis, 2013b, p. 206)

Studious play cuts across these categories that polarize educational thought into actualizing students' potential either through performance testing or through free play

(Lewis, 2013b, p. 201). Studious play provides a third model of education that is neither ritual nor free play:

> Studious play is neither the transmission of specific content (specific norms, values, and ways of being in the world), nor is it the impossibility of transmission (toppling over into endless events and willful invention/construction). Rather studious play transforms the impossibility of transmission into the *transmission of impossibility*. In such a model, transmissibility is liberated from transmitting any definitive message or law. (Lewis, 2013b, p. 206)

This 'transmission of impossibility' is also "…the possibility for new uses that open up when the law is suspended, rituals are left idle, and objects are profaned" (Lewis, 2013b, p. 206). Studious play transforms artefacts with specific uses and functions into toys without a purpose or destination: "When one engages in studious play, the things and signs of the world are suspended and opened up for free use" (Lewis, 2013b, p. 203). Studious play "…transforms sacred things and signs (with specific functions, roles, meanings) into toys (which lack any sense of destination)" (ibid). While studiously playing, the rules about how to use words, things and signs of the world are suspended, and they are transformed into toys that we studiously play with.

> To merely play with a toy is to play with *particular uses* but to studiously play with a toy is to be attentive to *whatever* enables these free uses to emerge in the first place. Stated differently, to play is always to play with possibilities (to be this or that) while to studiously play is to play with potentiality (to be this *and* that). (Lewis, 2013b, p. 210)

Studious play infinitely defers the actualization of the toy's potentiality and this deferral allows for new uses and new functions of the toy to emerge. Studious play is an educational experience because it clears the path for new meanings to emerge thus allowing us to imagine the world and ourselves as 'otherwise than.' Ford (2016a) provides reading poetry as an example of study and its educational value of imagining ourselves and the world as otherwise:

> We never really finish reading a poem; poetry never leaves one satisfied or complete. Dwelling within the poem we remain fragmentary or, as Butler would

48

say, within the poem we experience our self-opacity. But we are not incompetent within the poem. Instead, we oscillate between subjectification and desubjectification, suspended in the time and space between the two poles. We dance to the rhythm of "I can, I cannot," moving from retreat to advance and back again. This cadence detaches us from prescribed moves and we are free to experience time and being otherwise, opening up the possibility of new subjectivities, relations, and arrangements that are within and beyond the current order. (p. 54)

Tinkering

Studious play can take the form of tinkering that "…has a certain temporal dimension suggesting a loss of definitive ends, uncertainty of outcomes, and the simultaneous rhythms of withdrawing and progressing" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 128). Rather than a straightforward path from studiously playing to evaluating the outcomes and effectiveness of such play:

> …tinkering suggests a practice of being absorbed in the activity in and for itself, of finding pleasure in tinkering as what Agamben might call a 'pure means.' The end is no longer the priority so much as the experimentation with the present. (Lewis & Friedrich, 2016, p. 239)

However, tinkering is not synonymous to 'testing out' or 'trying out' in the conventional sense of the word:

> Even if one tinkers in order to achieve a specific goal, what is unique about tinkering is that its meandering and its improvisational pacing push toward a goal while also delaying its eventual arrival. In this sense, we can make a critical distinction between tinkering and 'testing out' or 'trying out.' Both testing and trying are concerned with trial, evaluation, and eventual judgment. If testing means *deciding upon* then tinkering with means *experimenting with* – the former erases what is potential while the latter retains a relationship to this potential indefinitely. (Lewis & Friedrich, 2016, p. 239)

Lewis and Friedrich (2016) give the example of tinkering with an engine and distinguish how a mechanic and a tinkerer might approach the same task. The mechanic might take an engine apart to learn how it works and to figure out how to fix it. In other words, the mechanic is driven by a goal which is to make the engine function properly: "With this goal firmly set, the mechanic is guided by a mental representation of a particular set of success conditions which guide his or her actions toward a specifically desirable outcome: a working motor" (Lewis & Friedrich, 2016, p. 240). The tinkerer, on the other hand, will approach the task in such a way as to:

> …release the activity from its specific end. To tinker is to be a mechanic *as not* a mechanic. The instrumentality of the mechanic and the success conditions determining proper vs. improper, success vs. failure are suspended indefinitely. (Lewis & Friedrich, 2016, p. 240)

The tinkerer studiously plays with the engine, thus, turning the engine into a toy and transforming "…a useful object identified within the order of things as a *particular* object with *particular* uses that separate it from other things and uses. Being both an engine and not an engine simultaneously means that it is a toy" (Lewis & Friedrich, 2016, p. 240). The tinkerer is likely to see the engine as an 'im-potential state of equipment,' or a free thing that can become something new and different than is commonly seen as.

Teachers as tinkerers

The educational value of tinkering is that it allows us to experiment with the present moment, to find pleasure in the pursuit of knowledge in itself and to imagine both the world and ourselves as 'otherwise than.' Tinkering is a spontaneous kind of studious play that can be done on one's own or with others. The teacher's role is not to teach the student how to tinker or how to become a better tinkerer because students can "…do it without invitation and without design" (Lewis & Friedrich, 2016, p. 248). Rather, teachers themselves are tinkerers. They tinker with "…what can be seen and heard in the classroom" (ibid.), and encourage studious play by giving students the time and space to experiment. Teachers as tinkerers open up new possibilities for teaching and studying that is not focused on predetermined outcomes and on fulfilling one's potential.

Rather, teachers as tinkerers redistribute what can commonly be seen and heard in classrooms, such as calling the class to order, mastering a subject matter in depth in order to better transmit this knowledge to students, meeting learning objectives, identifying optimal learning conditions, evaluating students' work, and so on. Teachers who tinker with such models of education, on the other hand, are themselves stupefied by the sheer amount of knowledge out there, and are themselves curious and responsive. Teachers as tinkerers are attentive to moments when studious play is taking place without rushing to judgment and evaluating students' performance:

> Teachers need to be sensitive to moments of suspension as pure means (rather than means to another end). When students tinker…, teachers trained to look for and evaluate education in terms of learning might see and hear these activities in terms of learning discourses, and thus devalue them or try to 'put them back on the right track.' Or they might think that they can turn a student into a tinkerer with these or those skills. In short, a redistribution of educational perception is needed here so that learning is put in its place and the moments when suspension happens can be allowed to open up, move about, and dissipate as they occur. (Lewis & Friedrich, 2016, p. 248)

However, the teacher's role does not end with providing the time and space to studiously play. The teacher is also there to inspire in times of sadness, or in other words, in times when it dawns on students that studying is a never-ending quest that is always in a fragmentary stage. The teacher inspires by transforming the melancholy of studious play into an intellectual activity that has 'joyously forgotten its end:'

> The teacher's particular work is to help transform the messianic mood from one of sadness to inspiration. As opposed to the anxiety of learning to meet standards or expel students, the teacher in Agamben's formulation helps the student transform the infinite sadness and pain of study into a type of intellectual activity that has 'joyously forgotten its goal' to become this or that in order to sustain a relation of immanence with its own impotence. When sadness becomes joy, it effectively transforms from study to playful study as the messianic moment of educational freedom. (Lewis, 2011, p. 596)

51

Teachers inspire by being stupefied themselves and unable to provide direct help in the form of right or wrong answers. Perhaps the best teachers are:

> …not those whose work has passed into actuality – i.e. completed a body of definitive work that offers students 'solutions' or 'answers' or more tentatively 'models' for action, scholarship or proper research – but rather those whose work remains (im)potential. (Lewis, 2011, p. 596)

Teachers are neither masters of a subject matter nor ignorant schoolmasters. They remain stupefied, always in a state of study, and invite students to studiously play together. Their apparent impotence allows teachers to "…embody the type of eternal student who cannot finish anything, whose non-act (inability to give a gift to humanity) is in the last instance the ultimate gift: the gift of (im)potentiality" (Lewis, 2011, p. 597).

The description of the teacher as 'impotent' does not undermine the role of the teacher in education. As I have stated previously, Agamben (1999) claims that in order for us to experience our freedom to choose whether or not we want to put our knowledge to use, we must first suffer an alteration in the form of learning. It is then on the basis of this 'having' or 'possessing' knowledge that we can choose to also not bring our knowledge into actuality. The alteration that one needs to undergo does not, as a matter of speech, fall from the sky but rather comes from somewhere - whether it is from a book or from a teacher in the classroom. In other words, learning is in a sense a prerequisite for the student to experience their (im)potentiality. Thus, there is always room in education for the transmission of knowledge from the teacher to the student, usually in the form of explications. Explications are commonly seen as a means to an end which is to bridge the gap between the teacher and the student, and to bring the student closer to understanding a subject matter in depth.

However, teacher's explanations come with a risk too. The risk is that instead of inspiring in moments of sadness, such explications can lead to stultification. Thus, it is beneficial to tinker with what can be done with explications so that they inspire rather than stultify. The teacher can tinker with explications by neutralizing their function and exposing their new possible uses without actualizing their functionality. In other words, teachers can use explications in the classroom *as not* explications: "If explanations are given, they are *useless*, *stupid* explanations that inspire rather than stultify" (Lewis,

2011, p. 597). Explications *as not* explications are always fragmentary and in progress. They provide no definitive answers, directions or conclusions and leave one stupefied. Explications *as not* explications are pure means, and as such, they are inspiring.

Studious play infuses education with aesthetic experiences that are lacking in the learning society. When we studiously play, our pursuit of knowledge is not overshadowed by the imperative to actualize our potential. The educational value of studious play is that it leaves us 'stupid,' curious and responsive. When we tinker, we do so not only with material objects but also with thoughts. One example of tinkering with thoughts is dialogue that "… is not an actualization of a thought but rather the creative chaos of thinking that opens when one studies" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 147). When we dialogue with friends, we do not exhaust thinking by coming to definitive conclusions. This is not to say that dialogue is completely useless but rather that dialogue with friends is an aesthetic experience that serves no specific purpose other than taking pleasure in thinking along with friends. Lewis writes that "…while learning is often conceptualized as competitive and individual in nature, study is something done in common with others" (Lewis, n.d.). In the following section, I will describe the social dimension of study and discuss in further detail what is meant by the claim that 'study is always communist' (ibid.).

Tinkering with friends

Tinkering is always collective. When we studiously play, we do so with friends "…whom we do *not recognize* but who are, nevertheless, our friends" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 136). A friend is not simply someone who has certain qualities that we value: "If we were to enumerate all the qualities that make a certain individual a friend, the list would never reach the heart of the matter, for the essence of a friend cannot be represented" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 137). But a friend is not a complete stranger either. Rather, a friend is "…someone with whom we share *sharing.* In other words, it is a relationship through which sharing is shared in common. Or even better, what is shared is the im-potentiality of sharing itself!" (ibid.). A friend is someone whose specific qualities, identities or politics we do not recognize as such. Rather, friends are whatever beings with whom we share sharing: "The pleasure of friendship is this sharing of a fundamental whatever that does

not belong to anyone, that does not have any predestination of its own, that is not any one particular identity" (ibid.).

A group of friends who study together have no specific identity or destination. They are what Lewis (2013a) calls an 'inoperative community' (p. 138). Lewis describes the notion of the inoperative community against the backdrop of the operative community:

> For Plato, the operative community is a kind of division of labor that assures the organic harmony/unity of the city-state. In such a community, everyone has one specific kind of special nature that corresponds without remainder to a particular occupation. The resulting community is a community of harmonious parts, each doing what it is intended to do. (p. 138)

In other words, the division of labor according to each individual's aptitudes and skills is supposed to bring harmony within a given community and is supposed to ensure "…the perfect relationship between essence and appearance" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 138). However, Lewis argues that the problem with the operative community is that it is thought of as an essence that must be preserved and manifested through labor:

> Thus, politics becomes the work of preserving *a people* or *a nation* with their specific identity, traditions, norms, and values that are exclusively theirs. The operative community as an expression of essence results in the end of politics rather than its beginning. (Lewis, 2013a, p. 138).

In education, the operative community is the learning community where every student has their place within an already ordered and established community:

> This is a community of consensus-building, of harmonious parts that work together to collectively fulfill the potentiality of each individual. All potentiality is transformed into a quantifiable number to be administered through the social orthopedic of schooling which will transform it into a marketable skill, human capital, or other commodity. … the community of learning can only produce *individual* competitors who struggle for private goods (grades, degrees, teacher favoritism, etc). (Lewis, 2013a, p. 139)

Friendship in the operative community is impossible. There are only individuals who struggle for admission into particular communities and competition becomes imperative.

Another problem with the operative community revolves around the criteria that are necessary for an individual to become a member of particular community. Since the operative community works toward preserving their own identity and values, it becomes important to develop criteria for inclusion into such a community: "A community, traditionally thought, is defined by the common experiences or identities of its members, and often experience and identity are closely linked" (Ford, 2016a, p. 46). However, as Ford points out: "The inverse of this formulation means that a community is defined not only by who or what it *includes*, but also by who or what it *excludes*" (ibid.). In other words, the very criteria for inclusion of new members are at the same time the criteria for excluding others. Agamben's (1993) notion of the 'coming community' is useful to think about a community without any criteria for either inclusion or exclusion:

> The 'coming community,' in which human beings would relate to one another *without* erecting a potentially divisive criterion of group identity; in short, commonality without an 'inside' or 'us' as opposed to an 'outside' or 'them.' (Meskin & Shapiro, 2014, p. 426)

Stated differently, Agamben's 'coming community' problematizes the inside/outside binary. In his discussion about Franz Kafka's short story *Before the Law*, Slovenian philosopher and psychoanalyst Mladen Dolar (2006) illustrates the dialectical relationship between the inside and the outside:

> The openness itself immobilizes, the subject stands awestruck and paralyzed in front of the open door, in a position of exclusion from the law, but an exclusion which is precisely the form of his inclusion, since this is how the law holds him in sway. "Before the law" one is always inside the law, there is no place before the law, this very exclusion is inclusion. Exclusive inclusion or inclusive exclusion is the way in which Agamben … describes the structure of sovereignty: it is the point of exception inscribed in the law itself… (p. 167)

Thus, an inoperative community has no criteria for inclusion and no criteria for exclusion. I have already discussed Agamben's concept of a 'whatever being' that is

55

neither a particular nor a universal subject but rather 'a being such that it always matters.' Agamben's coming community is a community of whatever singularities who share being-in-common. A community of whatever beings is an inoperative community that lacks both an identity and criteria for inclusion or exclusion. "Being-in-common is inoperative in the sense that it is not defined in terms of an essence that enables divisions between us versus them, friend versus enemy, smart versus stupid" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 138). The inoperative community is "…pure means, a pure experiment in being-in-common, of sharing whatever remains when foundations are abandoned" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 139).

Agamben's coming community is a tinkering community, or the community of studious play that consists of friends who share being-in-common and whose activities are those of "…suspended decisions, aborted attempts, ambiguous results, unfinished schemes, unanticipated outcomes" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 139). Their work is never finished and no definitive outcomes are ever reached, which allows space for prolonged reflection:

> The inoperative community of tinkerers is a community of rhythmic sway, back and forth from an undertaking to an undergoing, from melancholia to inspiration without necessary end. …To tinker is to tinker with friends in an inoperative community of equals. (Lewis, 2013a, p. 140)

Tinkering with thoughts

As I mentioned previously, we can tinker not only with material objects but also with thoughts: "We tinker with thought when we dialogue with friends" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 145). In dialogue, tinkering with thoughts is characterized by the suspension of all presuppositions and everything seems to be up for grabs: "…the need to reach definitive conclusions and solutions is deferred, and the need to argue persuasively for preexisting theoretical positions is left idle" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 146). While tinkering with thoughts, friends do manage to reach some sort of conclusions only to withdraw such conclusions in order to open up space for new ideas to emerge:

> These seemingly interminable questions push toward some resolution at the very moment when this resolution recedes from view and opens up to new,

unanticipated problematics. What is left is the creative time of the now, the time
of study wherein all thoughts are open, all cards are on the table, all deadlines
are dismissed. (Lewis, 2013a, p. 146)

Thus, if any conclusions are reached during dialogue, they recede and open up
space for new ones to arrive. Like study itself, dialogue is interminable and if dialogue
includes any sort of conclusions "…it reveals not the *actualization* of a thought but rather
the creative chaos of thinking that opens when one studies" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 147).
Dialogue with friends does not have an audience or, in other words, no one is excluded
from dialogue and treated as observers who are supposed to take anything away from
the dialogue. Rather, friends take turns in dialogue and those who listen are not an
audience that "…expects to *learn* anything. Certainly not an audience who *identifies* with
the speakers. The only audience remaining is a kind of anonymous audience of
singularities who witness the im-potentiality of the work of this dialogue" (Lewis, 2013a,
p. 148). Friends who tinker with thoughts are an inoperative community that circulates
ideas rather than demands. In dialogue, "…all predetermined positions, all individual
habits of mind are oddly suspended, and the two friends meet as singularities whose
being-in-common is nothing more than the im-potential experience of studying" (ibid.).

Concluding remarks about study and its educational values

In this chapter, I described several problems with the learning discourses and the
learning society because it is important to be mindful of the predominant educational
logic of learning and its pitfalls. If we do not talk about and advance alternative
educational practices, there is a risk that the 'learnification' of educational discourses will
completely take over. Biesta (2005) aptly describes his suspicions about the learning
discourses that have allowed "…the description of the process of education in terms of
an economic transaction" (p. 58). The learner is construed as the consumer who knows
what he or she wants to get out of education, and more importantly, within the learning
society "…education itself becomes a commodity to be provided or delivered by the
teacher or educational institution and to be consumed by the learner" (ibid.).

Simons and Masschelein (2008) are equally suspicious of the learning society
although they provide a slightly different interpretation of learning discourses than Biesta

(2005). For Simons and Masshelein, the learner is construed not so much as a consumer but rather as someone who must adapt to the constantly changing job market, and learning becomes the organizing principle that demands of the learner to seek re-training in order to stave off the threat of unemployment. For Lewis (2001), on the other hand, the learner is neither a consumer nor someone who needs to learn in order to survive. Rather, Lewis portrays the learner as an infinite potentiality that *can* and *must* be actualized through constant performance testing. Even though the three critiques of the learning discourses and the learning society might differ in their interpretations, all of the authors point out the dangers of the predominant educational logic of learning and highlight the need to discuss alternative educational discourses and practices. One such alternative educational practice is study, which in this chapter I have described as the experience of one's (im)potentiality.

Study is not a linear, forward march towards the actualization of potentiality but rather an educational suspension that defers measurements of success or failure. Within the logic of learning, study might be viewed as 'anti-educational,' so in this chapter I focused on discussing the educational values of study and why there needs to be more space and time for studying in education. To do so, I relied on the three pillars of Lewis's theory of study that focus on reconnecting potentiality with an educational practice that goes beyond the imperative of fulfilling one's potential, on rethinking the notion of freedom in education and, finally, on infusing education with aesthetic experiences.

Study as the experience of (im)potentiality has certain features. Study is an interminable activity that requires devotion and fidelity to a subject matter. As I indicated at the beginning of this chapter, the root of the word study comes from Latin 'studium,' which means devoting oneself to an activity and this fidelity is crucial for study as an educational experience. However, such devotion does not necessarily result in mastery of a subject matter. Studying is neither about mastery nor about ignorance. Rather, it is incessant, leaving one feeling 'impotent' and 'stupid,' as Agamben writes. Study is always in a fragmentary stage, never complete and never-ending thus inducing this stupefying feeling in the student. Study is characterized by the rhythmic sway between mastery and ignorance, between sadness and inspiration, between reaching a goal and then withdrawing.

Study is an educational experience that goes beyond the neoliberal imperative to actualize one's potential in order to adapt to the ever changing world and to the global market. Instead of actualizing potential, study asks us to conserve it. By conserving our potential, we maintain our relation to our impotence which allows us to experience the freedom to choose to act or not act, to become this or that or not become anything at all. This freedom can manifest itself as boredom or stupidity and such a state of impotence allows the space and time for sustained reflection, planning, speculation, and imagination (Lewis, 2011, p. 588), which is needed in order to imagine the world and ourselves as 'otherwise than.'

The driving force behind the logic of fulfilling one's potential is also the metaphysical claim that humans are willfull and purposeful beings "…with intentions and desires that command our capabilities and orient them toward action" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 40). Such metaphysical claims demand that education be concerned with the training of the will. Students learn that the world is something that needs to be mastered and comprehended, usually in a methodical way. On the other hand, study is an educational experience that suspends the metaphysical claims that we are willful beings. Study teaches us that rather than being wilfully oriented towards action, we need to listen, be curious and responsive, thus infusing education with aesthetic experiences. And when metaphysical claims that we are purposeful beings are suspended, all that is left is a clearing for seeing the world and ourselves in new ways.

Finally, as Agamben has stated, all study is a form of play. When we study, we studiously play with objects, words and thoughts, and release them from their predetermined uses and functions. Studying is thus not about accumulating knowledge and mastering a subject matter but rather it is a form of play that allows us to tinker with possibilities. Tinkering is a form of studious play that is characterized by uncertainty of outcomes, by being absorbed in an activity in and for itself and by taking pleasure in the activity itself. We tinker with thoughts when we dialogue with friends with whom we share being-in-common. The educational value of tinkering with thoughts is that it allows thoughts to actualize themselves without being extinguished.

One example of the tinkering community is the group called Lacan Salon that I described in the previous chapter. In this community, there are no teachers and no

59

students. We are an inoperative community of friends who enjoy being together and studying Lacan's seminars. We experiment with what can be said about and done with Lacan's work, and there are no clear outcomes or conclusions to our discussions. It could be said that instead of reaching any definitive conclusions, we gather and practice thinking together, and in the next chapter, I will discuss how study can be construed as a practice of thinking. Communities such the Salon give me hope that it is possible to imagine education beyond the learning society.

Chapter 3.

Study as a practice of thinking

Introduction

In the previous chapter, I discussed the word 'studium,' or the Latin root of the word 'study' which means being busy and devoted to an activity. I described Giorgio Agamben's reference to the Latin prefix 'st-' in the word 'study,' indicating a shock or a crash (1995, p. 64). For Agamben, those who study are akin to people who received a shock that leaves them stupefied. It is the moment when the studier stumbles onto something new and smacks himself across the forehead in realization that he does not seem to know as much as he thought he did. As Agamben writes, the scholar in this sense is always 'stupid.'

By 'stupid,' Agamben (1995) does not mean ignorant. Rather, studying induces this stupefying feeling in the studier because it is never-ending and always in fragments, and as such defers mastery. Study is neither about being ignorant nor about becoming a master of a subject matter. Rather, as I highlighted in the previous chapter, studying requires devotion to an activity to the point where we forget about space and time. In addition, study requires the suspension of daily living so that one can commit to an activity. However, our bodies will eventually let us down or the everyday will interfere. We have to put down whatever we started, then pick it up the next day and the day after that, and so on.

Thus, devotion also requires the repeated returns to an activity one enjoys doing. These repeated returns do leave traces, such as becoming better at doing something and creating new habits in the student. Because of these repetitions, study resembles practicing that can but does not necessarily result in becoming proficient in a subject matter. Rather, the educational value of studying is that it is a form of practice that helps people improve themselves in some way. I believe that the existing literature on study in education has not acknowledged the close relationship between study and practice. Therefore, in this chapter, I will add to discussions about study by proposing that there is a closer link between study and practice and that study is, in fact, a form of practice. My

claim is that study is a practice of thinking that deserves space and time in educational settings.

It is common to think of practice as repetitious as is evident in the existing discussions about practice by philosophers of education Joris Vlieghe (2012), Tyson Lewis and Daniel Friedrich (2016). Vlieghe (2012) describes one example of practice in educational settings as the active rehearsal of the alphabet or of the multiplication tables which is "…strictly repetitive, rhythmical and collective in nature" (p. 191). Such practices require particular conditions and methods as well as the active participation of students and teachers. Vlieghe does not argue for a return to what he calls 'obsolete' pedagogical methods but rather claims that the educational value of repeating a word over and over again is that the repeated word "…becomes a mere sign, deprived of all possible signification" (2012, p. 201). In other words, "…through repetition, the student experiences letters and numbers freed from distinct uses (to form words that communicate or to solve mathematical problems)" (Lewis & Friedrich, 2016, p. 238). By drilling and repeating, words and numbers become free-floating signifiers or pure means that open up possibilities for their new and unforeseen uses (Vlieghe, 2012).

In their critique of Vlieghe's (2012) notion of practice, Lewis and Friedrich (2016) also write that practices are repetitious but point out that "…practice is merely one of several ways in which the educational paradigm of learning can be suspended" (p. 238). Lewis and Friedrich claim that although practice as conceived by Vlieghe can interrupt the "…linear forms of educational developmentalism" (ibid.), practice lacks the rhythmic and poetic sway of study. In addition, Lewis (2013a) writes that "…practices are much more an experience of 'I can' than 'I can, I cannot'" (p. 45). For Lewis (2013a), practicing lacks the rhythmic sway between being able and not being able. Lewis is correct to claim that through practice, the student is still unable to experience his or her (im)potentiality and the freedom not to be, but he is correct only if understood through the lens of Agamben's theory of study.

I see at least two problems with these portrayals of practice. One is that the notion of practice has not been properly linked to studying. Perhaps this is so because practice is construed as simply repeating the same thing over again whereas Lewis and Friedrich (2016) claim that study is more poetic than simply drilling. However, in this

chapter, I will argue that repetitions are only one component of practice. In other words, there is more to practice than drilling. I believe that expanding our notions of practice can assist us in establishing a closer link between study and practice.

Second, all of the authors discuss the notion of practice within the framework of Agamben's theory of study. If we remain solely within the framework of Agamben's theory, we might miss opportunities to enrich our notions of what it means to study. Thus, I think that turning to alternative theoretical frameworks can add to the discussions on study in education. I will propose that there is another framework that can assist us in linking practice and study. In this chapter, I will discuss another theory of study based on the discussions about the life of practice by the German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk. Sloterdijk's (2012) theory of practice is a useful framework that we can use to establish a link between practice and study, and as a result, enrich our notions of what it means to study.

Studious practice

In this chapter, I will add to to discussions about study by linking study to practice and put forward the term *studious practice* that is grounded in one of the key concepts in Sloterdijk's work (2012) called 'anthropotechnology,' or people using *practice* to develop themselves. Sloterdijk claims that practicing is inherent in human nature and sets out to develop a theory of practice as an integral element of human existence. I will extend Sloterdijk's discussion of practice to studying and describe study as a form of practice, and specifically as a practice of thinking. Much like an athlete or a musician who needs practice to better their craft, I will argue that students engage in study in order to practice thinking and become better at thinking and studying itself.

In the previous chapter, I described the term 'studious play' used by Lewis (2013a) who based the term on Agamben's claim that all study is a form of play. In this chapter, I will use the term 'studious practice' to describe study as a form of practice, and I will now outline what I mean by studious practice. As mentioned, studying requires devotion and the repeated returns to an activity. These repetitions are a form of training that result in students 'getting into shape,' and improving themselves in some way. Thus, studying, or what I call studious practice, consists not only of active training, such as

repeatedly doing the same thing over again, but also of contemplative practices like suspending participation in everyday life because we have to shut out the everyday in order to commit ourselves to studying. Studious practice is also a form of self-fashioning because it produces new habits and results in the person improving themselves in some way, which is why studious practice is an educational experience.

When we set out to practice, we usually have something to practice, or in other words, we have something to get better at. For example, an athlete might practice the same motions over and over again until such movements become almost second nature. Similarly, studious practice has thinking as its object. In other words, while studying, students practice and sharpen their thinking. If studious practice has thinking as its object, then it is necessary to outline a theory of thinking and for that I will turn to the work of Hannah Arendt (1978) as one of the most comprehensive discussions about the nature of thinking. Furthermore, Arendt's theory of thinking is a useful framework that can be used to consider what it means to make space and time for studious practice in education. As I wrote in the first chapter of this thesis, Arendt's discussions about the space and time for thinking might not be helpful in everyday terms but are still important because they illuminate the nature of thinking and the educational value of study as a practice of thinking.

Definition of practice in Sloterdijk's work

Sloterdijk (2012) uses the term practice in the sense of exercise or training whose results "… do not influence external circumstances or objects, as in the labor or production process: they develop the practicing person himself and get him 'into shape'" (p. 6). Thus, the first feature of practice as Sloterdijk describes it is that practice results in the person getting into shape. Sloterdijk claims that practice has been "…neglected by theoretical modernism, if not wantonly pushed aside and scorned," (ibid.), and that his project is to highlight the importance of practice. Sloterdijk asks the following:

> Just as the history of science usually presumes that the scientists who do their disciplines already exist, the history of art has assumed since time immemorial that artists are the natural protagonists of the business that produces works of art, and that these players have always existed as well. What would happen if we

rotated the conceptual stage ninety degrees in both cases? What if we observed

artists in their efforts to become artists in the first place? (p. 9)

As Sloterdijk (2012) suggests, it is easy to lose sight of the fact that one is not
just born an artist or a scientist and that it is required for one to practice in order to
create art or do science. One does not necessarily need to be an artist by profession in
order to create art. Children learn how to do art and for that they need to practice, such
as moving their fingers, practicing how to hold a paintbrush or an instrument, and so on.
Thus, creating art is contingent on practicing in some way. When Sloterdijk writes that
people tend to assume that artists or scientists have always existed, he points to one of
the key features of practice, which is its invisibility. In other words, we do not follow
around the artist or the scientist every day and witness how much they practice to get
into shape. We tend to assume that they are 'natural protagonists.' In this sense,
practice seems invisible.

Similarly, in the classroom teachers are not always able to tell how much practice
has gone into a homework assignment or a student's portfolio, for example. There is
probably a whole lot of practice that was done behind the teacher's back or otherwise
there would be no work for the student to show. Teachers can assume how much
practicing was involved based on the student's finished product but this can only be
done in retrospect. Although not immediately visible, practice should always be
acknowledged and encouraged in education.

Sloterdijk's (2012) project is not to make the invisible practice visible again but to
highlight the importance of practice as such. Sloterdijk's explanation why practice has
been swept under the rug is that "…the familiar distinction between the *viva activa* and
viva contemplativa that initially related only to monks, was linked with the effect of
making the dimension of practice as such invisible, if not actually inconceivable" (p. 6).
Sloterdijk argues that the very act of distinguishing active life from the contemplative
realm, "…as if it were an exclusive and total alternative," (ibid.) contributes to why we
lose sight of "…a substantial complex of human behavior that is neither merely active
nor merely contemplative" (ibid.). One might wonder whether the value of practicing has
been neglected because of today's so-called 'fast and easy culture' where we have
become accustomed to efficiency and immediate results whereas practicing takes time

with very little visible returns for at least a while. In any case, Sloterdijk claims that the 'life of practice' is neither only active training nor solely contemplative practice but rather that it is more of a hybrid: "…it seems contemplative without relinquishing characteristics of activity and active without losing the contemplative perspective" (ibid.). In other words, practice involves active training until new habits are formed. However, to acquire new habits, the student needs to also remove himself or herself from daily business in order to devote themselves to an activity, which in my opinion constitutes the contemplative aspect of practice.

Sloterdijk's (2012) definition of practice seems to illustrate his beliefs about what it means to be human. For Sloterdijk, practice is inherent in human nature and has particular features and functions:

> In focusing on the practicing aspect of human existence, I am taking account of a fact that is apparently trivial but whose effects are unpredictably far-reaching: the fact that everything people do and can do is achieved more or less well and done better or worse. Adepts and players are constantly involved in a spontaneous better-or-worse ranking of their skills and actions. I define these kinds of distinctions as an expression of the vertical tension inherent in human existence. (p. 8)

The theme of 'vertical tension,' or the notion that humans are hard-wired to keep improving themselves through practice, is present throughout Sloterdijk's work (2012, 2013). For Sloterdijk (2012), it is human nature to practice and "…all life is acrobatics, although we perceive only the smallest part of our vital expressions as what they really are: the results of practice and elements of modus vivendi that happens on the high wire of improbability" (p. 8). In a sense, Sloterdijk presents here a teleology of self-fashioning, or becoming an improved version of oneself; though, he never argues that practice is about becoming a master of a subject matter. I believe that even though there are no guarantees that we will become wiser or better at a craft as the result of practicing and there are no guarantees that devotion to an activity can be lasting, perhaps we are doomed to keep practicing and practice might be an end in itself.

My notion of study as studious practice is rooted in Sloterdijk's (2012) description of practice so it is important to outline the main features of practice in Sloterdijk's

66

discussions. The features of practice as articulated in Sloterdijk's work can be summarized in the following way. The first feature of practice is that it does not influence external objects as much as it is about getting the practicing person into shape. Second, practice is not immediately visible and obvious. As Sloterdijk claims, it is often assumed that, for example, artists or scientists are 'natural protagonists' whose efforts and practicing are not readily available to others. The third feature of practice is that it is a hybrid, or a mix of active training practices and the contemplative stance toward the world. In other words, there is more to practicing than drilling. Rather, practicing requires devotion and the suspension of everyday life so that one can commit to practicing a craft. The fourth feature of practice is that it takes time and asks the person to slow down. More often than not, there are little to no immediate and visible returns for one's efforts. Thus, for at least a while, the only goal and purpose of practicing is practice itself. However, practice should eventually pay off if done regularly and with devotion, which leads me to the final feature of practice. Sloterdijk's theme of 'vertical tension' points to the feature of practice as a form of self-fashioning, or creating new habits and improving oneself in some way as a result of practicing. I believe that all of the features of practice that I have just described also apply to studious practice. What is particular to studious practice, however, is that the student practices theoretical behavior, or thinking.

Sloterdijk (2012) describes scholarship as "…more than a sum of its results; it is also the embodiment of the mental or logical procedures that help its pupils to make the transition from everyday to theoretical behavior" (p. 11). Sloterdijk writes that scholars get into shape by practicing the transition from the everyday living to what he calls 'theoretical behavior,' or life devoted to thinking. In my opinion, he is describing the experience of study because studying requires the suspension of everyday living in order to devote oneself to thinking. I believe that Sloterdijk's descriptions of practice provide a new way of thinking and talking about the experience of study as a form of practice, and specifically as a practice of thinking.

Training cultures in antiquity

The notion of practice as something educational and inherent in human nature can be traced back to antiquity. Sloterdijk (2012) writes that "…the training cultures of antiquity were primarily systems of ethical self-transformation. … They quite often

prescribed excessive physical and mental asceticism" (p. 8). Sloterdijk argues that training cultures in antiquity can offer "…insights into the structures of the implicit and explicit life of practice," (p. 9) and claims that the principles of training in antiquity and the resulting ethical transformation in a person can be broadened to the area of theoretical behavior.

I will provide one example of training cultures in antiquity that were systems of ethical self-transformation. The example I will offer is that of spiritual exercises in antiquity. This is neither a call for a return to antiquity nor a recommendation for spiritual exercises to be introduced in schools today. Rather, my claim is that studious practice is modeled after spiritual exercises that were educational in nature even though there were no predetermined criteria to be met, no ideal learning conditions and no textbooks, and yet the Stoics and the Epicureans figured out how to manage life by devoting themselves to practicing spiritual exercises.

As already mentioned, Sloterdijk (2012) describes practice as something people do in order to get into shape. I believe that much like an athlete who needs to exercise to get fit, students engage in studious practice to sharpen their thinking. French historian Pierre Hadot (1995) makes a similar comparison when he draws a parallel between physical and spiritual exercises:

> …by dint of repeated physical exercises, athletes give new form and strength to their bodies, so the philosopher develops his strength of soul, modifies his inner climate, transforms his vision of the world, and finally, his entire being. The analogy seems all the more self-evident in that the *gymnasion*, the place where physical exercises were practiced, was the same place where philosophy lessons were given; in other words, it was also the place for training in spiritual gymnastics. (p. 102)

Spiritual exercises as a form of practice and their educational benefits

Hadot (1995) explains the origin and the importance of spiritual exercises because, as Hadot argues, they are still present in contemporary consciousness. Hadot writes that spiritual exercises in antiquity were an intense experience where one would

take flight from the everyday, even for just a moment or longer, in order to attain the wisdom one needs to handle life's misfortunes. Spiritual exercises were transformational in nature and required mental concentration, attentiveness and wakefulness. One did not need to go to school to learn how to practice spiritual exercises but rather people learned how to handle life by the process of actually living.

Hadot (1995) argues that although thought is its own subject matter in spiritual exercises, the words 'thought' or 'intellectual' would not suffice to refer to these exercises because they do not capture the full dimension of the experience of spiritual exercises. Hadot claims that words referring to solely thought or the intellect neglect the fact that imagination and sensibility play key roles in spiritual exercises. The word 'ethical' might come close since spiritual exercises have to do with the conduct of life. However, the word 'spiritual' in spiritual exercises is the best word choice because spiritual exercises:

> …correspond to a transformation of our vision of the world and to a metamorphosis of our personality. The word 'spiritual' is quite apt to make us understand that these exercises are the result, not merely of thought, but of the individual's entire psychism. Above all, the word 'spiritual' reveals the true dimensions of these exercises. (Hadot, 1995, p. 82)

I will now describe four kinds of spiritual exercises that are discussed in Hadot's (1995) work and they include practicing to live, practicing to die, practicing to read and practicing to dialogue.

I will describe in more detail what spiritual exercises looked like in antiquity for three reasons. One reason is that spiritual exercises provide insights into the life of practice. These exercises can further assist us in expanding our notions of practice. Spiritual exercises were daily exercises that allowed people to gain independence from daily worries and fears, and thus achieve inner freedom. These exercises consisted of morning and evening meditations and were not merely learned but lived, or in other words, spiritual exercises went beyond being just a theory to be mastered. They were a form of training that allowed people to live and look at the world in a new way, and as such were educational experiences. Spiritual exercises were thus a form of self-

fashioning in the sense that they were about creating a new 'pared down' self that is divorced from desires, fears and everyday worries.

Second, I believe that studious practice is modeled after spiritual exercises which were educational experiences. They were educational because they were a form of self-fashioning and because they created new habits in a person. If studious practice is modeled after spiritual exercises, then it could be said that studious practice is also an educational experience. Third, taking a closer look at spiritual exercises in antiquity can assist us in establishing a closer link between practice and study. My claim is that the Stoics and the Epicureans who were practicing spiritual exercises were, in fact, studying. Spiritual exercises, much like studious practice, required devotion, the suspension of everyday life and the repeated returns to an activity. I will now give a more detailed account of spiritual exercises in Greek antiquity as they are described in Hadot's work (1995). I think that it is instructive to pay attention to the terms that Hadot uses, such as 'exercise,' training' and 'practice' because words such as these, in part, show that spiritual exercises and studying are linked.

Practicing to live

The first kind of spiritual exercise is practicing to live. Hadot (1995) writes that for the Stoics, philosophy itself was an exercise. According to Hadot, the belief was that the principal reason for mankind's suffering were fears, passions and unregulated desires, and the purpose of philosophy was the therapeutic of passions. The task of philosophy for the Stoics was to teach people to look for the goods they are able to obtain, avoid evils and recognize what does and what does not depend on them.

Hadot (1995) makes use of two lists of spiritual exercises outlined by Philo of Alexandria to describe what spiritual exercises looked like for the Stoics. First is the constant vigilance and presence of mind so that one is aware of their actions at all times. As a result, the individual becomes able to discern what does and does not depend on them. Such insights allow one to cope with sudden and unforeseen events and if one is vigilant and paying attention, the fundamental principles for coping can be recalled right away. Second, meditation allowed the Stoics to practice being present in the moment:

The exercise of meditation is an attempt to control inner discourse, in an effort to render it coherent. The goal is to arrange it around the simple, universal principle: the distinction between what does and does not depend on us, or between freedom and nature. (Hadot, 1995, p. 85)

The exercise of meditation and memorization of guiding principles required nourishment, such as reading, listening, research and investigation: "For the Stoics, then, doing philosophy meant practicing how to 'live': that is, how to live freely and consciously" (Hadot, 1995, p.86). Thus, vigilance and meditation helped the Stoics discern what they can or cannot control. These exercises required repeated attempts at being present and they were not merely contemplative in nature. Meditation and wakefulness were, and still are, deeply rooted in the everyday and yet they allowed the Stoics to garner enough distance from everyday life so that they have the time and space to ruminate.

Epicureanism, or the philosophy of pleasure, places equal importance on spiritual exercises. Hadot (1995) writes that for the Epicureans philosophy is concerned with healing one's soul and turning from worry to joy of simply existing:

People's unhappiness, for the Epicureans, comes from the fact that they are afraid of things which are not to be feared, and desire things which it is not necessary to desire, and which are beyond their control. Consequently, their life is consumed in worries over unjustified fears and unsatisfied desires. As a result, they are deprived of the only genuine pleasure there is: the pleasure of existing. (p. 87)

Much like for the Stoics, one way to practice spiritual exercises in Epicureanism was through meditation. Through meditation, the Epicureans trained the soul to relax. While the Stoics would imagine misfortunes that might happen in the future so that one is better prepared to manage them, the Epicureans, on the other hand, would detach thoughts from pictures of misfortunes and focus only on pleasurable ones.

Another way the Epicureans practiced spiritual exercises was also being in the present moment. While for the Stoics living in the moment meant being tense and wakeful at each moment, to live in the present for the Epicureans was an invitation to

71

relaxation and serenity. Both the Stoics and the Epicureans used the same kind of practice, such as meditation and living in the moment, though for different purposes. This is not to say that one was better than the other but rather to describe how spiritual exercises were educational practices that helped both the Stoics and the Epicureans deal with life.

Practicing to die

The second kind of spiritual exercise is practicing to die but not in the physical sense. Death refers to the spiritual separation of the soul and the body: "If it is true that philosophy subjugates the body's will to live to the higher demands of thought, it can rightly be said that philosophy is the training and apprenticeship for death" (Hadot, 1995, p. 94). The kind of death that these exercises prepared one for is the spiritual detachment and freedom from earthly passions, desires and fears. This kind of spiritual exercise embodied the contemplative aspect of practice. While the spiritual exercise of learning to live incorporated active practice and repetitions, the second kind of spiritual exercise as training to die contained mostly elements of contemplative practice. The kind of dying that was practiced referred to detaching from the everyday material reality and dwelling in the theoretical realm.

Hadot (1995) writes that for the Epicureans, the finite nature of existence added to the value of each moment while the Stoics discovered freedom in the apprenticeship for death. Freedom for the Stoics came about by using maxims and guiding principles to liberate the soul from earthly passions and "…among these maxims, the one affirming the unimportance of human affairs plays an important role" (Hadot, 1995, p. 96). Training for death in philosophy is this elevation of thought and rising from the everyday, individual, passionate subjectivity to the universal perspective. I believe that taking up the universal perspective in this case means to 'zoom out' and watch oneself as part of a bigger picture. As a result, the person would come to realize that the everyday fears and worries are not as big of a burden as they may appear to be. Hadot writes that spiritual progress was contingent on the turning away from what is mortal and material and returning to the activity of the intellect. The spiritual exercise of training for death was about purifying the soul of earthly passions and devoting oneself to the exercise of pure thought.

Practicing to read

The third kind of spiritual exercise is practicing how to read. Philosophy in antiquity was the art of living rather than the close reading of philosophical texts and the teaching of abstract theory as it is mostly today:

> The philosophical act is not situated merely on the cognitive level but on that of the self and of being. It is a progress which causes us to be more fully and makes us better. It is a conversion which turns our entire life upside down, changing the life of the person who goes through it. (Hadot, 1995, p. 83)

If philosophical texts are seen from the point of view that philosophy in antiquity was a spiritual exercise, our reading and interpretation of such texts will likely change: "Philosophy then appears in its original aspect: not as a theoretical construct but as a method for training people to live and to look at the world in a new way. It is an attempt to transform mankind" (Hadot, 1995, p. 107). Hadot does not seem to treat reading in the sense that we use the word 'reading' today but rather as an exercise that we have neglected, forgetting:

> …how to pause, liberate ourselves from our worries, return into ourselves, and leave aside our search for subtlety and originality, in order to meditate calmly, ruminate, and let the texts speak to us. This, too, is a spiritual exercise, and one of the most difficult. (p. 109)

Reading is a unique kind of spiritual exercise because it retains the character of a practical and everyday activity while at the same time it is also an avenue that we have to remove ourselves from everyday living. Reading can be both an active type of practice where the person engages with reading letters on a page but it can also be a contemplative kind of exercise: "…it is also a tearing away from everyday life. It is a conversion, a total transformation of one's vision, lifestyle and behavior" (Hadot, 1995, p. 103). Reading, thus, allows one to keep a distance from the everyday and practice theoretical behavior.

Practicing to dialogue

The fourth kind of spiritual exercise is practicing to dialogue. Hadot (1995) describes the Socratic dialogue as a communal spiritual exercise. In the Socratic dialogue, the interlocutors are asked to comply to the dictum 'Know thyself,' inviting them to establish a relation between the self to the self, which is the foundation of any spiritual exercise. Hadot writes that to know oneself can mean three things: to know one self not as a sage but as a 'philo-sophos,' or someone on the way towards wisdom. Second, it can mean to know oneself in one's essential being, as in separating that which we are from that which we are not. Finally, to know oneself can refer to examining one's conscience.

The significance of having dialogue with oneself is that only those capable of an authentic encounter with oneself are also capable of a genuine encounter with another: "Dialogue can be genuine only within the framework of presence to others and to oneself. From this perspective, every spiritual exercise is a dialogue, insofar as it is an exercise of authentic presence, to oneself and to others" (Hadot, 1995, p. 91). This dialogue with oneself is kind of preparation and practice for dialogue with others, which is necessary for the transformation of our ways of seeing and being. In any spiritual exercise, we must let ourselves change and such change occurs in dialogue with oneself and with others.

Socrates was a master of dialogue with himself. It has been documented that he was capable of exceptional mental concentration and able to meditate for extended periods. Sloterdijk (2012) describes Socrates as 'the inventor of sublime emigration' who was able to break off all contact with his surroundings and immerse himself in his thoughts. Socrates was able to disengage with the everyday in order to practice having a dialogue with himself as the preparatory step to having an authentic dialogue with others:

> According to Xenophon, Socrates saw this as 'concentrating the mind on itself' by breaking off contact with his environment and becoming 'deaf to the most insistent address.' Once during a military camp to which he was called up as part of his duty as an Athenian citizen, he is supposed to have stood still on the spot for twenty-four hours. (Sloterdijk, 2012, p. 27)

Similarly, Plato has documented Socrates's prolonged absences. In *The Symposium* (1999), Socrates is about to arrive for dinner but will not come in: "Socrates is here; he's retreated into your neighbor's porch and is standing there, and won't come in although I've asked him to" (p. 5). To this, Agathon responds: "That's odd. Go on asking him in and don't leave him alone" (ibid.). However, Agathon was not aware that this is something Socrates often did. Aristodemus explains: "No, leave him. This is one of his habits. Sometimes he goes off and stands still wherever he happens to be. He'll come soon, I'm sure. Don't bother him, leave him alone" (ibid.). When he was in such a state, Socrates has been described as though he was in a trance and that he would appear absent. Sloterdijk (2012) writes that anyone who had witnessed Socrates in his daydream state would highlight:

> …the savant's condition of absence as an inseparable attribute of the business of thinking….in real thinking, thoughts belong more closely to their fellow thoughts than the thinker to the world around him. Anybody who experiences this in reality is uprooted from his or her everyday relationship to circumstances and totally absorbed in internal operations. (p. 28)

Socrates was so absorbed in thoughts that he seemed to lose sense of space and time: "If Socrates is immersed in his thoughts and we 'see him thinking,' obviously we cannot locate this at the place where we perceive him physically" (Sloterdijk, 2012, p. 30). Like spiritual exercises, studious practice requires the cutting off links with one's surroundings, and losing sense of space and time in order to commit oneself to practice of thinking. Studying in this sense cannot be immediately observed and measured but only practiced: "To borrow Niklas Luhmann's terminology, we should describe this kind of retreat into a person's inner workings as an unobservable observation and draw the analogy to dreams, which, as we know, only the person dreaming can experience" (Sloterdijk, 2012, p. 29).

The link between spiritual exercises and studious practice

Spiritual exercises were one form of training cultures in antiquity that offer insights into what Sloterdijk (2012) calls the life of practice. As Sloterdijk suggests, they required both mental and physical asceticism that helped people improve themselves in

some way. It is instructive to examine spiritual exercises in antiquity because they can assist us in expanding our notion of practice and in establishing a closer link between practice and studying.

Spiritual exercises illustrate that practice is a kind of a hybrid, or a combination of both active and contemplative practices. As Hadot (1995) describes them, spiritual exercises were intense experiences that required a person to take flight from everyday life and take a contemplative stance toward their surroundings. But they also included active training, such as memorizing maxims that would be recalled when dealing with misfortunes. The Stoics and the Epicureans would not just detach themselves from everyday matters and ruminate. Rather, they actively practiced reading, listening, doing research, but would also find time to turn inward and commit themselves to thinking. Both the active and the contemplative aspects of practice allowed them to get into shape and form new habits.

I believe that studious practice, as modeled after spiritual exercises, is an educational experience because it allows people to improve themselves in some way. This is not to say that there are predetermined criteria to be met, as in a person striving to be a such and such person with such and such qualities. Rather, studious practice is a form of self-fashioning that allows the person to form new habits. For example, the Stoics practiced how to meditate in order to acquire the habit of discerning what does and does not depend on them. They studied how to 'zoom out,' how to detach themselves from earthly fears and passions, and how to dialogue with others. Such practices allowed them to acquire new habits and fashion themselves in such a way so that they are better able to deal with misfortunes. Interestingly, Hadot (1995) does not go into detail about how the Stoics would evaluate whether they were successfully handling life's misfortunes and transforming their visions of the world. Perhaps the point of spiritual exercises was not to be happier but rather the purpose was exercise itself.

Finally, it is instructive to look into spiritual exercises because they can assist us in establishing a closer link between practice and studying. I strongly believe that the Stoics and the Epicureans were not only practicing spiritual exercises but were also studying. Spiritual exercises required devotion, the suspension of everyday living and the repeated returns to an activity, such as meditating, dialoguing, memorizing maxims,

and so on. Such a description closely resembles the experience of study that I described at the beginning of this chapter. I wrote that studying requires devotion and zeal as the root of the word 'study' suggests. Studying asks the student to shut out everyday matters, slow down and commit to an activity. But we can only go on studying for so long before our bodies let us down or everyday matters ask us to put down whatever we might be engaged with. Thus, studying requires repeated returns to an activity one enjoys doing and such repetitions leave traces, or in other words, we get into shape as a result of practicing. However, a closer look at spiritual exercises in antiquity does not provide a full picture of what study as a form of practice entails. As I will describe in what follows, there are more features of studious practice that ought to be considered.

Spectatorship as a feature of studious practice

In order to studiously practice, the student needs to suspend active participation in daily life, which does not mean that the student needs to completely retreat into an inner world like Socrates did at times. Rather, the student practices 'noninvolvement:' "…not the lack of involvement in the external activity that chronically overworked professors have no time for anyway, but in one's own life where one takes a position" (Sloterdijk, 2012, p. 20). The kind of withdrawal that is required is a momentary suspension of involvement in everyday life so that one can devote themselves to study.

Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein (2013) point out that the word 'school' has its origins in the Greek word *schole* which means "…free time for study and practice" (p. 9). By free time, Simons and Masschelein do not mean relaxation but rather that school "…provided free time, that is, non-productive time … and established a time and space that was in a sense detached from the time and space of both society (Greek: *polis*) and the household (Greek: *oikos*)" (2013, p. 28). School in ancient time meant plucking young people from their everyday and allowing them to "…disconnect from the busy time of the household or of the *oikos* (the oiko-nomy) and the city/state or *polis* (poli-tics)" (Simons & Masschelein, 2013, p. 29). Simons and Masschelein (n.d.) suggest that school was "…more of a form of gathering than an institution" (para. 2). School was a retreat that would accommodate the suspension of the everyday, allowed students to slow down and provided time for study so that they can get into shape:

Time for study, exercise and thinking is time to bring oneself into (good) shape. … Study, exercise, and thinking are, thus, and importantly, practices which in themselves slow down and install a delay. Free time is separated from productive life, it is time where labour or work as economic or instrumental activities are put at a distance, and hence, study and exercise become possible. (Simons & Masschelein, 2015, p. 87)

Studious practice does not necessarily happen only in schools. Rather, my point is to highlight the Greek word *schole* and its implication that daily living and studying are ultimately incompatible. It is common to hear, and especially in educational settings, that one needs to avoid distractions and remain focused on task at hand if one wants to study. This is because the student needs time and space away from the everyday in order to devote himself or herself to studying.

On the other hand, the everyday can play a role in studious practice and should not be completely neglected. The everyday can provide opportunities for inspiration for the students who observe and reflect on themselves, their thoughts and their realities. Thus, another key feature of studious practice is watching, and specifically watching oneself within the bigger picture, watching one's surroundings and watching others. While studying, the student takes up the position of what Sloterdijk (2012) calls a 'neutral observer' who observes the everyday but does not participate in it. Rather, the student dwells in a state that I will describe later in this chapter as 'suspended animation,' or living death.

Spectatorship, however, might not bode well in educational contexts. A typical example of spectatorship in the educational setting is that of watching the teacher teaching. Watching someone lecturing is often conflated with the traditional model of education and with oppressive pedagogy, and as such is often criticized. But spectatorship in education is not all bad all of the time. Being a 'neutral observer' is one of the key features of studious practice so it is important to address the notion of spectatorship in education and its critiques.

To do so, I will turn to the notion of spectatorship in education as outlined by the philosopher of education Charles Bingham (2015) who claims that the problem is not spectatorship per se but rather a particular trend in education that he calls 'educational

humanism.' Bingham (2015) argues that critiques of supposedly passive or oppressive pedagogical approaches derive from educational humanism, or the tendency to make "…certain human qualities the aim of education" (p. 191) and when educational humanism takes hold, it tends to limit the myriad of ways a human can be in the world (p. 192).

Perspectives on spectatorship in education

Bingham (2015) writes that modern educational thought has inherited the Platonic and Aristotelian divide on spectatorship. Plato was anti-watching because listening and seeing are "…derivative activities whose results end up duping the spectator, putting him or her out of touch with the real world of what one actually does" (Bingham, 2015, p. 182). While Plato was against observing, for Aristotle, on the other hand, spectatorship provides "…at least in the best of aesthetic circumstances, space for reflection and catharsis, which can lead to human flourishing" (ibid.). Modern educational thought is more often than not on the side of Plato because spectatorship is largely rejected in educational contexts while, on the other hand, actively constructing knowledge with others is highly valued. Bingham claims that the anti-watching stance can be found in both progressive educational theory of John Dewey and critical theory of Paulo Freire: "Progressivism and criticalism are consistently at pains to condemn pedagogical practices that posit the student as a spectator" (ibid.).

For Dewey, spectatorship in the progressive classroom is wrong not only because it is passive but also because it goes against human nature: "Knowing is what humans do, not what they observe, just as foraging and roaming is what animals do, not what they observe" (Bingham, 2015, p. 184). Freire was also anti-spectatorship because it dehumanizes people: "Knowledge, for Freire, … is knowledge in use. It is praxis. But when one is a spectator, one never partakes in knowledge" (Bingham, 2015, p. 185). In other words, knowledge does not exist when students are posited as mere spectators but rather it only exists "…in the midst of participants, when people are in each others' company" (ibid.). Thus, spectatorship in both the progressive and critical classrooms is condemned because it is passive and dehumanizing.

The problem with educational humanism

However, both Dewey and Freire seem to drop the anti-spectator attitude when it comes to observing art. On the one hand, both authors disapprove of spectatorship in education while on the other, they embrace it when it comes to watching art. For both Dewey and Freire, "…the act of perceiving a work of art and the act of producing a work of art cannot be disentangled" (Bingham, 2015, p. 186). The role of the artist and that of the observer of art do not seem to be as clear-cut for Dewey and Freire: "Just as the observer must partake in the role of the artist, so, too, must the artist take part in the role of the observer" (Bingham, 2015, p. 187). Observing a work of art, thus, is not only *not* condemned but it is also championed by both authors. For Dewey, the onlooker is initiated through observing art. For Freire, observing art stirs the critical consciousness of students (ibid.). It seems as though Dewey and Freire claim that spectatorship in education inspires passivity while observing art inspires activity. Bingham (2015) suggests that Dewey's and Freire's inconsistencies"…about spectatorship in education derive from the practice of educational humanism" (p. 183).

The (mis)treatment of spectatorship in education is a symptom of a larger trend in education that tends to discredit certain pedagogical practices based on whether or not they conform to what it means to be fully human. For example, Paulo Freire critiques the 'banking system' as the practice of treating students like empty receptacles and the work of the teacher is to transmit knowledge to the student in order to fill their lack: "The banking system thus treats the student as a spectator in an event that is prepared for in advance by the teacher" (Bingham, 2015, p. 185).

According to Freire (1970), the 'banking system' of education is oppressive and dehumanizing because students do not actively participate in their own education but are rather expected to memorize the knowledge that is prepared for in advance and then narrated by the teacher. Freire (2005) writes that teachers prepare in advance by following "…prepackaged educational materials produced by some experts in their offices to unequivocally demonstrate their authoritarianism" (p. 15). So, it is not the case that teachers themselves are the oppressors. Rather, the problem lies in the requirement for the teachers to follow the curriculum, or what Freire calls "packages," that are prepared in advance. Freire (2005), rather, argues that teachers need to have courage

to establish such a relationship with their students that "…demands that we respect them and demands equally that we be aware of the concrete conditions of their world, the conditions that shape them" (p. 102). Put differently, the starting point of education should be "…the real-life situation of the students in question, i.e. their own life world experiences, their own joys and worries, and their particular needs and aspirations" (Vlieghe, 2018, p. 919).

If the assumption goes that the banking system operates through spectatorship, then spectatorship as a pedagogical approach must be wrong because it prevents students from participating in their own education and becoming fully human. This is one example of educational humanism, or the trend of linking certain pedagogical practices to beliefs about what it means to be human. The logic of educational humanism operates in such way that if a particular pedagogical approach goes against human nature, then it is discredited. In the same vein, if classroom practices support our beliefs about what it means to be human, then such practices are embraced.

Bingham (2015) stresses that it is important to be cautious about linking pedagogical practices to specific features that make us human. The problem with educational humanism can best be summarized in the following way:

> We should try to avoid making certain human qualities the aim of education. For, the only thing that such a tendency leads to is paternalism toward those who do not already exhibit such qualities or, what's worse, endless research on behalf of those who are slower than others to attain these qualities. (Bingham, 2015, p. 191)

Furthermore, educational humanism "…has created a fixation on the human ability to learn," (Bingham, 2015, p. 192), thus paving the way of thinking and talking about education in terms of learning. Such a fixation is evident in the predominant language of 'learning outcomes,' 'learning environments,' and 'lifelong learning,' whose primary focus is on the people's ability to learn and on the one best way to be fully human. Bingham (2015) claims that such a fixation on learning, and on the best ways to teach people so that they can flourish, have the potential of limiting the myriad of ways people can be in the world. However, this is not a call to teach people as though they were not people but is rather a call for a general awareness that educational humanism

exists and operates "…in ways that can be limiting to various ways of human flourishing" (ibid.). Bingham (2015) claims that discrediting spectatorship in education because it is passive and because it supposedly goes against human nature is "…an erroneous way of proving that spectatorship is an undesirable human trait, or even that spectatorship is wrong in education" (p. 191). My claim is that watching in educational contexts is not necessarily detrimental or oppressive and should actually be embraced at times.

However, it would be difficult for educators to teach without some figure of the human in mind. Sloterdijk (2012) is not immune to drawing conclusions about human nature either as is evident in his claims that we are destined to practice and are driven to improve ourselves. But, Sloterdijk's notion of practice incorporates spectatorship. Watching is one of the key features of practice as articulated in Sloterdijk's work and, in my opinion, of studious practice too. While practicing theoretical behavior, the student takes the position of an observer who can draw inspiration from the everyday. Thus, spectatorship is another feature of studying as a form of practice. Next, I will outline Sloterdijk's notion of spectatorship, and specifically his definition of the neutral observer and suspended animation.

The neutral observer

> If the theoretical 'attitude' … is to be a matter of practice, then the cardinal exercise (from the Latin *cardo*, the door hinge) would have to be a withdrawal exercise. It would be an exercise in not-taking-up-a-position, an exercise in de-existentialization, an attempt at the art of suspending participation in life in the midst of life. … The observing ego should take the place previously occupied by the position-taking ego. (Sloterdijk, 2012, p. 18)

The observing ego that Sloterdijk refers to is grounded in Husserlian phenomenology, which Sloterdijk calls 'modern asceticism.' I have already described the kind of asceticism practiced in antiquity. In the training cultures of antiquity, the suspension of everyday life was driven by ethical questions whereas in 'modern asceticism,' this suspension and taking up the position of an observer served a different purpose.

Husserlian phenomenology is a study of appearances rather than material reality itself. The study of appearances requires the withdrawal into an inner world and studying images of material objects and events, or phenomena, as they appear in our consciousness. While the Greeks would shut out everyday experiences because the everyday would lead them astray from studying, in Husserlian phenomenology, daily experience gains a different status. The point of withdrawing into an inner world is to notice the everyday and to study it as it appears to us. Thus, both ancient and modern asceticism required the withdrawal from daily living and this suspension of the everyday served different purposes. Sloterdijk (2012) claims that Husserl's vision was to develop a phenomenological method that would narrow the gap between philosophy and strict science:

> Husserl … had been convinced for some time of the possibility that contemplative behavior could be liberated from the position of being a once-weekly, second-class, indolent activity … and that time was ripe for a philosophy that would rise to become a strict science. (p. 14)

Thus, the purpose of Husserl's phenomenological method was to narrow the gap between philosophy and science. It required the cutting off links to material reality and withdrawing into an inner world to study phenomena as they appear in our consciousness.

Sloterdijk uses the term 'neutral observer' to describe a particular way of relating to life's events as pure observers (2012, p. 13). However, it is not enough to just watch. Rather, one must also be 'neutral.' In other words, it is essential to suspend judgment and switch off the so-called natural or existential attitude towards the world where one takes a position. The notion that the observer must be neutral is based on Husserl's phenomenological method, which Sloterdijk (2012) describes as methodically motivated abstention from judgment and the bracketing of existential consciousness, or switching off the 'natural attitude:'

> Since Husserl always considered the 'natural attitude' to everything in real life to mean 'taking a position,' which implies being involved in life's problems and being fettered to the galleys of everyday life, the decision on the possibility of intuitive, even 'purely intuitive,' behavior depends solely on proving that the curse

of having-to-take-a-position can be successfully avoided. This means that to be pure, theory should be able at least temporarily to suspend its agent's fixation on real existence, even if it does not completely dissolve it. (p. 17)

The neutral observer is thus 'neutral' because he or she turns off their preoccupation with everyday life and retreats into an inner world to study phenomena, or material reality as it appears in our consciousness. To practice theoretical behavior, the student needs to detach from the everyday because it creates "…a windless zone in which thinking, free from the unreasonable demands of existence could enjoy its interminable work on phenomena" (Sloterdijk, 2012, p. 17).

As I wrote previously, Sloterdijk defines scholarship as a set of procedures that assist the student to transition from the everyday to theoretical behavior. Thus, the student takes up the position of a 'neutral observer' who relates to the everyday as a spectator rather than as an actor. Similarly, studious practice requires taking up the position of the neutral observer who watches but does not participate in everyday matters so that the student can make space, or what Sloterdijk calls the 'windless zone' that is necessary for one to commit to thinking. The act of suspending the 'natural attitude' can be described as a kind of living death, or 'suspended animation.'

Suspended animation and study

Sloterdijk (2012) likens the state of suspended animation to being 'dead in one's lifetime.' This gesture of distancing oneself from everyday existence is based on the term 'epoche' that was first used by Husserl in 1913 in his book *Ideas for a Pure Phenomenology* (2012). Sloterdijk expands on the term 'epoche' and defines it as "…training an abstinent attitude that encourages observation" (2012, p. 40). The architectural equivalent to Husserl's 'epoche' is similar to the Greek *schole* as a place "…for shutting out the world and bracketing in concern, an asylum for the mysterious guests that we call ideas and theorems. In today's parlance, we would call it a retreat or a hideaway" (Sloterdijk, 2012, p. 33).

The term 'epoche' was borrowed from Skeptics who defined the term as the art of hovering between doctrines: "…the skepsis of antiquity represents a precursor to the modern culture of coolness. In this context, epoche corresponds to the behavior of the

customer who strolls through the market without buying anything" (Sloterdijk, 2012, p. 21). Sloterdijk claims that Husserl went beyond the Skeptics in that he did not want to just hover between theories. He had decided to suspend even the "I" or the personal existence where one withdraws "…to the inner laboratory where mental photographs provide precise, tangible pictorial presences" (2012, p. 22). In this suspended state, the studier transforms sights into fixed inner images where "…one's personal existence would appear as a graphic illustration in a textbook on possible life forms" (Sloterdijk, 2012, p. 18). Studying as a form of practice would be akin to flipping through the pages of one's lived experiences, and imagining new and different possibilities of being in the world. It is about slowing down and reflecting on one's lived experiences instead of rushing to meet deadlines and passing exams.

I often hear my own students tell me that they don't have time to think. They claim they are always rushing to learn enough to pass exams and have no time to take in what it is they are reading. Students need time and space for sustained reflection and for 'digestion' of what they are asked to study. It is important to allow time and space for students to studiously practice, to slow down and reflect. In what follows, I will discuss what it means to give space and time for students to think. For that, I will turn to Hannah Arendt (1978) and focus specifically on her discussion about the time and space for thinking.

Space to think

In the first chapter of this thesis, I outlined Hannah Arendt's definition of thinking as one of the three basic mental activities. For Arendt, thinking is the reason's need to actualize itself in speculation (1978, p. 69). Reason is the faculty that makes us think and it is distinct from the intellect which is driven by cognition and the quest for knowledge. Reason, on the other hand, is the quest for finding meaning.

To think does not mean to know. To expect the truth to arise out of thinking illustrates the mistaking of the need to think with the urge to know. Thinking can indeed be employed to know but thinking in itself is not the quest for truth. Thinking is, as Arendt puts it, 'the handmaiden of a different enterprise.' For Arendt, thinking and knowing are not the same. Thinking is discursive, driven by the urge to find meaning and to tussle

with unanswerable questions. Thinking is aimless and is sheer activity of the mind that wanders without a specific purpose or end in sight. Arendt (1978) describes thinking in the following way:

> If thinking is an activity that is its own end and if the only adequate metaphor for it, drawn from our ordinary experience, is the sensation of being alive, then it follows that all questions concerning the aim or purpose of thinking are as unanswerable as questions about the aim or purpose of life. (p. 197)

In my discussions about studious practice so far, I claimed that studious practice has thinking as its object. Arendt's claim that the question about the purpose of thinking is as unanswerable as the question about the purpose of life, in my opinion, adequately captures the aim of studious practice too. For Arendt, thinking is "…always out of order, interrupts all ordinary activities and is interrupted by them" (1978, p. 197), and it requires mental concentration, absent-mindedness and withdrawal into an inner world. The way Arendt describes what is required for thinking to take place resembles Sloterdijk's notion of the 'windless zone' as the space necessary for the student to think.

Arendt's description of Socrates's habit of getting lost in thought and breaking off contact with his surroundings also appears to illustrate Socrates's practice of 'suspended animation': "Once, we are told by Xenophon, he remained in complete immobility for twenty-four hours in a military camp, deep in thought…" (1978, p. 197). Socrates was physically present but his mind was somewhere else. Thus, mental absence and withdrawal are inseparable elements of thinking activity which "…always deals with absences and removes itself from what is present and close at hand" (Arendt, 1978, p. 199).

If the body and the mind are in two different locations while we are thinking and if we are physically present but mentally absent, then where are we when we think? In her book *The Life of the Mind*, Arendt (1978) devotes a chapter to the topic in which she stresses that everyday topology is not necessarily helpful in trying to locate the place of thinking. I believe that Arendt's discussion about where we are when we think is important if we want to examine what it means for our students to have space to think instead of focusing on passing exams, meeting deadlines and chasing after credentials.

While thinking, reality is temporarily suspended and loses meaning for the thinking ego. Human thought leaves the world of the particular and looks for something meaningful. For Arendt, when we are lost in thought, the mind is 'nowhere.' Arendt describes this 'nowhere' as being homeless, drawing on the Aristetolian notion that homelessness is inherent in thinking. Philosophers love this "nowhere," according to Arendt, "…as though it were a country (philochorein) and they desire to let all other activities go for the sake of scholazein (doing nothing, as we would say) because of the sweetness inherent in thinking or philosophizing itself" (1978, p. 200).

Sloterdijk (2012) is in agreement with Arendt that ordinary topology does not necessarily suffice if we want to locate the thinking ego:

> From the perspective of existential analysis, there is nothing to be gained from such statements about the 'where' of the thinking being. Phrases from physics and everyday topology do not facilitate any positioning of the real being that is thinking. (p. 31)

While in agreement with Arendt that ordinary topology does not suffice to locate the thinking ego, Sloterdijk (2012), however, claims that instead of nowhere, we are Elsewhere when we think: "The correct answer is short and to the point: we are in a place *Elsewhere*" (p. 31). Both authors claim that it is not useful to think in terms of ordinary topology to locate the mind when we think. Arendt (1978) claims that the question *Where are we when we think?* might be the wrong question, as in looking to identify the physical location of the thinking ego:

> …the everywhere of the thinking ego – summoning into its presence whatever it pleases from any distance in time or space, which thought traverses with a velocity greater than light's – is a *nowhere*. (p. 200)

The educational value of studious practice, which has thinking as its object, is precisely this never ending search for meaning and slowing down to dwell on what one is studying. So far, I have discussed about the space for thinking and next I will describe Arendt's notion of time for thinking. What is insightful about Arendt's discussion about thinking is that space and time are not so easily distinguishable when we are lost in thought. In other words, for Arendt, space and time intersect when we think.

Time to think and Arendt's 'Eternal Now'

Our sense of reality is not determined only by our spatial existence. For Arendt (1978), the time and space for thinking intersect:

> We are not only in space, we are also in time, remembering, collecting and recollecting what no longer is present out of 'the belly of memory' (Augustine), anticipating and planning in the mode of willing what is not yet. Perhaps our question – Where are we when we think? – was wrong because by asking for the *topos* of this activity, we were exclusively spatially oriented… (p. 201)

Arendt writes that the thinking ego finds the time to think in what she refers to as the Eternal Now, which is neither bogged down by our past nor driven by the future. The Eternal Now is the time for thinking that is situated in the gap between our past and future, which is:

> …the quiet in the center of a storm which, though totally unlike the storm, still belongs to it. In this gap between past and future, we find our place in time when we think, that is, when we are sufficiently removed from past and future… (Arendt, 1978, p. 209)

To describe the notion of the Eternal Now, Arendt (1978) uses Kafka's parable "HE." In the parable, a nameless man stands between the no-longer and the not-yet. He is pushed forward by the past while at the same time pushed backwards by the future. The two forces, the past and the future, are antagonistic. The past helps the man in Kafka's parable in his fight with the future and the future helps him in his fight with the past. Kafka's parable is as follows:

> He has two antagonists; the first presses him from behind, from his origin. The second blocks the road in front of him. He gives battle to both. Actually, the first supports him in his fight with the second, for he wants to push him forward, and in the same way the second supports him in his fight with the first, since he drives him back. But it is only theoretically so. For it is not only the two antagonists who are there, but he himself as well, and who really knows his intentions? His dream, though, is that some time in an unguarded moment – and

this, it must be admitted, would require a night darker than any night has ever been yet – he will jump out of the fighting line and be promoted, on account of his experience in fighting, to the position of umpire over his antagonists in their fight with each other. (Arendt, 1978, p. 202)

The two antagonistic forces have no beginning and no ending. Because of the presence of man, they meet and collapse into the present Now, thus creating a gap that is necessary for thinking: "…the insertion of man, fighting in both directions, produces a rupture which, by being defended in both directions, is extended to a gap, the present seen as the fighter's battleground. This battleground for Kafka is the metaphor for man's home on earth" (Arendt, 1978, p. 205). In ordinary life, we continue what we started yesterday and hope to finish tomorrow:

The time continuum depends on the continuity of our everyday life, and the business of everyday life, in contrast to the activity of the thinking ego – always independent of the spatial circumstances surrounding it – is always spatially determined and conditioned. It is due to this thoroughgoing spatiality of our ordinary life that we can speak plausibly of time in spatial categories, that the past can appear to us as something lying 'behind' us and the future as lying 'ahead.' (Arendt, 1978, p. 206)

Kafka's parable "HE" describes the time sensation for the thinking ego provided it has withdrawn from the business of ordinary life: "The gap between past and future opens only in reflection, whose subject matter is what is absent – either what has already disappeared or what has not yet appeared. Reflection draws these absent "regions" into the mind's presence…" (Arendt, 1978, p. 206). The man in Kafka's parable is situated in the gap between the past and the future, which is an immovable present or a *nunc stans*. In the parable, the man hopes for the moment when it becomes quiet enough for him to jump out of the battleground between the past and the future and take on the role of the umpire, or the spectator. I believe that the moment when the man in Kafka's parable hopes to jump out of the battleground between the past and the future and to take up the position of the spectator resembles the taking up of the universal perspective in spiritual exercises in antiquity. It is the moment of reflection on one's own position in the larger context and in the context of time. It is an educational moment

because one is able to 'step outside' oneself in order to gain perspective and insight about one's own life. It is also the hope of finding oneself in complete quiet beyond clocks and calendars and not being involved with deadlines or time at all.

The man in the parable is not some passive object inserted in-between the past and the future but a fighter who defends his own presence. For Arendt, his presence in the fighting line influences the direction of time and perhaps even causes the antagonism between the past and the future itself. Without him, the past and the future would be indistinguishable. But because of his presence, they meet at an angle and the image is that of what Arendt calls 'a parallelogram of forces.' Such an image would provide the fighter with a resting place where he would no longer strain to jump out of the fighting ground so that he can find "the quiet and stillness and necessary for thinking" (Arendt, 1978, p. 208).

Concluding remarks about studious practice

In this chapter, I argued that there is a close relationship between study and practice. I believe that the benefit of establishing a closer link between study and practice is that it can enrich our notions of study. I used Peter Sloterdijk's (2012) discussion about the life of practice as a useful framework to link studying and practice and proposed the term 'studious practice' in order to capture another dimension of study, namely study as a practice of thinking.

Studious practice has certain features. It consists of repeated returns to an activity that one enjoys which results in the student 'getting into shape.' As Sloterdijk argues, practice is not readily visible and obvious to others but it is necessary and inherent in human nature. Practice asks the student to slow down and think, and there are no guarantees that it will ever pay off. It could be the case that the whole point of studious practice is the act of practicing itself, and perhaps Sloterdijk is correct in claiming that we are doomed to practice.

Studious practice is a hybrid that consists of active training and contemplation. In other words, the student needs to both actively train and distance himself or herself from everyday matters in order to devote themselves to thinking. Sloterdijk (2012) describes the practicing person who has cut off links with their surroundings as "…a kind of a dead

person on holiday. … philosophically dead who cast off their bodies and apparently become pure intellects or impersonal thinking souls" (p. 3). The student's relationship to his or her surroundings can be best described as a to and fro movement where one moment the student is engaged with everyday living only to be disengaged the next.

The educational value of studious practice is that it helps people to sharpen their thinking rather than mastering a subject matter. Furthermore, the educational value of studious practice is that it is a form of self-fashioning and it forms new habits in the student. In this chapter, I extended Sloterdijk's claim that the principles of training cultures of antiquity can be applied to the practice of theoretical behavior, or life devoted to thinking. I turned to Pierre Hadot (1995) and his descriptions of spiritual exercises in Greek antiquity for primarily three reasons. The first reason was to expand the notion of practice so that it is not perceived as merely repetitions, as it has been suggested by Vlieghe (2012). Rather, I wanted to illustrate how practice can be understood as a hybrid between active training and contemplation. For instance, spiritual exercises were intense experiences that required the Stoics to take flight from the everyday in order to think about how to deal with misfortunes. They consisted not only of repeating maxims, which were recalled when needed, but also of withdrawing from the everyday in order to find the time and space to think.

Second, I believe that studious practice is modeled after spiritual exercises that required devotion, the suspension of everyday living and the repeated returns to an activity. Spiritual exercises were educational experiences because they were a form of self-fashioning that allowed the Stoics and the Epicureans to transform their vision of the world and they required constant practice. Finally, I believe that the Stoics and the Epicureans were not just practicing spiritual exercises but were, in fact, studying. I believe that spiritual exercises illustrate how study and practice can be linked.

Studious practice also includes spectatorship which has not always had a positive connotation in educational settings. I described how the general trend in education called 'educational humanism' has, in part, contributed to an unfavorable perspective on spectatorship in education. However, spectatorship is not all detrimental all of the time. When we studiously practice, we need to be sufficiently removed from everyday matters in order to devote ourselves to thinking. But this does not mean that

the student has to live like a hermit and completely cut off links to their surroundings. Rather, while studying, the student practices 'non-involvement' with everyday matters. The everyday can provide moments of inspiration and food for thought. Watching the teacher teaching, watching our surroundings and our place within it, listening to others and to our thoughts, all provide opportunities to study.

However, there are no guarantees that one will become a master of a subject matter, become wiser or a better thinker as a result of studiously practicing. Studious practice is never-ending and its point is to keep studying, thinking, and devoting oneself to an activity. The purpose of studious practice is akin to the way Hannah Arendt describes the nature of thinking. As Arendt (1978) claims, thinking is the equivalent to the sensation of being alive, and that questions about the purpose of thinking are as unanswerable as questions about the purpose of life (p. 197). I believe that the same can be applied to studious practice. We studiously practice for the sake of practicing itself.

In this chapter, I also argued that the object of studious practice is thinking and I turned to Arendt's theory of thinking as one of the most comprehensive discussions about the nature of thinking. I focused specifically on Arendt's discussion about the time and space that a person needs for thinking. For Arendt, time and space intersect, which is to say, while we are in space, we are also in time. In order to think, one needs to find the necessary stillness to allow the mind to wander and search for meaning. Arendt claims that we cannot locate the space for thinking if we construe space in ordinary life. Rather, the mind is nowhere when we think and that the time for thinking is the Eternal Now, or the gap in-between the past and the future that provides the stillness necessary for thinking. Although Arendt's theory of thinking might not be helpful in practical terms for setting up the time and space for our students to think, her discussions of thinking illuminate the nature of thinking as tussling with unanswerable questions and searching for meaning rather than for truth.

Finally, I would like to return to the example I provided in this chapter. I described how I would often hear my students tell me that they have difficulty finding time to think about what they are reading or listening to in class. They often feel rushed to just get through materials so that they can pass exams and meet deadlines. What I hear my

92

students saying is that they are not given enough space and time to study. Thus, I am always mindful of how much time and space I give my students to slow down to think and just practice. I strongly believe that educators need to be mindful and to recognize opportunities when it is appropriate to suspend expectations and evaluations and just allow students to practice thinking.

Chapter 4.

Study and the Event

Introduction

In the second chapter of this thesis, I described a theory of study whose function is to suspend the discourses and practices of learning by asking us to conserve rather than actualize our potential in the name of generating more capital. In the third chapter, I discussed the link between study and practice, and claimed that study is a form of practice. I proposed the term 'studious practice' to capture the aspect of study that has not been acknowledged so far in the literature on study, namely that study is a practice of thinking. So far, my discussions about study have been informed by philosophy and philosophy of education. In this chapter, I will discuss study by using the theory of the Event developed by the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Zizek (2014), which is grounded in Lacanian psychoanalysis. I will describe a new theory of study through the lens of the theory of the Event because I strongly believe that Zizek's theory of the Event can assist us in further enriching discussions about study in education.

Zizek's work has been used mostly in passing in the literature about study in education and primarily in relation to the political aspect of study. I will now illustrate the extent of discussions that include Zizek's work. Tyson Lewis (2013a) describes the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement, at least in its early stages, as an example of study as a collective and public experience that "…'would prefer not to' settle on this or that agenda or demand and instead experiment within a suspended, whatever state of being" (p. 150). Lewis claims that this hesitation of studying and its rhythmic sways between reaching a goal and then withdrawing might suggest a deferral of political engagement. Such deferral has been either criticized by some or lauded by others, such as Zizek who has famously said "Don't act! Think!" (2012a), or in other words, that we need less activism and more thinking. Zizek has argued that we should refrain from political engagement, especially in light of "…the fake sense of urgency that pervades the left-liberal humanitarian discourse on violence" (2008, p. 5). The proponents of this type of

discourse demand we do something about capitalism, climate change, hate crimes, and so on, and do something now.

On the other hand, Zizek claims that "There are situations when the only truly 'practical' thing to do is to resist the temptation to engage immediately and to 'wait and see' by means of a patient, critical analysis" (2008, p. 6). Lewis, however, claims that Zizek misses the (im)potentiality of collective study: "…public and collective study can be theorized as a new form of *communist study* that does not delay the arrival of a coming politics but is a messianic appearance of an inoperative community in the present" (2013a, p. 150). In other words, the movement was a collective and public experience of (im)potentiality that made no demands for the future but was rather a community of equals living in the present. This is approximately the extent of engagement with Zizek's work in the literature on study.

While Zizek's views about the deferral of political engagement have been addressed in the literature on study, there have not been enough discussions about the psychoanalytic dimension of Zizek's work, and specifically his interpretations of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Before moving on to describe how Zizek's work is relevant for understanding study in education, I will refer to the work of the educational theorist Daniel Cho who has engaged with Zizek's theorizing. Though engaging with Zizek's work and with Lacanian psychoanalysis, Cho (2009) does not address the topic of study. Cho has written mostly on how the psychoanalytic theory developed by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan can be interpreted in educational contexts and described a theory he calls 'psychopedagogy' to show the close relationship between psychoanalysis and pedagogy.

Cho claims that it is erroneous to think that: "…psychoanalysis and education are distinctive fields that can later be brought together. In this way, the relevance of psychoanalysis in education is reduced to that of *application:* psychoanalytic education is merely an education to which psychoanalysis is applied" (2009, p. 2). Rather, Cho's argument is much stronger: "Psychoanalysis is already pedagogy, and pedagogy is already psychoanalysis" (2009, p. 3). According to Cho, psychoanalysis and pedagogy are intertwined to the point where one cannot do without the other, and goes on to develop a theory of what he calls "psychopedagogy" in order to convey their close

95

relationship: "Psychoanalysis cannot be applied to pedagogy because pedagogy is already found *within* it. That is to say, psychoanalysis utilizes and depends upon pedagogy in order to formulate its theory and concepts" (ibid.).

Cho's main concern, thus, is to establish a closer link between psychoanalysis and pedagogy, and he draws primarily on Freud and Lacan. Cho's theory of 'psychopedagogy' is useful to establish the relevance of Lacanian psychoanalysis in educational contexts, or as Cho claims: "It is high time that Lacanian psychoanalysis became a fixture in educational studies" (2009, p. 6). But, as I mentioned previously, Cho does not specifically discuss the experience of study in education. Thus, there is still a gap in the literature on study that should be filled by Zizek's interpretation of Lacan's work. In this chapter, I will add to discussions about study in education by developing a new theory of study through the lens of Zizek's theory of the Event.

More specifically, in this chapter, I will discuss the link between the Event and study. I will first describe the role of the unconscious and fantasy in study, which is a topic that has not been discussed enough in the existing literature on study. Then, I will describe the qualities of study and discuss three specific features of study that include being seized by an idea, the cutting off links with one's surroundings and study as getting lost in thought, and do so through the lens of the theory of the Event. I will then add another feature of study that has not been discussed so far. While the logic of learning pivots around the accumulation of knowledge that is later observed and measured, studying, on the other hand, is also about loss and undoing. The student can indeed learn something as a result of studying but this knowledge can be forgotten, repressed, ignored, or in other words, lost, and this aspect of education needs to be acknowledged. I will conclude the chapter with a call for what Zizek calls a 'new universality' and I will apply it to educational settings. The 'new universality' in education would acknowledge study as a legitimate and valuable educational experience rather than a waste of time and potential.

The Event and its relation to study

Zizek (2014) writes that an Event "…can refer to a devastating natural disaster or to the latest celebrity scandal, the triumph of the people or a brutal political change, an

intense experience of a work of art or an intimate decision" (p. 3). In other words, an Event can be anything that alters the way we perceive our reality and our place within it. An Event is:

> …something shocking, out of joint that appears to happen all of a sudden and Interrupts the usual flow of things; something that emerges seemingly out of nowhere, without discernible causes, an appearance without solid being as its foundation. (Zizek, 2014, p. 4).

An Event, however, need not be a big shattering moment in material reality but can be "…a barely perceptible shift in the subjective attitude" (Zizek, 2015, p. 269). Zizek does not classify events into species and subspecies nor does he distinguish between material and immaterial events, between scientific and artistic, or between public and intimate events because such an approach would neglect the three most important features of an event. The first is its circular structure, or in other words, it is an effect that exceeds its causes. An Event seems to appear out of nowhere and has no discernible causes because of its circular structure: "…an event is *the effect that seems to exceed its causes* – and the space of an event is that which opens up by the gap that separates an effect from its causes" (Zizek, 2014, p. 5). Zizek claims that "…already with this approximate definition, we find ourselves at the very heart of philosophy, since causality is one of the basic problems philosophy deals with: are all things connected with causal links?" (ibid.). The second feature of an Event is that "…there is something 'miraculous' in an event" and Zizek (2014) provides the example of:

> …the prolonged protests on Tahrir Square in Cairo which toppled the Mubarak regime: one can easily explain the protests as the result of specific deadlocks in Egyptian society (unemployed educated youth with no clear prospects, etc.), but somehow, none of them can really account for the synergetic energy that gave birth to what went on. (p. 4)

In the particular example that Zizek provides, there is no one cause that would explain the uprising, and if one could be established, it can be done so only retroactively, or in other words, only *after* the Event has already occurred. This example, thus, combines the features of an Event as an effect that exceeds its causes and as something miraculous that emerges out of nowhere and changes how we perceive

reality. Finally, Zizek does not classify events because such an approach ignores the third and the most important feature of an Event as "…the surprising emergence of something new which undermines every stable scheme" (2014, p. 7). The next question is whether an Event is a "…change in the way reality appears to us, or is it a shattering transformation of reality itself" (ibid.). Zizek ponders whether philosophy can help to answer this question, and determine what an Event is and how it is possible.

The question whether an Event is a shift in our perception of reality or a change of reality itself rests on the distinction between two main philosophical approaches. Zizek writes: "From its very inception, philosophy seems to oscillate between two approaches: the transcendental and the ontological or ontic" (2014, p. 5). Transcendental is the word for a frame that defines the coordinates of reality while the ontic approach is preoccupied with reality itself: "How did the universe come to be? Does it have a beginning or an end? What is our place in it?" (2014, p. 6). For Zizek, the gap between the two approaches became most apparent in the 20th century: "The transcendental approach reached its apogee with German philosopher Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), while the ontological one seems today kidnapped by natural sciences" (ibid.). But both approaches culminate in an Event "…the Event of the disclosure of Being – of the horizon of meaning which determines how we perceive and relate to reality – in Heidegger's thought; and in the Big Bang (or, broken symmetry)" (ibid.). I believe that for an occurrence to be called an Event, there needs to be some sort of shift in how reality appears to us rather than a change of reality itself. In other words, I believe that an Event is the transcendental change in a person whose frame of perception has shifted and that such a change in perception is also present when we study.

In the previous two chapters of this thesis, I wrote that Giorgio Agamben (1995) links study to stupidity. Agamben examines the etymology of the Latin 'studium' and writes that the st- root of the word indicates a crash or shock of impact. In this sense, Agamben claims, studying and stupefying are akin because those who study are in a situation of people who have received a shock and are stupefied by what has just struck them "…unable to grasp it and at the same time powerless to leave hold" (1995, p. 64). Thus, studying induces this stupefying feeling in the student who realizes that he or she might not know as much as they believed they did and that study is never-ending: "With each new book discovered, each new reference tracked down, the trail of clues

becomes more elusive and the end more and more distanced from the student" (Lewis, 2011, p. 591).

One might wonder whether this shock is study itself or whether it is just the beginning of study. I believe that this crash, or shock of impact, is not the experience of study itself because study is not momentary. As I described in the previous chapter, study requires devotion and time, and as a form of practice it cannot be reduced to one moment. However, the shock that Agamben is referring to is not the beginning of study either. To say that this 'shock' is the beginning of study would mean that we are talking about the point of departure that is oriented towards the future. My claim, however, is that this 'shock' can be described as an Event, or an opening that has a circular structure and is oriented towards our past rather than to the future:

> This opening is thus not simply the opening towards the future but a much more radical opening towards the past – the moment it is not yet decided not what will become out of the things but what they always-already were. (Zizek, 2016, p. 90)

Because of its circular structure, an Event retroactively changes how we perceive and relate to our past, and, one might argue, that an Event even creates our past. To illustrate the circular nature of an Event, Zizek gives us the example of love: "I do not fall in love for precise reasons (her lips, her smile…) – it is because I already love her that her lips, etc. attract me" (2014, p. 4). Love is eventual because "…it is a manifestation of a circular structure in which the effect retroactively determines its causes and reasons" (ibid.).

Agamben (1995) claims that this shock of coming across something new leaves the student uncertain and stupefied because study is fragmentary and never-ending. I believe that this shock is an Event that changes the student's relation to their past knowledge, and I would even argue that there is an emancipatory element in this shock because it makes the student realize that he or she knew something in the first place. Thus, Agamben's 'shock of impact' cannot be labeled either as study itself or as the beginning of study. Rather, this shock is an Event that sends ripples and rearranges our perceptions of our past and, as a result, we form a different relation to our past. I believe that an Event is a manifestation of the Lacanian Real which does not correspond to material reality but is rather something sudden and out of joint that intrudes into our

reality and resists articulation and knowledge. To better explain the relation between an Event and the Real, I will now describe the Lacanian triad that consists of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real, which together form the human psyche.

The Lacanian triad: the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real

The Lacanian triad represents the three realms of the human psyche and consists of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real. In his earlier work, Lacan described the relationship among these three dimensions of the human psyche as a knot, basing it on the mathematical concept in knot theory called the Borromean knot. The French historian, psychoanalyst and Lacan biographer, Elisabeth Roudinesco (2014) describes the origins of the Borromean knot in the following way:

> Familiar to all specialists in topology, the coat of arms of the Milanese Borromeo dynasty comprised three rings in the form of a trefoil, symbolizing a triple alliance. If one of the rings is removed, the three are free and each refers to the power of one of the family's three branches. (p. 61)

In his later work on the sinthome, however, Lacan refers to the Borromean knot as a link rather than a knot. In any case, the Borromean knot is described as the structure that supports the human subject and consists of three overlapping rings that depend on one another. Should one of the rings be removed, the whole structure falls apart:

> For the condition to have been expressly posited that, starting with three rings, a link is made such that a break in one of the rings, the middle one, if I may put it in a somewhat abridged form, sets the other two, whichever they may be, free from one another, it had to be noticed that this had been inscribed on the coat of arms of the Borromeo family. (Lacan, 2016, p. 11)

In his early seminars, it appears that the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real are distinct from one another and that no two realms of the human psyche are directly linked together but each pair depends on the third to link them. For example, the Real and the Symbolic are not linked to each other directly but need the Imaginary to keep

them together and the same applies for all three realms of the human psyche. In his work in the late 1970s, however, Lacan introduces a fourth element that is necessary to keep the three dimensions of the human psyche together and calls it the 'sinthome' which "…is an old way of spelling what was subsequently spelt *symptom*" (2016, p. 9).

In his later work, Lacan claims that the three realms of the human psyche do not depend on one another to keep the structure, or the human subject, together but rather that there is a fourth element that keeps the three realms linked. In his seminar on the sinthome, Lacan turns to the work of James Joyce: "…it is through Joyce that I'm going to be broaching this fourth term in so far as it completes the knot of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real" (2016, p. 37). Lacan writes that the fourth element, or the sinthome, is necessary because the three realms of the human psyche are not, as he claimed in his earlier work, distinct from one another but are rather continuous: "…given the way that these three balance each other out, the way that they superpose one over the other, it doesn't take a great deal of effort to join up the points in the planar diagram, thus turning them into a continuity" (2016, p. 38). Such a continuity presents a problem for the human subject because the continuity among the three realms would result in psychosis:

> In so far as a subject knots together as three, the imaginary, the symbolic and the real, he is supported only by their continuity. The imaginary, the symbolic, and the real are one and the same consistence, and it is in this that paranoid psychosis consists. (Lacan, 2016, p. 41)

Thus, the sinthome as the fourth element marks out the difference between the three realms and keeps the structure from falling apart. Lacan developed the triad over the years and the definitions of the Symbolic, the Imaginary and the Real changed over time. Zizek (1989) outlines the development of the triad from when it was first conceived in the 1950s to Lacan's later work:

> …in the 1950s when we have the *Real* – the brute, pre-symbolic reality which always returns to its place – then the *symbolic* order which structures our perceptions of reality, and finally the *imaginary,* the level of illusory entities whose consistency is the effect of a kind of mirror-play – that is, they have no real existence but are a mere structural effect. (p. 182)

Thus, in Lacan's former years, the Real was the pre-symbolic reality while the Symbolic structured our reality and the Imaginary was the subject's experience of reality. The images generated by the subject had no actual grounding in reality but were a structural effect of the subject's experience of reality. However, in Lacan's later works, the Real approached more and more what Lacan earlier referred to as the Imaginary:

> With the development of Lacanian teaching in the 1960s and 1970s, what he calls 'the Real' approaches more and more what he called, in the 1950s, the Imaginary. Let us take the case of trauma: in the 1950s, in his first seminar, the traumatic event is defined as an imaginary entity which had not yet been fully symbolized, given a place in the symbolic universe of the subject; but in the 1970s, trauma is *real* – it is a hard core resisting symbolization, but the point is that it does not matter if it has had a place, if it has 'really occurred' in so-called reality; the point is simply that it produces a series of structural effects (displacements, repetitions, and so on). The Real is an entity which must be constructed afterwards so that we can account for the distortions of the symbolic structure. (Zizek, 1989, p. 182)

In Lacan's later seminars, the Imaginary is defined as our direct experience of reality and is the dimension of how reality appears to us. The Imaginary is the frame through which we experience the material world, ourselves and those around us. For example, when we deal with another person, we erase an entire stratum of that person, such as embarrassing bodily functions, and deal with a virtual image that structures our experience of the other person (Zizek, 2012b). The Imaginary does not exist on its own but rather overlaps with the Symbolic as the dimension that structures our experience of reality.

The Symbolic, or the big Other, is "…the invisible order that structures our experience of reality, the complex network of rules and meanings which makes us see what we see the way we see it (and what we don't see the way we don't see it)" (Zizek, 2014, p. 106). Zizek writes that the notion of the big Other first emerged in the work of Karl Popper who proposed the theory of the Third World after becoming unsatisfied with the distinction between external material reality and the inner psychic reality:

Ideas we talk about are not just passing thoughts in our minds, since these thoughts refer to something which remains the same while our thoughts pass away or change…Popper is not an Idealist: ideas do not exist independently of our minds, they are the result of our mental operations but they are nonetheless not directly reducible to them – they possess a minimum of ideal objectivity. It is in order to capture this realm of ideal objects that Popper coined the term 'Third World,' and this 'Third World' vaguely fits the Lacanian 'big Other.' (Zizek, 2014, p. 107)

The word "order" in the Lacanian Symbolic Order is "…not a fixed network of ideal categories or norms" (Zizek, 2014, p. 107). Rather, the Symbolic dimension of the human psyche structures the way we perceive reality and is inherently inconsistent, antagonistic, and flawed. The third dimension of human experience is the Real which does not refer to external reality, but is something that cannot be directly experienced or symbolized. Thus, it might be difficult to define what the Real is because it does not exist:

The paradox of the Lacanian Real, then, is that it is an entity which, although it does not exist (in the sense of "really existing," taking place in reality), has a series of properties – it exercises a certain structural causality, it can produce a series of effects in the symbolic reality of subjects. (Zizek, 1989, p. 183)

The Real is "…like a traumatic encounter of extreme violence which destabilizes our entire universe of meaning. As such, the Real can only be discerned in its traces, effects or aftershocks" (Zizek, 2014, p. 106). The Lacanian Real escapes articulation because it is an embodiment of a lack, a void around which the symbolic order is structured. Our words can only circle around the void, the emptiness of the Real. In other words, the Real is uncommunicable because it is a void, a nothingness which words can never 'get at' but rather circumscribe it.

While the Real disrupts and frustrates verbal articulation, like a grain of sand disrupting the smooth flow of discourse, …"it is nowhere given in its positivity, only afterwards can it be logically constructed as a point which escapes symbolization" (Zizek, 1989, p. 193). The key point in Zizek's discussion is that the Real is an entity that can only be constructed retroactively, or in other words, it can only manifest itself when it

suddenly and unexpectedly intrudes into the material reality, and all we can feel are its aftershocks. The paradox of the Real is that it is un-representable because the Real itself is what prevents language from articulating it.

An Event is the manifestation of the Real which is the sudden intrusion into our reality, like a trauma or a shock, that resists articulation and knowledge. Returning to the link between an Event and study, I believe the shock that characterizes the experience of study might induce the stupefying feeling in the student not only because the end of study is elusive and never-ending as Agamben (1995) has argued. This stupefying feeling in the student is also a manifestation of something that intrudes into our reality and we are unable to directly experience it, articulate what it is and make it fit into our symbolic universe.

An Event, like the Lacanian Real, is nowhere given in its positivity (Zizek, 1989, p. 193) but is an embodiment of a lack which words can only circumscribe and never 'get at.' In other words, the student indeed learns something while studying but is for the moment unable to make it fit into what he or she already knows and put it into words. I have felt such a (frustrating) experience when I would know that I know something but could not find words to describe it. So I would explain in a round about way what I think I want to articulate and literally ask my peers and my teacher to give me, or better yet lend me words. It is important to note that this process can be a slippery slope because others may end up articulating for the student what he or she is actually thinking. I believe that a teacher or a peer needs to be wise enough to provide a sufficient amount of language to the student so that they can still think for themselves.

This is not to say that the student should renounce language altogether and study alone in complete silence. Studying can be done with others and in this context we rely on language to circulate ideas, borrow and lend words and tell others what we are thinking. As Lacan's knot of the three realms of the human psyche shows, the Symbolic is an indispensable part of the human subject and is a realm that overlaps with the Real and the Imaginary. As Roudinesco (2014) writes: "…the subject is above all immersed in language" (p. 24). Thus, language is an integral element of study.

However, it should be noted that the language we use also generates a surplus, or an excess of meaning that resists articulation and knowledge. Thus, we can speak

and tell others what we think but there will always be a remnant or a leftover produced by language that will escape symbolization and remain unsaid. As such, studying is in stark contrast to the logic of learning that insists the student articulate what they have learned without acknowledging the excess generated by language that escapes articulation and without recognizing that the student needs the time and space to make something new fit into their symbolic universe.

An Event, or the shock of coming across something new, leaves the student feeling stupefied because it is an encounter that resists symbolization and destabilizes our universe of meaning: "At its most elementary, event is not something that occurs within the world, but is *a change of the very frame through which we perceive the world and engage in it*" (Zizek, 2014, p. 12). An Event is the unexpected emergence of something new that shifts the coordinates of our perception of reality and, as Zizek claims, undermines every stable scheme. This scheme we rely on to access reality and make sense of it consists of the unconscious and fantasy. According to Zizek, the unconscious structures our experience of reality and fantasy regulates our access to it, or in other words, fantasy sustains both our sense of reality and our sense of ourselves as subjects.

If the experience of study is understood as encountering something new, then it can be said that we experience an Event, or a shift in this frame that we rely on to make sense of our realities. If so, then it is important to discuss what this frame consists of and how the shift of this frame can be an educational experience. In what follows, I will discuss in more detail the Lacanian unconscious and the Lacanian fantasy because they constitute the frame through which we perceive reality and our place within it. I believe that both the unconscious and fantasy play a role in studying and, as such, should be more closely examined.

The Lacanian unconsious

The unconscious structures our experience of reality and constitutes the frame that we depend on to make sense of our surroundings and our place within it. When we encounter something new while we study, it is like an Event and our frame of perception

shifts so we come to see the world and our place within it in new ways. As such, study is an educational experience.

Cho (2009) describes the unconscious as "…the part of consciousness that is no longer conscious. Not supraconscious but literally not-conscious (*Unbewusste*)" (p. 14). Cho claims that traumatic knowledge, such as distress, shame, self-reproach, pain or impairment which all describe "…the type of impact that can turn an ordinary event into a full-blown trauma" (2009, p. 13), never slips through consciousness but is rather stored within it: "Consciousness stores them but in a way that does not interfere with its operation. How then are they stored? The answer leads to the very theoretical innovation on which Freud builds psychoanalysis, namely, the unconscious" (2009, p. 14). Thus, the paradox of the unconscious is that it is not distinct from our consciousness but a part of it, or "…the reverse or underside of consciousness itself:"

> …access to the unconscious must be fought out *within* consciousness itself. Consciousness, as it were, must pass through *itself* or, to put it another way, it must cross its own inner split. This paradoxical location means that the unconscious is indeed a particular kind of conscious knowledge: it is the form taken by traumatic knowledge. (2009, p. 14)

According to Cho, "…the repressed is not the traumatic event itself but its memory. Or, to put it in another way, repressed is any and all *knowledge* the traumatic event" (2009, p. 17). Thus, the unconscious is a form of conscious knowledge and the role of psychoanalysis can be seen as a learning process "…the process of learning traumatic knowledge" (Cho, 2009, p. 18). However, a person is more invested in ignoring this traumatic knowledge instead of getting to know it because the knowledge of the trauma causes them further pain and "…this incentive allows the individual to enjoy ignorance" (Cho, 2009, p. 26). Cho, thus, stresses one of the most important functions of psychoanalysis which is that:

> …the unconscious means that one must be held responsible for traumatic knowledge. …In refusing to forgive ignorance, psychoanalysis has an abiding interest in pedagogy, but it is also committed to a specific pedagogical aim: to teach the analysand to learn traumatic knowledge from the unconscious. (2009, p. 26)

Cho (2009) describes traumatic knowledge as actual trauma. However, I believe that 'traumatic' knowledge is anything that suddenly appears and intrudes into the consciousness, and as such, can be described as an Event that shifts our perspective of ourselves and our surroundings. In other words, when an individual comes to know the repressed knowledge and brings it to the conscious level, it is an Event that changes how we perceive our realities. Such an Event also takes place when we study. It is the moment when we come across something that appears new on the conscious level but for the moment cannot be put into words.

While Cho describes the unconscious as a form of knowledge, Zizek (2014) on the other hand, describes it as a frame through which we perceive reality. An Event is something that reframes the frame through which we come to know reality and our place within it. Zizek defines this frame as the "Unknown Knowns," or "…the things we don't know that we know, which is precisely the Freudian unconscious" (2014, p. 11). In other words, the Freudian unconscious is the knowledge that doesn't know itself. "For Lacan, the Unconscious is not a pre-logical (irrational) space of instinct, but a symbolically articulated knowledge ignored by the subject" (ibid.). The unconscious is the subject's unawareness that he or she is adhering to disavowed beliefs and suppositions, and it is precisely these disavowed beliefs and suppositions that frame our experience of reality and structure how we perceive the real of our existence. Zizek writes that "…'Uknown Knowns' are the privileged topic of philosophy – they form the transcendental horizon, or frame, of our experience of reality" (ibid.).

In Lacanian psychoanalysis, the unconscious is the frame through which we see and experience reality. When we study and encounter something new, it can be said that we are experiencing an Event that alters our relationship to that which frames our perception of reality and as a result we might come to see the world in a new way. Because of this change, an Event is an educational experience because it teaches us to relate to the world in a different way. This is not to say an Event *must* result in some sort of a change in an individual that can be observed and measured. There are no ways of telling what the person's change of perception consists of and whether it was done properly or not. The shift happens and we might not even register that anything about us is any different until it is too late. By the time we notice something has shifted in us, we are already different.

The Lacanian fantasy

Zizek (2016) claims that "…what we experience as reality is always truncated, filtered; some dimension is excluded from it and can appear only as fiction" (p. 14). This fiction, or fantasy in Lacanian psychoanalysis, sustains the human subject's sense of reality:

> In order to experience something as part of our reality, it has to fit the frame that determines the coordinates of our reality; Kant's name for this frame is the transcendental scheme, and the psychoanalytic name is fantasy. This is why, from the strict Freudian standpoint, fantasy is on the side of reality, it sustains the subject's 'sense of reality.' (Zizek, 2016, p. 14)

Fantasy serves at least three functions. First, in Lacanian psychoanalysis, "…fantasy does not simply realize a desire in a hallucinatory way; rather it constitutes our desire, provides its co-ordinates – it literally *teaches us how to desire*" (Zizek, 2014, p. 25). For example, it is not the case that if I desire a chocolate cake and cannot get it in reality, then I fantasize about it. Rather, fantasy teaches us: how do I know that I desire chocolate cake in the first place? This is the educational aspect of fantasy because it *teaches* us to desire and every subject invents a fantasy of their own. Desire in Lacanian psychoanalysis is not about satisfying one's needs and wants, and has nothing to do with attaining the object of one's desire. Rather, Lacan calls the object one desires as the 'object-cause' of desire, or *objet petit a*. This means that an object one thinks they want is actually the driving force behind desire and not its end goal. One can only desire desire itself.

It is important to note that while fantasy teaches us to desire and "…constructs the frame enabling us to desire something" (Zizek, 1989, p. 132), it also shields us from getting too close to the object-cause of our desire. Coming too close to the object-cause of desire induces conflicting feelings of both jubilation and anxiety. Zizek (1989) gives the clinical example of erotic love towards one's parent. A common example in psychoanalysis is of a man who falls in love with a woman that has some feature that reminds him of his mother:

The only thing Lacan adds to this traditional view is to emphasize its usually overlooked negative dimension: in fantasy, mother is reduced to a limited set of (symbolic) features; as soon as an object is too close to the Mother-Thing - an object which is not linked with the maternal Thing only through certain reduced features but is immediately attached to it - appears in the fantasy-frame, the desire is suffocated in incestuous claustrophobia. (Zizek, 1989, p. 134)

The fantasy scenario of erotic love towards one's parent is sustainable only if it remains within the frame of fantasy:

Here we again encounter the paradoxical intermediate role of fantasy: it is a construction enabling us to seek maternal substitutes, but at the same time a screen shielding us from getting too close to the maternal Thing - keeping us at a distance from it. … Some objects (those which are too close to the traumatic Thing) are definitely excluded from it; if, by any chance, they intrude into the fantasy-space, the effect is extremely disturbing and disgusting: the fantasy loses its fascinating power and changes into a nauseating object. (Zizek, 1989, p. 134)

Fantasy, thus, can only function on the condition that it is the transparent background that structures our realities and desires. It is necessary because it both propels our desires and shields us from getting too close to the object-cause of desire.

Another function of fantasy is to provide "… the frame which enables us to experience the real of our lives as a meaningful Whole" (Zizek, 2014, p. 26). If so, then the destruction of fantasy can be disastrous.

When the fantasmatic frame disintegrates, the subject undergoes a 'loss of reality' and starts to perceive reality as an 'irreal' nightmarish universe with no firm ontological foundation; this nightmarish universe – the Lacanian Real – is not 'pure fantasy' but, on the contrary, *that which remains of reality after reality is deprived of its support in fantasy.* (Zizek, 2016, p. 14)

Thus, psychoanalysis does not aim for such a disintegration but with something more radical called traversing the fantasy:

Traversing the fantasy does not mean simply going outside fantasy but shattering its foundations, accepting its inconsistency. In our daily existence, we are immersed in 'reality,' structured and supported by the fantasy but this very immersion makes us blind to the fantasy frame which sustains our access to reality. To 'traverse the fantasy,' therefore means, paradoxically, to fully identify oneself with the fantasy. (Zizek, 2014, p. 27)

Zizek (2014) provides the example of Heidegger's 'technological enframing' to illustrate what traversing of fantasy would entail. Zizek describes 'technological enframing' as "…the frame of a fundamental fantasy which, as a transparent background, structures the way we relate to reality" (2014, p. 29). The term 'technological' "…does not designate a complex network of machines and activities, but the *attitude towards reality* which we assume when we are engaged in such activities" (ibid.). As I discussed in the first chapter of this thesis, 'technological enframing' is a particular way reality discloses itself to us and its danger is that "…the human being reduced to an object of technological manipulation is no longer properly human … and loses the very feature of being ecstatically open to reality" (ibid.). For Zizek, however, "…this danger also contains the potential for salvation: the moment we become aware and fully assume the fact that technology itself is, in its essence, a mode of enframing, we overcome it – this is Heidegger's version of traversing the fantasy" (ibid.).

The third function of fantasy is that it plays a role in the perception that we are complete and whole human subjects. However, the subject in Lacanian psychoanalysis is not whole but is rather a split subject. Put differently, the subject is divided between its symbolic representation and nothingness that is filled in by fantasmatic content. The split subject is not a harmonious Whole but rather a lack filled in by fantasy-scenarios. From early on in life, we construct fantasy-scenarios by observing and listening to our parents, and construct stories about ourselves that may or may not be grounded in material reality. These stories, or fantasy-scenarios, develop throughout life and constitute who we are. The role of fantasy is to help the subject function in everyday life by providing support to the subject's perception that he or she is a complete and harmonious subject.

Together with the unconscious, fantasy constitutes the frame we depend on to make sense of our realities and, furthermore, to make sense of who we are and our

place within the world. An encounter with something new is like an Event that rearranges and shifts this frame of perception and we begin to see the world in a different light. When we study and encounter something new, we also begin to construct new fantasy-scenarios that help us function as subjects and we can begin to see ourselves and our position in the world in a new way.

The split subject

As mentioned, the Lacanian subject is not a complete and harmonious whole. Rather, the human subject is barred, or split. I will now elaborate how the human subject becomes split. Both the human subject and the name giver have no choice but to be named and included into the chain of nominations. Roudinesco (2014) writes Lacan claimed that "…naming, he argued, enables a subject to acquire an identity" (p. 36). However, once the subject is named, it is divided into its symbolic representation and nothingness. The function of fantasy is to fill the void of the nothingness and support the human subject's sense of being whole and known to itself without which the human subject would not be able to function in everyday life:

> This symbolic representation of the subject is primordially not its own: prior to speaking, I am spoken, identified as a name by the parental discourse, and my speech is from the very outset a kind of hysterical reaction to being-spoken-to: "Am I really then, that name, what you're saying I am?" (Zizek, 2015, p. 270)

The paradox of naming the subject is that "…prior to nomination, there is no subject, but once it is named, it already disappears in its signifier – the subject never is, it always *will have been*" (Zizek, 2015, p. 270). This split between its symbolic representation and the nothingness filled in by fantasy reveals another key feature of the subject, which is that the subject is alienated in the signifier. Zizek (1989) writes that "…as soon as the subject is caught in the radically external signifying network he is mortified, dismembered, divided" (p. 196). The symbolic representation distorts the subject and the subject "…cannot find a signifier which would be 'his own'" (Zizek, 1989, p. 198). The human subject is alienated in the signifier ('Am I really what you say that I am?') and is an enigma to both itself and the other.

111

This is not to say that the human subject is straightforward ignorant about who one is to oneself and to the other. A more appropriate term to capture the human subject's relation to oneself and to the other would be the term that Robert Pippin (2017) uses, the term 'unknownigness' that designates "…a swirl of uncertainty and partial confidence" (p. 17) in who we think we are and who we think others take us to be.

> The putative distinctions and tension among these levels – "who I take myself to be," "who I am," and "the person you take me to be"… there is some evolving, mutable, functional interdependence among my understanding of another, my understanding of his or her understanding of me, and my self-understanding, as well as mutable assumptions about what could or could not be possible, given the other and given the terms in which he or she matters to me. (p. 24)

I believe that Pippin's (2017) term 'unknowingness' adequately captures the quality of the human relations between the subject and itself and between the subject and others. Pippin provides an amusing example of a romantic relationship to illustrate how difficult, if not impossible it would be to pin down who exactly the human subject is to him or herself and to others:

> It is sometimes said that in any romantic relationship between two people, six persons are involved. There are the two persons they actually are, there are the two persons as they see themselves; and there are the two persons as they are each seen by the other. Once starting down such a road, it is hard to stop. One could say: there is also, for each, *the person they aspire to be seen as* by the other. … That would get us to eight. If there is such a thing as self-deceit, there could be a difference between *the person they take themselves to be seen* by the other and the person *they are really seen to be* by the other. …That would get us to ten. And if we import a Freudian thesis, the opposite-sex parent of each participant also would be involved, and that would get us to twelve – quite crowded, no matter the size of the drawing room or bedroom. (p. 12)

I do not think that Pippin is literally talking about twelve subjects being involved in a romantic relationship or about the multiple personalities disorder. Rather, I believe that his example illustrates the fantasy-scenarios that we construct about ourselves, about how others perceive us to be and about how we want ourselves to be perceived, and so

on. We may not think about these fantasies on a day to day basis or even be aware of them but they operate in the background and shape our sense of who we believe ourselves to be. These fantasy-scenarios that we develop over time are necessary so that we can take the position of a human subject and be able to live normal daily lives.

Thus, the subject in Lacanian psychoanalysis is not a harmonious whole but a barred subject that is incomplete and ultimately unknown to both itself and to others. The fantasy-scenarios that support our belief that we are complete human subjects consist of what Zizek (2014) calls 'the stuff of the I,' or our inner positive properties, our stories about experiences and perspectives that we may not be always able to articulate. The notion that the subject has these inner positive properties and that because of this richness, the subject is unable to capture everything in language, is a notion contrary to the Lacanian subject:

> The Lacanian thesis is the opposite: this surplus of signification masks a fundamental lack. The subject of the signifier is precisely this lack, this impossibility of finding a signifier which would be 'its own': the failure of its representation is its positive condition. The subject tries to articulate itself in a signifying representation; the representation fails; instead of a richness we have a lack, and this void opened by the failure *is* the subject of the signifier [and] …the subject of the signifier is a retroactive effect of the failure of its own representation. (Zizek, 1989, p. 198)

I believe that the human subject is not necessarily a void or a lack but rather a structure that is supported through fantasy scenarios, or the 'stuff of the I.' These scenarios that constitute who we are may be grounded in material reality or be completely made up. Either way, these fantasies are real for the subject and provide the structure through which the human subject experiences itself, others and the material reality. However, these fantasy-scenarios are in no way stable and resistant to change. An Event can suddenly intrude and rearrange the fantasmatic content of the subject, which can result in the emergence of what Zizek calls the 'post-traumatic' subject. Perhaps it could be said that as we study and encounter something new that shifts our frame of perception, almost like a trauma, we turn into a 'post-traumatic' subject who suffers a loss of old fantasy-scenarios and begins to construct new ones.

113

The 'post-traumatic' subject

The Event that retroactively induces change in the subject can come from different sources. Our socio-political reality exerts many forms of violence and trauma on the subject. These forms of trauma can take on different forms, from violent terrorist attacks to natural disasters and social exclusion (Zizek, 2014, p. 85). However, trauma need not be only external but can be meaningless and irrational events such as brain tumors or diseases:

> A post-traumatic subject is thus a victim who, as it were, survives its own death: all different forms of traumatic encounters independent of their specific nature (social, natural, biological, symbolic), lead to the same result: a new subject emerges which survives the death (erasure) of its symbolic identity. (Zizek, 2014, p. 86)

There is no continuity between the old and the new subject because "…after the shock, literally a new subject emerges" (Zizek, 2014, p. 86). The new, or post-traumatic subject then exhibits the features, such as "…a lack of emotional engagement, profound indifference and detachment; it is a subject who is no longer 'in-the-world' in Heideggerian sense of engaged embodied existence. This subject *lives death as a form of life*" (ibid.). Such a description of the 'post-traumatic subject' closely resembles, in my opinion, the description of someone lost in study and living in this state of 'suspended animation.'

A traumatic Event empties the subject of its substantial content, or the fantasmatic content. The post-traumatic subject is emptied of fantasy-scenarios that once filled the void and as a result of some traumatic Event, the new subject emerges that cannot identify itself with the old fantasy-scenarios any longer. The new subject begins anew, filling in the lack with new stories to tell itself about itself.

This destruction of the subject's symbolic identity is at the same time the moment of its birth. The Event shatters the subject's frame through which it perceives the world and deprives the subject of its narrative texture. The new subject cannot identify itself with the fantasmatic content it once relied on to provide the structure for its existence, and "…when we take all this away, something (or rather, *nothing*, but a *form* of nothing)

remains, and this something is the pure subject" (Zizek, 2014, p. 86). The birth of the subject is the moment of the destruction of its substantial content, such as memories, experiences and stories. What is left as a result of the intrusion of the Event is a form of pure subjectivity which has been there all along. The post-traumatic subject starts over and thus finds new ways of being-in-the-world.

So far, I have described the main features of an Event which may be called 'traumatic' but it does not necessarily always imply actual trauma. It can be anything new that intrudes suddenly as we are studying and we are unable to articulate it and make it fit into our existing symbolic universe. The main features of an Event include its circular structure, its miraculous emergence that can only retroactively determine its causes and its sudden intrusion into our reality which undermines every stable scheme we rely on to make some sense of the world and our position within it. Zizek (2014) writes that this scheme, or our perspective, consists of the unconscious, which structures our perceptions of reality, and of fantasy, which regulates our access to it. Thus, if an Event is a shock, much like the shock that Agamben (1995) refers to when he describes the fragmentary and never-ending nature of study, then such a surprising emergence of something new alters our beliefs and suppositions we unconsciously adhere to and affects the fantasy-scenarios we have formed.

Gert Biesta (2014) provides an example that can serve to illustrate what an Event in the educational context might look like. I believe that the following is a good example to illustrate what study in education might look like and how it can be linked to the intrusion of an Event that re-frames the frame we rely on to make sense of our realities and our place within it. Biesta discusses the causal link between teaching and learning and sets up an experiment in his own class to explore: "…whether it is possible to take learning 'away' from education, or, to put it differently, to teach without aiming for learning" (p. 240). The aim of the experiment was to show that:

> …education is perhaps not just about growing and deepening what is already
> there, but that education can also be understood as an encounter with something
> that is radically new, something that students precisely do *not* already have.
> Moreover, it is possible to think of education then as an encounter with
> something that comes to you without reason, so to speak, because if it is

something that is really new, that really comes from the outside, students may not have any 'anchor points' for connecting with what is coming to them, and may therefore not (yet) be able to see the 'reason' of what is coming to them. (Biesta, 2014, p. 240)

Instead of teaching a concept to his students and asking them to comprehend it, Biesta (2014) asked his students to 'adopt' a concept. Biesta uses the term 'adoption' because it meant that "…students would not be able to *choose* the concept they wanted but rather declare a willingness to adopt one of the concepts and then see what would happen" (p. 241). Biesta wrote down a number of concepts for the students who drew them out of a hat, not knowing which concept they would get, and had to adopt the concept for two weeks. Biesta suggested that his students carry their adopted concept like "…a burden you can either choose to carry with you for a while or not, and if you decide to carry it with you, you may over time develop a relationship with it and perhaps even a passion for it" (p. 240). I would suggest that by 'adopting a concept,' Biesta was actually asking the students to *study* a concept because the students needed to spend time with a topic already chosen for them and, by delving into the topic, develop a relationship with it.

The kind of encounter that Biesta is describing is precisely an Event that we have no control over and that we cannot choose whether it will happen to us or not. Perhaps some of the students ended up adopting concepts that were so utterly foreign to them that they had to look for words to articulate how this concept fits into their existing symbolic universe, or as Biesta put it, the students had no 'anchor points' for connecting the new concept to their previous knowledge and experience. And perhaps the students' research into their adopted concept challenged their beliefs and suppositions that they were not aware they adhered to and altered the stories they have been telling themselves. The adopted concept, or better yet the 'studied' concept, could have been such an intrusion into their lives that, like an Event, it altered their perspectives about their world and about their place within it.

In the next section of this chapter, I will describe three specific features of study in order to add to the existing discourses about study in education and to highlight its educational values. All three features of study that I am about to discuss have an

educational element in them because each feature has an effect on the subject and its formation. I will describe the following three features: study as being seized by an idea, study as a radical self-withdrawal and study as getting lost in thought, and I will examine each feature through the lens of Zizek's theory of the Event.

Study as being possessed by an idea

In the previous chapter, I described Socrates's extended daydreams as 'suspended animation,' or a kind of living death. Socrates would be so absorbed by an idea that he would remain still for hours at a time and nobody could tell what was going through his mind, perhaps not even Socrates himself. I believe that this is how studying manifests itself or, to put it differently, one of the features of study is being captivated by an idea. Thinking in everyday terms, this is how students in the library appear to me while they are studying. Each frozen in place and they appear like they are possessed by ideas that have a strong enough hold on them that they are willing to sit still in one place for hours on end.

Zizek (2014) describes Socrates's episodes of daydreaming as 'seizures' that challenge Plato's idealism where

> …the only true reality is the immutable eternal order of Ideas, while the ever-changing reality is just its frail shadow. Within such a view, events belong to our unstable material reality; they don't concern the eternal order of Ideas where precisely nothing happens. (p. 71)

However, Zizek (2014) suggests that Plato's descriptions of Socrates's daydreams illustrate the opposite, or in other words, that events can happen not only in material reality but also in the eternal order of Ideas:

> Remember Plato's descriptions of Socrates when he is seized by an Idea: it is as if Socrates is the victim of a hysterical seizure, standing frozen on the spot for hours, oblivious to reality around him – is Plato not describing here an event par excellence, a sudden traumatic encounter with another, supra-sensible dimension which strikes us like lightning and shatters our entire life? (p. 71)

For Plato, "…the first and most elementary form of such an encounter is the experience of love, and it is no wonder that, in his dialogue *Phaedrus*, he compares love to madness, to being possessed" (Zizek, 2014, p. 71). The experience of being seized by an idea can be powerful enough to change the transcendental coordinates of the subject's being, and as a result, the subject reaches a new level of being. This is similar to the moment when one falls in love:

> When we are in love we feel a weird indifference towards our moral obligations with regard to our parents, children, friends - even if we continue to meet them, we do it in a mechanical way…An Absolute intervenes which derails the balanced run of our daily affairs: it is not so much that the standard hierarchy of values is inverted – it is much more radical, another dimension enters the scene: a different level of being. (Zizek, 2014, p. 72)

The same can be said when the student is so in thrall to his or her studies that they neglect all other aspects of their daily life and reach a different level of being. Being possessed by an idea is, thus, akin to falling in love, or the experience where the only thing that matters is being with a loved one. Love is an authentic Event that has a circular structure, or as I discussed earlier, it is an effect that exceeds its causes. In other words, we do not fall in love because certain features in another attract us. Rather, the choice of what features are attractive to us is decided in advance. All forms of love have this mechanism of forced choice attached to it, which does not imply the absence of choice but rather that our decisions who to love are made in advance: "The paradox of love is that it is a free choice but a choice which never arrives in the present – it is always already made. At a certain moment, I can only state retroactively that I've already chosen" (Zizek, 1989, p. 187). Mladen Dolar (1996) describes this mechanism of forced choice in the following way:

> One of the most famous formulations of the forced choice was given by Lacan in his seminar of *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis.* Lacan takes a very drastic example, that of being presented with a choice of "Your money or your life!" ("La bourse ou la vie"). The peculiar thing in this choice is that, if taken seriously, there is no choice at all: one can only choose to hold to one's life and thus lose only the money; holding on to money would entail losing both. One can

118

choose only one alternative, and even this one is curtailed (life deprived of money), whereas the other alternative is void (money without life). (p. 130)

Love for one's parent, country or neighbor, and even erotic love, has this mechanism of forced choice attached to it:

…one is presented with a choice that is decided in advance, and by choosing, one suffers a loss. … To put it simply, one is compelled to choose love and thereby give up the freedom of choice while by choosing freedom of choice, one loses both. (Dolar, 1996, p. 130)

Dolar (1996) states that any good melodrama will illustrate the case where love and autonomy, or the freedom of choice, rule each other out. A common scenario in popular culture is a young man or woman who meet their love interest by chance and destiny seemingly plays its hand. It appears that they were meant to meet and fall in love. In what may seem to be a 'chance' encounter, "…it is the Other that has chosen, not the young woman (or man) who was powerless" (Dolar, 1996, p. 130). That chance meeting is then retroactively recognized by the young man or woman as the realization of their innermost wishes. This so-called 'chance' encounter is accompanied by the moment of recognition: the moment when the subject recognizes what has always already been there and, retroactively, the subject's previous existence is infused with new meaning. Everything one has done in the past has led them to precisely this moment, to this chance encounter.

This moment of recognition, Dolar writes, "…implies that the first time is already a repetition, one realizes what one has already known" (1996, p. 133). What seemed a "chance meeting" was no chance at all: "The moment of subjectivation is precisely that moment of suspension of subjectivity to the Other (fate, providence, eternal plan, destiny, or whatever one might call it), manifesting itself as the pure contingency of the Real" (Dolar, 1996, p. 131). Love does not allow for deliberations of gains and losses, thinking about the advantages or disadvantages of certain choices. It demands the unconditional surrender to the Other.

Thus, love is an experience that has a circular structure and the mechanism of forced choice attached to it, and the subject must endorse the choice already made. As

a result, the moment when one falls in love retroactively creates meaning of one's previous past. This is not to say that our past actually changes but rather, once in love, we assign different meaning to what has happened to us prior to the moment of falling in love. As Zizek (2014) writes, "Falling in love changes the past: it is as if I always-already loved you, our love was destined, the 'answer of the real.' My present love causes the past which gave birth to it" (p. 99). When something radically new emerges, such as love, it retroactively creates its own causes and rearranges our perception of the past. We reach a new level of being because we perceive ourselves, our past and our place in the world in a different way. The fall into love never happens at a certain moment but rather has always already happened. Once we realize we are in love, it is already too late. The fall into love has already happened before we notice anything about us is any different.

Thus, study is an experience of being seized by an idea that can be powerful enough to have us thinking about it for hours, days or even years on end. This is similar to Plato's descriptions of Socrates's extended daydreams that illustrate how an Event can happen not only in material reality but also in what Plato calls 'the eternal order of ideas.' This feature of study is similar to the Event of falling in love when one's entire past is rearranged and retroactively infused with meaning, which is why it is an educational experience since it rearranges our perceptions and elevates us to a new level of being.

Study as radical self-withdrawal

During his prolonged mental absences, Socrates would cut off links with external reality and get lost in thought. These episodes of withdrawal are another feature of the experience of study and withdrawal is related to the experience of being captivated by an idea. Though outwardly it may seem the student is doing nothing and daydreaming, the withdrawal from the world is necessary and it has educational value. Such a withdrawal is an educational experience because it plays a central role in the subject formation. It is not the case that the subject is already formed prior to withdrawing from the world and 'doing nothing.' Rather, the subject emerges from such a withdrawal as a subject. This is what Zizek (2014) calls 'radical self-withdrawal' which is constitutive of the subject because it creates the space for the subject to enter the Symbolic order and

engage with the world as a speaking being. To put it simply, the student needs time and space to withdraw and think in order to prepare to speak and express what they are thinking.

This is not to say that everything one studies can or should be articulated and put into words but rather that the Symbolic realm is an integral element of the human subject. As I mentioned in the discussion about the Lacanian subject, the subject has no choice but to be named, which is how one enters the Symbolic order. There is no subject prior to naming but once named, the subject vanishes in the signifier. Though the subject is split, or dismembered as the result of entering the linguistic dimension, the Symbolic order is still constitutive of who the subject is. Zizek (2014) describes this 'radical self-withdrawal' as an existential experience that consists of

> …suspending the existence of all reality to a vanishing illusion, which is well-known in psychoanalysis (as psychotic withdrawal) as well as in religious mysticism (under the name of so-called 'night of the world'). After Descartes, this idea was deployed in the basic insight of Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph Schelling (1775-1854), the great German idealist, according to whom prior to its assertion as the medium of the rational Word, the subject is the 'infinite lack of being' – 'unendliche Mangel an Sein' – the violent gesture of contraction that negates every being outside itself. (p. 83)

According to Zizek (2014), this idea also forms the core of Hegel's notion of madness. For Hegel (n.d.), madness is the submersion of consciousness into nature, or the 'night of the world:'

> The human being is this Night, this empty nothing which contains everything in its simplicity – a wealth of infinitely many representations, images, none of which occur to it directly, and none of which are not present. This [is] the Night, the interior of [human] nature, existing here – pure Self – [and] in phantasmagoric representations it is night everywhere: here a bloody head suddenly shoots up and there another white shape, only to disappear as suddenly. We see this Night when we look a human being in the eye, looking into a Night which turns terrifying. (para 5)

Hegel's mystical term the 'night of the world' is characterized by the contraction-into-self, which eclipses the material reality and signals the loss of the linguistic dimension of existence. According to Zizek (2014), this Night is the suspension of all reality and is the pre-Symbolic world of dreams, nightmares and the unconscious: "Hegel determines madness to be a withdrawal from the actual world, the closing of the soul into itself, its 'contraction,' the cutting off of its links with external reality" (p. 82). This retreat into the night signals the regression of the subject to the level of 'animal soul' that is still embedded into its natural environs and determined by the rhythm of nature (Ibid.). However, Zizek (2014) argues the opposite: "Doesn't this withdrawal, on the contrary, designate the severing of the links with the *Umwelt*, or environment, the end of the subject's immersion into its immediate natural environs, as is it, as such, not the founding gesture of 'humanization'?" (p. 83). In other words, the withdrawal does not signal the loss of the linguistic dimension of human existence, but rather the contrary: "The symbolic order, the universe of the Word, *logos,* can only emerge from the experience from this abyss" (ibid.).

For Zizek (2014), this is not simply a withdrawal but a radical self-withdrawal which creates space for the constitution of the symbolic order:

> There is no subjectivity without this gesture of withdrawal. …That is to say, the withdrawal-into-self, the cutting off the links to the environs, is followed by the construction of a symbolic universe which the subject projects on to reality as a kind of substitute-formation, destined to recompense us for the loss of the immediate, pre-symbolic real. (p. 84)

If Hegel's 'night of the world' is a form of madness, Zizek (2014) then poses the question of "… how the subject is able to climb out of madness and into 'normalcy'" (p. 84). Zizek (2014) argues that there needs to be some sort of a mediator that makes the passage from madness to normalcy possible:

> …it is not possible to pass directly from the purely 'animal soul,' immersed into its natural environs, to 'normal' subjectivity dwelling in its symbolic virtual environs; the 'vanishing mediator' between the two is the 'mad' gesture of radical withdrawal from reality, which opens up the space for its symbolic (re)constitution. (p. 84)

For Zizek (2014), madness resides not in the withdrawal, or in Hegel's 'night of the world,' but rather madness is the very passage to the Symbolic itself:

> …of imposing a symbolic order on to the chaos of the Real. If madness is constitutive, then *every* system of meaning is minimally paranoiac, 'mad.' Recall Brecht's slogan: 'What is the robbing of a bank compared to the founding of a new bank? In the same way, we should say: what is the mere madness caused by the loss of reason compared to the madness of reason itself? (p. 85)

Another feature of study, thus, is the cutting off links with external reality and living a kind of death, which is closely related to the experience of being seized by an idea. It may seem the student is just daydreaming and doing nothing but this withdrawal is a necessary step for the student to take his or her time to think, to dwell on an idea in order to formulate what he or she thinks about it. In an educational context dominated by the discourses of learning outcomes, best practices based on scientific evidence and learner success, such a withdrawal may appear as procrastination and a waste of time. However, I believe that withdrawing from our surroundings in order to take the time to study is an educational experience because it carves out the space and the time for the student to wrap their mind around an idea or a concept and emerge out of the experience as a speaking being. Because of its educational values, there should be more time and space devoted in educational contexts for students to be 'doing nothing.'

Study as getting lost in thought

Next, I will describe the third feature of study as getting lost in thought. The expression of 'getting lost in thought' is commonly used to describe what the student does while studying. While lost in thought, one's mind wanders aimlessly and does not necessarily have any visible or measurable outcomes. Perhaps this is why the experience of study can be referred to as an 'aimless' or even 'useless' activity of the mind but one that, nevertheless, has educational significance.

I am interested in exploring the word "lost" in the expression of 'getting lost in thought' and highlight the word's meaning of literally losing one's way, of making errors and of being unable to find one's way out. This is akin to the experience most of us have had in a foreign country or in an unfamiliar neighborhood, holding a map, not knowing

where we are and trying to find our way to our destination. I believe that the experiences of losing one's way, of making errors, of being mistaken or just simply wrong are all elements embedded in every educational activity. Getting 'lost' is not something that should be overcome. On the contrary, I think that the feeling of being lost is actually necessary because it carves out the space for something new to emerge. In study, there is no straight path from ignorance to knowledge. Rather, the path is wayward and riddled with errors that are constitutive part of every educational activity.

The notion that losing one's way is embedded in any educational endeavor is based on Zizek's (2014) description of Hegel's dialectical process as treating some external opposition, such as madness, illusion or ignorance, as internal to that which it opposes, such as reason, truth or knowledge. The dialectical process is evident in Hegel's term the 'night of the world,' which was, according to Zizek, Hegel's attempt "…to think the abyss of madness at the core of subjectivity. … Hegel's point here is a refined one: not that everything is madness, but that 'normality,' the reign of reason, is a self-assimilation of madness" (p. 89). Or put differently, reason is already in itself madness.

> It is against this background that we can grasp what Hegel intended with his notion of 'absolute knowing' – the formula here is: take away the illusion and you lose the truth itself. A truth needs time to make a journey through illusions to form itself" (Zizek, 2014, p. 94).

Hegel's 'absolute standpoint,' according to Zizek (2014), "… makes us see how reality includes fiction (or fantasy)" (p. 95). Zizek makes a similar claim by describing the dialectical relation between popular opinion and truth:

> Hegel thus enjoins us to turn around the entire history of philosophy, which constitutes a series of efforts to clearly differentiate *doxa* (popular opinion) from true knowledge: for Hegel, *doxa* is a constitutive part of knowledge, and this is what makes truth temporal and evental. (p. 95)

I believe that this absolute standpoint can be extended to the relation between knowledge and ignorance. Knowledge already incorporates ignorance, or put differently, ignorance, as some external opposition, is already assimilated in knowledge. Thus, I

124

believe that one can arrive at knowledge by making a journey through errors in order for knowledge to form itself. Zizek (2014) makes an even stronger claim by stating that one *must* take the wrong turn and make the wrong choice:

> …it is not possible to choose directly the 'true meaning,' i.e., one *has to* begin by making the 'wrong' choice; the true speculative meaning emerges only through the repeated reading, as the after-effect (or by-product) of the first, 'wrong' reading. (p. 97)

Thus, I believe that errors and 'wrong turns' are constitutive of every educational activity and serve an educational purpose in the sense that they pave the path for something new to emerge. To illustrate how errors carve out the space for something new to emerge, I will describe Zizek's (1989) example of the dialectics of revolutionary movements. Zizek argues that there is no outside, or objective, position to judge when is the best time to act, and, furthermore, that there is no 'best' time to act. Zizek (2014, p. 101) points that every attempt at change is by definition simultaneously either too early or too late. If one is impatient and power is seized before objective conditions for change have been created, then the revolution will fail. Put differently, if one acts too early, the act turns into a violent outburst. On the other hand, if waiting too long, the act loses its mark and everything stays the same. Thus, the paradox is that every act is simultaneously both too early and too late. The conditions for change are never fully ripe so one might be forced to succumb to the urgency to act. On the other hand, the very urgency to act signals that we have arrived too late and "…every act is a reaction to circumstances which arose because we were too late to act" (ibid.). In short, there is no 'right' time to act.

However, for Zizek (1989), these first and failed attempts at revolution serve an educational purpose because they are essential for any change to take place:

> …the only way for the working class to reach its 'maturity,' to await the arrival of the 'appropriate moment' for the seizure of power, is to form itself, to *educate* itself for this act of seizure, and the only possible way of achieving this *education* is precisely the 'premature' attempts. If we merely wait for the 'appropriate moment' we will never live to see it, because this 'appropriate moment' cannot arrive without the subjective conditions of the maturity of the revolutionary force

(subject) being fulfilled - that is, it can arrive only after a series of 'premature', failed attempts. (p. 62)

Thus, it is precisely through these series of premature and failed attempts that change can arrive. The repetition of the first and failed attempt creates the necessary conditions for something new to emerge. I believe that the same principle can be applied to study. I explored the meaning of the word 'lost' in the expression that is often used to describe the experience of study as getting lost in thought in the sense of literally losing one's way while studying, following unfamiliar paths, taking wrong turns and dwelling in illusions. Such failed attempts and errors are embedded in every educational activity and they have educational significance because they carve out the space for something new to emerge.

I described these features in order to capture the qualities of study and highlight their educational values. These three features of study are not mutually exclusive, or put differently, the student does not choose to be either captivated by an idea or get lost in thought, for example. Rather, the three features of study are intertwined and closely related. On the other hand, whatever change in the individual that may occur as the result of studying is fragile. In other words, the student may gain new insights, learn new knowledge, form new ideas, and so on, but all of that can be undone. The student can repress, ignore or forget, which is an important aspect of any educational endeavor and, as such, it needs to be addressed.

The undoing of an Event

At the beginning of this chapter, I compared an Event to the shock of encountering something radically new, which has educational value because it reframes the frame through which we perceive and engage with our surroundings. This intrusion is like a trauma that shakes up the coordinates we rely on to make sense of our realities and of our place within it. An Event can result in the subject reaching a new level of being and can shift our perspectives. But such shifts are fragile and can just as easily be undone. Zizek (2014) refers to this process as 'dis-eventalization:' "The German expression of *ruckganging machen*, usually translated as to 'annul, cancel or unhitch,'

126

has a more precise connotation: to retroactively undo something, to make it as if it didn't take place" (p. 143).

The process of 'dis-eventalization,' or retroactively undoing of an Event, can take different forms in an educational context. For example, it can take the form of learning and then forgetting. People can ignore what they have learned, change their minds, suppress or, as Herbert Kohl (1994) reminds us, willfully un-learn: "Throughout life, there may be as much occasion for not-learning as there is occasion for learning" (p. 28). Or people can just pay lip service to what they have learned and deprive what they say of any actual substance. The process of 'dis-eventalization' can be the result of physical injuries too. Brain diseases and injuries can affect how much we remember and retain. Whatever the cause, the resulting shifts both in a person and in a society are far from permanent and can succumb to the process of 'dis-eventalization.'

In my opinion, this process of undoing is often overlooked in educational practice and discourses. For instance, at the end of every semester, there is a graduation ceremony at the university where I teach. Students, teachers, staff members and coordinators gather to celebrate the end of the term and congratulate students on their hard work and success. I remember the speeches that our former dean used to make to our students. She would tell the students that they should feel proud of their accomplishments and that nobody can take away what they learned. Perhaps what the dean meant was, in the administrative sense, that there will be a permanent record of our students' diplomas. While I would agree that our students should feel proud, I always found it suspect that nobody can take away what they learned.

Statements such as the ones our former dean used to make reveal an underlying belief that education comes with a guarantee, such as that one will only accumulate knowledge and never lose it, that there will always be a job waiting for the student, that the student will learn only what they want to learn, and so on. Such beliefs overlook an integral and very real component of education, which is that what one learns is fragile and far from permanent. My father had a PhD in electrical engineering. In the months leading up to his death of a brain tumor, I doubt he even remembered that he ever wrote it.

The retroactive undoing of an Event can also happen on a larger scale. Zizek (2014) provides an example of a society, though he does not specify which, that has made progress and collectively changed its framework of perception as a result of the intrusion of an Event:

> Imagine a society which fully integrated into its ethical substance the great modern axioms of freedom, equality, democratic rights, the duty of a society to provide for education and basic healthcare of all its members, and which rendered racism or sexism simply unacceptable and ridiculous – there is no need even to argue against, say, racism since anyone who openly advocates racism is immediately perceived as a weird eccentric who cannot be taken seriously. (p. 144)

Thus, the intrusion of an Event had created changes but these changes are fragile and can yield to 'dis-eventalization:' "But then, step by step, although society continues to pay lip service to these axioms, they are *de facto* deprived of their substance" (Zizek, 2014, p. 144). To illustrate how 'dis-eventalization' might look like, Zizek (2013) discusses and criticizes the movie *Zero Dark Thirty* which, according to the director Kathryn Bigelow, soberly depicts scenes of brutal torture in order to raise ethical questions and make us think. Bigelow's argument is that the depiction does not equal the endorsement of torture.

However, Zizek (2014) points out that raising questions and making the public think might not always be a good idea. On the contrary, for Zizek, the act of raising ethical questions by showing scenes of torture is a symptom of 'dis-eventalization' and diminished ethical standards:

> Our answer should be that, precisely apropos a topic like torture, one should not think. … a sign of ethical progress is the fact that torture is 'dogmatically' rejected as repulsive, without any need for further discussion. So what about the 'realist' argument: torture was always going on, if anything even more in the (near) past, so is it not better to at least be talking publicly about it? This, exactly, is the problem: if torture was always going on, *why are those in power now telling us about it openly?* There is only one answer: to normalize it, i.e., to lower our ethical standards. (p. 148)

Thus, the progress that has been made in order to advance the society's 'symbolic texture,' or the set of rules that help us make the distinction between what is and is not publicly acceptable, can be undone. According to Zizek, in some instances, thinking and asking difficult questions can actually contribute to the undoing of any progress made.

Towards a 'new universality' in education

However, this 'dis-eventalization' is not the fate of every Event. For Zizek (2014), in order for a radical turning point to stick and not succumb to its retroactive undoing, the very parameters of change have to shift as well:

> In an Event, things not only change, what changes is the very parameter by which we measure the facts of change, i.e., a turning point changes the entire field within which facts appear. … In capitalism, where things have to change all the time to remain the same, the true Event would have been to transform the very principle of change. (p. 159)

Thus, what characterizes an authentic Event is not only that it retroactively causes lasting change but also that it shifts our perceptions of what constitutes change itself. For Zizek (2014), one of the prevailing reasons we dwell in this constant pre-evental situation where any authentic Event is destined to fail is what Zizek calls the latest ideological triumph of capitalism:

> Each worker becomes his or her own capitalist, the 'entrepreneur-of-the-self' who decides how much to invest in his or her own future education, health, and so on, and paying for these investments by getting indebted. The rights to education, healthcare, housing, etc., thus become free decisions to invest in, which are formally at the same level as the banker's or capitalist's decision to invest in this or that company, so that, at this formal level, everyone is a capitalist getting indebted in order to invest. (p. 161)

In the context of education, this ideological triumph of capitalism is evident not only in the obvious sense that students have to get indebted in order to pay for their

tuition fees. It is also evident in the rise of the logic of learning and the trend that Maarten Simons and Jan Masschelein (2008) call the 'responsibilization' of education:

> Learners have become the managers of their own learning, for example, by developing their own learning strategy, monitoring the process, and evaluating the results. In short, the expertise concerning learning presupposes that learners themselves can and should become the real experts. (p. 400)

Simons and Masschelein (2008) argue that the learner is an 'entrepreneurial self' who with "…its managerial, calculating, and speculative attitude toward life" (p. 409) is the kind of subject that conceives of learning as the accumulation of skills and competencies that are necessary for survival:

> …the entrepreneurial self – as a capitalist in the particular sense of approaching his or her knowledge, competencies, and relationships as capital that he or she has to manage – is moving around in order either to find an adequate environment in which to employ this human capital or to acquire the competencies that are required. (p. 411)

The practices and discourses of learning have given rise to the perspective of seeing education as skills training, as the accumulation of necessary competencies and as learning for a purpose. The stakes are high because education has become a means to guarantee the learner's survival. In other words, education is equated to learning, which is an impoverished way of looking at education. What is necessary now more than ever is an intrusion of an authentic Event that will not only reframe the perception of education as learning but also shift the very parameters we use to determine what counts as education. Put differently, I believe that an authentic Event is needed to redefine or reframe education so that it includes the experience of study. An authentic Event is authentic because it gives rise to a new universality that demands:

> …fidelity and hard work for the new Order. An erotic encounter is the Event of love when it changes the lovers' entire lives, organizing them around the construction of the shared life of a couple; in politics, a contingent upheaval (revolt) is an Event when it gives rise to a commitment of the collective subject to

a new emancipatory project, and thereby sets in motion the patient work of restructuring society. (Zizek, 2014, p. 160)

The hard work towards a new universality is based on a dialectical process that "…begins with some affirmative idea towards which it strives. However, in the course of this striving, *the idea itself undergoes a profound transformation* … because the idea itself is caught into the process, (over) determined by its actualization" (Zizek, 2014, p. 164). In other words, as people demand some sort of change, they become aware that more is needed than the initial demands they began with: "What happens in such moments is a reframing of the universal dimension itself, the imposing of a new universality" (ibid.). This new universality is not based on unity and solidarity but rather on division:

> In situations of deep crisis, an authentic division is urgently needed – a division between those who want to drag on within the old parameters and those who are aware of the necessary change. Such a division, not opportunistic compromises, is the only path to true unity. (Zizek, 2014, p. 164)

Perhaps one could say that a division between those who want education to be understood as a means to an end and those who want to introduce alternative educational experiences, such as study, is not necessarily undesirable but actually necessary for any true change to take place in educational settings. Divisions, on the other hand, run the risk of enticing violence. However, violence need not be construed in this case as actual violent outbursts and doing harm onto others but rather as a necessary intervention "…into social and ideological relations which, without necessarily destroying anything or anyone, transforms the entire symbolic field" (Zizek, 2014, p. 166).

However, Zizek never describes exactly what this authentic Event might look like in practice. Rather, he ends his discussion with the Latin phrase 'Nota Bene!,' asking his readers to 'take notice' of opportunities that might at first look insignificant but that turn out to be the authentic Event that is necessary for true change to take place. I think the same could be said for educational settings. I believe that an authentic Event is needed to shift the perspectives that education is a means to an end but cannot say with certainty what this authentic Event would entail for any sort of change to happen on a

grander scale. But I do know that an authentic Event for me as a practicing teacher has been my encounter with the topic of study. I see this encounter as a necessary intervention that shifted some of my own perspectives on education and introduced me to new ways of approaching my own teaching practice.

I believe that it is important to talk about and to try to imagine an authentic Event(s) that might introduce a new universality in education on a broader scale. This new universality in education would require a form of violence that Zizek describes as a necessary intervention which would transform how we talk about education and about the people we teach. The new universality would include the experiences of being seized by an idea, of cutting off links with one's surroundings and of getting lost in thought, or in other words, include the experience of studying. Such experiences would not be labeled as a waste of time and procrastination but rather as legitimate and educationally valuable experiences that matter. Taking the time to 'digest' what one is studying and slowing down to make space for new encounters should not be labeled as procrastination but rather as educational opportunities for students to carve out space for new experiences to fit into their existing symbolic universe. Such encounters can be brought to signification but a new universality in education would also encompass experiences that might resist articulation and knowledge, and find them educationally valuable nevertheless. A new universality in education would also take into account that education does not come with any guarantees. The insights we gain and the new ideas we form as we study are fragile and far from permanent. A new universality would acknowledge that even though what we learn might be for nothing, we still accept the experience as valuable.

Chapter 5.

The Figure of the Studier

Introduction

So far in this thesis, I described three theories of study in education. I also discussed the functions of study and I highlighted the educational values of studying. The first theory of study is a comprehensive theory developed by Tyson Lewis (2013a) who grounded his theory in the 'idea of study' by the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben (1995). The value of Agamben's discussions on study derives from his argument that potential should be conserved rather than actualized. The function of study, in this case, is to suspend the predominant discourses and practices of learning that insist on actualizing a person's potential. The educational value of conserving instead of actualizing one's potential is that the human subject establishes a new kind of relation to their own (im)potentiality and, as a result, experiences the freedom to not-act or to not-be, which, for Lewis, is the greatest kind of freedom.

The second theory of study is a theory that I developed by using the framework by Peter Sloterdijk (2012) about the life of practice. I extended Slotedijk's discussions about the life of practice to the experience of study in education and proposed the term 'studious practice' that captures the dimension of study that, in my opinion, has not been discussed enough in the literature on study so far. As the Latin root *studium* of the word study suggests, studying means being devoted to an activity. It suggests zeal and passion for an activity to the point where we forget space and time. But we can be absorbed in an activity only so long before our bodies give out or the everyday interferes. We have to put down what we started and return to it the next day. These repeated returns to an activity that one enjoys doing leave traces in the form of 'getting into shape.' Therefore, I argue, study resembles practicing and I proposed the term 'studious practice' to describe the function of study as a practice of thinking. The educational value of studious practice is that it is a form of self-fashioning and that it helps one form new habits. One does not necessarily become proficient in a subject

matter as a result of studiously practicing. Rather, one becomes better at thinking and studying itself.

The third theory of study is my contribution to the existing discussions about study in education. I used Slavoj Zizek's (2014) theory of the Event as a useful framework to enrich discussions about study and to describe the educational values of study. I established a link between study and the Event by referencing Agamben's claim that study is akin to a shock that leaves the scholar stupefied and uncertain about his or her previous knowledge. My claim is that this shock is an Event that corresponds to the Lacanian Real and that retroactively changes one's relation to the past. As a result, a person comes to see their surroundings and their place within it in a new way.

We can certainly learn something new when we study, but this knowledge is far from permanent. As I discussed in the fourth chapter, what we gain as a result of an Event intruding into our realities can succumb to what Zizek calls 'dis-eventalization,' or the retroactive undoing of an Event. We can forget, repress, ignore, willfully unlearn or lose what we gained because of biological reasons. I believe that loss and undoing is an integral element of education and that it needs to be taken into account. I concluded the chapter with a call for a 'new universality' that would redefine what counts as education. A new universality in education would encompass educational experiences such as study, which would not be labeled as procrastination or a waste of time but rather as legitimate and valuable educational experiences.

I have discussed these three theories of study because I strongly believe that it is necessary to re-think the predominant learning discourses and practices in education. The central claim in my thesis is that study is a unique alternative experience that has educational values outside of the learning society and that there needs to be more time and space in education devoted to studying. In my opinion, it is important to talk about and imagine alternatives to the logic of learning, such as the educational experience of study, because the rise of the learning discourses and practices in education poses several problems.

As I wrote in the first chapter of this thesis, the learning discourses promote educational growth and perpetual progress, self-actualization and the accumulation of knowledge that is observable and measurable. The focus is placed on endless

production, on the development of competencies and on putting knowledge to use. The problem with the logic of learning is that individuals are formed according to predetermined criteria and are treated as resources to generate more capital. Moreover, one of the biggest problems with the logic of learning is that the purpose of education has become eclipsed by meeting the needs of the global market (Ford, 2016a):

> The only purpose of education is to serve the demands of the global capital, whatever those may be at any given time. Because these needs are perpetually changing, education becomes a lifelong process. Or, rather, *learning* becomes a lifelong process. The name given to this reality is the "learning society," and it is on the lips of politicians and economists everywhere. (p. 52)

I wrote this thesis because I am convinced that there is more to education than learning and because I strongly believe that teachers need to make more space and time for studying. As I wrote in the first chapter of this thesis, I am not calling for a complete overhaul of the education system. Rather, I have argued that there are gestures that teachers can make in their own classroom to make more room for studying. These gestures need not be monumental or pre-planned. Teachers can recognize moments when to let go of their educational expectations and to allow for moments to treat their classes as opportunities to come together and just study without any predetermined ends or outcomes that can be evaluated. In my opinion, studying is a valuable and educational experience that needs to be acknowledged as a legitimate form of education rather than as a waste of time and potential.

In this last chapter, I will address my concern about the impoverished ways that teachers and administrators talk about the people we teach. The people we teach are often portrayed as 'learners' who lack certain skills and competencies. The task of the teacher and the educational institution is to fill that lack and I find such an approach problematic. I believe that it is necessary to re-think the learning discourses about the people we teach so I will offer an alternative way to talk and think about the human subjects of education. I will describe how the notion of study is embodied in the figure of the *studier.* Put differently, I will discuss how the notion of study can be articulated both in how we refer to the people we teach and in what we think the studier might look like.

The word studier designates someone who is neither a learner nor a student, but is rather a term distinct from other words we use to refer to the human subjects of education. I will conclude the chapter and this thesis with a description of my own experience trying to teach a studier in my classroom. The purpose of this description is to illustrate that making space and time for study in educational settings is no easy task. It can sometimes be difficult for a teacher to let go of her educational expectations and of the urge to observe, to measure and to evaluate student progress. It is my hope that the theories of study that I discussed in this thesis can be used as 'pedagogical instruments' that can assist the teacher in illuminating and navigating the complex educational relationships they are a part of.

Towards the figure of the *studier*

For the past two decades, educational institutions have been obsessed with the figure of the learner. I find the term learner problematic for several reasons. As Biesta (2005) claims, the term learner is a symptom of the 'learnification' of educational discourses that construe the learner as someone who lacks certain skills and the task of the teacher is to fill that lack. The learner is a consumer whose needs are met by the educational institution, which leads to an economic understanding of education. For Simons and Masschelein (2008), the learner is under constant threat of social and economic exclusion so learning becomes the organizing principle for accumulating the necessary skills and competencies in order to survive in the ever-changing global market. The learner needs to not only acquire the competencies that are necessary to stay afloat but also reinvest in education to upgrade those competencies. Thus, the learner is a 'survivor' who needs to continually reinvest in education so that he or she can compete in the job market, and all learning becomes lifelong learning.

This is what Tyson Lewis (2013a) calls 'biocapitalism,' or a particular form of capitalism that continually invests into the production and reproduction of power and demands continual re-skilling so that the learner can compete in the job market. For Lewis, the learner is not just a consumer whose needs are met by the teacher and the educational institution. The learner is rather an infinite potentiality that *can* and *must* be actualized through constant performance testing. Thus, what we see happening in education today is the effect of biocapitalism and its insistence to treat people we teach

as learners who are constantly observed and evaluated, and who are subjected to continual high-stakes standardized testing. Because of these reasons, I find the term 'learner' to be problematic and I believe that it is important to re-think educational discourses about the human subjects of education.

I, therefore, propose the term *studier* as an alternative way of talking about the people we teach. The term itself, I argue, can suspend the learning discourses that construe people as learners. Instead of discussing the term studier in an abstract sense, I will use the protagonist of *Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street* as the model of the studier. The story was written by the American writer Herman Melville in 1853. It first appeared in *Putnam's Magazine* and, in 1856, it was published in Melville's six-story collection entitled *The Piazza Tales*. The story describes the relationship between a lawyer in Manhattan who hires the protagonist, Bartleby, as a legal copyist. Soon after he was hired, Bartleby informs his employer that he would prefer not to work any longer but remains in the office. The lawyer tries everything he could to get Bartleby to work but to no avail. Until the end of story, Bartleby prefers not to do anything or leave the premises.

Before offering specifics about the term studier, I will first summarize the story of Bartleby as the figure of the studier. I will then situate the term studier within existing educational discourses about the human subjects of education in order to add clarity how the term studier is distinct from other words we may use to talk about the people we teach. Philosopher of education Gert Biesta (2010b) has already written that it is important to be mindful of the language we use to refer to the human subjects of education. Biesta is equally suspicious of the commonly used term 'learner' and proposes that educators treat the human subjects of education as 'speakers.' I will extend Biesta's discussion about the human subjects of education by adding the term 'studier,' which is a necessary addition, in my opinion. I believe that adding the term studier to Biesta's discussion can assist us in enriching the educational discourses about the people we teach.

The story of Bartleby

The narrator of Melville's *Bartleby, the Scrivener: A Story of Wall Street* is a 60-year-old attorney who recently got a promotion. Needing additional help around the law office, he placed an advertisement in the newspaper and soon a "…pallidly neat, pitiably respectable, incurably forlorn" (Melville, n.d., p. 6) figure appeared at the threshold of the office. It was Bartleby. After a brief conversation and without asking for references, the attorney hires Bartleby on the spot hoping that his sedate character might balance out the fiery tempers of his other employees, Turkey and Nippers. The lawyer assigns Bartleby a desk in the corner of his own office "…so as to have this quiet man within easy call, in case any trifling thing was to be done" (ibid). The arrangement has all the hallmarks of Michel Foucault's (1995) description of the disciplinary machinery whose:

> …aim was to establish presences and absences, to know where and how to locate individuals, to set up useful communications, to interrupt others, to be able at each moment to supervise the conduct of each individual, to assess it, to judge it, to calculate its qualities or merits. (p. 143)

The attorney placed Bartleby's desk in the corner next to:

> …a window which originally had afforded a lateral view of certain grimy backyards and bricks, but which, owing to subsequent erections, commanded at present no view at all, though it gave some light. Within three panes was a wall, and the light came down from above, between two lofty buildings, as from a very small opening in a dome. (Melville, n.d., p. 6)

To complete the arrangement, the lawyer placed between their desks a high green folding screen "…which might entirely isolate Bartleby from my sight, though not remove him from my voice. And thus, in a manner, privacy and society were conjoined" (ibid). At first, Bartleby "…did an extraordinary quantity of writing. As if long famishing for something to copy, he seemed to gorge himself on my documents. There was no pause for digestion. He ran a day and night line, copying by sun-light and by candle-light" (ibid.). From the very beginning, the lawyer observes that Bartleby was always there, writing both by day and night, and there is no mention of where Bartleby lives or what he does when not copying.

Bartleby initially appeared to be competent and had the necessary skills to do his job. He was capable of actualizing his potential to be a scribe. However, after the first three productive days, Bartleby informs his employer that he would prefer not to check his work for accuracy, driving his employer mad. It appears that Bartleby decided to conserve rather than actualize his potential as a legal copyist.

The lawyer's reactions to Bartleby's preference not to check his work for accuracy, and subsequently not to work at all, resemble the five stages of mourning developed by the Swiss psychiatrist Elizabeth Kuebler-Ross in her 1969 book *On Death and Dying*. Kuebler-Ross initially developed what is commonly called 'the five stages of grief' as a way to help one deal with one's own imminent death but later expanded it to how people respond to any sort of loss. The five stages consist of denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. They are not meant to be prescriptive and the stages of grief are not necessarily experienced in any particular order. The loss that the lawyer was experiencing was the loss of power and control over the situation and he thus moves through the stages of grieving his loss of control. After all, he had recently gotten promoted and "…following his promotion, he had decided to make this person (Bartleby), without objective references, a man of confidence who would owe everything to him. He wants to make him *his* man" (Deleuze, 1997, p. 75). And yet, the attorney increasingly felt helpless and lost when confronted with Bartleby's repeated 'I would prefer not to' when asked to have his work evaluated or to run errands.

Upon hearing 'I would prefer not to' for the first time, the attorney at first denies what he has just heard: "Immediately it occurred to me that my ears had deceived me, or Bartleby had entirely misunderstood my meaning" (Melville, n.d., p. 7). The lawyer denies the reality of the situation – that he has a scribe who remains in the office constantly writing but preferring not to have his documents checked for accuracy or run errands at a moment's notice. Disbelief soon turns into anger, and then bargaining that is met with Bartleby's response: "At present I would prefer not to be a little reasonable" (Melville, n.d., p. 16). The lawyer keeps coming up with ways to reach Bartleby and tries everything from reasoning with him to trying to bribe him to leave. The employer's feelings oscillate between empathy and sincere willingness to help the scribe to feelings of resentment and aggravation.

Bartleby never gives an explanation for his odd behavior or makes any demands, making it all the more difficult to negotiate with. The attorney reconciles himself to having around the scribe who soon after declares: "I have given up copying" altogether. The lawyer tries to run his business as usual and tolerate the scribe who would just sit in the corner and do nothing. The situation soon causes feelings of resentment in the lawyer who was embarrassed in front of his other clients. In the end, the lawyer accepts the fact that he will never be able to get Bartleby to work or leave the premises and moves his own office, leaving Bartleby behind. Having no other alternative, the new occupants of the law office call the police and Bartleby is taken to jail where he dies presumably of hunger – though I believe that it cannot be said with certainty that he starved himself to death. Bartleby could have died, for example, of natural causes or an underlying heart condition but most would say that he died because he preferred not to eat.

By preferring not to, Bartleby was not just standing up to the employer's authority and refusing to work. Rather, Bartleby's words embody passive resistance that renders power and authority impotent as is evident in the boss's futile attempts to get Bartleby to work or at least leave. I believe that Bartleby's passive resistance is evident not only in his words but also in his relationship to his physical environment and his confinement within the Wall Street office.

It may seem that Bartleby ends up in prison at the end of the tale, but he is actually confined throughout the story. His employer notes early on in the story that Bartleby "…never went to dinner; indeed he never went anywhere. As yet I had never of my personal knowledge known him to be outside of my office. He was a perpetual sentry in the corner" (Melville, n.d., p. 9). Bartleby preferred not to leave the office at all, eat or talk to anyone, leading readers to believe that the protagonist was merely depressed or even anorexic (Desmarais, 2001). Bartleby neither adapts nor resists his work environment. He does not adapt by being productive at work and going home. But neither does he resist the rigid world of work and its rituals by going on a strike:

> Bartleby exemplifies not a labour strike, the suspension of productive activity in the production of commodities, but a "human strike", the detachment/separation from social, utilitarian functions, necessary for the production and reproduction of State-Capital. The "human strike" is not the rebellion of workers against Capital,

for workers are themselves the product of Capital; but a refusal to work, a displacement from the role of worker, a refusal of identities susceptible to assimilation or appropriation. A "human strike" is the negative affirmation that one is not any particular kind of individual, that one does not behave in any particular kind of way. One is, and one is nothing more than what one is, namely, a changing collection of preferences/desires. (Gavroche, 2012, para. 9)

Bartleby remains in the office day and night, confined within office walls even on weekends, doing nothing and engaging in what Melville calls 'dead wall reveries,' or staring at walls. I believe that Bartleby seemed to relate to his surroundings as a spectator, or as Sloterdijk's 'neutral observer,' who was physically present but not engaged in events around him. The scribe reminds me of Socrates standing frozen in place, apparently in some sort of trance and nobody knows what is going through his mind. Bartleby reminds me of someone who is lost in thought and studying.

Situating the term *studier* in existing educational discourses

Gert Biesta (2010b) begins his discussion on the educational discourses about the human subjects of education by asking the following question: "How shall we call those whom we teach and who, in a manner of speaking, are the subjects of education? We ask this question because we believe that language matters" (p. 131). For Biesta, language matters not because it possesses mysterious powers but rather because using some words may easily lead to other words. These linguistic pathways "…enact a particular distribution of the sensible and in this way articulate particular relations between ways of saying, ways of doing and ways of being. And that is why our words matter" (ibid.). Biesta sets out to follow these linguistic pathways of meaning and expression, and outlines three terms that can be used to talk about the people we teach. The terms Biesta analyzes are the *learner*, the *student* and the *speaker*. Biesta's discussion on the educational discourses about the people we teach is rooted in French philosopher Jacques Ranciere's notion of emancipatory education.

Biesta's argument that we need to re-think discourses about educational subjects is relevant. I will first describe Biesta's valid points why the terms learner and student might not be the most adequate words to refer to the human subjects of education, and

discuss Biesta's proposal to refer to them as speakers instead. Then, I will highlight and problematize the centrality of will and speech in both Biesta's discussions and in Ranciere's emancipatory education. I believe that Ranciere's emancipatory education hinges on the training of the will and the willful production of speech. I will address the centrality of will and speech in Ranciere's work because the distinction between Biesta's term 'speaker' and the word 'studier,' in part, revolves around this centrality of will and speech in education. I will continue the conversation by adding the term studier because it challenges notions that the people we teach are willful human subjects who are always oriented towards action and who are required to articulate to others their identities, opinions and beliefs. I will then explore what can be done under the assumption that the subjects of education are called studiers.

The problem with the term "learner" and its link to stultification

The rise of the word 'learner' is the symptom of the so-called 'learnification' of educational discourses that refers to the human subjects of education as learners, to teachers as facilitators and to schools as places of learning (Biesta, 2010b, p. 134). For someone to be called a 'learner,' there needs to be something for them to learn. In other words, the learner is "…constructed in terms of a lack. The learner is the one who is missing something. The learner is the one who is not yet complete" (ibid.).

The word learner implies an inequality between a superior and an inferior intelligence. A superior intelligence that "…knows things by reason, proceeds by method, from the simple to the complex, from the part to the whole" (Ranciere, 2010, p. 7), transmits this knowledge to an inferior intelligence by explicating and adapting it to the supposed intellectual capacities of the learner. The learner embodies this coincidence between an inferior and a superior intelligence. In other words, the learner exemplifies what Ranciere calls 'stultification' (1991, p. 12), and as Biesta rightfully argues, there should be alternative terms to refer to the people we teach.

The problem with the term 'learner' is its link to stultification and the assumption that the starting point of education is inequality that needs to be overcome. In order to overcome inequality and reduce the gap between the teacher and the learner, teachers

142

usually explicate some knowledge and fill the lack in the learner. Ranciere (2010) refers to this as a pedagogical logic whose aim …

> … is to teach the student that which he or she doesn't know, to close the gap between the ignorant one and knowledge. Its usual means is explanation. To explain is to arrange the elements of knowledge to be transmitted in accordance with the supposed limited capacities of those under construction. …An explanation is generally accompanied by an explanation of that explanation. Books are necessary to explain to students the knowledge to be learned. But, such explanation is apparently insufficient: Teachers are still needed to explain, to those who are ignorant, the books that explain this knowledge. …The regress would be in principle infinite if the teacher's authority did not in fact stop it by acting as sole arbiter of the endpoint where explanations are no longer needed. (p. 3)

There is nothing wrong with explanations per se but problems arise when the bridge from not-knowing to knowing necessarily requires the intervention of the teacher. Such an intervention demonstrates not only an inequality but also an incapacity: "The learner is not simply lacking what it is that needs to be learned; here the learner is lacking the very capacity to learn without the intervention of the educator" (Biesta, 2010b, p. 135). Explications accomplish two things. They demonstrate that the learner has to catch up to the teacher and that they are not equal. At the same time, they reveal an incapacity in the learner. An explication demonstrates that the learner is not capable of understanding something on his or her own. Explication is the "…infinite verification of a fundamental axiom: the axiom of inequality" (Ranciere, 2010, p. 3), and the term learner verifies the axiom of inequality.

Charles Bingham (2010) argues that another problem with explications is that they rest on the assumption that there is a direct link between words and truth:

> During explanation, one uses language to present the truth. One establishes a certain linguistic relation with truth. When one uses language to explain something, one draws a direct line from the word to truth, from the word that explains, to the truth of the thing explained. (p. 656)

The assumption behind explications is that language can directly represent reality. But the problem with such an assumption is that if words are fixed to truths, then all we can ever do is replicate the world as it has always been, leaving no room for imagining and talking about 'otherwise than.' As Bingham (2010) puts it: " …then there would be no chance for human beings to insert themselves *differently* into the 'distribution of the sensible'" (p. 657).

The paradox of learning is that its aim is to liberate learners from the teacher and to teach them to think for themselves. Yet, the learners are placed on 'educational respirators' (Biesta, 2010b, p. 135) and are taught to rely on the teacher to explicate and fill their lack. The equality between the teacher and the learner is infinitely deferred and one has to wonder whether it is the case "…that as soon as one becomes a learner, one has automatically become a *lifelong* learner" (Biesta, 2010b, p. 137).

Thus, the problem with referring to the people we teach as learners is that the word 'learner' embodies stultifying education where a superior intelligence instructs an inferior intelligence how to catch up. In order to overcome this supposed inequality between intelligences, the superior intelligence uses explications, which in turn demonstrate to the inferior intelligences that they are not capable of understanding on their own.

Furthermore, stultification rests on a flawed model of communication that Biesta (2004) calls the "sender-receiver" model that is "…conceived as the transmission of information from one place (the sender) to another place (the receiver) through a medium or channel" (p. 13). According to Biesta (2004, p. 14), such a model of communication is flawed because it misses the crucial part of human communication which is that meaning is not something that the sender passively receives. Rather, the meaning of information is actively interpreted and constructed on the side of the receiver. Bingham (2011) echoes a similar concern with such a model of communication: "Language, it is generally assumed, works on the sender-receiver model. That is to say, human speech is assumed to convey – as if by pneumatic tube – meaning from one person's head to another person's head" (p. 515). The problem with the sender-receiver model is that the educator's role is then reduced to using "… his or her language to deliver curriculum to the student … [and] explicate the ever-increasing stockpiles of

human thought" (ibid.), which in turn leads to impoverished perspectives on education and what it is supposed to achieve.

For all of these reasons, Biesta (2010b) argues that we need to carve out alternative ways of talking about the human subjects of education and use terms that will disassociate the link between the superior and inferior intelligence. In other words, Biesta (2010b) looks for terms other than the word 'learner' in order to suspend the predominant discourses of learning.

The lessons of the ignorant schoolmaster Joseph Jacotot

To find alternative educational discourses about the people we teach, Biesta (2010b) turns to Ranciere and his theory of intellectual emancipation. Ranciere describes the story of a French teacher, Joseph Jacotot, who caused a stir in the 1800s when he proclaimed that "…uneducated people could learn on their own, without a teacher explaining things to them, and that teachers, for their part, could teach what they themselves were ignorant of" (Ranciere, 1991, p. 1). Ranciere calls Jacotot's teaching 'universal teaching.'

Jacotot found himself teaching in Holland in the 1820s. He spoke no Flemish and his students spoke no French so there was no way for them to communicate. Jacotot used a bilingual edition of the book 'Telemaque,' and through an interpreter, he told his students to read the book with the aid of the Flemish translation. The students were told to repeat what they have learned and to write down what they think of it. Jacotot was surprised to find out that his students were learning French even though he did not transmit any knowledge or explicate anything to his students. Jacotot learned that it was possible to educate his students without transmitting information. He was a teacher who enacted:

> …a dissociation between the mastery of the schoolmaster and his or her knowledge, who shows us that the so-called 'transmission of knowledge' consists in fact of two intertwined relations that are important to dissociate: a relation of will to will, and a relation of intelligence to intelligence. (Ranciere, 1991, p. 2)

This is not to say that the teacher need not know anything about a subject matter. The teacher can be very knowledgeable about a subject matter but not transmit any of that knowledge. Stated differently, the teacher can have authority in the classroom without being authoritarian. Hans-Georg Gadamer (2004) links authority to the teacher's knowledge rather than to the teacher's position to command and be obeyed: "Authority … has nothing to do with blind obedience to commands. Indeed, authority has to do not with obedience but rather with knowledge" (p. 279). In this sense, the teacher can indeed be authoritative in a subject area and be more knowledgeable about a subject matter. Charles Bingham (2001) puts it this way: "Gadamer's analysis of authority distinguishes "genuine" authority from "non-genuine authority" by separating the knowledge-based-ness of authoritativeness from the power-based-ness of authoritarianism" (p. 268). However, just because the teacher has authority and is knowledgeable about a subject matter does not imply that he or she should transmit any of that knowledge to others.

Rather, in emancipatory education, the teacher transmits the effect of his mastery rather than facts and thus demonstrates to his students that they are capable of learning a subject matter on their own. Within the context of emancipatory education, the teacher is not a superior intelligence filling in the lack of the inferior intelligence. Instead of the link between an intelligence to another intelligence, there is a direct link of will to will that is established. In other words, the teacher is a will that asks another will what they see, what they think and what they make of what they learn.

Jacotot did not use explication to teach his students because he did not speak Flemish and the students spoke no French. In this sense, Jacotot was an ignorant schoolmaster. He did not possess the knowledge that he could transmit to his students and yet he taught them to read and speak in French. Jacotot was another will that verified the students were studying, paying attention and producing speech. By not being able to use explications, Jacotot inadvertently demonstrated to his students that they were capable of learning French on their own. Jacotot was there as another will that instigated a capacity "…already possessed, a capacity that every person has demonstrated by succeeding, without a teacher, at the most difficult of apprenticeships" (Ranciere, 2010, p. 3).

The most difficult of apprenticeships is the one we have all gone through without an explicator, a textbook or a guide: learning one's mother tongue. Children "…hear and retain, imitate and repeat, make mistakes and begin again methodically, and, at too young an age for explicators to begin instructing them, they are almost all … able to understand and speak the language of their parents (Ranciere, 1991, p. 5). This capacity to learn independently does not disappear or diminish with time but remains with us throughout our lives. Thus, the teacher is another will that demonstrates to the students that their intelligence is already at work and that they are capable of learning without the teacher's explications.

The ignorant schoolmaster's lesson is twofold. First is that "…there is only one intelligence at work in all intellectual training" (Ranciere, 2010, p. 5) and we use this intelligence when we learn our mother tongue. Everyone is in possession of such intelligence and the teacher is another will that verifies that it is put to work. If there are inequalities in intelligences, this inequality is not related to intellectual capacity. Rather, intelligences may differ because of the way they manifest themselves. As Ranciere (1991) writes:

> There aren't two sorts of minds. There is inequality in the *manifestations* of intelligence, according to the greater or lesser energy communicated to the intelligence by the will for discovering and combining new relations; but there is no hierarchy of *intellectual capacity*. (p. 27)

Starting education with the assumption that everyone has the intelligence and the capacity to learn on their own does not mean that all intelligences are the same but rather that we have all learned something in our lives without an explicator. We learned by listening and repeating, by observing and stumbling, only to begin over again.

The second lesson that Joseph Jacotot teaches us concerns the "…connection between the explanatory order and truth itself" (Bingham, 2010, p. 656). Ranciere (1991) writes that:

> Truth is not told. It is a whole, and language fragments it; it is necessary, and languages are arbitrary. It was this thesis on the arbitrariness of languages –

even more than the proclamation of universal teaching – that made Jacotot's teaching scandalous. (p. 60)

If language is arbitrary, as Ranciere (1991) claims, then "…one can never draw a direct line from the word to truth" (Bingham, 2010, p. 656). The arbitrary nature of language is for Ranciere "…a hopeful point of departure" (ibid.) because it means that: "There is always hope to reconfigure the relationship between saying and being" (Bingham, 2010, p. 657). The claim that language is arbitrary signals a different kind of relationship between words and truth. The possibility that words are not fixed to truth allows us to embrace a distance between words and things and, as a result, to imagine and talk about the world and ourselves as 'otherwise than.'

The student: On the way to emancipation

Biesta (2010b) writes that the subject of education who does not need the explications from the teacher is called the 'student.' The student is different from the learner because the student breaks the circle of powerlessness that ties the learner to the explicator (Biesta, 2010b, p. 137). Instead of explaining and transmitting knowledge, the teacher commands the student's attention, establishing a link of will to will instead of intelligence to intelligence. The educator does not explain but commands and verifies speech. The educator will "…not verify what the student has found; he will verify that the student has searched. He will judge whether or not he has paid attention" (Ranciere, 1991, p. 31).

The teacher verifies that the work of intelligence is done with attention, which is necessary for emancipation to take place. Attention is needed for the intelligence to reveal itself to itself and to demonstrate to the student that intelligence will always obey only itself even when their will obeys another will, which for Biesta (2010b), is at the heart of emancipatory education (p. 137). Thus, the teacher demands speech from the student and verifies not the outcome of the work of intelligence but rather that the work is done with attention: "The one who is the subject of education is summoned to study and thus, in the most literal sense, has become a student" (Biesta, 2010b, p. 139).

As I have outlined above, the term 'learner' embodies stultifying education because the learner cannot yet speak: "We are saying that … until the 'end' of education

148

has arrived, they can only produce noise and that it is only as a result of our explanation of the meaning of their noise that they can come to speech" (Biesta, p. 141, 2010). On the other hand, the term 'student' exemplifies the kind of education that starts "…from the assumption that they can learn *without* our explanations, without the need for an educational 'respirator'" (ibid), and the relationship between the student and the teacher is that of will to will.

The student is not exactly someone lacking the intelligence or the capacity to figure something out without the Master explicator but not yet an equal to the teacher because equality in emancipatory education presupposes that all human subjects of education are *already* speaking beings. The student, however, is still on the path to becoming a speaker and, as such, is not yet emancipated. The student is on their way to emancipation and still lingers in the space between stultification and emancipation. Biesta (2010b) critiques the term student because "what matters … is not so much that students study but that they *speak*" (p. 141). In his search for vocabulary that will embody emancipatory education which begins with the assumption of equality among *all* speaking beings, Biesta proposes his own term, the speaker.

The "speaker" as the embodiment of emancipatory education

The term speaker embodies emancipatory education that "…starts from the assumption that students neither lack a capacity for speech, nor that they are producing noise. It starts from the assumption, in other words, that students already are *speakers*" (Biesta, 2010b, p. 142). This equality among speaking beings is not an end to attain but "…a point of departure, a *supposition* to maintain in every circumstance" (Ranciere, 1991, p. 138). Instead of overcoming the inequalities among intelligences, emancipatory education places equality as the starting point of education: "…emancipation starts from the assumption of equality" (Biesta, 2008b, p. 175). The point of emancipatory education is not to prove equality of intelligence. Equality is not proven but rather recognized and verified, and the term speaker verifies this axiom of equality.

Emancipatory education is about seeing what can be done under the assumption that all beings can already speak and that all speaking beings are equal. In

emancipatory education, speaking does not mean taking up an existing identity within the already established order of identities. Rather, speaking in emancipatory education is an act of 'subjectification' that "…produces new and different opportunities for identification" (Biesta, 2010b, p. 140) and, as a result, produces new ways of relating to the world, new ways of being and new ways of speaking. Biesta's answer to the question on how to suspend the predominant discourses of learning is to stop talking about the people we teach as learners or students and start using the term speaker.

Critiques of will and of speech in Ranciere's emancipatory education

There are two persistent themes in Ranciere's emancipatory education and I will problematize them here because the difference between Biesta's term 'speaker' and the term 'studier' revolves around these two themes. The first theme is the central role of the will. Ranciere's main aim is to challenge what he calls 'stultifying pedagogy' that posits inequality between the teacher and the student as the starting point of education. Ranciere's solution to stultification is to overcome this perceived hierarchy of intelligences through the verification of the person's *will* to learn. For Ranciere (1991):

> …*man is a will served by an intelligence*. Perhaps saying that wills are unequally demanding suffices to explain the differences in attention that would perhaps suffice to explain the inequality of intellectual performances. (p. 51)

The role of the teacher in emancipatory education is not to give explications because they demonstrate a person's lack of capacity to learn on his or her own. Rather, the teacher's role is to command the *will*. For Ranciere, emancipation is "…the act of an intelligence obeying only itself even while the will obeys another will" (1991, p. 51). The training of the will is necessary for intelligence to manifest itself to both itself and to another will who demands attention and speech. And if there is no will to motivate another, then no emancipation can take place. Thus, emancipatory education hinges on the training of the will to keep paying attention.

I believe that Ranciere's centrality of will in emancipatory education posits the human subjects of education as inherently willful and oriented toward action. I find such a claim appealing but not without its problems. In the second chapter of this thesis, I

addressed the centrality of will in modern Western philosophy and outlined Lewis's critique of this persistent theme in educational philosophy (2012a and 2013a). In modern Western educational philosophy:

> …the will is almost unanimously given priority as *the initial and central human faculty* – a key point that can never be proven or argued but must be merely *asserted.* In turn, this initial metaphysical claim then demands that education primarily concern itself with the training of this will. (Lewis, 2012a, p. 94)

As Lewis (2012a) claims, the role of will in education has not been problematized enough. Lewis points out the coincidence between the rise of Heidegger's 'technological enframing' and the rise of positing humans as inherently willful subjects who are always oriented towards action (p. 95). Within Heidegger's 'technological enframing,' material reality is reduced to raw materials that can only be animated by a willful subject. In other words, the world is mute until there is a willful subject who infuses it with meaning. In the educational context, I believe that this translates to construing the world as something that needs to be comprehended and calculated usually in a methodical manner. As a result, the willful human subject of education runs the risk of losing their poetic receptivity to the world. As I highlighted in the second chapter, giving priority to the training of the will sacrifices aesthetic experiences in education. If education is reduced to the training of the will, there is little to no room for suspending our intentionality, for being curious and responsive, for listening and for 'letting things be' (Lewis, 2012a, p. 98). This is not to say that Ranciere's emancipatory education itself sacrifices the aesthetic experiences in education but rather that Ranciere takes the will for granted and does not problematize its central role.

I believe that the centrality of the will in emancipatory education also reveals what Emile Bojesen (2018) calls 'the contemporary logic of education:'

> …which values activity itself as the ultimate measure of educational engagement. …Even 'experiential' or play-orientated models of education are reliant on activity and easily assessable progress. 'Experiential' education requires activity and purposefulness from the student and the teacher. (p. 928)

Bojesen (2018) claims that Jacotot might give the impression of a passive teacher who does not instruct whereas Bojesen portrays the ignorant schoolmaster as quite the opposite, or as 'the instructor *par excellence*:' "The ignorant schoolmaster still knows precisely what is to be instructed and its value, even if he does not know the content of it himself" (p. 929). Stated differently, Jacotot did not know the subject matter himself but that did not prevent him from holding his students accountable by demanding attention and speech. He was "…an accountant of attentiveness and effort, as well as a facilitator and attributor of value" (ibid.). Bojesen claims that Jacotot, and in turn Ranciere, leave no room for passivity in education. In other words, everything in education seems to revolve around action in the form of paying attention and the production of speech. Thus, even though Jacotot was not a master of the subject matter at hand, he was still demanding action from students and he was himself actively participating in his students' education by demanding effort, speech and attention.

The second persistent theme in Ranciere's emancipatory education is that of speech. Biesta's term 'speaker' embodies emancipatory education in part because, as the term suggests, the speaker is required to produce speech in order to demonstrate that they are paying attention and putting their intelligence to work. The work of intelligence is:

> …to see and to compare what has been seen. It sees at first by chance. It must seek to repeat, to create the conditions to re-see what it has seen, in order to see similar facts, in order to see facts that could be the cause of what it has seen. (Ranciere, 1991, p. 55)

However, seeing and comparing is not enough for an intelligence to manifest itself:

> It must also form words, sentences, and figures, in order to tell others what it has seen. In short, the most frequent mode of exercising intelligence, much to the dissatisfaction of geniuses, is repetition. And repetition is boring. (Ranciere, 1991, p. 55)

If repetition is boring, according to Ranciere (1991), it is easy to absent oneself and give up. Therefore, there needs to be a will that keeps pushing another will to pay

152

attention and to produce speech. Another example of centrality of speech in Ranciere's emancipatory education is Ranciere's (1991) description of the role of the teacher who:

> …*interrogates,* he demands speech, that is to say, the manifestation of an intelligence that wasn't aware of itself or that had given up. And he *verifies* that the work of intelligence is done with attention, that the words don't say just anything in order to escape from the constraint. (p. 29)

Such a description of the role of the teacher reverberates with Lyotard's (1997) notion of the 'general life' that tends to take over a person's no-man's land, or the 'secret life.' In the first chapter of this thesis, I described Lyotard's distinction between the two kinds of lives that we live. I wrote that we live a general life, or a life where we articulate our opinions and beliefs to others. But we also live our secret lives when we keep our thoughts to ourselves and are not required to answer to anyone. As Lyotard points out, the problem arises when the general life takes over the secret life. Put differently, problems arise when one is pressured to articulate their identities and thoughts to others when one would rather keep them to him or herself. I believe that there are elements of the general life taking over a person's secret life in Ranciere's claim that the teacher must interrogate and demand speech in order for an intelligence to manifest itself. The way I interpret Ranciere's claim is that I am intelligent only on the condition that I speak and express to another will what I am thinking. Derek Ford (2016a) puts it this way:

> The responsibility of the educator is to facilitate the uniqueness of the subject, and the way that the educator does this is by asking simple but fundamental questions: What do you think about it? Where do you stand on this? And how will you respond? The uniqueness of the subject must be expressed, represented, and codified. A stand has to be taken: you have the right! (p. 80)

Furthermore, as Ford (2016a) points out, this demand to articulate our identities, our knowledge and our subjectivities continually feeds the existing insatiable appetite that both capitalism and democracy have for speech:

> Not only is our no-man's land attacked and repressed by democracy but it is also invaded by asignifying semiotics, by the operation of currencies and capitalist value metrics. There is so much babbling going on that inclusion into the order

isn't the problem at all. Access to these shared semiotics is not only not denied, it is imperative: one must join in, one must take an active part . . . a shortage of speech is not the problem but rather its overabundance. There is, it seems, almost no limit to the amount of babbling that capital can absorb; its demand is in principle impossible to satisfy. (p. 78)

These two persistent themes in Ranciere's emancipatory education are reflected in Biesta's discussions about the human subjects of education. My intent is not to undermine either Ranciere's philosophy or Biesta's suggestion that we call those we teach as speakers. Rather, my intent is to problematize the centrality of will and speech in education in order to point out openings that would allow me to continue the conversation about the human subjects of education. I will propose another term, the 'studier,' who is distinct from Biesta's speaker because the studier is the human subject of education who is not inherently oriented toward action and toward articulating their thoughts.

Bartleby as an example of the studier

At the beginning of this chapter, I described Melville's story of Bartleby in order to illustrate what the studier might look like. I believe that it is instructive to read Melville's story as a story between a teacher who demands attention and effort, and Bartleby as the example of a studier who prefers not to conform to the teacher's expectations. The studier is neither a learner nor a student, and is not exactly a speaker either. Rather, the studier is a term that opens up an indeterminate space in educational discourses about the people we teach. In what follows, I will offer three interpretations of Melville's story.

Authors such as Lewis (2013a), Ford (2016a) and Vanhoutte (2014) posit Bartleby as the embodiment of Agamben's theory of study. Bartleby is a studier who is unrepresentable, like Agamben's 'whatever being' that conserves its potential, remains indistinct and, thus, free. Then, I will describe the French philosopher Gilles Deleuze's (1997) interpretation of Melville's story because it focuses on the relationship between the lawyer and Bartleby. I think the story is not only about the protagonist and his peculiar behavior. I see it rather as a story about the relationship between the lawyer and Bartleby, and for that reason, I believe that it is important to address Deleuze's

depiction of this relationship. Finally, the Slovenian philosopher and Lacanian psychoanalyst Alenka Zupancic (2011) highlights the indeterminate space opened up by Bartleby's words 'I prefer not to.' Zupancic argues that Bartleby's words are void of meaning, which is not to say that they are meaningless. Rather, Zupancic claims that we should not read into Bartleby's words and interpret them as a negation of the existing order of things. For Zupancic, Bartleby's words are an affirmation of negation and they lack any actual substance. Next, I will describe these three interpretations and highlight their educational relevance.

Bartleby as the embodiment of Agamben's theory of study

Lewis (2013a) claims that Bartleby exemplifies Agamben's theory of study. According to Agamben (1999, p. 254), Bartleby is pure potentiality who embodies what Lewis calls 'studious life.' Lewis claims that "…it would be a mistake to assume that Bartleby, for all his melancholy, is simply passive, inert, and inactive" (2013a, p. 46). Rather, what Bartleby was doing was actually studying. To make the case that Bartleby is an embodiment of Agamben's theory of study, Lewis outlines the features of study that are evident in what Bartleby does, or better yet, in what he does not do.

For Lewis (2013a), Bartleby is a quintessential example who paradoxically: "…does not belong to any class of 'educational subjects.'" (p. 46). Put differently, Bartleby does not conform to what is commonly expected of learners, students or speakers to be capable human subjects who can speak and whose work is evaluated. Bartleby suspends such expectations and ceases "…to be self-assertive, rejecting the logic of 'reliability'" (ibid.).

Lewis highlights the first instance when Bartleby announces that he would prefer not to proofread his copies with the employer: "What is important to note is that Bartleby's refusal is an *interruption of testing and examination*" (p. 47). By preferring not to have his work checked for accuracy, Bartleby prefers "…not to be compliant with a system of evaluation. …He will not test or be tested, he will simply work" (ibid.). Bartleby has the capabilities to do his job but "…these capabilities for Bartleby must become a pure means (*un mezzo puto*) and thus never be submitted to any test or measure" (ibid.). This is the first feature of Agamben's theory of study that Bartleby embodies. For

Agamben, study is pure means that has no end and does not even desire one. Thus, Bartleby is a studier who does not conform to educational expectations to produce work that will then be observed and evaluated. As Lewis writes, Bartleby simply works.

Bartleby calls into question the supremacy of the will (Agamben, 1999, p. 254), or the notion that we are purposeful and willful subjects always oriented towards action and towards actualizing our potential. Bartleby embodies the Aristotelian existing potentiality, or potentiality that does not actualize itself but is rather conserved. Bartleby prefers not actualize himself as a scrivener: "At the moment of maximum exertion, suddenly Bartleby withholds his capabilities, keeps them to himself" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 47). For Lewis (2013a), Bartleby is a 'studious life' or a life of ease that extends "…beyond the the performance principle, a life of pure potentiality that shines forth in the most of im-potential of gestures" (p. 49). Bartleby conserves his potential and thus maintains a relationship to his (im)potential, or the active capacity to not act or to not be. As I wrote at the beginning of this chapter, Lewis (2013a) claims that establishing a relationship with our (im)potential is the greatest form of freedom:

> In the face of the imperative to work, to learn, to be relied upon, to maximize one's outputs so as to be judged, tested, and evaluated, the studier simply "prefers not to" and in turn retains a little bit of freedom before the man of the law. (p. 52)

Bartleby conserves his potential and is thus free from becoming x, y or z. He is the quintessential 'whatever being,' a singularity with no identity (Jasinski&Lewis, 2016, p. 436). Bartleby is a whatever being because he "…is indeed *no one.* He has no past and no future. Only his present actions are known. …a no-body who does not seem to have a definitive destination or occupation" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 49). Bartleby has no preferences or desires to become a particular kind of subject. He repeatedly turns down his employer's offers to help him find a different kind of occupation and states that he would prefer not to. His lack of preferences and motivation is "…a manifestation of his im-potential freedom from all determinations" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 51). For Lewis, Bartleby preferred not to work or leave the premises not because he was doing nothing but rather because he was studying and "…in the moment of study, he lost his occupation and his

identity as this or that kind of person with this or that set of capabilities, desires, or interests" (ibid.).

Bartleby had the capacity and the skills to be a scrivener and yet he preferred not to work (Lewis, 2013a):

Thus, it is not simply that he is incapable of performing the required tasks assigned to him, but rather that he is in-capable, withholding his capabilities from actualizing themselves according to commands imposed upon him or even his desire to "live up to expectations." In this sense, the studier is always a profanity, a blight on the efficiency and necessity of *the way things are and the way people are supposed to act.* (p. 51)

Bartleby suspends the educational ideal that construes the people we teach as learners, students or speakers in the sense that he challenges the notions that we are willful and purposeful human subjects "…oriented toward particular projects with definitive success conditions" (Lewis, 2013a, p. 52). Lewis concludes that:

For educators, the example is a profound one: Bartleby does not teach us *what* to write, or *how* to write, but rather that we *can/cannot* write. And this is perhaps the most difficult thing to study precisely because it cannot be submitted to evaluation. We can only bear witness to its peculiar and perplexing appearance. (p. 52)

Bartleby and Deleuzian equality

Ranciere's emancipatory education resides on the premise that the starting point of education is equality, or more precisely the equality between the teacher and the student. Such a claim reminds me of Slavoj Zizek's (1989) notion of 'fetishist disavowal,' or 'I know very well that that the teacher and the student are not equal, but I will act *as if* we are.' Even Ranciere (1991) himself calls such a premise a 'beautiful lie' that places equality in the present moment.

French philosopher Gilles Deleuze offers another interpretation of equality but not without its flaws. As Ranciere (2004) rightfully points out, for Deleuze equality is a

157

promise that still lies in the future. Nevertheless, Deleuze's notion of equality is instructive because it can inform the educational relationships in the classroom. In what follows, I will describe Deleuze's interpretation of Melville's story that focuses primarily on the relationship between the lawyer and the scribe. Deleuze's interpretation is instructive in the educational context because it highlights how the seemingly simple demand for the student to work and to produce speech in order for their intelligence to manifest itself actually establishes a paternal relationship between the teacher and the student. I believe that Bartleby is a studier who neither conforms to this paternal relationship nor simply resists it. Rather, Bartleby's words 'I prefer not to' elide such a relationship and carve out what Deleuze calls a 'zone of indiscernibility.'

For Deleuze (1997), Melville's story is neither about the misfortunes of a poor clerk nor about the human condition. Rather, French philosopher Gilles Deleuze (1997) describes Melville's story as the development of a formula:

> 'Bartleby' is neither a metaphor for the writer nor the symbol of anything whatsoever. It is a violently comical text, and the comical is always literal. …It means only what it says, literally. And what it says and repeats is *I would prefer not to.* This is the formula of its glory, which every loving reader repeats in turn. (p. 68)

The formula is not a simple refusal as the brief exchange between the attorney and Bartleby demonstrates. At one point, the attorney asks him: "You *will* not?" to which Bartleby responds: "I *prefer* not" (Melville, n.d., p. 11). Bartleby does not refuse anything and "…the attorney would be relieved if Bartleby did not want to, but Bartleby does not refuse, he simply rejects a nonpreferred (the proofreading, the errands…)" (Deleuze, 1997, p. 71). Bartleby neither conforms nor resists because "If he said no (to collating, running errands…), or if he said yes (to copying), he would quickly be defeated and judged useless, and would not survive" (ibid.). Deleuze (1997) writes:

> If Bartleby had refused, he could still be seen as a rebel … and as such would still have a social role. But the formula stymies all speech acts, and at the same time, it makes Bartleby a pure outsider to whom no social position can be attributed. This is what the attorney glimpses with dread: all his hopes of bringing Bartleby back to reason are dashed because they rest on a logic of

158

presuppositions according to which an employer 'expects' to be obeyed, or a kind
friend listened to, whereas Bartleby has invented a new logic, a logic of
preference, which is enough to undermine the presuppositions of language as a
whole. (p. 73)

The presuppositions of language as a whole is that all language has references
or assumptions: "…language is distributed in such a way as to designate things, states
of things and actions" (Deleuze, 1997, p. 73) according to both explicit and implicit set of
conventions. Based on the logic of presuppositions, it would be expected for the scribe
to know that he needs to obey his boss's commands. In addition, language does not only
designate things and actions. When I speak, I also commit acts "…that assure a relation
with the interlocutor, in keeping with our respective situations: I command, I interrogate, I
promise, I ask, I emit 'speech acts'" (ibid.). Bartleby's formula precisely stymies speech
acts and "…disconnects words and things, words and actions, but also speech acts and
words – it severs language from all reference, in accordance with Bartleby's absolute
vocation, *to be a man without references*" (Deleuze, 1997, p.73). Bartleby himself does
not even have a first name, has no relatives, no past or future, and as Deleuze
highlights, he was hired by the attorney without having his references checked. The
formula itself has several variants (Deleuze, 1997):

Sometimes it abandons the conditional and becomes more curt: I prefer not to.
Sometimes, as in its final occurrences, it seems to lose its mystery by being
completed by an infinitive, and coupled with *to:* "I prefer to give no answer," … "I
would prefer not to take a clerkship," "I would prefer to be doing something
else"… (p. 69)

The formula proliferates and each time it is used: "…one has the impression that
the madness is growing: not Bartleby's madness in 'particular,' but the madness around
him, notably that of the attorney, who launches into strange propositions and even
stranger behaviors" (Deleuze, 1997, p. 70).

The formula is grammatically and syntactically correct but its abrupt ending in
'not to' "…leaves what it rejects undetermined, confers upon it the character of a radical,
a kind of limit-function" (Deleuze, 1997, p. 68). Ranciere (2004) neatly describes this
limit-function in Deleuze's essay, writing that Deleuze insists "…on the idea, borrowed

from Proust, that the writer creates, in his mother tongue, a foreign language whose effect entrains all of language and makes it swing over to its outer limits, which is silence or music" (p. 153). Though uttered in Bartleby's mother tongue, the formula makes it seem as though Bartleby was speaking a foreign language. Bartleby's formula is an instance of this hollowing out of language, of disconnecting words and things and words and actions. Thus, the formula itself does not produce any surplus or excess but rather it has the opposite effect – it hollows out language from the inside and opens up a "…zone of indetermination or indiscernibility" (Deleuze, 1997, p. 76).

In the educational context, it could be said that Bartleby is a studier whose words and (in)action open up this zone of indiscernibility so that the teacher cannot pin any identity to him, such as the identity of the learner, the student or the speaker. He is not just a rebel resisting the expectations to be productive and to submit his work for evaluation. But Bartleby does not conform either. Bartleby suspends the educational expectations to be such and such human subject of education. Rather, he carves out a unique space, a 'zone of indiscernibility.'

Another instructive point that Deleuze (1997) makes and that can be useful for the educational context is his claim that the attorney and Bartleby formed a pact that consists of the following:

> Bartleby will sit near his master and copy, listening to him but without being seen, like a night bird who cannot stand to be looked at. So there is no doubt that once the attorney wants to draw (without even doing it on purpose) Bartleby from behind his screen to correct the copies with the others, he breaks the pact. (p. 76)

The first time Bartleby uttered the formula is precisely at the point where the attorney "…broke the arrangement he himself had organized, and from the debris Bartleby pulls a trait of expression, I PREFER NOT TO, which will proliferate around him and contaminate the others, sending the attorney fleeing" (ibid). Deleuze (1997) writes that the lawyer breaks the pact with Bartleby by asking him to proofread his copies. And by breaking the pact, the attorney establishes a paternal function and turns his relationship with Bartleby into that of a father and a son:

…the attorney demonstrates that there are no good fathers. There are only monstruous, devouring fathers, and petrified fatherless sons. If humanity can be saved …it will only be through the dissolution or decomposition of the paternal function. (p. 84)

As Lewis (2013a) points out, the first time Bartleby says that he would prefer not to is the time when his boss asks to evaluate his work. In the educational context, we see such gestures all the time, even in Ranciere's emancipatory education. Teachers interrogate and demand speech. They command attention and application. They ask to measure and evaluate one's work. But such taken-for-granted gestures run the risk of the teacher establishing a paternal relationship towards the people they teach. However, Bartleby's formula seems to suspend the logic of demand, the logic of measurement and evaluation, and elides the paternal relationship between the teacher and the studier.

For Deleuze (1997), the scribe's words 'I prefer not to' hold the promise of dissolving this paternal function. Bartleby's formula liberates man from the father function and gives "…birth to the new man or the man without particularities…thus constituting a society of brothers as a new universality" (p.84). Put differently, the formula announces a new order that establishes the relationship of equality between Bartleby and the lawyer. Ranciere (2004) writes that Deleuze's Bartleby is a brother-Christ who "…frees us from the law of the father" and whose formula actualizes "…a society without fathers or sons, a small nation of brothers on the road together, without beginning or end" (p. 160).

However, Zupancic (2011) claims that Deleuze moves too quickly in interpreting the indeterminate nature of Bartleby's formula in determinate ways by introducing binaries, such as brotherhood/paternal hierarchy, foreign language/domestic language, and father/son. Rather, Zupancic is more interested in the third domain opened up by the formula that produces a strange effect on Bartleby and his surroundings. In her lecture 'I would prefer not to' at the European Graduate School, Zupancic says: "It strikes us as coming from another planet."

A psychoanalytic reading of Bartleby

According to Zupancic (2011), we should refrain from interpreting Bartleby's words as though they have some hidden meaning. The attorney falls into this trap when he assumes that there must be something behind Bartleby's words and that Bartleby must know what he means. The attorney asks: "Why do you refuse?" (Melville, n.d., p. 8) to which Bartleby predictably responds that he would prefer not to respond. Zupancic says that the reader might interpret Bartleby's 'I prefer not to' as a kind of metaphor for the lawyer's malaise and boredom with mechanical tasks, and that perhaps Bartleby reflects the lawyer's own desire not to work anymore. Such (mis)interpretations are the desire to find meaning behind Bartleby's formula and to make sense of it. For Zupancic, Bartleby's words have no hidden meaning, which is not to say that his words are *meaningless* but rather that they are void of any actual substance and are like an empty gesture. Zupancic provides a psychoanalytic reading of the story and argues that Bartleby's words are not a simple case of negation of the existing order of power. Rather, Zupancic claims that his words are an affirmation of negation.

Zupancic (2011) highlights the existing gap between Bartleby's language of preference and motivation. Put differently, we have some sort of passion or desire when we prefer one thing over another. Thus, the language of preference normally implies emotions, motivation or engagement. However, there is an absence of any sort of passion in Bartleby as described by the attorney himself:

> Had there been the least uneasiness, anger, impatience or impertinence in his manner; In other words, had there been any thing ordinarily human about him, doubtless I should have violently dismissed him from the premises. (Melville, n.d., p. 7)

One could conclude that there is no driving force behind Bartleby's words, no desire to change the existing order of power and no motivation to resist his employer. His words are devoid of any emotion or drive to accomplish anything. In this sense, Bartleby's 'I prefer not to' is an empty gesture.

 For Zupancic, Bartleby's formula is not a case of negation or *Verneinung* as described in Freud's 1925 essay 'Negation.' The function of negation in Freudian

psychoanalysis is to bring the content of a repressed thought to the conscious mind of the analysand (Freud, n.d.):

> The content of a repressed image or an idea can make its way into consciousness on condition that it is *negated*. Negation is a way of taking cognizance of what is repressed; indeed it is already a lifting of the repression, though not, of course, an acceptance of what is repressed. (para. 3)

In Freudian psychoanalysis, in order to bring the repressed thoughts to the level of consciousness, the analyst encourages the subject to talk about his or her dreams, engage in free associations, and the analyst might ask questions, such as "What would you consider the most unlikely imaginable thing in that situation? or What do you think was the furthest from your mind at that time?" (Freud, n.d., para. 2). If the analysand, as Freud states 'falls into the trap,' the answer to such questions are almost always the correct admission. A negation, such as 'It is *not* my mother in my dream' is the ego's recognition of the unconscious, which signals an opening to the unconscious and then analysis can begin.

I agree with Zupancic that Bartleby's formula is not a case of the Freudian negation. The formula does not imply *what* exactly Bartleby is negating, or in other words, the object of his negation is missing. If anything, Bartleby's formula begins with an affirmation 'I would prefer' and this affirmation has negation itself as its object, 'not to.'

Zupancic argues that 'I would prefer not to' is not the equivalent to 'I don't want to' examine copies, run errands, go home, etc. Rather, it corresponds to 'I want to not' examine copies, obey my boss, leave the office, and so on. Similarly, Slavoj Zizek (2006) argues the point in the following way:

> His "I would prefer not to" is to be taken literally: it says "I would prefer not to," *not* "I don't prefer (or care) to" – so we are back at Kant's distinction between negative and infinite judgment. In his refusal of the Master's order, Bartleby does not negate the predicate; rather, he affirms a non-predicate: he does not say that he *doesn't want to do it;* he says that he *prefers (wants) not to do it.* (p. 381)

The affirmation 'I would prefer' and the abrupt ending in 'not to,' indicate that the formula is not just a negation, but rather an affirmation of negation. Zupancic describes

163

the formula as having a pendulum effect. The sentence swings from affirmation 'I would prefer' to the surprising ending in negation 'not to,' which forces space apart between affirmation and negation. Zupancic (2012) refers to this in-between space as a 'crack:'

> …or internal interval, that is at work in the relationship between the crucial categorical couples, and that undermines their complementariness and symmetry: inside/outside; pleasure/beyond the pleasure (principle); repression/becoming conscious of the repressed; affective/intellectual; Eros/destructive drive; and so forth. (para 2)

The formula opens up the third domain that undermines this complementariness and the symmetry between affirmation and negation. According to Zupancic, Bartleby's words erode the very reality that distinguishes affirmation from negation and the distinction itself is exhausted by this alternative. Thus, Bartleby's formula is not an instance of rebellion and negation of the existing order of things (the boss commands and the clerks work) but rather dwells in this third space, a no-man's land.

In a rigid world of work in Melville's story, space is bound up with certain functions and politics. Everybody knows their place and the tasks that come with it. Once again, this world corresponds best to Foucault's disciplinary machinery where "…each individual has his own place; and each place its individual" (p. 143). It is a world of rituals where nothing happens and yet everything changes each time Bartleby uses the formula. Zupancic says that Bartleby's formula corresponds to another equally famous formula by Mallarme: "Nothing will have taken place but the place itself." For Zupancic, Bartleby is not looking for a new space that will come with new tasks. Rather, he is looking for for a pure place without the symbolic determination, without any politics or functions, and there is nothing to suggest that Bartleby remained in the office because he needed a roof over his head. If Bartleby wants anything, according to Zupancic, he wants this 'Only place itself will have taken place' in Mallarme's formula. He wants place as such, the 'placeness' of the place. I believe that the lawyer could not handle Bartleby's 'I prefer not to' because of its lack of any meaning, motivation or intent. Perhaps the lawyer could not handle that Bartleby just *is.*

The features of the studier

In this chapter, I discussed how relating to the people we teach as 'learners' is problematic and highlighted that it is necessary to rethink such educational discourses about the human subjects of education. I described Biesta's (2010b) alternatives to the word learner and problematized his suggestion to use the word speaker instead. Relating to the people we teach as speakers is certainly better than as learners but Biesta's suggestion is not without its faults. I proposed the term studier as a term that would resist the classification of educational subjects into learners, students or speakers. To illustrate what a studier might look like, I provided the example of Bartleby. If read through an "educational" lens, Melville's story about Bartleby and his relationship to his employer can provide food for thought about how teachers can relate to the people they teach.

Bartleby exemplifies what Lewis (2013a) calls the 'studious life,' or a life of ease that is not burdened by the insistence to self-actualize, to be productive and to be evaluated. Drawing on Agamben's theory of study, Lewis portrays Bartleby as a studier who is unfazed by the imperative to have his work measured and tested. Bartleby just works. He is a studier who suspends educational beliefs that we are willful and purposeful beings who are always oriented towards action. Bartleby is a 'whatever being,' who conserves his potential to actualize himself as a scribe and who, as a result, retains his freedom from becoming a kind of subject that the lawyer wanted him to become. Lewis concludes that Bartleby can teach us that we can/cannot write. In other words, our potential to self-actualize is always accompanied by (im)potential, or the active capacity to not act as we are supposed to act in the educational context whether as learners, as students or as speakers.

I see Melville's story as a story about a relationship rather than just about the protagonist himself. Therefore, I found Deleuze's (1997) interpretation relevant because of its focus on the relationship between the lawyer and the scribe, and one could extend it to the relationship between the teacher and the studier. Deleuze argues that the lawyer and Bartleby start out their relationship by forming a pact: the lawyer would assign him work and Bartleby would work uninterrupted in his corner. However, the lawyer breaks the pact by demanding to have Bartleby's work checked for accuracy. We see this kind

165

of relating between teachers and the people they teach all the time. Teachers demand attention and application. They demand speech and work that is later measured and tested. But this gesture establishes a paternal kind of relationship between the two. According to Deleuze, this is what Bartleby was reacting to by saying 'I prefer not to.' For Deleuze, Bartleby's words are a call for equality and a new order that would have no fathers who command and no sons who obey. In the educational context, this new order would have no teachers who demand speech and no learners or students who obey.

Finally, I am in agreement with Zupancic that we should refrain from interpreting Bartleby's preference not to and infuse his words with meaning. I believe that Bartleby is a studier whose words and (in)activity are empty gestures that are void of any meaning, motivation or intent. Bartleby is a studier who does not call for a new distribution of power, a new way of doing education or a new way of relating to the human subjects of education for that matter. Bartleby does not seem to want anything other than just to *be.* And perhaps this is the most difficult task for teachers – to suspend placing their educational expectations onto the people they teach to be learners, students or speakers.

However, I am not arguing that we need more studiers such as Bartleby in the classroom. I am not advocating for more studiers like Bartleby who do absolutely nothing in the classroom because I do not see how such a model can be good for education. Rather, the story of Bartleby as the figure of the studier is an occasion, or an opportunity to open up discussions about the people we teach. I will describe of my own experience with a student who reminded me of Bartleby and discuss how he exemplified the studier that I have been describing so far. My experience with my own studier, and subsequently reading Melville's story, challenged my beliefs about the people we teach. I believe that such occasions are instructive and necessary.

Bartleby in the classroom

When I first met the student who reminded me of Bartleby, I was teaching in a university language program and he was an international student who was attending our program for the same reason most of our students do, which is to improve their English skills and attend regular university classes in Canada. I was assigned to teach a group

of about fifteen young international students in a small classroom. I was teaching this group listening skills four hours a week and a grammar class for three hours a week, so I would meet them quite often.

I tend to treat smaller classes as seminars so that my students have ample opportunities to practice their English and to ask me questions when they need assistance. I encourage my students to work in pairs and in small groups so that they develop friendships and have more opportunities to practice. I value when students participate and I encourage lively discussions during class. I expect students to make grammar, vocabulary or pronunciation mistakes while speaking and writing in English but I make it clear to my students that I would not give them bad grades for such errors. Rather, I tell them that I would try to find out what they are good at and encourage them with positive feedback. I do not think of myself as a strict language teacher but I do demand effort and attention.

I do not feel that I treat the people I teach as learners, or as customers whose needs I am supposed to satisfy. I do not treat them as individuals who lack anything either. I treat the people I teach, first of all, as speakers. I have already described how Gert Biesta conceives of speakers and I wholeheartedly embraced it at the time. Speakers are not just students. They are people who do not need to learn to speak but are rather *already* speakers, and I would begin each course with the assumption of equality between me and the people I teach.

I rarely, if ever, have to explain to my students what they are expected to do and how they are expected to behave. I do not have to spell out to students that they are students and I am the teacher. These educational expectations have always been implicit in my experience. Put simply, the teacher demands and the students work. This is not to say that I am an authoritarian teacher. Quite the contrary, I have always thought of myself as an easy-going progressive teacher who is not overly burdened by evaluating student performance and by assigning grades. But I do demand speech, effort and attention, which is why I found Ranciere's emancipatory education so appealing and affirming. I implicitly expect the students to participate, to take notes and to work because this is what students do. But I also expect that there will be students who will rebel. I expect the rebels to not always be polite, to not show up for class

167

regularly, to not write their homework and, sometimes, to throw paper planes during class. This is what rebels do in my experience and I have learned over the years how to deal with them.

For this listening class, I selected videos, news broadcasts, documentary and movie clips that my young students would find interesting and that they could relate to. In our language program, we do not use textbooks but rather we use what we call "authentic materials" or materials that teachers can find on the web, in the newspaper or a magazine, and so on. In my listening class, I taught my students vocabulary, note-taking skills and effective listening strategies. I encouraged discussions and fostered critical thinking skills in my students. In my grammar class, I selected grammar points that I believed would help my students speak and write in English with accuracy. The students and I worked on filling out grammar worksheets and did language exercises that would have students speaking, reading and writing in English.

The students in this particular class that I was teaching were young adults. Most of the time, the students would be counting down the minutes until the end of the school day so they could be anywhere else but at school. Thus, I found it unusual that the student who reminded me of Bartleby was always at school. He never missed a class and he was always on time. He would be there in the morning before I arrived and he stayed behind long after everyone had gone home. I would see him in the hallways, in the designated study spaces around the university, in the classroom, and so on. Sometimes he was alone, reading or eating, and other times he would be with his classmates. He seemed ubiquitous. I queried the administrators about his living situation and learned that he lived with family members. He seemed well dressed and overall in good health. This is one of the instances when the story of Bartleby comes to my mind. Bartleby, too, never seemed to leave the premises and it did not appear that Bartleby was looking for a roof over his head.

After the first few classes together, I began noticing that this student was not taking any notes in class, not participating in class discussions, and not putting in any effort. Initially, I believed that he was a shy student who perhaps needed more space and time to open up so I patiently waited for him to start working. While his classmates around him would be busy filling out their worksheets, my student would always have his

168

laptop open in front of him. He would keep the handouts close to him but he never seemed to pay attention to what was going on in class. He seemed to be completely taken with whatever was on the laptop screen.

I knew that he could read and write because he would do so when I approached him and spelled out to him that he is a student and that he should fill out his worksheet. So I knew that he had basic English skills and that he could read and write. But he never spoke or wrote more than three sentences in class, and I mean this literally. I also knew that he could speak in English well enough to communicate with his classmates because I saw and heard him talking to his classmates during breaks. They had to speak in English since they came from different countries. But he preferred not to talk to his classmates in the classroom when it was about schoolwork. I could hear the chatter of his classmates around him trying to formulate their thoughts in English but he would never participate in whole group discussions or at least in pair work. His eyes were glued to his laptop.

Thus, he could read, write and speak in English but apparently chose to keep his capabilities to himself. In my mind, he was a studier who embodied Aristotle's existing potentiality, or the potential to not-do. It is the kind of potential that is accompanied by (im)potential, or the active capacity to not act or to not become x, y or z. Stated differently, he preferred not to actualize his potential to be productive and to comply with the teacher's demands to be attentive and to produce speech.

He never outwardly refused to work, which was particularly confusing. I was confused because he did not fit my expectations of what a rebellious student is supposed to act like. Quite the contrary, he was always polite, would nod in agreement when I asked him to work but he never did any work whatsoever. He attended every class and was always punctual. But he did not conform to my expectations of what a 'speaker' was supposed to act like in my class either. He seemed to elide any sort of status that I was trying to assign to him. Thus, I could not simply assign him the role of a rebel, which is, as Deleuze has noted, still a social role. I believe that he managed to be a rebel without being rebellious.

As the weeks went on, my student never took his eyes off the laptop. Because we were in a small classroom, it would not take me too long to approach him. But

whenever I tried to find out what he was doing on his computer, I always seemed to arrive too late. All I could see was the home screen. Since patiently waiting for him to open up was not working, I asked my colleagues for advice and we all had different thoughts about how to handle the situation. Some of my colleagues said that they would give him a failing grade while there were some who did not even notice that anything was a bit off about him.

I then tried to draw from my experience as a teacher to figure out what I can do to help him. I resorted to something I never usually do, which is to tell him that he is not allowed to use his laptop during class. I felt it was appropriate to do so because no other student in the classroom had a laptop. But I soon found out that the laptop was not the problem. I allowed him to have his notebook and his pen in front of him. But then he would start doodling in the notebook. When I took away the notebook, he would fall asleep in class. This dynamic continued for days, then weeks and then months.

I am an experienced teacher and thought I could handle anything but I realized that I was wrong. I went from being kind and understanding to being strict with my student. I tried negotiating, explaining, offering one-on-one help and even threatening with bad grades. No matter what I tried, I never managed to get my student to write more than three sentences, or to at least talk to his classmates during class discussions. I felt powerless. Thus, when I was reading Melville's story, I could empathize more with the lawyer who tried just about everything to get Bartleby to be productive than I could with Bartleby himself.

I was not under any impression that the studier in my classroom was actively refusing to be productive, to participate in class discussions and to be the 'speaker' that I expected him to be. Stated differently, his (in)action never suggested to me that he wanted a different distribution of power where there are no teachers who demand effort and speech, and no students who comply. Perhaps he was not proficient in English well enough to express exactly what was bothering him and what I could do to change the dynamics. He had every opportunity to convey what he wanted out of his classroom experience through an interpreter hired by our language program but he never stated either explicitly or implicitly what exactly the point of his (in)activity was.

I am reminded here of Alenka Zupancic's claim that there was a gap between Bartleby's 'I prefer not to' and his motivation. Zupancic claims that Bartleby was not looking for a new distribution of power and I was under the same impression when it came to the studier in my classroom. I would have been relieved if he willfully refused to be productive and just be rebellious because I would have been in a position to at least assign him a role in my classroom and perhaps negotiate.

I do *not* feel this was the case of what Herbert Kohl (1994) calls 'willed not-learning' which requires "…actively refusing to pay attention, acting dumb, scrambling one's thoughts, and overriding curiosity" (p. 4). Kohl claims that active not-learning tends to happen when the student faces challenges to "…her or his personal and family loyalties, integrity and identity" (p. 6). It is an active refusal "…to become socialized in ways that are sanctioned by the dominant authority" (ibid.). For Kohl, willed not-learning is a "…healthy, though frequently dysfunctional, response to racism, sexism, and other forms of bias" (p. 29). Kohl provides many examples from his own teaching practice about what willed not-learning looks like in the classroom and many of the examples bare resemblance to my studier. However, there are some key differences too.

Kohl gives the example of a young African-American student who refused to participate in classroom discussions about Sigmund Freud. The student willfully articulated to his white teacher why he was refusing to learn from him. According to the young student, Freud's is a 'white man's psychology' (p. 17), and it bothered the student. From there on, the teacher and the young student agreed to look for instances of racism in the textbooks that they were reading. They were both transformed as a result. Kohl, the white teacher, became more sensitive to instances of racism and sexism in the texts that he was assigning to his students. The young student for a while seemed to have a bright future ahead of him as he ploughed through assigned class readings, pointing out instances of racism and injustices to African-American people. As the title of Kohl's essay suggests "I won't learn from you," the examples he provides are that of active refusal that are motivated by a desire for a change in the way teachers teach and in the way students study. It is an active call for a new order and a new distribution of power.

On the other hand, the studier in my classroom did not actively refuse to be a learner, a student or a speaker. He did not willfully refuse to be productive because he

171

was unsatisfied with the educational relations in my classroom. There seemed to be no motivation behind his inaction. If anything, the studier's refusal was what Derek Ford (2016a) calls a 'double refusal:'

> Bartleby does not say "I *will* not!" … If we are to call this refusal, it will be a double refusal: he refuses to refuse, and he refuses to explain his refusal, and it is this double refusal that makes Bartleby's inactivity so frustrating, for Bartleby poses nothing to oppose. (p. 51)

After what seemed like two long semesters, and a perfect attendance record, my student left the program. To this day I think about my student and wonder what happened to him. As frustrating as the experience was, I still think that I have gleaned some insights. I felt as though the Bartleby-like studier held up a mirror and I had to look at myself and what I was doing in class. I became curious about my own reactions to his preference not to be the kind of educational subject that I expected him to be and I thought about what I could take away from the experience.

One of the most important insights I gleaned is that the notion of study, as I have described it in this thesis, is not merely a theory but also a 'pedagogical instrument' that teachers can use to navigate the educational settings and relationships. In the example that I just described, the notion of study is a pedagogical instrument because it teaches the teacher how to relate to the people she teaches. I do not think that the people we teach can neatly be placed into one of the three categories of educational subjects: as learners, as students or as speakers. Rather, the figure of the studier, as the embodiment of the experience of study, elides any sort of classification. The studier is, as Agamben calls Bartleby, a 'whatever being' or a pure singularity that resists any sort of classification.

This was an educational experience for me because the studier stymied my expectations that the people I teach are speakers and that my role as a teacher is to demand attention, effort and speech. I had tried to establish a relation of will to will with the studier and to act as another will that demands attention and speech so that intelligence can manifest itself to itself. However, no matter how I positioned myself, the relation of will to will was never established. It seemed to me that the studier called into question this supremacy of the will in education and the notion that education is about

the training of the will. The studier never implicitly or explicitly stated that he *will* not. His preference not to be and not to feel emancipated was not a willing refusal. The studier simply preferred not to be equal to anyone.

Until then, it had never before occurred to me that perhaps there are people who would prefer not to participate in emancipatory education. Stated differently, perhaps the studier preferred not to be equal with the teacher and with others around him. This is not to say that he felt inferior or unworthy or that he thought we were somehow inferior to him. This was not my impression. Rather, he literally wanted to not participate in emancipatory relations that I was trying so hard to nourish in my classroom.

The studier also taught me that he can/cannot write, produce speech and pay attention. The studier illustrated to me how the sway between capability and incapability looked like in the classroom. He was certainly capable of paying attention, of producing speech both in written and spoken form, and of making an effort. But outwardly, it seemed like he was incapable. He seemed to have chosen to maintain a relationship with his (im)potentiality, or the active capacity not-to-be any sort of educational subject, and thus was truly free. The studier was free from the burden of the educational expectations to be a speaker.

Perhaps the studier in my classroom sensed that I was encroaching on his freedom as I was demanding speech and attention. It appears that I was trying to establish what Deleuze calls a 'paternal relationship' with the student by not allowing him to simply work on whatever he was working on during class. In his interpretation of Melville's story about Bartleby, Deleuze writes that the lawyer's demand to have Bartleby's work checked for accuracy signaled the beginning of the paternal relationship that the lawyer was trying to establish with Bartleby. Bartleby's utterance, according to Deleuze, was a response to the broken pact that the lawyer himself had established, and I believe that Deleuze's interpretation can also be extended to educational settings and to my own example of having a Bartleby-like studier in the classroom. The studier sensed that I was encroaching on his freedom not-to-be any particular educational subject when I asked him to produce work and to pay attention, or in other words, when I asked of him to be a speaker. The studier was more intent on living out his 'secret life' as Lyotard describes it. He preferred not to comply with the teacher's demand to articulate

173

his opinions, his beliefs and his identity. He preferred to keep it to himself and to not have to answer to anybody.

Finally, it could have been the case that the studier in my classroom was doing what the term 'studier' suggests. Perhaps the studier was studying all along. I have often wondered whether he was simply pursuing his own desires and interests instead of following the paths suggested by the teacher, which would fit the description of study in educational settings. I have no way of knowing what he was doing on his laptop or what was going through his mind because he never let me in. Instead of still feeling frustrated or puzzled, I have decided to take this experience as a pedagogical moment in my career as a teacher.

I believe that the most important lesson that the studier in my classroom taught me is how difficult it can be to carve out the space and time in education for just being together and studying. I do not need any convincing that there needs to be more space and time for study. After all, that is the central argument of my thesis. However, I do not want to end this thesis without illustrating how difficult it can sometimes be for a teacher to suspend her educational expectations and to just be with her students. It is difficult to allow their minds to wander without any predetermined ends or outcomes and to refrain from verifying that their intelligence is put to work. It is even more difficult to suspend the educational expectations that the human subjects of education should act in such and such a way in the classroom. The studier taught me to loosen the tight grip I had on the belief that the people we teach can be classified, and more specifically classified as speakers.

Future directions for research on study in education

To reiterate, in my thesis I argued for more space and time for studying in education. I have shown the pitfalls of the predominant logic of learning and discussed the importance of talking about alternative educational experiences such as study. My claim in this thesis is that study is a unique educational experience that needs to be supported for its own sake. I described three theories of study, and highlighted the functions and the educational values of study. I believe that educators should carve out the space for study in education where teachers and students lose their occupations and

spend time being together and studying. I described the figure of the studier as a human subject of education that elides any sort of classification and showed that making the time and space for studying is not always an easy task. I described the challenges that a teacher may face when trying to suspend his or her educational expectations in the classroom. I believe that the theories of study that I have described in this thesis can assist educators navigate educational relationships such as the one I described above. I believe that these three theories of study can be used as 'pedagogical instruments' for educators to think about educational discourses and practices, and to think further about what it means to make space and time for studying.

My thesis, of course, is not without its limitations. But I see these limitations as opportunities for future research on the topic of study in education. The three perspectives on study that I discussed have diverse orientations and my goal in this thesis was to use this diversity of discourses to assist me in illuminating the multiplicity of study's educational values. These three theories on the topic of study sometimes overlapped but in other instances they diverged. My intent in this thesis was not to reconcile their differences or highlight their similarities but rather treat each perspective as a valuable framework that added to my own understanding of the experience of study and its educational values.

I did not compare the three theories because it would have extended the scope of this thesis and because I wanted to first outline the theories in more detail before proceeding to comparing them. Thus, in my future research, I would like to compare these three theories and find out how they 'stack up' when compared to one another. Another topic of my future research would be to apply the three frameworks to concrete everyday teaching practices. In other words, I would like to tell more stories and use each of the three theories as sort of a 'lens' that will help me interpret and make sense of my own teaching practices in the classroom.

I would also like to look into possible directions for further research on study proposed by authors that I respect and whose opinions matter to me. An important topic for further research concerns the ethics of study. Lewis (n.d.) brings this point to attention when he says:

175

As someone who must simultaneously safeguard the study time of his students while also remaining mindful of the very real pressures of the job market, the question of the ethics of study is something that continues to interest me, and I plan on thinking about this topic more in the future. (para. 3)

I believe that the ethics of study as a possible research topic is a valuable one. As Lewis states, teachers need to be mindful and balanced when it comes to making room for study in their everyday teaching practices.

Finally, I strongly believe that no form of education or teaching practice is only "good." In other words, teachers have to also be mindful that practically all educational theories and practices simultaneously have positive and negative sides, or what I would call an 'underbelly.' For example, as I was doing my research on the theory of study as a form of practice and was thinking about the value of practicing in education, I came across an interesting quote by Agamben (1999):

Benjamin discerns the inner correspondence between copying and the eternal return when he compares Nietzsche's concept to *die Strafe des Nachsitzen,* that is, the punishment assigned by the teacher to negligent schoolchildren that consists in copying out the same text countless times. ("The eternal return is copying projected onto the cosmos. Humanity must copy out its texts in innumerable repetitions"). (p. 268)

This quote strikes a chord in me because it reminds me how practicing can easily be championed in education as something that contributes to the development of skills in students. But, as Agamben reminded me, practicing can also be used as a form of punishment in education. Thus, I do not think that any theory or practice in education should be hailed as only good for people, and that would include studying. As I continued my research into study, I also came across instances where individuals would study sources that deny climate change, or study how to commit mass shootings or hate crimes. Therefore, in my future research I would like to examine this weak point, this 'underbelly' of study, and think further about what would distinguish a desirable form of study from its less desirable counterpart.

Conclusion

My motivation to write this thesis on the topic on study stems from my own teaching practice and from my weariness to treat education as a means to an end. This logic of learning for a purpose has stripped away opportunities for educators and their students to slow down and to be non-productive. In the learning society, the opportunities for students and teachers to be together, to lose their occupations as 'teachers' and as 'students,' and to just study together are few and far between. The time spent in the classroom within the learning society has to be useful, meaningful, productive, observable and measurable. Otherwise, we are just 'wasting time and potential.' On the other hand, I strongly believe that this 'non-productive' time in the classroom is, in fact, a valuable and legitimate form of education.

The educational value of study as 'non-productive' time is that it asks the student to slow down and to *encounter* something new rather than to learn. This 'non-productive' time allows the student to wrap their minds around a new concept or an idea and to carve out new spaces in what Lacan calls their existing 'symbolic universes' in order put something new into words. It is the time that students need to digest what they are studying, which is, I believe, in stark contrast to the fast pace of the learning society that insists a student articulate their thoughts and demonstrate mastery almost as soon as they come across something new. My students often remind me that they would prefer more time to think instead of rushing to meet deadlines and cramming for exams.

The 'non-productive' time is the time the student needs to practice thinking, to attain new habits of slowing down and of repeatedly returning to an activity that they enjoy. As a result, they become better thinkers and better studiers rather than masters of a subject matter. As I have argued in this thesis, teachers should look out for opportunities in their classrooms to be non-productive and to study with their students for the sake of studying. The teacher does not need to wait for curriculum reforms that would include time for study. I think the teacher can safeguard opportunities to study in her classroom on a daily basis if they wanted to because, as Harney and Moten (2013, p. 127) point out, the teacher is her own policy maker in the classroom. It is not like the university president will come knocking on the classroom door and demand the teacher and her students stop being non-productive.

Study is meandering, hesitating, losing one's way, starting and stopping, and never finishing what one started. As Lewis (2013a) defines it, study is an rhythmic activity that infinitely defers mastery of a subject matter and the actualization of one's latent potential. Agamben (1995) argues that study asks us to conserve rather than actualize our potential and its educational value is that it allows us to experience the greatest form of freedom that one can experience, which is the freedom to not-be productive. When we set out to study something, whether an academic subject matter or how to play an instrument, we might have an end in mind but as soon as we reach a 'milestone,' the end retreats and we begin anew. I do not think that the point of study is to say with certainty that one has mastered a subject matter or learned how to play an instrument. One just plays.

On the surface, studying may seem anti-educational but, as educational theorists have been discussing for the past four decades, study is actually a very educational experience. When we study, we do so for the sake of studying. In my own teaching practice, I often assign, for example, group projects, presentations or opinion essays and I make sure that my students have done their homework. But I tell my students that I will not be evaluating their progress and giving them a grade based on these assignments. Rather, I tell my students that I assign these tasks because I want them to take pleasure in studying and in spending time with their friends and with their thoughts. I encourage what Lewis calls 'studious life' in my teaching practice, or a life of ease. The studious life is a life not burdened by evaluations. Rather, the student just works. The student lives out his or her studious life without desires to become x, y or z, to self-actualize and to have a destination. Thus, I never think of my assignments as a 'waste of time.'

In my own writing practice, I have spent countless days typing pages and pages that never made it into this thesis. I do not think of these hours, days and months as a waste of time. Rather, the time I spent writing these unused pages were opportunities for me to practice writing, to practice thinking and to wrap my mind around ideas. I think of this 'non-productive' time as the time that I spent being with my own thoughts and studying. Perhaps they will continue to haunt me and someday something might come out of these unused pages. Even if nothing comes out of them and they remain buried somewhere completely forgotten, I still believe every moment of writing was worth it.

178

In my classroom, I never think of the time spent studying as a waste. I encourage my students to study and tinker with possibilities, to get lost in their work, to slow down and to spend more time wrapping their minds around something new that they encounter during their research. I see my role in the classroom as another tinkerer who studiously plays with thoughts along with her students and I nourish in my students the desire to pursue their own interests. Luck and chance play an important role in studying so I encourage my students to be open to follow the paths that present themselves while they are doing research and to be open to the surprising and unexpected moments while they study. These unexpected moments might turn out to be an authentic Event that can turn their life and their thinking upside down. And I try to inspire my students in moments of sadness when they realize that their studying is fragmentary, never-ending and never complete.

As I have shown in my discussion about the figure of the studier, making room for study, for this 'non-productive' time and inactivity in the classroom is not always an easy task. In my story about the student who reminded me of Bartleby as the quintessential studier who elides any sort of classification of educational subjects, I described how I was torn between my responsibility as a teacher to teach my students and my belief that the people I teach should pursue their own interests and desires, and I do not think there are simple answers. Suspending educational expectations, setting aside one's occupation as a teacher and making room for study can sometimes be challenging. I believe that one of the most important insights that I gleaned from both my experience trying to teach a studier in my classroom and my readings about Bartleby is that the studier made me question the centrality of speech and will in education, as well as my belief that the people I teach can be classified as speakers.

Still, I believe that the teacher should allow this 'non-productive' time in the classroom but to keep in mind that this is a balancing act. What has helped me to be a balanced teacher and to navigate the sometimes complex educational relationships is my research into the notion of study in education. It is my hope that other educators too will find some inspiration in the three theories of study that I described in this thesis. I hope that more teachers will make time and space for studying, and use these theories of study as 'pedagogical instruments' that will assist them in thinking further about educational relationships they are part of and about their own teaching practices.

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