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13. THE IDEA OF CRITICAL E-DUCATIONAL RESEARCH—E-DUCATING THE GAZE AND INVITING TO GO WALKING

We walk, not in order to arrive at a promised land, but because walking itself is the revolution

(Subcommandante Marcos)

[For Foucault] to think always meant to think about the limits of a situation. But it also meant to see

(Deleuze)

INTRODUCTION

Thinking about educating the gaze as a proposal for critical educational research we are easily coming to the idea that it should be about the way in which we could help students to arrive at a more open, better, more critical, emancipated or liberated view. We should help them to open their eyes i.e. to become (more) *conscious* about what is 'really' happening in the world and to become aware of the way their gaze is itself bound to a perspective and a particular position (e.g. a gendered, western, ... position). We should look for another more adequate, critical perspective which in fact takes also into account the perspective of others. Educating the gaze, then, would be about becoming conscious and becoming aware, it would be about getting at a better understanding.

In this line one could say that *modern* education has been concerned to (re-) present the world in a 'critical' way. The questions about how we (re)present our world to newcomers—something which involves selection, choice, justification and judgment concerning what is worthwhile to be transmitted or to be given to the new generation—are apparently still the one's we have to ask today. One could state indeed that (modern) education is about the world 'once more', the world explained and (re)presented in a 'right order' in response to a reigning confusion. However, in the last century this idea of (re)presenting the world has been strongly complicated by the increasing awareness of the implied problem: How is the representation related to what it represents? The Belgian painter René Magritte offered maybe one of the strongest and most famous images of this problem. He made a painting of a pipe with the caption 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe'. This is not a pipe, but a painted pipe and one cannot decide whether the painted pipe represents the 'real' pipe. This means that when we let children 'see the world', we don't show them the world, but what we see as the world, and what we consider to be important, valuable and

useful about it. Therefore, educators do not only have to think about the 'right' representation but should be aware that they are not showing the world, but representing it: 'ceci n'est pas le monde'. And then the question seems to appear again: What do we have to represent and how to represent it?

However, my hypothesis is that the problem of critical education in our (post-modern) times is changing. Not in the first place because we moved from education to learning and to 'learning to learn' as the main aim (thereby seemingly solving the problem of 'what to learn'), but because our condition has changed (related partly to the omni-presence of images). Indeed, in contrast to the very common idea in educational theory and philosophy that one of our main endeavors in education should be to raise a critical awareness with students that every 'world' is but a view on the world, just one vision, one perspective, each and every person having her own perspective so that we have a plurality of perspectives and that everything is an interpretation (a reading)—'ceci n'est pas le monde', but a vision on the world, 'a window', 'a frame'—I would maintain that today this awareness is very widely spread and indeed has become the basic stance. And I would maintain that it confronts education with a problem which is, so to say, opposite to the modern one. Not: How to represent the world and how to make students aware that this representation is not the 'real world'? This awareness is present enough. But: How to turn the world into something 'real', how to make the world 'present', to give again the real and discard the shields or mirrors that seem to have locked us up increasingly into self-reflections and interpretations, into endless returns upon 'standpoints', 'perspectives' and 'opinions'. This problem, I think, is neither an epistemological one (about true representations) nor a normative one (regarding what to value, what to select, how to judge), but is precisely about the (dis-)stance i.e. the way we relate to the world, it is about the right distance which opens up an existential space. This problem does not concern images, symbols or signs (related to stories and interpretations), but concerns the gaze and the ethos of looking itself. "... to give again the real to realize it is genuinely to look at it" (Nancy, 2001, p. 34) It is not about the problematic of representation. Indeed this problematic has been debated in all (im)possible ways (its relation to the real and to illusion, its subjectivity or objectivity, its historical, social, cultural determinations, etc.). It is rather about a look at the world as a regard for the world and its truth. This movement is not a movement beyond what is visible, but a movement towards its work or power, not only to make it known, but to make it 'real' or 'present'. The given must be given again in order to become really given: it must be received and recreated to be what it is. To give again the given is to 'realize' it, to make it impress, to insist on its present and presence. Which is not a mere matter of vision or the symbolical representation of a cognitive or cultural content (or a story or a frame). The present is not what appears as such and before us (as an object of knowledge or an issue of interpretation), but what is experienced when we are *attentive* or when we are 'present in the present'.

The proposal for critical education and critical educational research that I will sketch is related to this idea of being 'present in the present'. It is related to an understanding of education not in the sense of 'educare' (teaching) but of 'e-ducere' as

leading out, reaching out. E-educating the gaze is not about getting at a liberated or critical view, but about liberating or displacing our view. It is not about becoming *conscious* or *aware*, but about becoming attentive, about paying *attention*. Consciousness is the state of mind of a subject that has or constitutes an object(ive) and aims at (critical) knowledge. Attention is the state of mind in which the subject and the object are into play. It is a state of mind which opens up to the world in a way that it can present itself to me (that I can 'come' to see) and that I can be transformed. Attention opens up an atypical (and not an utopical) space: a space of possible self transformation and self-displacement i.e. a space of practical freedom. In my idea e-educating the gaze requires a critical research practice which effects a practical change of ourselves and of the present we live in, not an escape from it (towards a vision of a better state from where we could judge the present). Such a critical research practice is not depending on method, but relying on discipline; it does not require a rich methodology, but asks for a poor pedagogy i.e. for practices which allow to expose ourselves, practices which bring us on the street, so to say, displace us. I want to elaborate what such a critical e-educational research practice is about starting from an example: the example of walking (and copying). Consequently e-educating the gaze could be about an invitation to go walking.

Of course, walking invokes implicitly the idea of travel ('voyage') and the idea of travel "conjures up the image of an innovative mind that explores new ways of looking at things or which opens up new horizons. That mind is a critical one to the extent that its moving beyond a given set of preconceptions or values also undermines those assumptions" (Van Den Abbeele 1992, xiii). One could thus easily recognize a very familiar and classical topos of western thought—and of western educational thought (how could we forget for example Rousseau's invitation of Emile)—when critical educational research is connected to an invitation to go walking.¹ However, I think it is worthwhile to reconsider, once more, this invitation—which is nothing less or more than an invitation to engage in e-educative practices i.e. practices which bring us out, help us out (e-ducere)—trying to see whether we could recover a bit of its radical critical power.² In the following pages I don't want to develop an argument or to define and justify the project and program of a critical educational practice or theory, but I want to explore a bit the terrain of critique and critical research, not in order to mark and demarcate or circumscribe it, nor to measure it and to install beacons. There is nothing here to be demarcated. It is just an attempt to pave a way, to cut through a way and to see where it could lead hoping this can make the invitation (which is also a presentation) to go walking attractive in the literal sense i.e. makes us moving. Or to put it differently, I am not interested here in the examination of the epistemological or methodological claims of critical educational research and their validity, but precisely in an exploration of its e-educational aspects i.e. the way in which it involves transformations of the relations to ourselves, to others and to the world.

I will explore this idea along a comment on two quotations. One is a small remark by Foucault, the second a short but beautiful passage by Walter Benjamin. I start with the last one.

WALKING: LEARNING THE POWER THE ROAD COMMANDS

In 'One Way Street' Benjamin writes:

"The power of a country road is different when one is walking along it from when one is flying over it by airplane. In the same way, the power of a text is different when it is read from when it is copied out. The airplane passenger sees only how the road pushes through the landscape, how it unfolds according to the same laws as the terrain surrounding it. Only he who walks the road on foot learns the power it commands, and of how, from the very scenery that for the flier is only the unfurled plain, it calls forth distances, belvederes, clearings, prospects at each of its turns like a commander deploying soldiers at a front. Only the copied text thus commands the soul of him who is occupied with it, whereas the mere reader never discovers the new aspects of his inner self that are opened by the text, that road cut through the interior jungle forever closing behind it: because the reader follows the movement of his mind in the free flight of daydreaming, whereas the copier submits it to command" (Walter Benjamin, 1927b/1979, p. 51).³

I want to read this passage as an extremely precise indication of what critical educational research could be about,⁴ revealing also why revolution lies in the walking and is not depending on the Promised Land it would allow to enter, as Sub-commandante Marcos tells us. Benjamin indicates clearly what this walking has to do with seeing, with opening one's eyes, with getting a new view or look (in German: 'Ansicht'), which is not about arriving at a certain perspective or vision, but about displacing one's gaze so that 'we' are '(t)here' and that the '(t)here' can present itself to 'us' in its evidence and command 'us'. Displacing one's gaze so that one can see differently, can see what is visible (since the "distances, belvederes, clearings, prospects" are not hidden, are no reality beyond) and be transformed (that is why we have to put the 'we' and 'us' between brackets). That is exactly what walking is about. In this sense we could say that walking is a displacement of the gaze that enables experience, experience which is not just a passive undergoing (being commanded or cutted, one could say) but also a kind of cutting the road through.

The issue about walking is not that it would offer us a better view (and we could replace view also by reading or interpretation) or a more true view, a more adequate, more complete view, that it would allow us to attain a different perspective, to transcend the limits of one's perspective and getting to a new perspective by confronting it with other perspectives, but that it allows us a view beyond every perspective, a view that transforms us (and therefore is experience) while its evidence commands us. It allows for a view beyond every perspective since a perspective is bound to a standpoint in the sense of a subjective position, which is exactly also the position of a subject in relation to an object or objective. Walking is about putting this position at stake; it is about ex-position, being out-of-position.

The first thing which Benjamin makes clear is that there is a difference between walking a road and flying over it so that we get a certain view of it. A difference which is similar to the difference between the copying of text by hand and the reading of a text—one could say the interpretation or understanding of a text.

The difference being that it works differently, that its power is different. Walking the street or the road makes that the road imposes itself upon us with a certain authority, that it commands our gaze and presents us with a striking reality in its differences, with an evidence that commands. It should be clear that Benjamin is not saying that the gaze we have on the road is different according to a different viewpoint or perspective (the viewpoint down in the street, or up in the air), which would be the idea that we should not only take the perspective from above, but also from below, in fact, taking into account different viewpoints and perspectives, every viewpoint or standpoint offering its own perspective (and maybe implying that the one from below is better, more human, true, or whatever). So it is not about different visions or views or perspectives (which would be offered by a different standpoint or *subjective position*—indeed *the position of a subject*), although the difference between walking and flying has an effect on the view, on what we see. And Benjamin is not referring to the difference between a view from nowhere, or an objective viewpoint on the one hand and a subjective, lived and engaged viewpoint or perspective on the other hand. No, he is referring to a difference in the activity itself, a difference between walking and flying, copying and reading, being different ways of relating to the world, *relating to the present, to what is present*. This difference is a difference in power, in the effect of that activity on ourselves and on what is revealed, what appears. The one who flies, Benjamin says, only sees, but the one who walks the road "learns of the power it commands" ("erfährt von ihrer Herrschaft") i.e. *experiences* how some given comes to appear, is commanded to appear, how it presents itself to us, *becomes evident* and "commands our soul", inscribes itself, "cuts through". (Of course there is no doubt that one, but as I believe only to a certain extent, could walk like one is flying).

Flying over a road (and reading it) makes this road to be part of a plane surface, a plain which appears from the perspective of the flyer revealing it to be situated against a horizon. The road appears as an object which obeys the same laws as all the other objects appearing before a subject against a horizon in and on that plane i.e. as objects which can be explained, defined, ordered, identified, codified (in relation to the subject) just like the whole reality (or present) around it. Objects behave according to laws (or reasons) imposed or supposed by the subject (that is its intentionality). The road then is subjugated under the laws of the perspective of the flyer and has no power on the flyer ("it is only the unfurled plain", "nur die aufgerollte Ebene"), it cannot touch him or her, or better it cannot cut through him or her. He or she gets a certain knowledge, knowledge as an interpretation, as a reading as a way of grasping reality, as offering an objectivity for a subjectivity. An object(ivity) is something which appears from a certain perspective, which is read from a position related to an intention of a subject (a grasping of an object against the horizon which is an obeying to ones I: "the movement of his mind in the free flight of daydreaming").

Walking then is not about changing the perspective or getting to a certain perspective (that for example of the promised land), but, like copying by hand, it is about a totally different relation to the present, it is about physically delivering oneself, embarking to follow an arbitrary line i.e. the road and the text, as "a road cut through" the intentions, and ex-posing oneself to its command. This command

opens a new look ("neue Ansichten") upon ourselves, but also "calls forth distances, belvederes, clearings, prospects" i.e. it presents us with an evidence beyond visions and perspectives.

Benjamin is thus suggesting that walking, just like copying, liberates our gaze, *opens our eyes*—which is itself of course also a very old and familiar topos in educational and philosophical thought—displaces our gaze, which is not the same as offering us a (new) perspective or vision or reading.⁵ It is not a kind of consciousness raising or the revelation of a truth beyond what we (are used to) see. To open our eyes is to get a look at what is evident; it is, as I would like to say, about being or getting attentive or to expose oneself. Walking the road, like copying the text, are ways of exploring and relating to the present which are in the first place educative. They are forms of critical educational research. They constitute a kind of research practice (a kind of mapping as I would say) which is about being attentive, that is open to the world, exposed (to the text) so that it can present itself to us in a way which commands us. This command is not the command of a tribunal, it is not the imposition of a law or principle (which we would be supposed to recognize or impose ourselves), but the manifestation ("learning") of a power which makes us move and thus paves the way. It is not directing us, not leading us to the Promised Land, but pushing us. It does not tell us where to go, but pushes us to move from where (who) we are. The copying of the text is then not just a representation but a cutting through of the road. It is a paradoxical activity: to be commanded by something which is not yet given, but on the way to be given, something which is exactly presenting itself, along the way that one is following. Copying a text as concrete activity is reproducing or recasting the text which is not representing it (it is not its representation or its reading), but presenting it. In the same line we could see walking a road as a mapping of the present which does not give us an overview (and therefore mapping is not about representing a totality) but cuts the road through (paves the way). Walking is at the same time going a way and paving a way which *commands the soul*. Walking one could say is a physical activity of displacing one's gaze (that is as displacement a leaving of one's position, an ex-position) along an arbitrary line, a trajectory that at the same time exists (and is recaptured) and is paved for new, the way for new looks (so not leading somewhere given before i.e. without a destination or orientation).

Walking is to gain a critical distance, which is not to get at a meta-standpoint, but at a distance in which one's 'soul' is dissolved from inside. It is a practice "to risk one's very formation as a subject" (Butler 2001)⁶ through a different relation towards the present—that is also why Foucault considers critique to be 'an issue of attitude' ("une question d'attitude"). In this attitude towards the present that present is not judged (interpreted) i.e. not brought before a tribunal, for example the tribunal of reason or interpreted from a certain perspective; it is not evaluated against a vision of the promised land, but we expose ourselves to that present, implying a suspension of judgment and a physical embarkment or delivering which can dissolve us and, thus, liberate us, liberate our gaze.

In this idea critical e-educational research is neither aiming primarily at insight and knowledge, nor at increasing awareness or raising consciousness, but it is a research

which opens up an existential space, a concrete space of practical freedom i.e. a space of possible self-transformation⁷ which entails a liberation (i.e. an e-education) of the gaze and in that sense enlightens. In this research knowledge is not meant for understanding (to improve our understanding), but for cutting i.e. concrete bodily inscription and transformation of who we are and how we live.⁸ This research is therefore characterized by a concern for the present and for ourselves in relation to that present, a concern to be present in the present which is another way of indicating that the first concern of this research is to be attentive i.e. precisely to be present in the present. To be attentive is a limit-attitude which is not directed at limiting the present (by judging), but at exposing one's limits and at exposing at the limits. Walking, then, is a critical practice involving a limit-attitude that transforms us, not by making us conscious, but by making us pay attention. This brings us to a little remark of Foucault concerning the practice of critique.

But let me first make a brief note.

I cannot elaborate it here, but the kind of walking the road and/as copying the text as suggested by Benjamin could be related to the ideas of mapping and cartography which have been popular for some time and are now again attracting increasing attention.⁹ What is interesting in this 'cartographic turn', says Bosteels, is neither the increased interest in maps appearing in literary and artistic works, nor the tiresome use of the term 'mapping' as a mere synonym for 'describing', but rather the explicit interpretation of cartography as an exemplary cultural activity with a seemingly intrinsic critical and often Utopian—I would prefer to say atopian—potential. I think that approaching the idea of mapping starting from the activity of walking and of copying and *not of reading* (or flying over) could be very helpful to get beyond a rather sterile discussion on the issue of representation (and its validity) related to this idea of mapping as critical activity. Mapping is then not about reading and ordering or re-presenting, but about simultaneously recapturing and inventing, about copying and "cutting a road through". It should be clear that what I suggest here is referring to a totally different idea of mapping than the one which is apparently getting popular also in educational contexts. A good example is a study by Lambeir which presents itself explicitly as a mapping which should help to educate our gaze.¹⁰ It is a study which attempts to map 'cyberspace' as being our present. Lambeir states that wherever people face a confused and perhaps dangerous landscape, something is needed to enable them to make their way through it. Today we seem "to lack a map that guides people through the foreign world ... through the jungle.. of the ongoing technological revolution" (Lambeir 2004, p. 1). The map would offer conceptual schemes or sets of ideas that frame the problems. In fact mapping then is first of all to make an overview of the landscape, to mark it and demarcate it, to take care that one is not getting lost and not disturbed. And making maps, as he says, implies to remain with two feet on the ground—which is obviously not the movement of walking—avoiding ways which would lead us nowhere. I cannot develop it in detail here, but, as I noted, looking at mapping from what Benjamin says about copying and walking, would offer a totally different idea of mapping. Starting from that idea the proposal of Lambeir would make us into bad viewers and in fact it would make us blind for the present and immune for transformations. It would make us inattentive.

TO GO WALKING AND TO BECOME ATTENTIVE

In a very short reply to a letter which appeared in the French Newsletter 'Le Matin' regarding his attitude towards Iran Michel Foucault approved Maurice Blanchot's remark "que la critique commence par l'attention, la présence et la générosité [that critique starts with attention, presence and generosity]" (Foucault, 1979a, p. 762, my translation). I would like to see this remark, like the one by Benjamin, as a very fruitful and promising indication to elaborate a different idea of critical educational research which would consist in the invitation to be attentive, present and generous.¹¹ As I suggested already such a critical research practice could be described, in a particular way, as the *art* of bringing in touch, of opening the eyes—liberating the gaze and mobilizing the gaze i.e. the art of presenting, of making present.¹² That means that it is not the art of representing (implying the questions of selection, judgment, false or true, see my introduction), of raising consciousness, of critical reflection, of transferring or mediating knowledge or insights or overviews. What is at stake is leaving behind the sovereignty of the judgment (of bringing the present before a court and its laws, of relating it to a vision, of projecting it against a horizon) and regaining, one could say, the sovereignty of the gaze which gives something to see, makes it, so to say, evident. Critical research is then about e-ducing the gaze as becoming attentive.

Critical e-ducational research is not about making conscious or *being conscious* (Freire 1972/1986), but about attention and *being attentive*. Attention instead of consciousness. To be attentive is to open oneself to the world. Attention is exactly to be present in the present, to be there—in the present—in such a way that the present can present itself to me (that it becomes visible, that it can come to me and I can come to see) and that I am exposed to it in such a way that I can be changed, that I can be touched or 'cut' or contaminated, that my gaze can be liberated (through the 'command' of that present). As such attention makes experience possible.¹³

Being attentive is the opposite of being absent (in English attention also relates to 'attend', with a different connotations of care—attend a patient, the lamps, a customer, of being at—attend the church, of being present, of listening to, of going along). Being absent means that we are not there, that we are captivated by the horizon of expectations, projections, perspectives, visions, views, images, dreams which are ours, i.e. our intentionality—which constitutes us as a subject in relation to an object or to an objective (or orientation); we could say that the state of mind of someone who has an orientation, an object or an objective is the state of mind of a subject (a subject of knowledge). To be attentive is not to be captivated by an intention or a project or a vision or perspective or imagination (which always give us an object and catches or imprisons the present in a re-presentation), attention does not offer me a vision or a perspective, it opens for what presents itself as evidence. Attention is lack of intention. Attention entails the suspension of judgment and implies a kind of waiting—critique as the art of waiting (Foucault)—in French attention relates to 'attendre' = to wait (see also: Artières 2000).

Being attentive, according to Simone Weil, means that the will to subject under a regime of truth is neutralized and that the supplementary energy with which the subject (of knowledge) projects itself in the objects is exhausted. This particular

kind of attention implies and enables a being-present which brings the subject into play and defers the expectation for a benefit and in that sense it is generous.¹⁴

THE NEED FOR A POOR PEDAGOGY (AS AN ART OF WAITING, PRESENTING AND MOBILIZING)

Critical educational research i.e. research that opens the eyes, that puts us at a distance of ourselves, that opens the space of a possible transformation, is not depending on the subjugation to a method or the abeyance to rules and procedures which would be shared by a certain community (for example the scientific community, or the community of rational beings, the community of those who subjugate to the claims of communicative reason). It does not require a rich methodology, but asks for a poor pedagogy, a pedagogy which helps us to be attentive, which offers us the *exercises of an ethos or attitude*, not the rules of a profession, the codes of an institution, the laws of a kingdom, the stories and dreams of a "mind in the free flight of day-dreaming" (Benjamin). And therefore sending an invitation to go walking is not the same as requiring to submit under some laws or rules—for example of a method functioning as a tribunal or as guarantee to get to valid answers; or, in the words of Habermas: the conditions of communicative reason or the laws of dialogue.

Critical educational research requires a poor pedagogy, a poor art: the art of waiting and of presenting. Such a poor art is in a certain sense blind (she has no destination, no end, is not going anywhere, not concerned with the beyond, has no sight on a promised land and is not concerned with it), she is deaf (she hears no interpellation, is not obeying 'laws') and speechless (she has nothing to teach, no teachings to give). She offers no possibility of identification (the subject position—the positions of the teacher and the student—is, so to say, empty), no comfort.

A poor pedagogy is inviting to go outside into the world (not into the parks, homes and kingdoms), to expose oneself i.e. to put oneself in an uncomfortable, weak 'position' and offering means and support to do so. I think that she offers means for experience (instead of explanations, interpretations, justifications, representations, stories, criteria, etc.), means to become attentive. These are poor means, means which are insufficient, defective, which lack meaning, which lack signification, which are not referring to a goal or an end, pure means, tracks leading nowhere, which means which can lead everywhere: as a 'passe-partout'. As Bataille writes: "... les moyens pauvres (les plus pauvres) ont seuls la vertu d'opérer la rupture (les moyens riches ont trop de sens, s'interposent entre nous et l'inconnu, comme des objets recherchés pour eux-mêmes)." (Bataille 1954, p. 29)

A poor pedagogy offers means which can make us attentive, which eliminate or suspend the will to submit oneself to a regime of truth¹⁵ or to submit oneself to an advantage or a profit. A poor pedagogy does not promise profits. There is nothing to win (no return), no lessons to be learned. However, such a pedagogy is generous: she gives time and space, the time and space of experience.

A poor pedagogy is not putting under surveillance, she is not monitoring, she is not guarding over a kingdom (the kingdom of science, of rationality, of morality, etc.),

she does not impose entrance conditions, but she invites to go and walk the roads, to go into the world, to copy the text that is to expose oneself. Walking the roads, the streets, means literally to leave the comfort of the home to go into the world. The world is the place which belongs to no-one, which has no entrance gate which has to be put under surveillance. To go into the world it suffices to make an effort (to go walking, copying). What is needed is the will to move and to exhaust the energy of projection and appropriation (which time and again establishes its own order), what is needed is a concrete effort as a kind of disciplining of the body and the mind which is not normalizing, but in a sense weakens our position. Walking and copying are such physical disciplining activities. Walking and copying are the names for all kinds of e-ducative practices which allow for experience and exposition. They imply giving up the comfort of a position (of an orientation, of a good intention, the comfort of the awareness, the explanation or the stories).¹⁶

A poor pedagogy is a pedagogy which says: "look, I won't let your attention become distracted, look! Instead of waiting for thrills and a denouement, for stories and explanations, Look!". It impresses the gaze by offering trajectories, like arbitrary lines (roads, the lines of the text). It offers cuts, incisions as lines that mobilize the gaze, take the gaze away, attract it, take it along.¹⁷ But the line does not define the gaze and does not offer a perspective. This pedagogy creates no scene, depicts no horizon, offers no tradition, offers no representation, it draws a line as cutting an opening, which is attraction for a look (a gaze). This line is a traction of the gaze all along its movement, while it is also defining a side of the space as the side of the gaze, its framing and carrying distance, its focus and adjustment. But this line is no scene, no theater (it does not display scenes of a theater, is in itself no story or narrative and demonstrates nothing, is not suggesting an explanation or an interpretation or a reading of the world—it is not the flightline of Benjamin's flyer, but the road), it is a line which makes a cut, through which pictures can offer themselves, a 'passe-partout'. So the cutting is no representation or no reflection. And what is revealed, then, what appears along the line, is not a defigured, chaotic world, which would need the right viewpoint (or an overview) or explanation, the right vision. Walking along the line is not getting lost in Plato's cave where what we see would attest to a different world. No, the line is an opening cut in the world onto this very world. So the walking (the movement) does not need a destination or orientation which would give it its (true) meaning, whereby the ideal of course would be the arrival (even if we would know that we will never arrive). What the line offers is not a distorted, incomprehensible, false or chaotic reflection of the world, it does not offer a vision on the world, but it opens up to the world. Walking along that line is walking without a program, without an end but with a burden, a charge: what is there to see and to hear?

A poor pedagogy offers means that helps us to get in the position of the vulnerable, the uncomfortable position, the exposition. As soon as one leaves this exposition, the gaze changes and we get objects (and objectives) appearing to subjects, we get knowledge instead of experience. (I don't doubt the importance of knowledge but I state that critical educational research is not about knowledge, or better it is about

knowledge which is not about understanding, but about cutting, about a possible self transformation—see above). A poor pedagogy offers means for getting out of position, so that the soul can be commanded by the road, also the road paved by the text at the moment that I copy the text. Copying like mapping is following a trajectory which is not directed by leading ideas or by (hypo)theses of the copier (as in the case of reading as interpretation).

This pedagogy presents the world, offers it 'evidence'. "Evidence always comprises a blind spot within its very obviousness: in this way it leans on the eye. The 'blind spot' does not deprive the eye of its sight: on the contrary, it makes an opening for a gaze and it presses upon it to look." (Nancy 2001, p. 12) It is this pressure which the pedagogy exerts: it presses. And the blind spot could be seen as the (arbitrary) line—the road cut through, the text as a road—which opens for a gaze. A poor pedagogy spells out a need to look and to make use of one's eyes: the evidence and the certainty of a gaze which is mobilized, a gaze as regard for the world and its truth (ibid. p. 14).

Pedagogy as eye-opener as mobilizer and animator of the look, making it vigilant and attentive for a reality that impresses. This pedagogy is not offering a mirror, a reflection or representation. It is not about vision or sight (insight, imaginary vision, etc), but about looking: opening the seeing to something real, which imposes itself as evidence.— "not what is evident in what is simply given (plainly or empirically, ...), but what is evident in what shows up when one does take a look ...[which] is quite far from a vision that is merely sighting (that looks in order merely "to see"): what is evident imposes itself as the setting up of a look ("elle s'impose comme la mise en puissance d'un regard"). If this look regards that upon which it casts itself and cares for it, it will have taken care of the real: of that which resists, precisely, being absorbed in any vision (visions of the world, representations, imaginations)" (ibid. p. 18). Pedagogy, thus, as art of looking made possible and of experience made possible implies a movement and mobilization in the sense of 'to bring out...' (e-ducere): an education in looking at the world: "a look taken by the hand and led away on a journey that is not an initiation, that does not drive to any secret, but that amounts to making the gaze move, stirring it up, or even shaking it up, in order to make it carry further, closer, more accurately Motion is ... presence insofar as it is truly present, that is to say coming forward, introducing itself, offered, available, a site for waiting and thinking, presence itself becoming a passage toward or inside presence" (ibid. p. 26, 30) And presence is not a matter of vision: it offers itself in encounters, worries or concerns. So it follows that the questions which go along with walking a road (Where do you come from? What are you doing? What do you think about...?) make up a way of looking, questions which are not intrusive, but show a 'regard' for the other.

A poor pedagogy does offer exercises as the art of sharpening our attention, stretching our gaze toward the real and its truth. Which is not the truth about the real, but the truth that comes out of the real—the truth lies not in a thesis or representation, but in the experience. It is to give again the real (which is not simply given) to 'realize' it (see Benjamin) i.e. to look at it and to regard it.

The energy of the movement is “the energy of a mobilized, activated or animated look: that is to say the power of *regard* (*égard*) with respect to what presents itself to a look. In French *regard* (look) and *égard* (regard) are more or less the same word: *re-gard* indicates a propitious distance for an intensified guard (*garde*), for looking after (*prise en garde*) (it is a Germanic root, warden/warten, that yields all this words). Guarding calls for watching and waiting, for observing, for tending attentively and overseeing. We look after what is ahead and after the way it presents itself: we let it present itself” “looking is regarding and consequently respecting. The word respect also has to do with regard (and look) (*respicere*): it watches for..., turned toward..., guided by attention, by observance or consideration. A rightful look is respectful of the real that it beholds, that is to say it is attentive and openly attending to the very power of the real and its absolute exteriority: looking will not tap this power but will allow it to communicate itself or will communicate with it itself. In the end, looking just amounts to thinking the real, to test oneself with regard to a meaning one is not mastering” (ibid.38)

A pedagogy which would open the eyes is not a pedagogy which would offer the true view on the present (thereby always already devaluating that present and judging upon it), which would introduce in what is really going on and what there is really to see. It is not a pedagogy which would imply a reversal of the gaze (from the dark cave to the bright sun, from the messy world to the order of reason, etc.) and the teaching of a (more) true, or human or just view (a world view) or vision. It is not offering a representation or a vision (and therefore it offers no possibility of identification) which brings the present in an order (see mapping as ordering). To open the eyes is not to develop or elaborate a vision (an intuitive, an ideative, or fantasmatic vision). To offer representations, visions, interpretations is a way to capture the gaze, to discipline it in the sense of normalize it. A Critical Pedagogy does not capture the gaze, but requires it, mobilizes it, animates it, makes it going-along so that the gaze is not imprisoned but can be seduced and taken away by what is evident. And the evidence is not what is simply given, but what comes to appear when the gaze cares for the present instead of bringing it before a tribunal.

To walk along a road implies a possible transformation (“the command of the soul”), the ‘subject’ of that walk is the subject of experience (which is not the subject of knowledge or consciousness) and therefore is in a certain way no subject (that has an object and an orientation). To say it differently: the subjects of experience and the subjects of attention i.e. the subjects of critical educational research are particular kinds of subjects, it are subjects that are in between, under the way, without orientation, without object(ive). These subjects do not subjugate to the tribunal of (qualitative, quantitative) scientific research, or to tribunal of communicative reason, or the requirements of dialogue, but are under the command of the present that is coming. And we know from Benjamin that the walker like the copier is not listening to the “the movement of his mind in the free flight of daydreaming” (that is what the reader is doing, the one who understands and interprets: listening to the commands of his ‘I’ i.e. the commands which make him a subject and let appear what he’s reading as objects against his horizon—or tradition). In this sense the gaze is also

liberated of the ‘I’ and not subjective or private although it is certainly personal (and attached to the body), involving us, involving “our soul”. And that is precisely what is at stake in critical educational research as the opening of an existential space, a space for practical freedom: our soul.

Note: An invitation to go walking is an invitation to share an (limit) experience. Now, of course, referring to experience is a tricky business (see a more detailed discussion in Masschelein 2006). In her paper ‘The evidence of Experience’ Joan Scott criticized in a clear way the assumption that experience would offer an evidence in which something would become visible (what has hitherto been hidden like by “documenting the lives of those omitted or overlooked in accounts of the past” p. 776). So, we have to be careful here when we refer to ‘evidence’ and certainly to ‘evidence of experience’: “When experience is taken as the origin of knowledge, the vision of the individual subject (the person who had the experience or the historian who recounts it) becomes the bedrock of evidence on which explanation is built. Questions about the constructed nature of experience, about how subjects are constituted as different in the first place, about how one’s vision is structured—about language (or discourse) and history—are left aside To put it another way, the evidence of experience, whether conceived through a metaphor of visibility or in any other way that takes meaning as transparent, reproduces rather than contests given ideological systems—those that assume that the facts of history speak for themselves and those that rest on notions of natural or established opposition between, say, sexual practices and social conventions...the project of making experience visible precludes critical examination of the workings of the ideological system itself, its categories of representation, its premises about what these categories mean and how they operate, and of its notions of subjects, origin, and cause. ...”. In fact, inspired by Foucault, we should acknowledge that ‘experience’ is produced. “It is not individuals who have experience, but subjects who are constituted through experience. Experience in this definition then becomes not the origin of our explanation, not the authoritative (because seen or felt) evidence that grounds what is known, but rather that which we seek to explain, that about which knowledge is produced. To think about experience in this way is to historicize it as well as to historicize the identities it produces” (ibid. p. 779–780). “Experience is not a word we can do without, although, given its usage to essentialize identity and reify the subject, it is tempting to abandon it altogether. But experience is so much part of everyday language, so imbricated in our narratives that it seems futile to argue for its expulsion. It serves as a way of talking about what happened, of establishing difference and similarity, of claiming knowledge that is ‘unassailable’. Given the ubiquity of the term, it seems to me more useful to work with it, to analyze its operations and to redefine its meaning. This entails focusing on processes of identity production, insisting in the discursive nature of ‘experience’ and on the politics of its construction. Experience is at once always already an interpretation and something that needs to be interpreted”. (ibid. p. 797)

As will have become clear, hopefully, the way in which I use ‘experience’ and ‘evidence’ here, equally inspired by Foucault (and Nancy) is displacing these terms in

*an other register, an existential one and not an epistemological or methodological one. It is not about addressing a scientific community, but about sending an invitation to everybody i.e. to nobody in particular.*¹⁸

NOTES

- ¹ Referring to Gauny, Jacques Rancière once noted that one of the essential budget costs of the emancipated individual was the cost of shoes, since: "l'émancipé est un homme qui marche sans cesse, circulé et converse, pait circuler du sens et communique le mouvement de l'émancipation" (Rancière, J. [1998] *Aux Bords du Politique*. Paris: La Fabrique, 70).
- ² During the last years I travelled with post-graduate students in a course on 'world-forming education' ("éducation mondiale") for 10 to 14 days to post-conflict cities (Sarajevo, Belgrade, Tirana, Bucharest, Kinshasa) and non-tourist megapoles in China (Shenzhen, Chongqing). Students were asked to walk day and night along arbitrary lines drawn on city maps. Lines starting and leading nowhere particularly, lines without plan, crossing at random neighborhoods, buildings, areas. Everyday, during long talks, I asked each of them very simple questions: What have you seen? What have you heard? What do you think about it? What do you make of it? At the end of the travel they had to present somewhere in the city their 'look at the city'. What is at stake in this travels and walks is neither discovering far countries and exotic habits nor visiting 'the poor', but making the (slight) move which shapes the mapping of a 'there' to a 'here'. It is these walks that offer the background for what I try to say in this essay.
- ³ The original German text is: "Die Kraft der Landstrasse ist eine andere, ob einer sie geht oder im Aeroplan drüber hinfliegt. So ist auch die Kraft eines Textes eine andere, ob einer ihn liest oder abschreibt. Wer fliegt, sieht nur, wie sich die Strasse durch die Landschaft schiebt, ihm rollt sie nach den gleichen Gesetzen ab wie das Terrain, das herum liegt. Nur wer die Strasse geht, erfährt von ihrer Herrschaft und wie aus eben jenem Gelände, das für den Flieger nur die aufgerollte Ebene ist, sie Fernen, Belvederes, Lichtungen, Prospekte mit jeder ihrer Wendungen so herauskommandiert, wie der Ruf des Befehlshabers Soldaten aus einer Front. So kommandiert allein der abgeschriebene Text die Seele dessen, der mit ihm beschäftigt ist, während der blosse Leser die neue Ansichten seines Inneren nie kennen lernt, wie der Text, jene Strasse durch den immer wieder sich verdichtenden inneren Urwald, sie bahnt: weil der Leser der Bewegung seines Ich im freien Luftbereich der Träumerei gehorcht, der Abschreiber aber sie kommandieren lässt." (Walter Benjamin, 1927a, p. 90)
- ⁴ I believe that other readings are possible and I am aware of the very ambiguous character of what I am doing here in 'reading' this text. However, I cannot go into these issues here.
- ⁵ There is of course a whole literature on walking as research tool, as a ritual, as performance, as intervention, as tool for sharing insights and as embodiment of the critical process. (See for example: *Walking as knowing as making. A peripatetic investigation of place* (2005) www.Walkinginplace.org/converge/home.htm; Le Breton, D. (2000) *Eloge de la marche*. Paris: Métailié; Solnit, R. (2002) *Wanderlust. A History of Walking*. London/New York: Verso). Walking straight, arbitrary lines is a practice also well known in art (See for example: R.Long, *Walking a Line in Peru* in 1970, or the work *JFK* of D. Adams & L. Malone in 1997; see also: Franco Carreri. (2002) *Walkscapes. Walking as aesthetic experience*. Barcelona: Gil; Davila, Th. (2002) *Marcher, Créer. Déplacements, flâneries, dérives dans l'art de la fin du XXe siècle*. Paris: Regard).
- ⁶ In this context it would have been interesting to have a look at: Thoreau, H.D. 'Walking' in: *The Natural History Essays* (1980) Salt Lake City: Peregrine Smith Books and more particular at some idea's developed by Cavell in: Cavell, S. (1999) *Conditions Handsome and Unhandsome. The constitution of Emersonian Perfectionism*. Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press (for example regarding he idea of "what the soul's 'attraction' is to its journey ...; of how to picture such journeying (Emerson's word for it is taking steps, say walking, a kind of success(ion), in which the direction is not up but on, and in which the goal is decided not by anything picturable like the sun, by nothing beyond the way of the journey itself—this is the

subject of Emerson's 'Experience'" (p. 10) "...rather that 'having' 'a' self is a process of moving to, and from, nexts" (p. 12).

- ⁷ It opens up a space of freedom, not of abstract but of very concrete freedom i.e. a space of possible (self) transformation, which is also the space of thought as intellectual and not as logic activity. Cfr. Foucault: "ouvrir une espace de liberté, entendu comme espace de liberté concrète, c'est-à-dire de transformation possible" (1983, 1268).
- ⁸ "This is because knowledge is not made for understanding; it is made for cutting" (Foucault 1997). In French: "C'est que le savoir n'est pas fait pour comprendre, il est fait pour trancher" (Foucault 1971, p. 1016).
- ⁹ See for example: Bruno Bosteels, "A misreading of maps: the politics of cartography in Marxism and Poststructuralism," in *Signs of change: Premodern—modern—postmodern*, ed. St. Barker (Albany: State university of New York Press, 1996), 109–138; Thomas Flynn, Sartre, *Foucault and historical reason. A poststructuralist mapping of history* (Chicago/London: The University of Chicago Press, 2005).
- ¹⁰ Bert Lambeir, *The educational cyberspace affaire. A philosophical reading of the relevance of information and communications technology for educational theory*. (Leuven: Unpublished doctoral dissertation. K.U. Leuven, 2004). But see also for a similar idea of mapping: Crampton, J.W. (2004) *The political mapping of cyberspace*. Edinburgh: University Press.
- ¹¹ Freire also invokes a generosity introducing his pedagogy of the oppressed, but it remains very unclear what he means by this generosity. (Freire 1972, 1986, p. 20–23, 30). He distinguishes between false and true, authentic, humanist generosity, the first being a generosity which does not alter the situation of injustice in which the generosity is needed and therefore perpetuates the dependence of generosity, the second being the one which erases dependency and thus finally erases the need for generosity itself. The generosity which is meant by Foucault/Blanchot has to be situated in a totally different register as I try to indicate elsewhere (see Masschelein 2006).
- ¹² Of course, classical critical educational research was also interested in the present. However, it always was/is an interest in limiting it i.e. judging upon it. (See: Masschelein/Simons/Quaghebeur 2005). It consists in indicating to what limits the present (acting, speaking, thinking) should hold in order to be 'right' or 'just' (or 'human', or 'reasonable'). Therefore critique starts by looking for and asking for (justification or foundation of) the principles upon which it could rest or in whose name it could operate. It starts therefore by subjugation under a tribunal (of reason, tradition, humanity...) and requires of its subjects such subjugation. For McLaren, to indicate just one very influential example, a transformative practice and a Critical Pedagogy seem to be impossible without "a regulative principle" (McLaren 1995, 252), without criteria: "certain normative options (that) are necessary for an emancipatory educative praxis" (ibid.:256). Critique is for him about judgment. "But to judge we must have a criterion of judgment—a criterion that will justify us not only in refusing colonizing relations between the plural cultures of modernity, but will allow those cultures to speak to, to argue with, and to understand each other, however gropingly. This criterion is the idea of freedom. Freedom is the common measure of all discourses of modernity" (ibid. 250).
- ¹³ In Dutch the word for attention is 'aandacht' which is composed by 'aan', which is the pronoun that expresses to be near, close, in touch, and 'dacht', which comes from the verb 'denken' i.e. thought. So one could translate attention as 'to think near'. The second word for attention is 'to be present' ('aanwezig zijn') and therefore not to be attentive is to be absent (afwezig zijn), not to be there. In German you have a similar word 'Andacht', which however seems to have different connotations which are more explicitly religious. The usual word for attention being 'Aufmerksamkeit' (See also: Waldensfels 2004).
- ¹⁴ See: Weil, Simone (1962) *La pesanteur et la grace*. Paris: Plon. See also: Waldensfels, B. (2004) *Phänomenologie der Aufmerksamkeit*. Frankfurt: Suhrkamp.
- ¹⁵ Fabian, talking about anthropological research 'looking' at the other, suggests that maybe our best research is done while we are 'out of our minds', that is while we relax our inner controls, forget our purposes, let ourselves go. It is the ecstatic side, which is no 'method' he says, but the need of passion—"as drive and suffering, terror and torture"—being a condition to really see.

- (Cfr. J. Fabian, *Anthropology with an attitude. Critical essays* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001))
- ¹⁶ For Foucault arriving at an attentive attitude asks for a labor of askēsis, an exercise or work on the self in order to leave behind the judgmental attitude. In this context it is worthwhile to point at some concrete features of this askēsis (or 'philosophy') in the case of Foucault and maybe first of all at to the fact that it includes not only a certain *practice of the mind* (a disciplined and sustained reading, studying, ...—Foucault spoke about 'une transformation studieuse, une modification lente et ardue par souci constant de la vérité' which he distinguished from 'une illumination soudaine') but explicitly also a certain *practice of the body* since the work on the self is beyond a merely cognitive relation (it is not about 'knowing oneself'). It involves a particular physical relation towards one's 'present' i.e. a *physical* encounter with texts, events, places, archives, ... (implying sometimes bodily abhorrence or exhaustion encountering these archives or copying them; or physical pleasure and excitement visiting locations, etc.). The body is not on a distance, but appears as an instrument to diagnose that present (and in that sense experience it). It could be at once an instrument to measure the intolerable, painful character of the present, and an instrument of investigation and of thought. This practice of the body had different forms but one was precisely the voyage or travel, involving not only visiting different places, but walking for long hours and long distances, which Foucault estimated to be necessary for his work, one reason being that it implied always in a certain way a 'face-à-face'. The displacement as a physical experience (in its various forms) belonged to the work and contributed to produce the *attention*, so crucial for Foucault in many ways (See also: Masschelein, J. & Simons, M. (2008). Do historians (of education) need philosophy? The enlightening potential of a philosophical ethos. *Paedagogica historica*, 44(6), 647–660. Artières, Philippe. "Dire l'actualité. Le travail de diagnostic chez Michel Foucault." In Foucault. *Le courage de la vérité*, edited by Frédéric Gros. Paris: Puf, 2002.
- ¹⁷ Offering a line as a cut is what, according to Nancy, is happening in the films of Abbas Kiarostami. See: Nancy 2001. Nancy's ideas regarding Kiarostami's films have been inspiring for my presentation of a poor pedagogy and for the concrete educational research experiments that lay at the basis of this essay (see footnote one). Offering a line as a cut and passe-partout (opening an existential space) was what I tried to do when carrying out these experiments where students walked cities along totally arbitrary lines.
- ¹⁸ This paper is an extended and elaborated version of the article "E-educating the gaze: the idea of a poor pedagogy" published in *Ethics and Education* (2010) (in press). It includes also some elements from: Masschelein, J. (2009). *The World 'once More': Walking Lines*. Teachers College Record [online post], retrieved December 9, 2009, from <http://www.tcrecord.org>

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The Possibility/Impossibility of a New Critical Language in Education

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ILAN GUR-ZE'EV

1. TOWARD A NEW CRITICAL LANGUAGE IN EDUCATION¹ (INTRODUCTION)

To take love seriously and to bear and to learn it like a task, this is what people need... For one human being to love another, that is perhaps the most difficult of all our tasks, the ultimate, the last test and proof, the work for which all other work is but a preparation. (Rainer Maria Rilke, 1904)

Yes, Critical Pedagogy and the possibility of counter-education are tremendously meaningful for me; even today, at its worst stage, when its fashioned politically-correct rhetoric has the upper hand and is so irritating to me, and certainly at its best, when realizing its respond-ability (Gur-Ze'ev, 2005, p. 26) in an attempt to edify a new human gaze and fresh eavesdropping in face of what seems from the outside as an ongoing silence.

This is where my response to the shortcomings of present-day Critical Pedagogy comes from. It relates to what Critical Pedagogy should become—a ladder to the possibilities for a worthy overcoming of the factuality signified and re-produced by Critical Pedagogy. Maybe we should talk here about the “various Critical Pedagogies” and not so much about “Critical Pedagogy” as such, since, there is no such thing as one, unified, agreed “Critical Pedagogy”. Nevertheless from time to time I will speak here of “Critical Pedagogy” and I must beg my listeners’ forgiveness already at this stage.

At today’s meeting of friends of Critical Pedagogy with some of its most serious critics I would suggest the following: we cannot be content with transcending Critical Pedagogy. We should take it solely as a *starting point*, part of our self-education in order to prepare ourselves to go down deeper and climb higher. We should conquer the impulse to defend the theory that is devoted to justice and to the protection of fundamental human interests. Why do I think that we should not hold on to Critical Pedagogy and protect its conventions at all cost? Why should we refuse loyalty to it? Because we should be responsive to the quest that in spite of everything is still incubating in its original telos. We should *dislearn* and prevail over conventional rhetorical, ideological and philosophical conventions if we genuinely care about justice for actual people, for the fundamentals of the concept of justice, for the invitation of Love of Life. When we seriously respond to its present-day invitation to rethink ourselves, the self-evidence and the celebrated disorientations and their fashionable syncretisms and mishmashes, we should try, and in a worthy manner overcome, not the present manifestations of Critical Pedagogy alone but even some of the central elements of the Critical Theory that enabled Critical Pedagogy in its very beginning to move toward new forms of homelessness and Diasporic existence (Gur-Ze'ev, 2005a, pp. 343–365).