

32-46

# TURNING

Irit Rogoff

An earlier version of this text with illustrations first appeared in e-Flux Journal. No.0. 2008. See [<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/18>].

We have recently heard much about the ‘educational turn in curating’ among several other ‘educational turns’ affecting cultural practices around us.<sup>(1)</sup> Having participated in several of the projects that are being invoked in this perceived turn, it seems pertinent for me to think about whether this umbrella term is actually descriptive of the drives that have propelled this desired transition.<sup>(2)</sup>

My questions here are, firstly, what constitutes a turn? Are we talking about a ‘reading strategy’ or an interpretative model, as was the understanding of the ‘linguistic turn’ in the 1970s, with its intimations of an underlying structure that could be read across numerous cultural practices and utterances? **Are we talking about reading one system**, a pedagogical one, across another system, of display, exhibition and making manifest, so that they both nudge each another in ways that might loosen and open them up to other ways of being? Or are we talking about an active movement, a generative moment in which a new horizon emerges in the process, leaving the practice that was the originating point behind?

Secondly, it seems pertinent to ask: to what extent can the **hardening of a turn**, into a series of **generic or stylistic tropes**, be seen as resolving the urgencies that underwrote it in the first place? In other words, does the educational turn in curating address education, or curating, at those points at which it urgently needs to be shaken up and made uncomfortable?

Finally, this leads me to wonder about the **difference between turning** — as an **active process**, a movement, which actually and critically breaks down the very components of a practice — and its **branding as a recognisable style**, which can then be seamlessly appropriated by a variety of activities from curating to writing funding applications to the production of ‘research outcomes’. A similar discussion, from which we could certainly learn about such branding modes, has recently arisen around the concept of what has been termed ‘new institutionalism’, by which is meant the **emulation of institutional structures** for two purposes: (a) the production of a mirroring that can provide some form of critical

1. See [<http://www.ica.org.uk/Salon20Discussion3A2027You20Talkin-2720to20me3F20Why20art20is20turning20to20education>].

2. Among others: *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.*, Hamburg, Antwerp, Eindhoven, 2006–7; ‘Summit — Non Aligned Initiatives in Education Culture’, 2007; ‘Faculties of Architecture’, Dutch Pavilion, Venice Architecture Biennale, 2008; and the doctoral programme ‘Curatorial/Knowledge’ at Goldsmiths College, London University, co-directed with Jean-Paul Martinon.

clarity; (b) the use of such forms to promote other interests diametrically opposed to those of the institutions being emulated. As Tom Holert recently argued, ‘Administrative, information, or service aesthetics, introduced at various moments of modernist and post-modernist art, emulated, mimicked, caricaturized and endorsed the aesthetics and rhetoric of scientific communities. They created representations and methodologies for intellectual labor on and off-display, and founded migrating and flexible archives that aimed to transform the knowledge spaces of galleries and museums according to what were often feminist agendas’.<sup>(3)</sup> How this stylistic branding is being resisted by what Gerald Raunig has termed ‘institutive practices’ — the practice of instituting oneself, rather than of recognising oneself within a set of existing protocols or subverting those protocols to suit one’s claims — is one of the paths that will be sketched out further along this essay.

Since our discussion here focuses on education as the force which galvanises this supposed turn, we need, in the first instance, to return to it as an arena far beyond its representations. Delving into these questions around education is made more difficult by the various slippages which currently exist between ‘knowledge production’, ‘research’, ‘education’ ‘open-ended production’ and ‘self organised pedagogies’<sup>(4)</sup> — all of which seem to have converged into a set of parameters for some renewed facet of production. Although quite different in their genesis, methodology and protocols, it seems that some perceived proximity to ‘knowledge economies’ has rendered all of these terms part and parcel of a certain liberalising shift within the world of contemporary arts practices.

Being much concerned by the fact that these initiatives are in danger of being cut off from their original impetus and may be hardening into a recognisable style, I would like to invoke, towards the end of this discussion, Foucault’s notion of ‘Parrhesia’ — free, blatant and public speech — as perhaps a better model through which to understand some kind of educational turn.

3. Tom Holert, ‘Art in the Knowledge Based Polis’. See [[http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/40#\\_edn1](http://www.e-flux.com/journal/view/40#_edn1)].

4. Marten Spanberg, ‘Researching Research — Some reflections on the current status of research in performing arts’. [<http://www.international-festival.org/node/28529>].

## Education

It might be easiest to enter the fray of education via what are, for me, the two projects that best reflect my own engagement with education within the arenas of display and of gathering. The first of these was the *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* project (2006),<sup>(5)</sup> part of a series of exhibitions, one of which took place at the Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven in the Netherlands as a collaboration between 22 participants and the staff of the museum. The project as a whole posed the question: ‘What can we learn from the museum?’ and referred to learning that operates beyond what the museum sets out to show or teach us.

Initially, our question was whether ‘academy’ – that moment of learning within the safe space of an academic institution – could be a metaphor for a moment of speculation and expansion and reflexivity without the constant demand of proven results; if ‘academy’ was a space of experimentation and exploration, how could we extract these vital principles from it and apply them to the rest of our lives? And, if to our lives, then, perhaps, also to our institutions? Questions born of the belief that the institutions we inhabit – the museum and the university and the art school – can potentially be so much more than they are.

Of course, we touched on this problematic at the very moment at which a heated debate around the Bologna Declaration – the so-called reform of European education – was erupting all around us. Instead of hanging our heads and lamenting the awfulness of these reforms, with their emphasis on quantifiable and comparable outcomes, we thought it might be productive to examine whether this unexpected politicisation of the discussion around education might not be an opportunity to see how the principles we cherish in the education process might become applicable across the board for all our institutional activities. It was a way of saying to the politicians: ‘you want to politicise education? So let’s really politicise education; let’s make it a principle of actualisation that really does touch the institutions of culture. Not necessarily by producing perfectly trained, efficient and informed workers for the cultural sector

5. Initiated by Angelika Nollert, who was then at the Siemens Art Fund, *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* was a collective project between Hamburger Kunstverein, MuKha Antwerp, Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven, and the Department of Visual Cultures, Goldsmiths, London University. It took place in three cities across 2006 and was accompanied by a book published by Revolver and edited by Angelika Nollert, Irit Rogoff *et al.* See [[http://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/browse/?tx\\_vabdisplay\\_pi1%5Bptype%5D=18&tx\\_vabdisplay\\_pi1%5Bproject%5D=157&cHash=7d70173357](http://vanabbemuseum.nl/en/browse/?tx_vabdisplay_pi1%5Bptype%5D=18&tx_vabdisplay_pi1%5Bproject%5D=157&cHash=7d70173357)].

or by thinking of the cultural sector as a market economy, but rather by bringing the principles of education to the cultural sector and making them operate there as forms of actualisation’.

When we say that these institutions of ours could be so much more than they are, we don’t mean larger, or more efficient, or more progressive or more fun, though they certainly should be more fun, but that their reach could be wider, that they might provide sites for being so much more than they ever thought they could be.

In asking ‘what can we learn from the museum beyond what it sets out to teach us?’ we were not focused on the museum’s expertise – what it owns and how it displays it, conserves it, historicises it – but on the possibilities it opens up for us to think about things from elsewhere and differently. So, the museum in our thinking around this project was the site of possibility, the site of potentiality.

*A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* wanted to stimulate reflections on the potentiality of the academy within society. It situated itself in the speculative tension between the questions ‘what do you need to know?’ and ‘to what do you aspire?’ Academies often focus on what it is that people need to know in order to be able to start thinking and acting. Instead, we approached the academy as a space that generates vital principles and activities – activities and principles you can take with you, which can be applied beyond its walls, becoming a mode of life-long learning. As such, *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* aimed to develop a counter point to the professionalisation, technocratisation and privatisation of academies that are the consequences of the Bologna Declaration and to the monitoring and outcome-based culture which characterises higher education in Europe today.

In thinking about what we might have at our disposal to counter such official assessments of the ways in which learning can be evaluated and appreciated, we had focused on two terms: ‘potentiality’ and ‘actualisation’.

By potentiality, we meant the *possibility* to act which is not limited to the *ability* to act. Acting, therefore, can never be understood as something simply enabled by a set of skills or opportunities; it is also dependent on a will and a drive. Even more importantly, it must always include within it an element of fallibility – the possibility that acting will entail failure. The other term we wanted to mobilise in conjunction with *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* was that of actualisation, by which we mean understanding that there are meanings and possibilities embedded within objects, situations, actors and spaces and that it is our task to liberate them, as it were. It points to

us all being within a complex system of embeddedness in which social processes, bodies of learning, individual subjectivities cannot be separated and distinguished from one another.

Both of these terms seem very important to mobilise for any re-evaluation of education, as they allow us to expand the spaces and activities housing such processes. Equally, they allow us to think of learning as taking place in situations or sites that don't prescribe this activity.

At the Van Abbemuseum, we envisaged an exhibition project that brought together five teams of different cultural practitioners who had access to every aspect of the museum's collection, staff and activities. Each of these teams pursued a line of enquiry with respect to what we could learn from the museum beyond the objects on display and its educational practices. The access that was given was not aimed at producing institutional critique or exposing the true realities of the institution. Instead, it aimed to elicit the unseen and unmarked possibilities that already exist within these spaces: the people who are already working there and who bring together unexpected life experiences and connections; the visitors whose interactions with the place are not gauged; the collection, which could be read in a variety of ways, far beyond splendid examples of key art historical moments; the paths outwards which extend beyond the museum; the spaces and navigational vectors which unexpectedly take place within it.

There were many questions circulating in our spaces in the exhibition, each room and each group producing their own questions in relation to that central concern of what we can learn from the museum. These entailed questions regarding who produces questions, what are legitimate questions and under which conditions do they get produced? The seminar class and the think tank, the government department and the statistician's bureau are some of the sites for question production, but we were suggesting others, born of fleeting, arbitrary conversations between strangers, of convivial loitering and of unexpected lines of flight in to and out of the museum as in the *Ambulator* project (Susan Kelly, Janna Graham, Valeria Graziano); questions regarding the relationship between expertise and hope, expertise and governance, knowledge that is used to bolster hopeful fantasies and knowledge that is used to impose dominant concerns as in the *Think Tank* project (John Palmesino and Anselm Franke); questions regarding what kind of modes of attention are paid in such a context as a museum and a library and what these

modes of attention could be liberated for — could they be made use of in some other ways, could they become important in our liberation as in the *Inverted Research Tool* (Edgar Schmitz and Liam Gillick)?; questions regarding the very nature of ownership of an image or an idea, of how a simple object comes to stand in for an entire complex network of knowing and legitimating and conserving and ‘anointing with cultural status’ — all of which operate under the aegis of ‘ownership’ — as in *Imaginary Property* (Florian Schneider and Multitude e.V.), which asked: ‘What does it mean to own an image?’; questions regarding cultural difference, which ask whether a museum really is an institution of representation, meant to represent those outside it and its systems and privileged audiences. If it is not, then maybe those ‘outsiders’ are not outside at all but can be recognised as already here and part of us, but only if we listen, really listen, to ourselves, as in *Sounding Difference* (Irit Rogoff, Deepa Naik); and other questions, about the museum’s knowledge vs. our own knowledge, about open forums for learning, which are at the edges of that which is acknowledged, as in *I Like That* (Rob Stone and Jean-Paul Martinon).

### ‘Summit’

That initial project, within the spaces and parameters set by the museum, led several of us to think about taking those questions into a less regulated and prescribed space, one in which institutional practices could encounter self-organised, activist initiatives, which led to ‘Summit — Non Aligned Initiatives in Education Culture’ that took place in Berlin in May 2007.<sup>(6)</sup>

In a sense, we came together in the name of ‘weak education’ — a discourse of education that is not reactive, does not want to engage in everything that we know fully well to be wrong with education: its constant commodification, its over bureaucratisation, its ever increasing emphasis on predictable outcomes etc. These other approaches place education as forever reactively addressing the woes of the world while we hoped

6. The project was organised by a collective; Irit Rogoff (London), Florian Schneider (Munich), Nora Sternfeld (Vienna), Susanne Lang (Berlin), Nicolas Siepen (Berlin), Kodwo Eshun (London) and in collaboration with the HAU theatres, unitednationsplaza and BootLab and the Bundeskulturstiftung, all in Berlin. [<http://summit.kein.org>].

to posit education 'in' and 'of' the world, not as a response to crisis but part of its ongoing complexities, producing realities, not reacting to them, and many of these are low key and un-categorisable and non heroic and certainly not uplifting but nevertheless immensely creative.

### Why Education and Why at That Particular Moment?

To begin with, this provided a way of countering the eternal lament of how bad things are — how bureaucratised, how homogenised, how under-staffed and under-funded, how awful the demands of the Bologna Process, with its drive to regulate and standardise, how sad the loss of local traditions that it is dictating. This voice of endless complaint, not without its justifications, serves to box education within the confines of a small community of students and education professionals. So, to paraphrase Roger Buergel, how can education become more? How can it be more than the site of shrinkage and disappointment?

And why at this particular moment? Because this moment of Bologna and all its obvious discontents is also the moment of an un-precedented number of self-organised forums outside institutions and self-empowered departures inside institutions.

Propelled from within, rather than boxed in from the outside, education becomes the site of odd and unexpected comings together — shared curiosities, shared subjectivities, shared sufferings, shared passions congregate around the promise of a subject, of an insight, of a creative possibility. Another reason for 'why now' is that education is, by definition, processual; involving a low-key transformative process, it embodies duration and a working out of a contested common ground.

And here was, perhaps, one of the most important leaps from *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* to 'Summit' — an understanding that education was a platform that could signal a politics and bring together unexpected and momentary conjunctions; academics, art world citizens, union organisers, activist initiatives and many others see themselves and their activities reflected within the broadly described field of education.

At its best, education forms collectivities, many fleeting collectivities which ebb and flow, converge and fall apart. Small, ontological communities are propelled by desire and curiosity, cemented together by the kind of empowerment that comes from intellectual challenge. The point about coming together in curiosity is that we don't then have to



come together in identity; we, the readers of J.L. Nancy, encounter we the migrant or we the culturally displaced or we the sexually dissenting, all of them being one and the same we. So, at this moment in which we are so preoccupied with how to participate, how to take part, in the limited ground that remains open, education signals rich possibilities of coming together and participating in an arena that is not yet signalled.

Having liberated myself from the arena of strong, redemptive, missionary education, I want to refurnish the field with the following terms:

- Replacing the reorganisation of education for better distribution and dissemination, with notions of potentiality and actualisation: the idea that there might be, within us, endless possibility that we might never be able to bring to successful fruition. Instead, 'academy' becomes the site of this duality, of an understanding of 'I can' as always already yoked to an eternal 'I can't'. If this duality is not paralysing, which I do not think it is, then it has possibilities for an understanding of what it is about 'academy' that can actually become a model for 'being in the world'. Perhaps there is an excitement in shifting our perception of a training ground to one which is not pure preparation, pure resolution. Instead, it might encompass fallibility, understand it as a form of knowledge production rather than of disappointment.

- Equally, I would wish education to be the ground for a shift from emergency culture to one of urgency — emergency is always reactive to a set of state imperatives which produce an endless chain of crises, mostly of our own making. So many of us have taken part in miserable panels about 'the crisis in education'. Urgency is about the possibility of producing for ourselves an understanding of what the crucial issues are, so that they become driving forces. The morning after G.W. Bush was re-elected president, my class moved swiftly from amazement to a discussion of why electoral forums are not the arena of political participation and what these might actually be, i.e. a move from an emergency to an urgency.

- Perhaps most importantly, I want to think about education not through the endless demands that are foisted onto both culture and education to be accessible, i.e. to give a quick and easy entry point to whatever complexity we might talk about; Tate Modern as entertainment

machine celebrating critique-lite comes to mind here. Instead, I want to think of education as all of the places to which we have access. And access, as I understand it, is the ability to formulate one's own questions, as opposed to those that are posed to you in the name of an open and participatory democratic process, for it is clear that those who formulate the questions produce the playing field.

- And, finally, to think of education as the arena in which challenge is written into our daily activity, where we learn and perform critically informed challenges that don't aim at undermining or taking over. When political parties or law courts or any other authority challenges, it's with the aim of de-legitimising and offering another solution or position, of establishing absolute rights and wrongs; in education, when we challenge, we are saying there is room for imagining another way of thinking, of doing so in a non-conflictual way so that we don't expend our energies in pure opposition and reserve some for imagining another way. At a conference I attended, Jaad Isaac, a Palestinian geographer, produced transportation maps of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank which had an almost mind-blowing clarity to them. It made me think of the gargantuan energies which had been put into turning the evil chaos of that occupation into the crystalline clarity of those maps — energies that were needed in order to invent Palestine — but, in their pristine clarity, the maps performed exactly that: a challenge to the expenditure of energies as a response to an awful situation.

If education can be the release of our energies, from what needs to be opposed to what can be imagined, or at least some kind of negotiation of that, then perhaps we have an education that is more.

## Turn

Quite a long time ago, when I had just finished my PhD and was embarking on a post-doc and a radical change of path towards critical theory, I ran into my very first art history professor on the street. This was unexpected; a different country and city and the promise of another life on the horizon were not conducive, at that moment, to knowing how to deal elegantly with that which I had left behind. Having asked me what I was up to, he listened patiently as I prattled away, full of all the new ideas and possibilities which had just opened up to me. My professor was a

kind, humane and generous scholar of the old school; he may have been somewhat patrician, but he had an intuitive grasp of changes shaping the world around him. At the end of my excited recitative, he looked at me and said, 'I do not agree with what you are doing and I certainly don't agree with how you are going about it, but I am very proud of you for doing this'. It is hard to imagine my confusion at hearing what I now realise, with hindsight, was recognition of a turn in the making, rather than concern with, or hostility to, what it was rejecting or espousing. Clearly, this man, who had been a genuinely great teacher of things I could no longer be excited by, saw learning as a series of turns.

In a turn, we turn *away* from something or *towards* or *around* something and it is *we* who are in movement, rather than *it*. Something in us is activated, perhaps even actualised, as we turn. And, so, I am tempted to turn away from the various emulations of an aesthetics of pedagogy that have taken place in so many forums and platforms around us in recent years and towards the very drive to turn.

So, my question here is twofold; on the one hand, concerning the ability of artistic and curatorial practices to capture the dynamics of a turn and, on the other, concerning what kind of drive is being released in the process.

In the first instance, this might require that we break somewhat with the equating logic that claims that the process-based work, open-ended experimentation and speculation, unpredictability, self-organisation and criticality that characterises the understanding of education within the art world, and which many of us have worked with quite consistently, has, in and of itself, affected the desired transitions. While some of these premises have been quite productive for much of our work, they nevertheless lend themselves far too easily to emulating art educational institutions, archives, libraries, research-based practices etc. as representational strategies. On the one hand, moving these principles into the sites of contemporary art display signalled a shift away from the structures of objects and markets and dominant aesthetics and towards an insistence on the unchartable, processual nature of any creative enterprise. On the other hand, it has led all too easily into the emergence of a mode of 'pedagogical aesthetics' in which a table in the middle of the room, a set of empty bookshelves, a growing archive of assembled bits and pieces, a classroom or lecture scenario, the promise of a conversation, have taken away the burden to rethink daily and dislodge those

dominant burdens ourselves.<sup>(7)</sup> Having myself generated several of these modes, I am not sure that I want to completely dispense with them, for the drive that they made manifest — to force these spaces to be more active, more questioning, less insular and more challenging — is one to which I would want to stay faithful. In particular, I would not wish to give up the notion of conversation, which, to my mind, has been the most significant shift within the art world over the past decade.

In the wake of *Documenta X*<sup>(8)</sup> and *Documenta 11*,<sup>(9)</sup> it became clear that one of the most significant contributions that the art world had made to the culture at large had been the emergence of the conversational mode that it hosted. In part, this has had to do with the fact that there already exists a certain amount of infrastructure within the art world; there are available spaces, small budgets, existing publicity machines, recognisable formats such as exhibitions, gatherings, lecture series, interviews etc. as well as a constantly interested audience, made up of art students, cultural activists etc.<sup>(10)</sup> As a result, a set of conversations not experienced previously, between artists, scientists, philosophers, critics, economists, architects, planners etc. came into being, engaging with the issues of the day through a set of highly attenuated prisms. Not being subject to the twin authorities of governing institutions or authoritative academic knowledge liberated these conversations to adopt a speculative mode and enabled the invention of subjects as they emerged and were recognised.

And so, the art world became the site of extensive talking — as a practice, as a mode of gathering, as a way of getting access to some knowledge and to some questions, as networking and organising and articulating some necessary questions. Did we put any value on what was actually being said, or did we privilege the coming-together of people in space and trust that formats and substances would emerge from these?

7. I say all this with a certain awkwardness, as my own involvement with so many of these initiatives — exhibitions, self-organised forums within the art world, numerous conversation platforms — all shared the belief that turning to education as an operating model would allow us to re-invigorate the spaces of display as sites of genuine transformation.

8. *Documenta X*, 1997 (curator Catherine David), included the 'Hundred Days' project which hosted 100 talks during the exhibition.

9. *Documenta 11*, 2002 (curators Okwui Enwezor *et al.*), included four Documenta discussion platforms across the globe prior to the opening of the exhibition. See *Documenta XI* publication series, Hatje Kantz, 2002.

10. Another key example is the *unitednationsplaza project* in Berlin 2006–7 [[www.unitednationsplaza.org](http://www.unitednationsplaza.org)] (*the exhibition as art school*), continued in New York under the heading of *Night School* and, in this reincarnation connected to Marten Spanberg's project of 'Evening Classes' at the YourSpace.com section of the *A.C.A.D.E.M.Y.* exhibition at Van Abbemuseum.

The concern regarding the closure effected by branding, which I mentioned at the beginning of this essay, is not simply with respect to the largely opportunistic haste of an art world in a permanent state of hyper mobility and the rush to get attention and make careers. But, more importantly, it is a concern with the inability to sustain a process for long enough to actualise itself before declaring it to be this or that named phenomenon — a move which allows consumption to take place even before the innovative process has been fully articulated. This form of branding allows the market to enter the world of art beyond its preoccupation with material objects, for branding produces an economy of scale and value that materialises processes by giving them a graspable circulatory value within cognitive capitalism.

In a series of essays on ‘instituent practices’, philosopher, Gerald Raunig, has drawn on a particularly significant distinction within political theory for the discussion at hand — between ‘constituent’ and ‘instituent’ practices as viewed in relation to the contemporary art world.<sup>(11)</sup> The term constituent is understood as operating at the level of representation, in the name of all those who make up the field of representation, proceeding to produce a series of protocols for both governance and representation. As a form of social organisation, both constituent and constitutive forms get caught up in the formats which will legitimate them in ever expanding forms; as Raunig says: ‘The generally problematic aspect of constituent power as constituting assembly lies in the crucial question of how this assembly comes together, in the circumstances of legitimising this assembly’.<sup>(12)</sup>

Instead, Raunig invokes the example of the Park Fiction project in Hamburg as instantiating the curatorial field as a series of what he calls ‘instituting events’ — ones in which one institutes oneself, rather than locates oneself, within the field of representation, as part of something which has been constituted to include the claims one might have. Raunig sees this project as ‘a further development of Negri’s conceptualisation of constituent power, whereby Park Fiction uses the term “constituent practice” as a self-designation’.<sup>(13)</sup> From the description of the ongoing

11. Gerald Raunig, ‘Instituting and Distributing — On the Relationship Between Politics and Police Following Rancière as a Development of the Problem of Distribution with Deleuze’ [[http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/1007/raunig/en/#\\_ftn1](http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/1007/raunig/en/#_ftn1)] and ‘Instituent Practices, No. 2: Institutional Critique, Constituent Power, and the Persistence of Instituting’, [<http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0507/raunig/en>] (unpaginated).

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

impulses for collective desire production, however, it is particularly the quality as an instituent practice that should be clear here. In terms of the two main interlinking components of instituent practice, 'a stronger participation in instituting can be recognised in the pluralisation of the instituting event; the concatenation of so many ongoing and diversely composed instituting events especially hinders an authoritarian mode of instituting and simultaneously counters the closure of (in) the institution Park Fiction. The various arrangements of self-organisation promote broad participation in instituting, because they newly compose themselves as a constituent power again and again, always tying into new local and global struggles'.<sup>(14)</sup> Therefore, it is not only the moment of instituting oneself but also the plurality of the activities involved, the fragmentation of one clear goal and protocol into numerous registers of simultaneous activity, that are the hallmarks of instituent practices, which thereby refuse the possibility of being internally cohered and branded.

Increasingly, it seems to me that the turn we are talking about must result not only in new formats, even when they are as plural as the argument above posits, but also in finding another way of recognising when and why something important is being said.

In a lecture at Berkeley, Foucault once embarked on a discussion of the word 'Parrhesia' — a common term in Greco-Roman culture.<sup>(15)</sup> He stated that it is generally perceived as free speech and that those who practice it are perceived to be those who speak the truth. The active components of Parrhesia, according to Foucault, are: frankness ('to say everything'), truth ('to tell the truth because he knows it is true'), danger ('only if there is a risk of danger in him telling the truth'), criticism ('not to demonstrate the truth to someone else, but as the function of criticism') and duty ('telling the truth is regarded as a duty').<sup>(16)</sup> In Parrhesia, Foucault tells us, we have 'a verbal activity in which the speaker expresses his personal relation to truth, and risks his life because he recognises truth-telling as a duty to improve or help other people (as well as himself). In Parrhesia, the speaker uses his freedom and chooses frankness instead of persuasion, truth instead of falsehood or silence, the risk of death

14. Ibid.

15. Michel Foucault, *Fearless Speech*. Joseph Pearson (trans.). Semiotext(e). 2001.

16. See 'Discourse and Truth: the Problematicization of Parrhesia'. Six lectures given by Michel Foucault at the University of California at Berkeley, October-November. 1983. See [<http://foucault.info/documents/parrhesia/>].

instead of life and security, criticism instead of flattery and moral duty instead of self-interest and moral apathy'.<sup>(17)</sup>

It is hard to imagine a more romantic or idealistic agenda for invoking turns in the educational field. And yet... I am drawn to these with less embarrassment than you might think one would have if one were a self-conscious critical theorist working within the field of contemporary arts. Perhaps because nowhere in this analysis are we told *which truth* or to *what ends* it is being deployed. Truth, it would seem, is not a position; it is a drive.

To add an even more active dimension to Foucault's discussion of Parrhesia, we can also establish that, in Aramaic etymology, the term is invoked in relation to such speech when it is stated 'openly, blatantly, in public'.<sup>(18)</sup> So, this truth, which is in no one's particular interest or operates to no particular end, must be spoken in public, must have an audience and must take the form of an address.

Foucault called this 'fearless speech' and, at the end of his lecture series, he says 'I would say that the problematisation of truth has two sides, two major aspects. [...] One side is concerned with ensuring that the process of reasoning is correct in ensuring if a statement is true. And the other side is concerned with the question: what is the importance for the individual and for the society of telling the truth, of knowing the truth, of having people who tell the truth, as well as knowing how to recognise them?'<sup>(19)</sup>

Increasingly, I think that education and the educational turn might be the moment in which we attend to the production and articulation of truths. Not truth as correct, as provable, as fact, but truth as that which collects around it subjectivities which are neither gathered by, nor reflected by, other utterances. Stating truths in relation to the great issues and within the great institutions of the day is relatively easy, for these dictate the terms by which such truths are both arrived at and articulated. Telling truths in the marginal and barely formed, barely recognisable spaces in which the curious gather is another project altogether — one's personal relationship to truth.

17. Ibid. pp. 19–20.

18. Paraphrased from Foucault Ibid. pp. 18–21.

19. Ibid. p. 170.