

Preface

Joy by Changing: Arts and Education

Oliver Ruf

My interest here lies in ‘art’ and ‘education’ as a pair of operations in the context of a procedure able to conceive of both phenomena as two sides of the same coin, as it were. It could even be given what amounts to a rather peculiar name – a term¹ Jean-Luc Nancy evokes in response to a question about desire and the impossibility “of appropriating its object”:² “because, in *jouissance*, these two questions of object and subject are linked, that *jouissance* can be in such a proximity not only with joy, but also with *réjouissance*, exuberance in general.”³ The *exuberant desire* to conflate ‘art’ and ‘education’ once again, anew (or in ever-different ways), *in order to change the world* presumes a promising relationship between two nodes: renewal and pleasure. “I would even say,” Nancy writes,

that the property of *jouissance* is to be endlessly renewed. This is very striking in the case of aesthetic *jouissance*, which we find in works of art, and to which we will return. Because in art as in sexual *jouissance*, we never say we’ve had ‘enough’ of it. This idea makes no sense. If people continue to create and *jouir*, it’s because desire doesn’t stop when it takes one particular form. Because there is a constantly-renewed desire, the desire to make new forms arise, that is, to make a new sensibility perceptible.⁴

1 The French word *jouissance* describes enjoyment in terms of rights and property, but also the sexual fulfillment of desire.

2 Nancy, L. & Van Reeth, A. (2016). *Coming* (trans. by C. Mandell). New York: Fordham University Press, p. 12.

3 *Ibid.*, emphasis in original.

4 *Ibid.*, pp. 15–16, emphasis in original.

This procedure leads us back to both *aesthesis* and *aesthetics*, when ‘art’ and ‘education’ *engage in a joyful, desirous encounter*. It is from the point of their meeting, from their interface that those certain, ever-renewing ‘forms’ and ‘experiences’ emerge, as the following contributions explain in theoretical and applied terms. Projects like “Changing Time – Shaping World” assert that wherever art/education operations meet and intersect (possibly even *dissect* one another) in equal measure, they appear as the beginning of a story of transformation, and ideally produce changemakers. This hypothesis stands to be tested, among other things, through the examination of exemplary dispositifs. The epistemological problems that emerge in the course of this and solutions proposed against this background also point to a symptom of this viewpoint: mutual understanding. However, because structures of such reference are always characterized by an inherent aesthetic tension, its driving force remains the mode of critique.

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