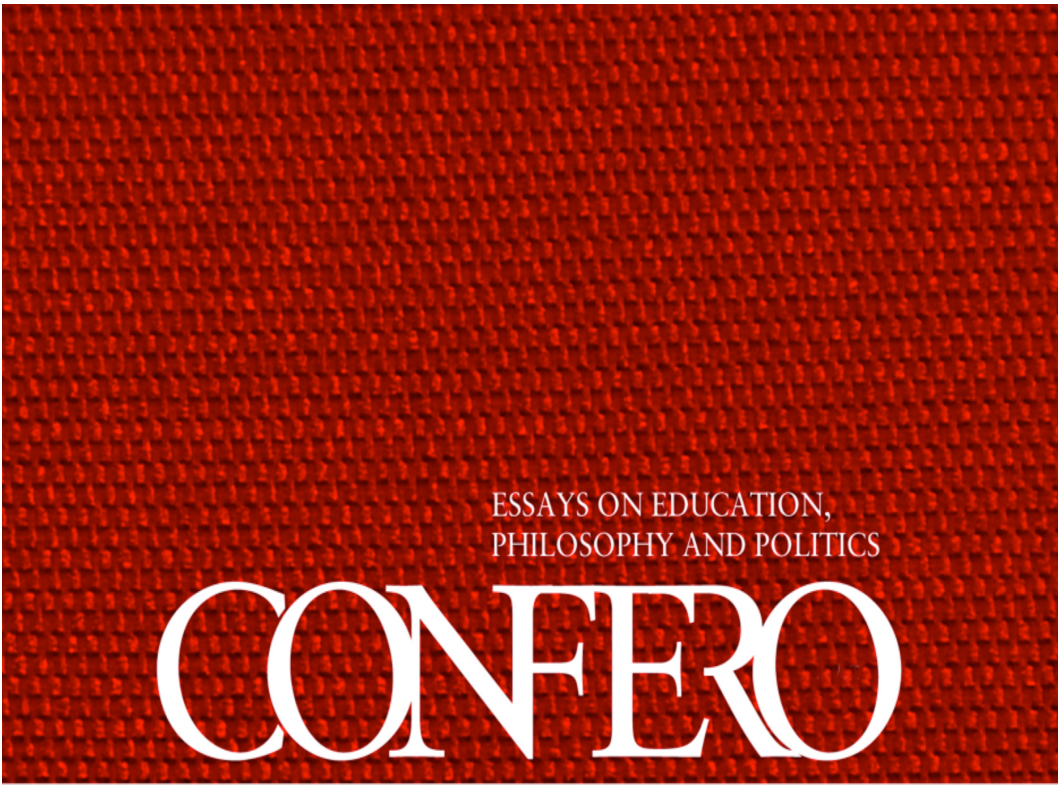

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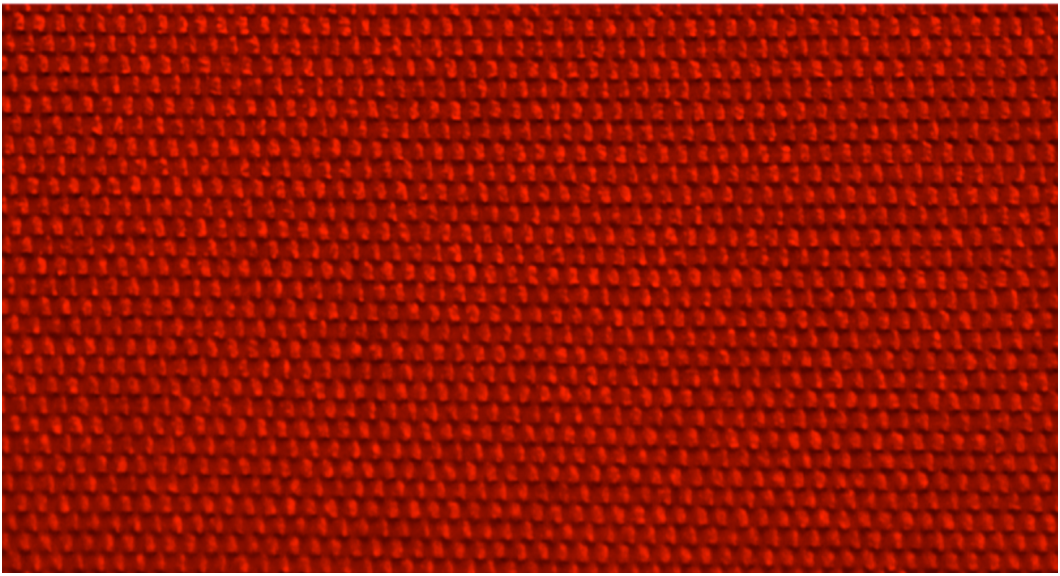

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Open issue: Introduction

Eleonor Bredlöv, Camilla Forsberg, Lina Rahm and Sara Vestergren

In this volume, which is an open issue, we present five papers that in various ways relate to issues on education, philosophy and politics, all imbued with social criticism and contributing to Confero's interdisciplinary focus and encouragement to essayistic writing. Two of the papers directly deal with heteronormativity and heterosexism in school contexts, where one empirically scrutinizes the normative production of pupil sexuality, and the other discusses the possibilities for straight teacher allies involved in LGBTQ activism in an essay of self-disclosure. Both acknowledge the importance of shaping school environments into safe spaces. A third essay, also with a focus on the school context and it's (un)safe spaces, unfolds research on bullying, highlighting the importance of taking socio-cultural power structures and norms into account in this field of research, also acknowledging the damaging forces of homophobia. In the writing of this essay, the argument is presented quite playfully, hence making the argument more accessible. This is also the case of the fourth paper, where a well-known children's book character is taken up and discussed in relation to Nietzsche's writings, presenting his ideas in an exciting way. Appropriately, this issue ends with an essay that explores the emotion of love in the search for knowledge in our universities. We are hopeful that these essays will inspire you as readers in writing more freely and more creatively than what is usually accepted in the larger realm

of scholarly writing, making use of the possibilities of the written word and partaking in the ongoing debate concerning education and social criticism. The papers in this volume are presented more throroughly in the following.

In the essay "Radical heterosexuality: straight teacher activism in schools", Leigh Potvin sets out to understand the efficacy of straight teacher allies, the importance of understanding straight privilege, and the significance of radical heterosexuality for straight people doing LGBTQ activism, where the discussion is laid out on the basis of queer theory and decolonizing/Indigenous queer theory. Potvin highlights the need for teachers to understand the privileges that comes with straightness. Heterosexuality becomes radical when straight people, allies, contest and become aware of the innate privilege of being heterosexual through heteropatriarchy. As the title indicates, "radical heterosexuality" is significant to the straight people involved in LGBTQ activism. Further, Potvin discusses the importance of radical heterosexuality in challenging two big foes of LGBTQ, namely, heterosexism and heteronormativity. Radical heterosexuality involves challenging and facing up to the normalized forms of sexuality in different contexts.

In "Gay as classroom practice", Angelica Simonsson and Petra Angervall discuss and problematize the production of normativity and subjectivity in language education. Through the use of discourse analysis, pupil and teacher interaction in a Swedish 8 grade English class is analysed, focusing on how sexual pupil subjectivity is produced. The pupils perform a drama assignment, where gay men are dramatized and constructed as something funny. Humour can contribute to a positive and permitting classroom climate, making pupils feel secure enough to speak the language that they are learning. However, the authors show how the pupils in their joking practices simultaneously get caught up in reproducing heteronormativity, where the discursive production of male homosexuality includes being non-natural, hyper-sexual and

rendering ridicule, reproducing straight male pupil subjectivity as normative. Further, the authors discuss the refusal of homosexuality in the analysed interaction in terms of producing openings for gay male pupil subjectivity – openings that otherwise would have remained within the realm of drama. In conclusion, the authors show how processes around gender and sexuality informs language instruction and learning, and vice versa, highlighting the importance of the meaning making aspects of language instruction and learning.

In 2015 Confero published a special issue (3.2) on bullying; *Essays on school bullying: theoretical perspectives on a contemporary problem*. For this special issue Paul Horton participated as a guest editor. In this issue, he contributes with an essay discussing different paradigmatical levels of approaches to bullying, using a Russian nesting doll to highlight these levels. The doll consists of five different size dolls that each represent a different level; individual, microsystem, mesosytem, exosystem, and macrosystem. On background of letting this doll symbolize the field of research on bullying, the author constructs an imaginative conversation with scholars, discussing the pros and cons of the different levels and highlighting areas in need of future research. This essay can be seen as a compliment to the previously published special issue as it stems from and discusses issues raised through the essays included here.

In the playful essay "Pippi Longstocking as Friedrich Nietzsche's overhuman", Michael Tholander reads Nietzsche's figuration of the "übermensch" in parallel to the fictitious (children's book) character Pippi Longstocking, created by Astrid Lindgren. By drawing out a series of ideals from Nietzsche's writings, and comparing these to segments and traits from the Pippi books (including Pippi herself, as well as other prominent characters), a series of striking (and provocative?) similarities emerge. This stimulating superimposition across issues such as forgetfulness, passion, creativity, acceptance and pluralism, concludes in an appeal or invitation to treat the overhuman as "a liberating

tool", which specific content will need to be created by the reader her/himself.

What role does love play in higher education? In the last essay of this open issue, "On emotions, knowledge and educational institutions", Tomas Karlsohn proposes that historical studies of emotions in education can provide a different and important trajectory that does not only problematize assumptions of today, but also opens up the often dichotomized discussions between what is frequently described as therapeutic or affective 'fuzzy' educational governance and classic scientific norms such as organised scepticism, disinterestedness and discipline. Karlsohn convincingly argues not only that educational institutions are impregnated with feelings but also present us with the thrilling argument that feelings of love in higher education might be spurred by the norm of disinterestedness. That is—norms, rules, principles and codes can provide the necessary frame that make love for research visible and perhaps even possible.

The long-term aim of Confero is to provide a space for critical inquiries on topics related to education broadly defined. The journal came to life from a critical standpoint regarding the emerging regime of the scientific economy and the mainstream reliance of form and structure. We threrefore invite you to submit essays at the crossroads between education, philosophy and politics – essays that do not stay faithful to the hemonic format of a 'scientific article', and in doing so take up new themes and challenges in need of exploration.

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Radical heterosexuality: Straight teacher activism in schools

Does ally-led activism work?

Leigh Potvin

The vast majority of schools in Canada are dominated by unsafe spaces and experiences for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) youth [1] who continue to experience higher rates of suicide, depression, isolation, harassment/bullying, and self-harm compared to their straight peers[2]. Gay/Straight Alliances (GSAs) and other LGBTQ-inclusive groups exist in schools with the goal of mitigating and working against homophobia. Most often in Ontario (Canada), straight teachers lead these groups[3]. Because of the pervasive role straight teachers play in GSAs and other anti-homophobia initiatives in schools, there is a practical need to analyze the role and experiences of straight teacher ally activists working with LGBTQ students and the overall effectiveness of anti-homophobia efforts under their purview.

Here, I explore the efficacy of straight teacher allies, the importance of understanding straight privilege, and the significance of radical heterosexuality for straight people doing

[1] EGALE, 2011; GLSEN, 2011
[2] O'Conor, 1995; Pascoe, 2007; Walton, 2006
[3] Kitchen and Bellini, 2013; LaPointe, 2015; Russell, 2011

LGBTQ activism. Relying on queer theory and decolonizing/Indigenous queer theory, I argue that it is necessary for straight teachers to acknowledge their straight privilege in order to challenge homophobia's companions: heterosexism and heteronormativity. In addressing the latter two covert forms of oppression in schools, teachers and students could shift into deeper, more effective resistance measures.

Personal connection and grounding

I have spent most of my adult life and teaching career guided by activist sensibilities rooted in a desire for social justice. A common paradox for privileged people like me (being white, straight, cisgender woman, middle-class, able-bodied, well-educated) lies in the fact that while I feel it is my social responsibility to work toward greater equity, I come to that disposition with the luxury of choice. In other words, my experiences of privilege mean that I have the luxury to "opt in" to struggles for liberation, rather than experience life from a marginalized or oppressed position. I have worked with students and colleagues as part of GSAs in schools, marched with my teacher's union in Toronto's Pride Parade, and more informally, supported LGBTQ colleagues, friends, and students in the face of their oppression in schools. I believe conversations about LGBTQ activism in school should include the radical politicization of straight teachers and their teaching practice. What I mean by 'radical' in this context is a movement toward recognizing the political nature of anti-homophobia activism in schools instead of sanitizing them as generic, anti-bullying activities. My own experience as an ally reflects the fallibility when allyship is assumed as a static identity.

The Great Twitter Debacle of 2013

Three quarters of the way through my first doctoral seminar, I found myself in proverbial hot water. Over the weekend, I

tweeted something that I intended to be funny (and it was funny, in context and amongst friends), but out of context, could only be interpreted as homophobic.

I was a confident ally.

It was from this position of confidence, which I now cannot help but think of as arrogance, that I wrote the tweet that will forever ring out in my mind as *The Great Twitter Debacle of 2013*. While spending time with some queer friends, I tweeted a portion of our discussion of favourite childhood movies. My friend's gay, male roommate stated that his two favourite movies were *Mean Girls* and *The Notebook*. He burst out laughing, along with the rest of us. I wrote: "'Mean Girls and The Notebook are my favourite movies'. That's the gayest thing I've heard today." Unbeknownst to my friends and I, classmates in the program read the tweet and were shocked and upset by its content. One responded, not by tweeting a response, but by informing my doctoral supervisor without initially identifying me as the offender. The student eventually told my supervisor that I was the tweeter. I received an email from him a day later highlighting my transgression and the concern of my classmates. He urged me to apologize, in a sincere and responsible way, citing other well-known public figures, like Jason Alexander and, more recently, Jonah Hill, who made similar errors in judgment.

I did.

I issued a 6-tweet apology (sometimes 140 characters is not enough, other times, it's too much). It is difficult to convey in words the distress I felt as a result of this incident. My entire identity as a compassionate educator, activist, and ally was shaken. After a couple of days, when I thought things had died down a bit, a student from one of the other cohorts approached me to explain the effect of my tweet. She relayed that students in her cohort had been discussing it in class and while I had not

been mentioned by name, my identity as the offender seemed to be a well-known fact. I was mortified and horrified at myself. I managed to get through the conversation before I burst into (more) tears. *Didn't people read the apology tweet? Did people really think I was a homophobe? Didn't they know the kind of work I did?*

This story is an important part of my experience as an ally. It plays a formative role in my learning and work to mitigate the effects of privilege in my life. Stories about so-called successes in my ally experience are easier to tell, especially in such a public forum. However, I find myself tiring of the stories that privileged people tell about themselves and "the good" they are doing for other people in the name of social justice and equality. Not that these stories are void of significance or importance, they have value. I question the motivation of telling stories that make us (privileged allies) seem important, benevolent, and therefore, good. It seems to me that good stories emphasize the perceived benevolence of the experiences of privileged people and run the risk of further alienating the marginalized folks with whom alliances are sought. And so, I propose that people who are interested in being allies start telling their bad stories; their stories of transgressions and failures to complicate and challenge the idea that an ally identity is a static, unchanging identity. In order for allies to be most effective, their role and social location needs to be problematized. Here, I use queer theory [4] and theories of decolonization [5] to help shape a conception of allies as people who are respectful, self-reflective, and willing to live in humility instead of seeking accolades and recognition for their work. Accolades and recognition (rather than respect and humility) as motive for being an ally, the results will be inauthentic, misguided, with great potential to reinforce the negative impacts of oppression.

[4] Britzman, 1995; Foucault, 1978; Halperin, 1997
[5] Battiste, 2005; Battiste, 2013; Root, 2009; Tompkins, 2002

For some, discussing allies and the nature of allyship is tiresome. An ally is someone who is kind to others possessing traits that are assumed inherent and cannot be learned or taught. For others, allies are seemingly well-intended, but ultimately self-important people looking to alleviate the guilt associated with their privilege. I am particularly interested is transcending these kinds of arguments "for" or "against" allies because it seems to me that where there are social movements, there are allies. I acknowledge that there are many arguments for or against allies and their role. Here, I focus on allyship as a useful concept in facilitating equity particularly when it is attended to in critical ways.

Relevant terms and concepts

Straight teachers can be important *allies* to LGBTQ students. Bishop emphasizes the importance of allies exercising their power in ways that support social movements rather than reinscribing oppression[6]. In order to do so, allies must take an inventory of their own experiences of oppression as well as the benefits of their privilege in society. Allies are "people who recognize the unearned privilege they receive from society's patterns of injustice and take responsibility for changing these patterns"[7]. The dual actions of recognizing and taking responsibility suggest that straight allies are afforded *privilege* in society on the basis of being heterosexual, at the expense of LGBTQ people. Privilege is a form of dominance afforded to a group over others that perpetuates inequities[8], in this case against LGBTQ people. Straight privilege manifests itself in commonplace ways that can be hard for straight people to see and acknowledge. It is the assumption or set of assumptions that the experiences of heterosexual people are the only

[6] Bishop, 2002
[7] Bishop, 2002, p. 1
[8] Sensoy and DiAngelo, 2012

experiences[9]. For instance, most straight people can hold hands with their partner in public without fear of provoking a response from others, we can put a picture of our opposite sex partner in our office, and we can rest assured that the majority of media will validate our life experience. One way that some straight teachers acknowledge their privilege is through LGBTQ ally and activism work. In school contexts, for instance, some straight teachers are active supporters of Gay Straight Alliances (GSAs), which are student-led anti-homophobia groups in schools, often supported and supervised by ally teachers[10]. The overarching sociological forces at work in schools, like other institutions in society are *heteronormativity* and *heterosexism*. *Heteronormativity* refers to the normalization of heterosexual privilege[11], evident in school dances and health/sex education curriculum, among other aspects of school life. Heterosexism presumes the superiority and naturalness of heterosexuality[12].

Why straight teachers?

Straight teachers play a significant guiding role in equity movements in Ontario schools[13]. I discuss and problematize ally identities within queer movements and suggest that radical heterosexuality is a more viable and respectful positioning. I seek to understand the ways that straight teacher allies experience privilege as they do activism work with LGBTQ students and colleagues. Many teacher leaders of GSAs and other pride organizations, as indicated above, are straight (predominantly female) teachers[14]. The role of straight teachers, despite their prevalence in these roles, is not often studied, particularly in Canada and Ontario[15]. The majority of student-

[9] Callaghan, 2007; Nicholls, 2013; Meyer, 2007; Rich 1980
[10] Russell, 2011
[11] Driskill et al., 2011
[12] Finley, 2011; Walton, 2006
[13] Goldstein and Davis, 2010; Kitchen and Bellini, 2013; LaPointe, 2015
[14] Kitchen and Bellini, 2013; LaPointe, 2015
[15] Eichler, 2010; Kitchen and Bellini, 2013; LaPointe, 2015; Russell, 2011

allies in Goldstein and Davis' study of heterosexual allies on a college campus were "white, female, politically-liberal, and religiously inactive, social sciences and humanities majors"[16]. The homogeneity of this group, according to the authors, sits in contrast to otherwise diverse student bodies, further reinforcing the importance of understanding the role that privilege plays in the lives of allies of LGBTQ people.

Unlearning straight white/settler privilege

Kumashiro's anti-oppressive pedagogy provides a mechanism to address privilege in schools and classrooms. Anti-oppressive education as a framework provides a platform for educators who seek to end sexism/heterosexism, racism, classism, ableism (and other forms of oppression) within their classrooms and schools. He posits that a failure to "work against the various forms of oppression [racism, sexism, heterosexism, homophobia, classism] is to be complicit with them"[17]. Kumashiro reminds educators that, in order to work toward ending oppression, they must be able to name it. Naming oppression requires seeing inequity and/or relations of power playing out in a systematically disadvantageous way for individuals or groups in a school or classroom. Changing oppressive dynamics rooted in these power inequities requires what he calls *disruptive knowledge* not as an end, but rather as "a means toward the always-shifting end/goal of learning more" (p. 34). Kumashiro's (2004) framework provides a solid foundation from which straight teachers can advocate for a queering of schools instead of reactionary, surface-level strategies that are often the limit or extent of anti-homophobia efforts. One such effort to combat homophobia in schools is made through creation of safe spaces.

[16] Goldstein and Davis, 2010, p. 488
[17] Kumashiro, 2000, p. 29

Delpit posits that, within schools, a *culture of power* exists that benefits dominant groups to the detriment of the marginalized groups, like LGBTQ students and/or students of colour. In line with Foucault's work on relations of power, Delpit argues that power is enacted in classrooms, establishing rules for participants that reflect the culture of the dominant, most powerful group[18]. For the less powerful, learning the rules of the dominant culture could help acquire power, yet maintain existing systems rather than erode them. Individuals or groups who have power in a culture are "frequently least aware of—or least willing to acknowledge—its existence. Those with less power are often most aware of its existence"[19]. This pattern, I argue, can be applied in understanding sexuality and gender diversity in schools. Delpit indicates, for example, that, for educators who consider themselves progressive or radical in nature there is discomfort in acknowledging their social power. She argues that discomfort is necessary in order to mobilize resistance movements[20]. Inaction on the part of privileged teachers only solidifies their dominance. Fortunately, educators, she says, can use their position within educational institutions for resistance and change. A teacher can "agitate for change—pushing gatekeepers to open their doors to a variety of styles and codes"[21]. These gatekeepers are allies[22]. Teachers who choose to agitate for change must accept a complete reworking of the current culture in schools from which they benefit[23].

There are two aspects of my social privilege that I have worked to address over the last decade: my white/settler and straight identity. Both elements of my life experience situate me in a position of privilege relative to racialized and/or queer people. The intersection of my whiteness, straightness, and cisgender

[18] Delpit, 1988; Foucault, 1978
[19] Delpit, 1988, p. 282
[20] Delpit, 1988
[21] Delpit, 1988, p. 292
[22] Bishop, 2013
[23] Delpit, 1988

woman identity enable me to leverage my privilege as an ally. These privileges can run amok as evidence by The Great Twitter Debacle of 2013. The intersections of privilege in my own identity can also lead to further marginalization of those I seek ally myself with if my privilege is left unchecked. Much of my own learning about my privilege as a cisgender, white, straight woman stems from the work of many Indigenous and queer scholars who articulate the need for privileged people to understand the space they occupy in society (and classrooms). Here, I explore some concepts that emerge from decolonizing and queer literature that help elucidate an argument for the necessity of recognizing and analyzing privilege, after which I construct an argument for respectful allyship.

Unlearning settler privilege

Finley relies on queer and Indigenous/decolonizing literature to construct a critique of sexism and patriarchy as components of colonialism[24]. I situate this work within a framework of decolonization because of my own work as a white/settler person to understand the ways in which the land, people, and systems where I live (Canada) experience ongoing colonization. Part of this decolonizing journey is unlearning the normalized hierarchies under colonialism[25]. This work is situated within the context of North America and connected understandings and experiences of colonialism, however, the importation of heterosexism and Euro Western patriarchal practices extends into other parts of the colonized world. In other words, sexuality, gender, and race are sites of regulation within the colonial enterprise that continue to have daily impact in regulated social life. Finley outlines that heterosexism and the structure of the nuclear family as part of a "colonial system of violence"[26]. Oyewumi emphasizes a similar process amongst the

[24] Finley, 2011
[25] Battiste, 2005
[26] Finley, 2011, p. 32

Yoruba in Nigeria where "kings and men have been created from oral traditions which were originally free of gender categories"[27]. Furthermore, she argues "men and women have been invented [under colonialism] as social categories, and history is presented as being dominated by male actors" [28].

Heteropatriarchy "disciplines and individualizes communally held beliefs by internalizing hierarchical gendered relationships and heteronormative attitudes toward sexuality. Colonial systems needs heteropatriarchy to naturalize hierarchies and unequal gender relations"[29]. In other words, heteropatriarchy is the marriage of hetero/sexism and patriarchy a system that reinforces the dominance of straightness and maleness in society. Along with heteronormativity, they are key "logics of colonialism" [30]. Heteronormativity is a system of ordering central to colonialism, propping up heteropatriarchy. Finley points to "purposeful deconstructions of the logics of power" in order to end colonial dominance for Indigenous people [31]. Colonial sexualization, the way sexuality is prescribed and defined by colonialism, constructs Indigenous peoples as "incapable of self-governance without a heteropatriarchal influence"[32]. Finley provides insights into the pervasive nature of oppression that exists within a colonial system. Resistance to colonialism and heteropatriarchy are inherently bound together.

Battiste, Root, and Tompkins urge white educators to face their privilege head-on within a Eurocentric, colonized system [33]. White educators must, Root says, be ever mindful of cultural appropriation in pursuit of decolonizing: "it is equally important for us [white educators] not to retreat from the

[27] Oyewumi, 1998, p. 264
[28] Oyewumi, 1998, p. 264
[29] Finley, 2011, p. 34
[30] Finley, 2011, p. 33
[31] Finley, 2011, p. 34
[32] Finley, 2011, p. 35
[33] Battiste, 2005; Root, 2009; Tompkins, 2002

colonial problem"[34]. Decolonizing, the unlearning of white privilege under colonialism, is messy work because it challenges white/settler people (like me) to excavate our minds, habits, and beliefs so that learned oppressive assumptions can be forged into respectful relationships, while the pain and damage brought on by the collective experience of colonization heals. Decolonizing journeys are deliberate experiences whereby non-Indigenous people undertake a process of unlearning their white privilege and the ways in which their lives and minds have been colonized along with the Canadian landscape. The process of decolonizing for white/settler people is similar, I argue, to a process straight people should undertake to unlearn and/or recognize their heterosexual privilege.

Tompkins emphasizes the need for dominant groups to unlearn their privilege. She points out that oppression is grounded and perpetuated in the privileged life experiences of dominant groups[35]. By critically assessing privilege in their own lives, members of dominant groups (white folks, straight people) take a key step toward understanding the ways that racism, power, and privilege operate in society. Often, white/settler people mistakenly understand their worldview as a universally acknowledged truth; one through which all people view and understand the world. Tompkins suggests a radical overhaul through rigorous self-reflection of Eurocentric epistemologies; to unlearn and relearn the way(s) white settlers and Indigenous people alike understand and see the world. Her argument advocates acknowledging and working towards a proliferation of epistemologies, similar to arguments made by queer theorists. Moving away from ways of knowing and understanding the world that emphasize one, singular set of experiences (those of straight and/or white folks) to the detriment of others (queer and/or Indigenous people) is a key component for people with privilege who are interested in allying themselves with marginalized people.

[34] Root, 2009, p. 108
[35] Tompkins, 2002

Unlearning straight privilege

Like Indigenous scholars who articulate experiences of all people in colonized systems, queer scholars seek to understand sexuality/gender experiences under patriarchy. Colonization and patriarchy, both hegemonic systems of ordering people and their experiences, work together amongst these two theoretical frameworks. Privilege, and its unlearning is an essential component of queer theory and theories of decolonization.

Queerness and queer politics seek to resist social norms and dominant ways of being and knowing. Beyond a framework that seeks acceptance of the queer or generic "celebrations of diversity," queer politics seek to transgress and even rewrite social norms, only to transgress them and rewrite them again in perpetuity, seeking spaces and realities where a multiplicity of ever-changing norms exist. Such transgression and upending of norms, however, are rarely evident or experienced in educational settings. Straightness, and therefore queerness, is highly regulated in school life most often through homophobic acts and heterosexist expectations within a heteronormative framework. Freitag identifies that movement towards the creation of safe spaces for queer students may also increase safety for straight ones and argues that "schools should be queered, and not only with exclusively queer-identified subjects" in mind [36].

Walton focuses on strategies to equip K – 12 teachers and administrators with the tools they need to adequately address homophobic bullying in schools. The three concepts that Walton outlines as significant to this process are homophobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity or *H-cubed*[37]. Identifying and naming these phenomena can help educators understand the broader sociological forces at work within school-based bullying and address it, instead of shying away for fear of

[36] Freitag, 2013, p. 125
[37] Walton, 2006

conversations about sex with teens, particularly the specter of gay sex. As Walton points out, understanding heterosexism and recognizing heteronormative assumptions are the key to addressing harassment in schools that arises within the matrix of sexuality and gender. While sexuality is a legitimate terrain of discussion in age-appropriate ways, addressing homophobic bullying is, in fact, not tantamount to teachers having conversations with students about sex or sexual activity, a reason often claimed for failure to address homophobic harassment[38]. Despite efforts of LGBTQ activists and their allies in schools, straightness maintains its dominance. Addressing heteronormativity and heterosexism by highlighting straight privilege (a by-product of these more covert forms of homophobia) is crucial in order to upend the system of gender/sexuality dominance in schools.

Regulating straightness in schools

Social construction and regulation within schools often mirrors the norms, values, and goals of broader society, but schools are also unique cultural settings in and of themselves[39]. They are not completely autonomous outside of the influence of broader society, meaning government, family influence, and economic forces, but schools are also not completely dependent, having some autonomy in shaping school culture and the broader culture in which the school is situated. Jones identifies that schools may, in fact, constitute the "Borderlands" in society; a place where "two or more cultures edge each other"[40]. As I discuss above, heteronormativity, heterosexism, and homophobia are typically a highly salient part of school life[41]. Schools as institutions and in many cases, their staff and

[38] EGALE, 2011; GLSEN, 2011
[39] Wotherspoon, 2004
[40] Jones, 1999, p. 299
[41] Eyre, 1993; Nicholls, 2013; O'Conor, 1995; Walton, 2006

students, construct and regulate heteronormative ideals[42]. Despite good intentions straight teacher allies can also participate (consciously or unconsciously) in these oppressive dynamics. These good intentions can, Jones identifies, be met with resistance by marginalized students[43].

Explicitly oppressive and regulatory policies prohibiting homosexuality and reinforcing conventional gender norms no longer exist in most schools, as they did historically[44]. Despite this, implicit and often explicit forms of homophobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity continue to be salient and prevalent forces in schools[45]. In some cases, they may be more covert, but in other ways, such as school-based violence and bullying, their effects are still quite overt. Research shows that the vast majority of schools in Canada are dominated by *unsafe* spaces and experiences for LGBTQ youth who continue to experience higher rates than their straight counterparts of suicide, depression, isolation, harassment and bullying, and self-harm[46]. These data, collected from schools across the country, are troubling for educators who support equity initiatives for LGBTQ students because it calls into question the efficacy of the policies and practices in place in Ontario (and Canadian) schools. O'Conor articulates that heterosexism "is a salient force in schools because curricula continue to reflect heterosexist assumptions, homophobic slurs are commonplace, and the school system has failed to support lesbian and gay students and teachers"[47].

Yet, while heterosexism remains alive and well in schools, Rasmussen, Rofes, and Talburt point out that "liberal understandings of complex matters, such as identity, tolerance,

[42] EGALE, 2011; GLSEN, 2011
[43] Jones, 1999, p. 300
[44] Blount and Anahita, 2004
[45] EGALE, 2011; GLSEN, 2011
[46] EGALE, 2011
[47] O'Conor, 1995, p. 274.

safety, and equity" dominate discourse about youth and sexuality in schools[48]. In other words, liberal understandings miss the obvious, which is that social norms based on such understandings dictate that so-called "good" young people are, more often than not, presumed straight until they disclose otherwise, or until their gender performance is perceived as transgressive. This perspective doubly stigmatizes LGBTQ youth (and those perceived as such) because they are perceived as declaring themselves anti-normative, both queer and sexual, instead of the normalized expectation that, especially straight girls/women should be straight and asexual or sexually inexperienced and timid. While the authors support the role of allies and caution that they can lead to a desexualization and normalization that "can drive out the 'queerest of the queers'"[49]. Further effects of such normalization include the possibility of entrenching genders and sexualities as static, fixed identities, the very enterprise queer politics is or *should be* trying to resist. They argue that queer youth in America have been, and continue to be, largely excluded from broader societal conversations about queer issues. Anti-homophobia efforts are well intentioned in their naming of, and resistance against, homophobia, but can be limited in their effectiveness because they operate within the same political discourse. Because of this shared paradigm, anti-homophobia efforts are ineffective because they fail to proactively shift discourse. Instead, they are reactionary[50]. Elsewhere, Rofes argues that much of the work of Gay/Straight Alliances (the primary host of anti-homophobia work in schools) focuses on the trope of LGBTQ youth as target-martyr-victim even if in the form of resisting them[51]. While these tropes may be invoked with good intentions, they fail to transcend the traditional binary of sexual identity wherein straights are assigned subjectivity and queer youth remain objectified and victimized. To put it another way, anti-

[48] Rasmussen, Rofes and Talburt, 2004, p. 2
[49] Rasmussen, Rofes and Talburt, 2004, p. 5
[50] Rasmussen, 2004; Rasmussen, Rofes and Talburt, 2004
[51] Rofes, 2004

homophobia efforts are necessary but insufficient in the work of shaping cultures in schools that are inclusive and supportive, normatively, of LGBTQ identities, relationships, and families. Malmquist, Gustavson and Schmitt also highlight the role that straight people can play in queer experiences in school[52]. Straight allies are poised to help others collectively unlearn their privilege, but claiming an ally identity does not ensure that greater equity will become a reality in schools.

GSAs and safe spaces: Is anti-homophobia enough?

A recent study that explores the role of GSAs in Ontario (Canada) schools and the role of advisors found 73% of GSA advisors in this study were female, the majority of whom are also straight. 75 % identified as activists, engaging in days of action that did a majority of advocacy for LGBTQ students[53]. Membership in GSAs is predominantly female, with advisors identifying that the majority of participants are straight, something that is reiterated in Goldstein and Davis' [54] comprehensive study of heterosexual allies on a college campus. The allies in their study are a much more homogeneous group in comparison to the diverse population on the rest of the campus. The majority of allies in this study are, like me, "white, female, politically liberal, and religiously inactive social science and humanities majors"[55]. Most joined the alliance because of friends/family, a commitment to human rights issues, and wanting to know more about LGBTQ people. The authors claim that motivations to become an ally are rooted in the social justice values of would-be allies. Interestingly, their study found that despite commitments to social justice, there was considerable fear amongst the straight ally participants' of being perceived as LGBTQ. While straight allies were eager to learn

[52] Malmquist, Gustavson and Schmitt, 2013
[53] Kitchen and Bellini, 2013, p. 21
[54] Goldstein and Davis, 2010
[55] Goldstein and Davis, 2010, p. 489

more and participate in events where they would be identified as political and social allies with LGBTQ people, their discomfort with being labeled LGBTQ suggest a lack of self-awareness and perhaps even unchecked latent homophobia. This fear of being perceived LGBTQ seems to carry some insidious and unchecked prejudice. Perhaps it stems from the experience of relative safety that comes from the social privilege straight people experience. Is it acceptable and good to be a friend to LGBTQ people, but not to be perceived as such by others? This is one of the perils of unexamined straight privilege. One possible implication this fear may have is on the nature of the leadership straight teacher allies provide to GSAs or other equity groups. Straight teachers who fear being perceived as LGBTQ may not lead in a way that celebrates queerness and difference.

Challenging heterosexism and heteronormativity

Ngo[56] explores interventions and awareness raising campaigns in an American high school. Ngo challenges work that attempts to address the oppression of LGBTQ youth in schools and problematize impact it is having. The study found that despite interventions to promote inclusion of LGBTQ youth; homophobic, heterosexist, and heteronormativity are often reinscribed. In an effort to retell or re-present LGBTQ youth and their identities as unique and different, they are still being compared to a norm. Students in the school, they report as often being "hassled because they *look* gay, for saying the wrong things, for wearing the wrong clothes, or for wearing their clothes the wrong way"[57]. Notably, despite ideas about their own proactivity, staff often shied away from addressing homophobia and heterosexism in their curriculum. Like Kumashiro, Ngo indicates that teachers often reinscribe

[56] Ngo, 2003
[57] Ngo, 2003, p. 118

heteronormativity in their complicity[58]. The author suggests that to authentically challenge homophobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity in school settings requires a commitment from staff to "creative and innovative ways of teaching" and to "transform conventional discourses" that inform the ways that people think about the world around them[59]. Similarly, Griffin and Ouellett contend that "although GSAs can play a vital role in making schools safer and more inclusive places for all students, GSAs are only part of the bigger picture"[60]. The authors call for broader institutional and policy changes because as "individual students and staff come and go. Without a change through a school's organizational setting, the gains of one year may be lost"[61]. Critical to the process of changing the over-arching school setting is the support of the principal/administrator. Often the pressure to shift school culture comes from a dedicated group of students and teacher allies, but a larger scale shift in school culture is required. An administrator may have greater longevity and certainly more influence in terms of policy development to ensure longer-term, macro shifts in school culture.

If *queering* school culture[62], rather than implementing anti-homophobia efforts, is the "what" of working against heterosexual privilege and heteronormativity in schools, another important question arises: Who is the "who"? In other words, who are the people who lead or guide the process? For Short[63], this should include people outside of the school system. Often, the leaders of social change in schools are students and staff. Many LGBTQ youth and adults work towards greater equity in schools as part of GSAs, on administrative or policy-developing

[58] Kumashiro, 2000; Ngo, 2003
[59] Ngo, 2003, p. 123
[60] Griffin and Ouellett, 2002, p. 2.
[61] Griffin and Ouellett, 2002, p. 2.
[62] Goldstein, Russell and Daley, 2007
[63] Short, 2013

committees[64]. There are also many straight-identified staff and student allies who participate in GSAs[65]. While the efforts of straight teachers as queer advocates yield benefits, especially for GSA members, our (straight peoples') participation is not entirely unproblematic.

When I problematize such legitimacy, I do not mean to suggest that allies are not important in the work of shaping schools into more equitable spaces for LGBTQ students. On the contrary, allies are important figures in struggles to end oppression, including the challenging and difficult personal journey for allies themselves as they unpack their privilege alongside persons more marginalized. Freire cautions allies of liberation movements against positioning themselves as "executors of the transformation"[66]. Put differently, allies can forget that they carry privilege and inadvertently reassert their dominance while trying to work against oppressive mechanisms. *Unlearning* oppressor culture is essential for allies. It is also work that is never total or complete. It is, and should be, an ongoing process requiring responsiveness and adaptability. Freire's emphasis on rigorous self-reflection and unlearning is an essential component for privileged persons who choose work against oppressive mechanisms in schools and society. I turn now to what I believe is a viable stance and position for straight allies to most effectively leverage their privilege for greater equity in school environments.

Radical heterosexuality

Another way for allies to demonstrate the ways they have and are unlearning oppressor culture is in the disposition or stance

[64] Griffin and Ouellett, 2002; Kitchen and Bellini, 2013; Ngo, 2003; Schneidewind and Cathers, 2003
[65] EGALE, 2001; Eichler, 2010; GLSEN, 2011; Kitchen and Bellini, 2013; LaPointe, 2015; Russell, 2011
[66] Freire, 1968/2011, p. 60

they take in doing ally work. Thomas conceptualizes the possibilities for straight allies to work productively and respectfully on *queering* projects. Challenges for straight allies, he says, are more about privilege than social practices: "less heterosexuality, than heteronormativity"[67]. He argues that despite being perceived as monolithic and unchanging, heterosexuality is "constantly set about trying to prove itself, assert itself, insist on itself"[68]. It is a series of repetitive performances that can lead to reified oppression on the part of well-intentioned straight allies. Thomas suggests that *radical heterosexuality* or "self-conscious straightness" acknowledges queerness within its identification, while also keeping privilege ripe for rigorous self-reflection for straight people[69]. "Straightness with a twist" (as Thomas refers to it) works to "mitigate, or militate against those institutional, compulsory ideals, those compulsory performances"[70]. Thomas' construction of a self-reflective radical heterosexual constitutes a thoughtful and powerful ally for change, one who engages in respectful praxis and dialogue without becoming a co-opter of a social movement. It is helpful to conceive of the straight ally, rooted in the reality of straight privilege. Acknowledging straight privilege does not reify that privilege and uphold heteronormativity, nor does it ignore the unearned benefits ally people often fail to recognize in their lived experiences. Instead, it allows radical heterosexuals the opportunity to disassociate themselves with the oppressive mechanisms of heteronormativity, heterosexism, and homophobia.

Radical heterosexuality is an important stance for straight allies because it emphasizes the intention that is (or should be) part of being a respectful ally. It involves going against the grain of the normalized and constantly reinforced forms of straight sexuality

[67] Thomas, 2000, p. 17
[68] Thomas, 2000, p. 28
[69] Thomas, 2000, p. 30
[70] Thomas, 2000, p. 31

in classrooms, families, and social life[71]. Heterosexuality becomes radical when straight people acknowledge the unearned privilege afforded to them in a heteropatriarchy. For straight people to resist heteronormativity, heterosexism, and homophobia in schools and their lives from a stance of humility and respect is indeed a radical act. One of the ways radical heterosexuals can demonstrate their allyship and activism is rooted in humility is to listen to the people with whom they are aligned, to talk about (and experience) stumbling and fumbling in their allyship, and when they do lead and speak to tell (and learn from) their bad stories, not only the good ones[72].

Telling uncomfortable stories

Drawing upon personal experiences, and my situatedness in the content, I challenge those undertaking anti-homophobia initiatives to look at more covert forms of oppression rooted in heterosexism and heteronormativity in schools. Reaching out to critical race theory and Indigenous decolonizing perspectives to inform radical heterosexuality, I highlight the importance of understanding the role that privilege plays in sweeping oppression under the rug. Privilege and the experiences of the privileged often determine social norms and can be used as a level against oppression or a mode of ignoring injustice. Straight teachers that seek to leverage their privilege in order to alleviate the oppressive experiences of their students need to start with themselves and the systemic advantages they experience. In order to address gender and sexuality-based marginalization and oppression in schools, educators must seek out initiatives that push the boundaries of anti-homophobia education. Resisting homophobia is a good start, but equity measures should address straight privilege (heterosexism) and the normalizing of straight experiences (heteronormativity) in order to ensure safe and healthy school environments particularly for

[71] Bryson and de Castell, 1993
[72] Margaret, 2010

LGBTQ youth. Mitigating destructive outcomes resultant from homophobia in schools would improve daily life for all students, particularly those who identify as or are perceived as LGBTQ. Educators guided by a queer pedagogy can also learn from the critique of colonial, white privilege elucidated by Indigenous scholars. In fact, many scholars[73] articulate queer Indigenous critiques which focus on the way that heterosexism and heteronormativity was constructed and reinforced by Euro Western colonialism. Significantly, queer theory and Indigenous decolonizing theories emphasize the importance of analyzing privilege and its normalizing effect amongst the dominant group (straight and white).

Three years have passed since *The Great Twitter Debacle of 2013*, a time when my allyship could have been characterized as brash, overconfident, and riddled with unchecked privilege. Too much confidence in allies now makes me nervous and uncomfortable because I fear the ways in which their privilege maybe co-opting the efforts of those with whom they seek to align themselves. My ally identity (and the actions I take) now means more listening and reflecting before speaking, working to ensure space for marginalized voices, not simply claiming space for my own. I try to participate in activities organized by LGBTQ people, instead of organizing them myself. In social activism, I often follow instead of lead. Much of this is uncomfortable for me, it often feels inadequate. The ability or desire to avoid discomfort, I think, is rooted in my privilege. I do not ignore oppression when I see or hear it. I use my privilege to start critical conversations about homophobia, heterosexism, and heteronormativity in classrooms and in the community. I no longer present my voice (filled with privilege and good intentions) as a definitive authority on LGBTQ activism. I am frequently asked to give public lectures and workshops about homophobia in schools where I identify my ally position in order to acknowledge the privilege of my social

[73] Driskill et al., 2011; Finley, 2011; Morgensen, 2011

location. I frequently tell my story of struggling and failing as an ally: *The Great Twitter Debacle of 2013*. For me this story represents a cautionary tale of privilege run amok and the learning that can emerge from acknowledging and admitting those transgressions. My current ally identity is rooted in an invitation to learn, to challenge oppression, and to hold people with privilege (including myself) to account.

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Gay as classroom practice: A study on sexuality in a secondary language classroom

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In this study conceptions of sexuality in classroom praxis are investigated. Sexuality and education is a growing field of research, in Sweden as well as internationally[1], something which has been recently represented also in Confero[2], not least in the contributions in the special issue "Queering School, Queers in School"[3]. In the introduction to an anthology on gender, sexuality and education, Carlson and Meyer[4] point out that school, as an institution, plays an important role in society when it comes to regulating gender and sexuality since school is a producer of differences in terms of "separable binary oppositions" [5] such as man-woman and straight-gay, that are easily understood within the dominating culture and where one in each couple is usually more highly valued than the other. Carlson and Meyer further assert that

[1] See e.g. Ullman and Ferfolja, 2015; Martinsson and Reimers, 2010, 2014; Pascoe, 2007/2012; Rasmussen, 2006.
[2] See e.g. Ringrose and Rawlings, 2015.
[3] Malmquist, Gustavson and Schmitt, eds., 2013.
[4] Carlson and Meyer, 2014.
[5] Carlson and Meyer, 2014, p. 1.

school as an institution, in this way, produces gender and sexuality[6]. One example of this is presented by Dalley and Campbell[7], who in their study of pupil interaction in high school conclude that the male pupils produce heterosexuality, whether actual or pretended, as normal by referencing homosexuality as abnormal. Our reading of these studies indicates that within both formal and informal schooling, meaning and knowledge is produced through everyday practices in which conceptions of gender and sexuality are crucial. In these practices, heterosexuality holds a position as taken-for-granted and normative[8].

The field, in general, gives important insights on how gender and sexuality influence pupils' conditions and choices as well as the norms re/producing classroom praxis. Also the related area of "queer education research" includes a broad set of angles and interests[9] even though, as Malmquist, Gustavson, and Schmitt note, many studies in resent years have put particular focus on schools being unsafe for non-straight pupils.

This study answers to a growing call for research analyzing subjectivity within cis-normative school contexts[10]. It aims at analyzing the production of pupil subjectivity in relation to sexuality in the context of a specific language instruction context. Moreover, this article aims at highlighting the role of sexuality in the context of language instruction specifically, as opposed to education in general. Although sexuality and education in a broader sense is a growing field of research, the specificities of sexuality in the specific context of language instruction practice has not been studied to a large extent[11]. Given the centrality of language in the production of meaning and knowledge, the context of language instruction offers an interesting site for the in-

[6] Carlson and Meyer, 2014.
[7] Dalley and Campbell, 2006.
[8] See e.g. Kehily, 2002; Youdell, 2006; Bromseth and Wildow, 2007.
[9] Malmquist, Gustavson and Schmitt, 2013, p. 6.
[10] See e.g. Malmquist, Gustavson and Schmitt, 2013, p. 6.
[11] Nelson, 2006.

vestigation of subjectivation and sexuality within the context of instruction. Learning a new language, or developing your first language, offers opportunities to learn new words and concepts that help you understand, make sense and communicate in ways not yet accessible to you[12]. Hence, learning a new language, or developing your first language, gives opportunities to conceptualize and express gender and sexuality in sometimes new, or at least other, ways, thus making it a venue interesting to investigate from the perspective of production of subjectivity and normativity. There is an intriguing tension between the prominent focus of language instruction on linguistic proficiency[13] in relation to the inherence of production of meaning in language, i.e. the function of language to be simultaneously representative and constitutive of that which it signifies[14]. This means that what and how we say or write things is interconnected to the conceptual meaning making of that, which is being said or written.

Some of the studies that have been conducted within the area of language education and sexuality have focused on issues of representation in textbooks. Nelson concludes that we seem to have collectively imagined the classrooms as a "monosexual community of interlocutors"[15], where classroom cohorts seem to have been thought of as domains for straight people. Representation in textbooks has been stressed as important for the production of legitimate speakers[16] and, hence, representation in relation to sexuality in teaching materials can be emphasized as significant in the production of heteronormativity in school. Nelson stresses that the instructional situation needs to be thought of as multi-sexual and that it needs to be acknowledged "that sociosexual meanings infuse language, social interactions,

[12] Tornberg, 2000; Pavlenko, 2004.
[13] Tornberg, 2000.
[14] Butler, 1993/2011, p. 6.
[15] Nelson, 2006, p. 1.
[16] Amizova and Johnston, 2012.

and public discourse"[17]. Both Liddicoat[18] and Nelson[19] have shown that heteronormative discourses in the language classroom can have limiting effects for the possibilities of pupils who do not identify as heterosexual to express themselves and participate in the classroom activities. Furthermore, Godley[20] has shown that classroom behavior in language education can be connected to the production of sexuality.

The questions asked within this area of research are related to how gender and sexuality affect the processes of learning a language, and, how learning a language affects the processes of producing gender and sexuality. This article deals directly with these questions. The general aim is to analyze and discuss the production of sexual pupil subjectivity. More specifically, focus is on how sexual pupil subjectivity is produced as an effect of the particular discursive practices of interaction (among pupils and teachers) around a gay male couple featuring as the main characters in a pupil skit presented in class. This pupil skit is part of a pupil speaking assignment in a grade 8 English class[21] in a Swedish public school. We ask questions about how male sexuality is conceptualized as part of the production of sexual pupil subjectivity as well as how language instruction is integrated and function within this process. We also ask how the pupils' use of humor in the classroom may contribute to the orientation of the production of subjectivity and how the genre of humor is used in this particular instance of language instruction.

Theoretical framework and method

In the analysis we look at the meaning-making aspects of language, the discursive production of sexuality and subjectivity, and the interconnectedness of these in the pupil and teacher inte-

[17] Nelson, 2006, p. 4.
[18] Liddicoat, 2009.
[19] Nelson, 2010.
[20] Godley, 2006.
[21] The pupils were between 14-15 years old.

raction within a specific language instruction context. Our theoretical starting-point is that language is representative and productive of meaning[22], and that it, conceptually, encompasses both speech and actions. Meaning is seen as created through discourse, and hence, language practices will be referred to as discursive practices. In line with Howarth and Laclau and Mouffe, we also suggest that "all objects are objects of discourse"[23] and that nothing is meaningful outside of discourse[24]. In this sense, practices become meaningful when they repeat something that already exists. For instance, Kulick and Cameron suggest that "The meaningful expression of desire depends on the existence of codes which are quotable, iterable."[25], illustrating how meaningfulness of practices depends on that which already circulates in "social life"[26]. In other words, things become understandable through discursive practices.

Butler argues that the performative act is where the discursive production happens[27]. Hence, Butler[28] is able to describe how the subject emerges performatively as recognizable through discursive practices. More specifically, she states that the body "… becomes accessible on the occasion of an address, a call, an interpellation that does not "discover" the body, but constitutes it fundamentally"[29]. This means that the body is given "social definition", and hence becomes understandable and meaningful, performatively through discourse. Performativity, then, denotes "… the process through which the subject emerges"[30].

[22] Butler, 1993/2011, p. 6.
[23] Howarth, 2000, p. 8.
[24] Laclau and Mouffe, 1985/2001, p. 107.
[25] Cameron and Kulick, 2003, p. 127.
[26] Ibid.
[27] Butler, 1993/2011, p. 70.
[28] Butler, 1993/2011; 1997; 2009.
[29] Butler, 1997, p. 5.
[30] Kulick, 2006, p. 286.

In order to make sense of the "discursive subjectification"[31] in the classroom we also draw on Butler's thinking about the emergence of the subject through processes of "exclusion and abjection"[32] in which "… identification takes place through a repudiation which produces a domain of abjection, a repudiation without which the subject cannot emerge."[33]. This means that the analysis takes into consideration that which is repudiated and produced as "abject" in relation to that which is repeatedly and smoothly invoked in the pupil and teacher interaction. This is because these are regarded to be simultaneous processes in the production of subjectivity. Following this, it is crucial to analyze what is said and enacted against what is not said and enacted[34].

As means of analyzing the empirical data we draw on this understanding of the discursive production of meaning and subjectivity and the function of performativity. However, in order to be able to problematize and discuss sexuality in relation to the processes that bring about intelligible pupil subjectivity and constitute "socially viable beings"[35] we also make use of Butler's thinking about gender and gender norms. We see gender as produced through discourse, i.e. gender is done, and the relationship between sex, gender and desire we deploy is explained by the "heterosexual matrix"[36] which denotes a "… grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized."[37]. In this model, that point to the discursive doing of hegemonic heterosexuality, two stable sexes (male and female) are assumed and they become intelligible only if they are articulated correctly through two stable genders (masculine

[31] Ringrose and Rawlings, 2015, p. 88.
[32] Butler, 1993/2011, p. xiii.
[33] Ibid.
[34] Kulick, 2003/2006, p. 286.
[35] Butler, 2004, p. 2.
[36] Butler, 1990/1999, p. 194.
[37] Ibid.

and feminine) and then engage in heterosexual practice[38]. Thus, gender and sexuality are results of discursive practices and femininity and masculinity are crucial in the emergence of "culturally viable sexual subjects"[39].

Finally, we also use Kulick's[40] accounts of what does and does not produce humor in terms of gender and sexuality. Kulick's main point is that as long as masculinity is seen as unproblematic and natural, masculinity itself is not seen as funny. Femininity, on the other hand, is taken to require constant "doing" and effort to accomplish and is, therefore, also easy to ridicule. Hence, humor is a way to both express, deal with and value gender and sexual "failure". Kulick[41] concludes that it is the accomplishment of femininity that produces humor, as well as the failure of "natural" masculinity.

To sum up the theoretical underpinnings of this study, language instruction in school is regarded as embedded in, and producing, hegemonic meaning making discourses of e.g. gender and sexuality. Our analyses and discussion make use of this in order to discuss the production of sexual pupil subjectivity within discursive practices in the pupil and teacher interaction. More specifically, these theoretical aspects are used in order to examine how the use of a male gay couple as the main characters in a pupil play works to produce sexual pupil subjectivity in different respects, and how the genre of humor works to produce male homosexuality a feasible pedagogical tool. The concepts of performativity also help us deal analytically with the fact that a substantial part of the course of event at hand is an actual "on stage" performance in shape of a pupil play performed in the classroom.

[38] Ibid.
[39] Butler, 1993/2011, p. 70.
[40] Kulick, 2010.
[41] Ibid.

Producing data

The data analyzed in this study was produced by using classroom observations in a grade 8 English class in a public secondary school in Sweden[42]. The data consists of field notes of observed pupil and teacher interaction and activity in the classroom. An excerpt from one particular instance of interaction from one lesson has been chosen for this article to serve as an example of how language practices generate subjectivity. This selection was made since we see it as an example that reflects "recurrent and enduring discursive practices"[43]. In other words, the example was chosen because it reflects, theoretically and empirically, the discursive production of normative heterosexuality in school, as we discussed in the introduction. The selection of this specific instance of interaction to analyze was thus theoretically and methodologically driven because the example lends itself so well to the analysis of the production of sexual pupil subjectivity. As we see it, the example illustrated and problematized in this article offers an opportunity for in-depth analyses of "subjectivation-in-practice"[44] and we regard it as a valuable example both of the discursive production of subjectivity itself and of the way an analysis of such production can be undertaken.

[42] This article is based on empirical data from a bigger (PhD) study that investigates the significance of socio-sexual aspects in language education. For the bigger study, a total of 31 classroom observations were carried out during a period of four consecutive months (in 2012) in two different groups of 8th graders (14-15 years old) during a selection of their Swedish and English classes. The two groups were located in two different public secondary schools in two different districts in a large city in Sweden. Each class had one English teacher and one Swedish teacher respectively. The observations were carried out by first author, explaining why reference to one person is used in the excerpts from the field notes below. During the observations first author most often sat at the back of the classroom (but sometimes she sat with smaller groups of pupils when group activities were undertaken), observing and taking notes, interacting sporadically with the teachers and pupils.

[43] Youdell, 2006, p. 70.

[44] Youdell, 2006, p. 70.

We use discourse analysis in order to analyze the empirical data. Howarth state that "Discourse analysis refers to the process of analyzing signifying practices as discursive forms."[45], a wide definition that we subscribe to. Methodologically speaking, the discourse analytical perspective stresses that the theoretical underpinnings of a study frame the starting-point for the entire research process[46], including the formulation of the problem, the conducting of the observations, the primary sorting out of themes for further analysis, the analysis itself, and, in the end, the conclusions drawn. In a broad sense, the aim of this type of analysis is to destabilize that which is taken-for-granted[47]. More specifically, the aim of this analysis is to make visible and problematize a specific "subjectivation-in-practice"[48], which "… involves the detailed unpicking of the minutiae of discursive practices"[49]. This means that the selection of the example itself, and the way it is represented in the text as an excerpt from first author's field notes, needs to be regarded as a part of the analytical construct.

The analysis was undertaken in multiple steps, of which the observations and writing of field notes were a great part. Having selected this example, the analysis was conducted by a theoretical deconstruction of the activity in the excerpt. Firstly, language practices were singled out, and their discursive potential was rudimentary unpicked in terms of gender and sexuality performativity. Secondly, we looked more deeply into the way subjectivity was produced through explicit processes of abjection in the discursive practices. Thirdly, aspects of humor were weighed in, in order to analyze its meaning making effects and function in the production of sexual pupil subjectivity. This micro-level analysis of language practices in the classroom was also put in the context of discourses of language instructional practice in

[45] Howarth, 2000, p. 10
[46] Bolander and Fejes, 2015, p. 93; Youdell, 2006, p. 68.
[47] Bolander and Fejes, 2015, p. 95.
[48] Youdell, 2006, p. 70.
[49] Ibid.

order to discuss the educational implications of the discursive doing of male sexual pupil subjectivity.

The criteria for selection of participating classes in the bigger study[50] were primarily ethically and theoretically founded. The object of study calls for a research design that is highly sensitive to ethical dimensions of the research process. For example, trying to secure anonymity as far as possible was prioritized. Therefore, in the bigger study, the two groups are represented as one following Sikes[51], and the names of people and schools are pseudonyms. The choice was made to rely solely on field notes as data production method, as this would minimize the risk of recording e.g. sensitive instances of harassment, or any types of personal records regarding individual pupils' or teachers' expressions of their sexual identity. Due to the methodological aspects of this study and the character of the observations, ethical considerations strongly influenced the approach first author had as an observer in the classroom. During the observations Simonsson only sporadically took an active part in the conversations, and, more importantly from a methodological perspective, she did not ask questions explicitly mentioning sexuality. Primarily, the reason for this was a fear, informed by Simonsson's own experience of working as a secondary teacher, of spurring explicit harassment or implicit heterosexism in the classroom. To her experience, these were fairly common pupil responses when sexuality was made a conversation topic in school. In the information sheet to the participants, the study was framed to focus on "gender, relationships and basic values in language education" (translation from Swedish original). These three concepts were chosen to conceptualize gender and sexuality without explicitly using the possibly value-laden word "sexuality" which, following the reasoning above, by its presence in the text alone was believed to carry with it a risk to cause unwanted reactions among the pupils.

[50] Described in detail in a footnote above.
[51] Sikes, 2010.

Examining the production of subjectivity and normativity in this study meant, to a large extent, trying to deconstruct that which was taken-for-granted, i.e. the "ordinary" and therefore "invisible" and unnoticed[52]. The analytical interpretations of possible subjectivity and normativity production in this article may therefore not be shared by the pupils or teachers themselves. Their accounts of what was going on would be another type of data, answering other types of questions. For reasons presented above classroom observations were chosen as a suitable method for undertaking the study, pursuing depth and richness in theoretically underpinned researcher accounts of the classroom practice. Given the in-depth character of the analysis a transcribed verbatim of, for instance, a video recording may have generated other analytical paths or opportunities than those that came present by "only" using field notes. However, given the perception of knowledge pursued in this study, the aim was primarily to create opportunities for new and meaningful ways of theorizing[53] around the practices illustrated rather than pursuing any futile attempt of giving a "neutral" account of what "really" happened, which would be an undertaking in stark contrast to the epistemological starting points of this study.

Findings

The analysis deals with one particular instance of pupil and teacher interaction which has been analyzed closely in order to problematize and discuss how sexual pupil subjectivity is produced discursively through language practices. The example taken, where the talk and staging of "gay" appear, is within a particular scope of a classroom drama assignment, where *male* homosexuality is explicitly negotiated and contested. Below we use empirically grounded themes to structure the analysis and discuss the production of subjectivity and normativity within

[52] Ripley, Anderson, McCormack and Rockett, 2012.
[53] Howarth, 2000.

this specific classroom practice: 1. The Comedy Producer: What's so funny about a gay male couple?, 2. "No Homo, man!": Producing straight subjectivity through repudiation, and, 3. The Sexless Classroom: Sexuality as interaction facilitator and resistance.

1. The Comedy Producer: What's so funny about a gay male couple?

During one English lesson the pupils were given the assignment to write and then enact a "mini play" in front of the class. The lesson started off by the pupils having to sit quietly and take a homework test in which they were supposed to write a summary of a chapter from their textbook, a chapter which had been their homework for this particular day. The text was called "The skin" and was, put shortly, an explanatory text about different aspects about the skin, e.g. that it is an organ, that you can decorate it with tattoos, etc. Allotted time for this writing task was about twenty minutes, but as the pupils gradually handed in their texts, they were grouped together by the teacher and given instructions for what to do next, namely write and enact a mini play, loosely based on or inspired by the textbook chapter "The skin". The pupils were not supposed to hand in any manuscripts, but instead the focus was on their presentation of the mini plays. Group after group quietly left the room and sat down, both in the hallway and in the classroom, to work on their plays. In the end, most of the groups had about twenty minutes at their hand to complete the task before it was time to act it out "on stage" in front of the class.

The following is an excerpt from the field notes, written down as Simonsson sat at the back of the classroom watching the different groups presenting their plays. The groups of pupils took turns acting out their mini plays at the front of the classroom with the entire class, their English teacher and the researcher, as their audience. The following field notes were made by first author:

The different groups are now presenting their plays. The first group presents what seems like a commercial for a skin cream. They do not seem to have any characters, but instead they read different sections of a text they have prepared. The second group then presents a fairytale and one of the girls reads the story to the class while the other pupils in the group act out what she reads. The fairytale begins with:
Once upon a time there was a girl and a boy who wanted tattoos (the girl reads). Then two of the pupils in the group get fake tattoos and the play is over.
Group three then enters the "stage". The group consists of three boys and one girl. Before they start acting out their play, they tell the class to imagine that the scene is now a tattoo studio. Then the play begins. Two of the boys walk up to a third boy who asks them in English: *What would you like?*
The first boy replies in English: *A dragon. And my man wants to have a tatoo.*
Immediately upon this reply some of the pupils in class react (verbally). One boy calls out: *No homo, right*. Then he and a few others start to laugh, and yet another boy calls out encouragingly, in my interpretation, and laughing: *A kiss*!
The girl in the group then shows a picture of a dragon that she has drawn on the white board, and asks if that will do. The first boy confirms that a dragon like that will do. He then sits down on a chair and the third boy starts to pretend tattoo him on his arm. The boy getting a fake tattoo makes a grimace that signals pain and, at the same time, his man (husband), the second boy, stands closely behind him, holding his hand tight.
Many of the pupils in the class are laughing out loud now, and so is the teacher. I perceive the atmosphere in the classroom to be jovial.
The boy getting a tattoo now starts, with his free hand, to caress his man (husband) on his stomach and says whining: *Oh, baby*. Again with a grimace signaling pain.
Upon this, the classroom laughter intensifies, and amidst the laughter one of the pupils says in a, in my interpretation, annoyed and challenging tone: *Carl, seriously!* (comment made in Swedish: *Carl, seriöst!*)
It is now the man's (the second boy's) turn to get a tattoo, and the first and the second boy on stage change positions with each other. While the second boy now gets a fake tattoo on his arm, he and the first boy hold hands and he caresses the first boy on his stomach.
Most people in the class are now laughing hysterically at the scene. The play ends seconds later and loud applauds break out. The teacher says laughingly and in a loud voice as if trying to

> make herself heard above the noise of the applauds: *Good acting skills!* She then continues laughing.
> Through the noise of the applauds and laughter I hear one of the boys in the class yell out loud: *No homo, man!*
> The fourth group then enters the "stage" and presents their play which also takes place at a tattoo studio. One of the girls says that she wants a flower on her arm. Another girl takes out a black whiteboard felt pen and starts drawing on the first girl's arm. She asks if she wants *A big blac*k?, which the first girl confirms that she does. Upon this reply she starts laughing and so do the rest of the class and the teacher. One of the boys in the class shouts out *Black mamba*. Seconds later the first girl rises up and shows her tattoo to the rest of the class. On her arm there is a sketch of a large black penis. Upon seeing this, the pupils in the class are nearly laughing their heads off, but I notice that the teacher now looks a little bit perplexed.
> A few minutes later, after the teacher has summed up today's lesson and given the remaining groups instructions to present their plays the next time since there was not enough time for all groups to present today, the class is over. The teacher then comes up to me with a smiling face, saying:
> *That was fun, right? I thought we needed to lighten things up a little bit.*

In order to create a deeper understanding of the situation presented in the excerpt above we suggest that this can be seen as part of a discursive "doing" that produces subjectivity and normativity in the classroom. The fact that a "fictive" play is central to the pupil activity here is an interesting feature of the interaction taking place. The fictive feature of some of the pupil interaction does not rid it from its subjectivity and normativity producing effects. On the contrary, this kind of a performance, occurring in an instructional environment such as a classroom, we think needs be seen as a discursive doing with performative effects. However, drama in the classroom differs from drama performed in a theatre in multiple ways. For example, the actors are not professional and the audience is not there voluntarily or in their spare time. Additionally, the assignment to perform is mandatory and the relation between "actors" (pupils), "audience" (pupils and teacher) and "stage" (front part of classroom) is already known and part of the "doing school" discourse. Drama in the classroom is thus part of an already established

classroom discourse and should therefore in this case be seen as part of the discursive doing of language instruction. The point that we want to clarify here is that drama in the classroom cannot analytically be disconnected from the classroom discourse. Instead, this circumstance lends itself well for a multi-leveled analysis of the performative effects of the presentations of these mini plays.

"That was fun, right?" On the inherently funny gay man and humor in the classroom

The performance of the groups in the excerpt above and the atmosphere that was created as the performance of the skits went along could in one sense be described as jovial and easy-going. The pupils in group three and four seemed to thrive up on stage in their roles as providers of comedy to the class. Most of the pupils were laughing out loud at multiple occasions and the teacher was laughing out loud as well from her position at the back of the classroom. The pupils up on stage talked in English, and three of the four spontaneous pupil comments they got were in English. In this sense, the classroom activity described can by all means be seen in terms of an example of a classroom pervaded by a relaxed and easy-going atmosphere, created and recreated in and by the pupils' use of humor in their plays.

As is visible in the excerpt, the comedy in the play is a strong feature of the performance. The excerpt shows both that the presence of a gay male couple as the main characters in the skit produces comedy in the classroom, but also simultaneously that the accessibility of the genre of comedy in the classroom discourse actually produces gay men as feasible and easily accessible play-script characters. But why would a gay male couple be particularly suitable play script characters for producing humor? Along the lines of Kulick's reasoning about humor and sexuality, we argue that this classroom situation needs to be seen in relation to a larger heteronormative discourse in which the supposed failure of the unproblematic and "natural" masculinity produces humor alongside with the "achievement of femi-

ninity", whereas masculinity in itself is never taken to be funny[54]. The task is then to investigate how the gay male couple performed by the pupils in group three produces and exhibit "failed" masculinity, which we assert that they do on at least three levels. Firstly, both boys moan and clearly exhibit pain, i.e. they do not take pain "as a man". Secondly, they show love and affection openly. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly, they love another man, i.e. they are gay and hence fail to fulfill the crucial criterion of masculinity to desire women. Hence, the gay male couple on stage offers "a staple of comedy"[55] in their performance of failed masculinity. In their performance, the pupils express the essence of Kulick's reasoning of how "… masculinity only becomes funny when it is seen as failed masculinity, as masculinity that does not manage to embody the understated, self-evident, contained and non-performative quality that characterizes mainstream notions of what a man ought to be"[56]. By all means, this male couple even fails on the performance level; they are play script characters being performed as men on a stage in front of a classroom filled with teenagers.

We also argue that placing a gay male couple in the middle of the play-script action, emphasizing the physical intimacy aspects of this couple's relationship, clearly directs the performance to feature something extraordinary and that the humor is raised from the incongruity between the portrayal of the physically involved gay couple and the permeating heteronormative discourse. In an instructional environment seemingly heavily pervaded by heterosexual default narratives and thereby possibly drained of homosexual representation the occurrence of a gay male couple is likely to produce some kind of response. Our reasoning here follows the idea of the logics of the workings of normalization presented by Ripley et al.,[57] in which the hallmark of that which is not ordinary is that it does not go unno-

[54] Kulick, 2010, p. 75.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Ibid.
[57] Ripley et al., 2012.

ticed. As an example of this we see that the male gay skit characters, portrayed using intimacy and bodily contact as one of the main ways to underscore the trait of character of the men's relationship to each other, did not by any means go unnoticed in this classroom. Rather, it created a "good" atmosphere, laughter and spontaneous outbursts among both pupils and teacher (as it appeared anyway). This also highlights another incongruity within this context. School is a place where sexual practice is usually seen as inappropriate, and drawing on the physical intimacy aspects when portraying the gay male couple the pupils effectively draw on a stereotype about male gays as hyper sexual, thus bringing in a dimension of sex into the classroom discourse. This challenges the notion of school as a venue of platonic relationships and could function as resistance. We assert that the gay male couple in the skit therefore functions both as a producer of comedy and a "jovial" atmosphere, underscored by the teacher's comment at the end of the play, as a producer of normativity around sexuality, and as a means of resistance towards dominating school rules.

At the same time, we suggest that the genre of comedy and the way it facilitates this seemingly jovial classroom atmosphere and locus of pleasurable learning also needs to be underscored as producing opportunities for the pupils to perform a "funny" version of a gay male couple in the middle of the classroom. Comedy and its accessibility to the pupils in the classroom thus make male gay characters available to the pupils as a means of producing comedy in the classroom, because, when acted out, the gay couple adds to the "comic" effects of the play. The genre of comedy thus also makes possible the entrance of male homosexuality into the classroom, in the shape of a stereotype about gay men. In other words, comedy as a classroom genre here facilitates the production of male homosexual subjectivity in the classroom. However, it is not just any subjectivity that is being produced here but instead an account of male homosexuality that draws heavily on a stereotype. As explained above,

Kulick[58] stresses that failed masculinity is often considered fun perhaps since masculinity is often taken to be natural as opposed to performed. Gay men, however, tend to be stereotyped as "sparkingly witty and campy"[59]. Furthermore, Kulick asks why gay men "are stereotyped in the *opposite* way"[60] in relation to the stereotype about lesbians as humorless, which he asserts is a homophobic stereotype. He continues by asking "… why is humor socially distributed in such a way that some groups – gay men, for example, or Jews, or African-Americans, come to be thought of as inherently funny, while others – lesbians, for example, or Germans – are stereotyped as congenitally humorless?"[61]. In light of this, drawing on the culturally viable stereotype about the inherently funny gay man in a classroom skit seems like a sure thing to do for the pupils in order to raise humor and achieve laughter and pleasurable learning.

2. *"No homo, man!": Producing Straight Subjectivity through Repudiation*

The expression "No homo", which nowadays pervades public discourse, originated as a "discourse interjection"[62] in US hip hop lyrics in the 1990s. Since 2011 it is also present in Swedish hip hop lyric[63], and, as the excerpt above shows, it is also present in Swedish public youth discourse. Brown shows how "no homo" functions discursively in different contexts as a negation of a "supposed misconception or misreading of a previous utterance"[64]. The pupils making the "no homo" comments can in this sense be seen as "protecting" the pupil actors on stage from any "misinterpretations" on the behalf of the audience. Put dif-

[58] Kulick, 2010.
[59] Kulick, 2010, p. 61.
[60] Ibid.
[61] Kulick, 2010, p. 67.
[62] Brown, 2011, p. 299.
[63] Berggren, 2012.
[64] Brown, 2011, p. 301.

ferently, the repeated utterings of "no homo" possibly save the pupil actors on stage from having their role characters incorrectly merged with their own "off stage" characters. For reasons of clarification we present a shortened version of the excerpt here, with the two "no homo" remarks underscored:

> [---]
> The first boy replies in English: *A dragon. And my man wants to have a tatoo.*
> Immediately upon this reply some of the pupils in class react (verbally). One boy calls out: *No homo, right*. Then he and a few others start to laugh, and yet another boy calls out encouragingly, in my interpretation, and laughing: *A kiss*!
> [---]
> Most people in the class are now laughing hysterically at the scene. The play ends seconds later and loud applauds break out. The teacher says laughingly and in a loud voice as if trying to make herself heard above the noise of the applauds: *Good acting skills!* She then continues laughing.
> Through the noise of the applauds and laughter I hear one of the boys in the class yell out loud: *No homo, man!'*

At first glance, the "no homo" interjections seem to qualify the actors' performances as purely platonic and rid them of any potential "real" sexual agency causing effect on the pupils' "real" off stage subjectivities. The "no homo" interjection can thus in part be seen to function efficiently to protect the playscript characters from getting glued on to the bodies of the actors as they leave the stage. However, following Kulick's reasoning about the discursive functions of 'no', where "…a sexual advance acts as an interpellation, a calling into being of a sexual subject"[65], the "no homo" remarks can be seen, not only as an acknowledgment of the sexual connotations of the action on stage, but actually as bringing about sexual subjectivity in the classroom. The acting pupils on stage thus emerge as sexual subjects. Upon repudiating the "homo" the pupils in the audience actually affirm this sexuality as being a possible subject position available to all of them in the classroom. The repudiation,

[65] Kulick, 2006, p. 290.

or refusal, produces that which is being refused as a possibility, otherwise there would have been nothing there to refuse in the first place. The scene on stage acts as an interpellation, "a calling into being of a sexual subject"[66], through the repudiating "no homo" remarks that simultaneously act as acknowledgment of that subjection. The "no homo" remarks act as disqualifiers that produce male homosexual subjectivity both as an option and as a threat. The threatening aspect is underscored by the disqualifiers that per se must disqualify something. If male homosexuality was not there as a real life possibility with conceivable futurity embedded, what Butler calls "liveable lives"[67], there would be no need for the discourse interjecting "no homo" remarks that in effect may disassociate the acting pupils' performances of gay, their "doing gay", from actually "being gay". However, it is not only the acting pupils' allegedly straight subjectivity that is at play here. The pupil comments can be seen as functioning as rescue actions of the general male straightness of the male pupil subjectivity in the classroom. The "no homo" remarks, coming from the audience, stretch the reach of the interpellative call to the audience. The remarks function to discursively secure the position of the performing pupils as straight, preserving the stage performance as "performance" and thereby preventing the performance from being read as a representation of any "real" homosexual pupil subject position. The performance thus discursively remains a faux gay act.

Along these lines we see that male homosexual subjectivity is produced through this classroom practice, but perhaps only on the premise of its refusal. The "no homo" comments rid the play of its comic innocence producing contingent gay subjectivity where the stage ends and the alleged "real life" begins. The semantic meaning of the disavowing "no homo" is obviously the refusal of homosexuality, or a demand for its removal from

[66] Ibid.
[67] Butler, 2004, p. 39.

this context. Using performativity theory however, we see that this refusal can also be seen as simultaneously producing contingent male gay subject positions that would otherwise have remained within the realm of fiction and theatre. On the other hand, the "no homo" remarks are indeed efficient repudiations pushing the male gay positions in the direction of the abject "uninhabitable"[68] zone.

3. The Sexless Classroom? Sexuality as interaction Facilitator

We have argued that the availability of the gay couple, brought forth by the genre of humor, opens up for the pupils to dedicate to this school assignment, go through it with great enthusiasm and simultaneously enthuse the audience, i.e. their peers and the teacher. The male gay couple, and the ridiculing thereof, can therefore be seen as fulfilling a number of pedagogical functions, which the classroom context itself has paved the way for. For instance, the performance of male homosexuality lends itself as laughingstock efficient enough to direct both the teacher's and the rest of the pupils' attention towards this pupil presentation. Humor appears to create an "in-group" characterized by people laughing at the same thing. Thus, the humor produced by group three and their performance of a tattoo studio, including the responses and reactions from the audience, and the normative expectations in the classroom, have several pedagogical consequences. One is that the humor and its various reactions create legitimacy for the normative expectations put at work. Another is that the instance of interaction presented here also challenges normativity and opens up for new ways of performing subjectivity.

However, this process of inclusion and creating an "in-group" is paralleled by a process of disavowing exclusion[69]. The

[68] Butler, 1993/2011, p. xiii.
[69] Butler, 1993/2011, p. xii.

straight pupil subjectivity that laughs at a parodied version of male homosexuality simultaneously produces its own outside, the abject: the uninhabitable male gay pupil subjectivity. This overly stereotypical form of a gay man is constructed as a position in a play, a subjectivity to perform and function as a punch-ball, facilitating social and perhaps also learning benefits for the performers and those in the audience who laugh. Male homosexuality can thus be seen as a facilitator in maintaining and constructing straight centered classroom interaction during this instance of interaction, producing the downside effect of male homosexuality being singled out as something to laugh at, something positioned in an "unhabitable zone"[70] not present in the classroom as real livable subjectivity.

Subjectivity produced by means of drawing on a stereotype like this needs to be seen through the lens of Butler's thoughts on how "… identification takes place through a repudiation which produces a domain of abjection, a repudiation without which the subject cannot emerge"[71]. Thereby we suggest that male homosexuality is here being produced as "abjection" functioning as a "threatening spectra"[72] for the heterosexual male pupil subjectivity simultaneously being produced. The male homosexual position is produced as an "unlivable" zone in which those who enter will be, at least, laughed at in the periphery of the forming of male heterosexual pupil subjectivity in the classroom.
However, male homosexuality was not the only aspect of sexuality that caused laughter and general joviality during the pupil presentations. The following sequence takes place at the very end of the presentations of the mini plays:

> The fourth group then enters the "stage" and presents their play which also takes place at a tattoo studio. One of the girls says that she wants a flower on her arm. Another girl takes out

[70] Butler, 1993/2011, p. xiii.
[71] Ibid.
[72] Ibid.

> a black whiteboard felt pen and starts drawing on the first girl's arm. She asks if she wants *A big blac*k?, which the first girl confirms that she does. Upon this reply she starts laughing and so do the rest of the class and the teacher. One of the boys in the class shouts out *Black mamba*. Seconds later the first girl rises up and shows her tattoo to the rest of the class. On her arm there is a sketch of a large black penis. Upon seeing this, the pupils in the class are nearly laughing their heads off, but I notice that the teacher now looks a little bit perplexed.

In this sequence we see that an explicit reference to a penis in shape of a sketch on a girl's arm renders humor as well. This time it is not homosexuality that produces humor and, we claim, not necessarily heterosexuality either, but instead the public exhibition of a caricatured version of the male genitalia on a girl; it is a reference to sex and sexual practice. We suggest that the humor here is produced by the incongruity between the conception of the classroom as a sexless space, as part of the discourse of "childhood innocence"[73], and the explicit presence of a drawing of a large penis on a girl, i.e. the general baldness of the girls challenging these discourses. Sex, here represented by the public drawing and exposure of a sketch of a penis on a female pupil's arm, functions in this example as a way to challenge these discourses, as does the example about the male gay couple discussed above. The drawing of the large penis can also be seen as an explicit production, or doing, of male sexuality and masculinity, as opposed to the normative and seemingly not funny version of natural and "self-evident" masculinity[74]. The drawing thus produces a conception of "constructedness"[75] and therefore, in a sense, failure of masculinity, inherent of comic potential.

Interestingly enough, it appears as if sexuality in these various cases nevertheless challenges the seriousness of the school culture, as a sort of comic relief, therefore simultaneously reinforc-

[73] Epstein, O'Flynn and Telford, 2003, p. 15.
[74] Kulick, 2010.
[75] Kulick, 2010, p. 74.

ing, at least on a surface level, the desire to learn, and provoking, or resisting, the limits of the classroom. Our point is that by bringing sex into this otherwise allegedly sexless space[76], by using drama and humor, new and possibly "dangerous" fields are tried out partly because of the promise of the "not for real" and partly because of the humorous framing. Comedy and drama therefore appear as facilitating ways to deal with male homosexuality and sexuality within the instructional frames.

Discussion

A positive and permitting classroom climate where the pupils feel safe is often held up as something to strive for by politicians, school departments and teachers in class. In the teaching of a foreign language, where you want to optimize the conditions for the pupils to feel secure enough to dare to speak the new language they are learning, humor could be an efficient way to achieve a "comfortable classroom atmosphere"[77]. It has even been suggested that humor in the classroom also can advance learning and enhance test scores[78]. However, our results show that humor seems to be paralleled with processes that lead to partly the opposite effect. Our analysis of an example of the function of sexuality and the way sexuality seems to lend itself so well as a pathway to joking practices in the classroom, particularly the parodying of gay men and its effects in terms of production of humor in this pupil assignment, illustrates how the pupils through joking practices in a sense get caught in the simultaneous production of normative straight pupil subjectivity and the gay man as the abject within a "threatening spectra" [79].

[76] Epstein, O'Flynn and Telford, 2003, p.15.
[77] Bell, 2009, p. 241.
[78] Hackathorn, Garczynski, Blankmeyer, Tennial and Solomon, 2011.
[79] Butler, 1993/2011, p. xiii.

Hence, our detailed analysis of this "subjectivation-in-practice"[80] in the example used illustrates that sexuality, and in particular male homosexuality, in some situations can play a crucial part in language classroom practice in how it maintains and constructs "smooth" interaction during the lesson, and how it both maintains and challenges school as a simultaneously heterosexual but also sexually innocent[81] place. The results show that male sexual pupil subjectivity is here produced by the staging of gay men as "not natural", hyper-sexual and, at least partly, as the "abjected outside"[82]. This simultaneous discursive production of male homosexuality as a performance, a set of stereotyped behaviors, a staged form of being that renders ridicule, is problematic in a number of respects. We, therefore, suggest that this example of the production of pupil subjectivity needs to be discussed in relation to what seems to be an overriding discourse in Swedish school policy of fostering linguistic proficiency within language instruction rather than focusing the meaning making aspects of language and learning of a new language[83]. If the objective of language instruction is unilaterally oriented towards linguistic proficiency in terms of enhancing the pupils' productive and receptive skills, then speaking per se, no matter the character of the topic of the conversation, will be understood as something positive and conversations will per se be valuable. Simultaneously, disruptions of pupil production of language, such as for instance speech, will be understood as negative. However, if the meaning making aspects of language and language learning are taken into account, the topic of the learners' conversations becomes a more problematic issue and cannot be understood just as a neutral medium or vehicle for the production of speech. The discursive production of meaning within pupils' and teachers' language practices in the language classroom perhaps therefore needs to be discussed more in

[80] Youdell, 2006, p. 70.
[81] Epstein, O'Flynn and Telford, 2003, p. 15.
[82] Butler, 1993/2011, p. xiii.
[83] Tornberg, 2000.

terms of the facilitating and limiting effects it may have on the production of pupil subjectivity in the classroom.

We suggest that the staged male gay couple functions as a comedy producer through means of the couple being portrayed as failing masculinity on at least three levels: by not "taking pain as a man", by being affectionate publicly, and last but not least, by being gay. We assert that humor and drama in this example need to be seen as ways for the pupils to deal with sexuality and male homosexuality within the scope of instruction, but also to keep its conceptions under control, thus reproducing the hierarchical dominance of heterosexuality. Furthermore, the results illustrate how a discursively known and accepted discourse interjection like 'no homo' can be used as opening up the classroom space for homosexual subjectivity. The pupils' discursive access to and use of this phrase as a repudiation produces the presence of "real" homosexual subjectivity as "liveable"[84] and possible but also so threatening that it needs to be refused. This threatening liveable male homosexuality needs to be analytically contrasted against its genesis in this classroom context, i.e. the abjected gay man as a staged "funny" character in a skit who can be "taken off", like a set of stage clothes, and got rid of upon leaving the stage. In line with Kulick, we suggest that the "no homo" comments can be seen as performatively producing subject positions that potentially undermine the performance of coherent straight male pupil subjectivity[85]. In other words, the public and explicit use of the parodied gay man as abjected, an identification to "disavow"[86], is simultaneously an acknowledgement of its constitutive importance in the production of straight male pupil subjectivity. On surface level, however, the "no homo" remarks constitute a clear refusal of homosexuality and a demand for its removal from the classroom space, which is obviously very problematic.

[84] Butler, 2004, p. 39.
[85] Kulick, 2010, p. 288.
[86] Butler, 1993/2011, p. xiii.

In conclusion, the desire to learn can be seen as a national requirement[87], something that schools are to build their work around and teachers are to reinforce in the children. In the light of this, the pupil and teacher interaction in the excerpt here discussed can be seen as a product of an environment secure enough for pupils to open up, express themselves and produce spoken English in front of the entire class, give each other feedback in English and laugh together. In this sense, the "permitting" learning environment made possible a social arena in which the pupils used the target second language in order to express themselves within the genre of comedy in front of the entire class, eliciting jovial feelings and verbal reactions, also in the target language, from the peers in class, thus reproducing the "permitting" learning environment. We therefore see how pupils, by using drama and comedy in this classroom skit, deal with sexuality and male straight and homosexual subjectivity, by elaborating with possible subject and abject positions. This, however, seems to have clear downside effects, which have been discussed here in terms of reproducing straight male pupil subjectivity as normative and male homosexuality as an abjection, a "threatening spectra"[88], thus reproducing heteronormativity. In the light of an overriding policy discourse that encourages linguistic proficiency the contingent jovial atmosphere pervading this classroom practice may be more easily understood as something positive. However, we assert that we need to return to Nelson[89] and the acknowledgment of the sociosexual aspects infused in language and ask ourselves if the production of straight male pupil subjectivity as normative and gay male subjectivity as its "abjected outside"[90] is an acceptable spin-off from a language classroom speaking assignment. Indeed, we assert that the result of this in-depth analysis of the "subjectivation-in-practice" [91] in this single example suggests that the

[87] Sanderoth, 2002.
[88] Butler, 1993/2011, p. xiii.
[89] Nelson, 2006, p. 4.
[90] Butler, 1993/2011, p. xiii.
[91] Youdell, 2006, p.70.

meaning making aspects of language learning and language instruction needs to be pondered seriously.

Conclusions

This study departed in questions on how school as an institution, and in particular language education in secondary school, produces conceptions of gender and sexuality in the classroom and how that produces sexual pupil subjectivities. The ambition has been to discuss the production of subjectivity and normativity taking place as an effect of discursive negotiations in the pupil and teacher interaction in a specific language classroom assignment, namely the performance of a pupil skit. Our analyses indicate that the staging of a gay male couple in this classroom skit is an example of a discursive doing that primarily produces straight pupil subjectivity and heteronormativity in the classroom. However, we also suggest that, as simultaneous processes, openings for gay male pupil subjectivity and space for pupils to resist dominating school discourses are produced as effects of the staging of this gay male couple and the interaction around the performance.

The presence of a gay male couple and the sketch of a large penis on a female pupil's arm generate a massive response from the rest of the class. Most of the responses consist of loud laughter. The gay characters on stage become possible sexual subject positions as a performative effect of the scene acting as an interpellation of these sexual subjects that the discourse interjection 'no homo' refuses and simultaneously "calls into being"[92]. Although the "no homo" comments efficiently protects the gay role characters from getting merged with the pupils' "real" off stage subjectivities, these comments also render the male homosexual subjectivity performed on stage a possibility available to all of the pupils in class. What was previously perhaps only a play, imaginary characters acted out on a stage with

[92] Kulick, 2006, p. 290.

the promise of leaving the character upon leaving the stage, performatively becomes something that concerns them all also outside of the stage. However, male homosexuality seems to be represented in the classroom only on the premise of the public refusal of it.

Our final remark concerns how this article in its analyses has dealt with notions of masculinity and male sexuality, and thus omitted discussions about notions about femininity and the absence of lesbians in this example. Questions about the ease with which male homosexuality was dealt with using drama and humor, and the response of laughter, joyfulness, in this classroom in relation to the absence of female homosexuality would be a pertinent way to continue discussing the presence and absence of sexuality and its function in language instruction.

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Unpacking the bullying doll: Reflections from a fieldwork at the social-ecological square[1]

Paul Horton

In April 2014, *Confero* announced a special issue titled *Essays on school bullying: Theoretical perspectives on a contemporary problem*, which aimed to stimulate a theoretical discussion about school bullying through the medium of theoretically focused essays.[2] No clipboards, no questionnaire surveys, no field notes, no recording devices, simply grey matter and a blank canvas upon which school bullying researchers could sketch their musings. Six researchers accepted the challenge and participated in a fruitful exchange of ideas, taking up issues as broad ranging as popular culture and social difference, victim positioning and exclusionary processes, discursive-material intra-action and the agency of skirts, institutional hierarchy and alternative forms of education, and qualified relativism and the interpretation of elephants.[3] The final essay in the collection extended an invitation to a group of proverbial "blind men" to meet and discuss their interpretations

[1] This is a fictional fieldwork, as the social-ecological square was used by Thornberg (2015) as a means of visualizing a potential common ground for researchers, i.e. the social-ecological model.
[2] Horton and Forsberg, 2015.
[3] Ringrose and Rawlings, 2015; Søndergaard, 2015; Thornberg, 2015; Walton, 2015; Yoneyama, 2015.

of the bullying elephant at a place the author called "the social-ecological square".[4]

Seeing this as a chance to engage in a cross-paradigmatic discussion of school bullying, I packed my field notebook into my bag and headed out of the department's main door, off in search of the aforementioned square. Walking in the direction of town, I noticed a sign pointing down a somewhat hidden lane that was overgrown with vegetation. The sign read *Ecological Lane*. The lane was narrow and the ground uneven, but I followed it anyway, in the hope that it would lead somewhere more social. After a long walk, I came upon a large square. The square was fenced off, sealed off in a heuristic sense, accessible via a small gated entrance. Above the gate a sign read *The Social-Ecological Square*. Opening the gate, I entered from the west side of the square.

The scene that greeted me upon entering the square was surprisingly different to that which I had expected. There was no elephant. The square was deserted.

Looking around, I could see that there were two other entrances; one gated entrance at the southern end of the square and one open entrance on the opposite side of the square to where I was standing. The eastern entrance led out to a large parking lot, where a few old cars were parked. The square was unkempt, with weeds growing through the numerous cracks in the concrete. At the northern end of the square there was a wooden park bench, worn from years of exposure to the elements. I walked over to the bench and sat down. As I was taking my notebook out of my bag, I heard the gate to the southern entrance being swung open.

A man dressed in a white lab coat entered the square pulling a large trolley behind him. On the trolley, there was a life-size

[4] Thornberg, 2015.

wooden doll painted in bold primary colours. It reminded me of the Trojan horse from Virgil's *Aeneid*; so much so that I began to wonder what might be hidden inside. The man wheeled the trolley to the centre of the square and lifted the doll down onto the concrete. I opened my notebook and started to write down what I was observing. I watched as the man struggled to twist off the top half of the doll. After a great deal of twisting back and forth, there was a loud creaking sound and the top half of the doll was removed to reveal another, slightly smaller, doll hidden within it. The man lifted out the inner doll and placed it about two metres to the right of the larger doll, the top half of which he then refitted. Two dolls, one slightly smaller than the other.

Focusing on the smaller doll, the man repeated the process until once again a smaller doll was revealed. I sat and watched this process until eventually there were five dolls lined up in the centre of the square. Making sure that the distance was equal between all of the dolls and that they were facing the same way, the man collected the now empty trolley and wheeled it back out the entrance from whence he had come.

I looked at the dolls. Five dolls, each differing slightly in size, lined up from largest to smallest in the middle of the square.

As if on cue, a large bus pulled into the parking lot at the eastern entrance. A large number of researchers of varying academic status disembarked from the bus and made their way excitedly into the square and over to where the dolls were lined up. The researchers each took up a position next to one of the dolls. There was one researcher at each of the largest three dolls, three researchers at the second smallest doll, and a large group of researchers at the smallest doll. Curious as to why the smallest doll had attracted so much attention, and keen to get a closer look at the dolls, I gathered up my things, walked across the square, and introduced myself to the researchers.

Doll 1: The individual

After introducing themselves, the researchers invited me to ask any questions I might have about the doll. I looked at the doll. It was the smallest of the five. It resembled an ordinary school child of undefined gender. I asked the researchers to tell me about the doll. They explained that it is a "bully". A school child who takes the initiative and, either directly or indirectly, engages in "repeated acts of aggression intended to cause physical or psychological harm to a peer who cannot adequately defend against such attacks as a result of a power difference."[5] There appeared to be general agreement amongst the researchers that boys are more involved in bullying, and that boys tend to bully directly, while girls tend to bully indirectly.[6] I wondered why it was that boys were more inclined to engage in bullying, and particularly physical bullying, and also how the researchers knew so much about the intention behind the acts. Surely not all those who engage in bullying seek to cause physical or psychological harm?[7]

I noted down my questions in my notebook and listened as the researchers talked about the particular acts of aggression that constitute bullying. According to the researchers, such acts of aggression take the form of "pushing, shoving, hitting, kicking … restraining another … teasing, taunting, threatening, calling names … spreading a rumour … or attempts to cause fear, discomfort, or injury upon another person."[8] The list of aggressive acts was long, and I wondered if they should all be considered bullying.

[5] Nickerson, Singleton, Schnurr and Collen, 2014, p. 158.
[6] Barboza, Schiamberg, Oehmke, Korzeniewski, Post and Heraux, 2009; Espelage, 2014; Espelage, Hong, Rao and Thornberg, 2014; Hong and Espelage, 2012; Hong and Garbarino, 2012; Huang, Hong and Espelage, 2013; Lim and Hoot, 2015; Nickerson et al., 2014; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt and Hymel, 2010.
[7] Horton, Kvist Lindholm and Nguyen, 2015.
[8] Hong and Espelage, 2012, p. 312.

As I was noting this question down, a researcher standing to my right explained that it is important to remember that children who have been bullied are more likely to bully others, and it is thus important to not only focus on the "bully" but also the "victim".[9] She explained that a 'victim' is a school child who has been subjected to bullying by one or more of her peers and that there are a number of predictors of bullying behaviour, including age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, obesity, disability, learning ability, impulsiveness, depression, anxiety, intelligence, and socio-economic status.[10] I looked at the doll and pondered the idea that the victim may have been a young, impulsive, slightly depressed, overweight, bisexual, ethnic minority boy with a diagnosed learning disability from a low-income community.

Regardless of their social position, the researcher assured me, "victims" most likely suffer from "psychosocial problems, such as depression and anxiety."[11] Noticing the perplexed look on my face, she elaborated that anxiety and depression can be both contributing factors and consequences of school bullying. As she put it, "our understanding of the psychology of bullying/victimization is much like the 'chicken or egg' conundrum."[12]

When I asked whether any school children are not characterised as either a 'bully' or a 'victim', a number of the researchers explained that in order to get a complete picture, it is not enough to focus on the individuals involved, but rather I need to understand the various *systems* within which the bullying behaviour occurs. They explained that the behaviour of an individual needs to be understood in terms of the social-

[9] Barboza et al., 2009.
[10] Espelage and Swearer, 2010; Espelage et al., 2010; Hong and Espelage, 2012; Huang et al., 2013; Swearer et al., 2010.
[11] Hong and Espelage, 2012, p. 315.
[12] Swearer and Hymel, 2015, p. 346.

ecological environment within which it occurs.[13] This social-ecological environment is made up of numerous systems, each located within another like a set of Russian nesting dolls.[14] Pointing along the line of dolls, one of the researchers explained that the next doll in the line was the *microsystem*, the third one the *mesosystem*, the fourth one the *exosystem*, and the fifth one, the one from which the others came, the *macrosystem*. Following his advice, I gradually worked my way from doll to doll, from the microsystem to the macrosystem.

Doll 2: The microsystem

There were three researchers standing at the second doll. As I approached, one of the researchers shook my hand and introduced me to the other two. She then explained that much of the research into school bullying has not adequately accounted for the broader social context, and it is therefore important to consider the microsystems within which individuals and groups of individuals interact.[15] As she put it:

> The most direct influences in bullying behaviour among youth are within the microsystem, which is composed of individuals or groups of individuals within immediate settings (e.g., home, school) with whom youth have interactions.[16]

From her explanation, I gathered that the microsystem is where proximal processes of development occur, and hence where, through interactions with others, children develop their behavioural characteristics. When I asked whether she could give me an example of a microsystem relevant to school

[13] Espelage, 2014; Hong and Espelage, 2012; Lim and Hoot, 2015; Patton, Hong, Williams and Allen-Meares, 2013; Swearer and Doll, 2001; Swearer Napolitano and Espelage, 2011; Thornberg, 2015.
[14] Bronfenbrenner, 1977, 1979; Patton et al., 2013; Rodkin and Hodges, 2003; Swearer et al., 2010.
[15] Barboza et al., 2009; Espelage, Holt and Henkel, 2003.
[16] Hong and Espelage, 2012, p. 315.

bullying, she replied that each of the three researchers would provide me with an example and that she would begin with the example of the family.

In elaborating the example of the family, she told me that family plays a crucial role, as interactions in the family may detrimentally influence the ways in which children interact with their peers and hence the extent to which they are involved in bullying interactions as either 'bullies' or 'victims'. She provided a number of examples of interactions in the family, including those that occur between parents (or other caregivers), parents and children, parents and siblings, and siblings. She elaborated that factors relevant to school bullying within the microsystem of the family thus include lack of parental involvement, lack of parental support, negative family interactions, child maltreatment, and inter-parental violence.[17] Emphasising lack of parental involvement and support, she stated that "Bullies tend to have parents who do not provide adequate supervision or are not actively involved in the lives of their children".[18]

The second researcher then provided a second example of a microsystem: the peer group. As he explained, bullying rarely involves only the child doing the bullying and the one being bullied, but occurs in the presence of peers, who can either encourage or prevent bullying interactions.[19] Such peers are referred to as 'bystanders'. When I asked him what he meant by 'bystanders', and how they differed from 'bullies' or 'victims', he explained that 'bystanders' are "neither 'pure bullies' nor 'pure victims'" but rather a 'bystander' is a "viewer, observer,

[17] Barboza et al., 2009; Espelage, 2014; Espelage and Swearer, 2010; Espelage et al., 2014; Hong and Espelage, 2012; Hong and Garbarino, 2012; Hong et al., 2013; Huang et al., 2013; Patton et al., 2013; Swearer and Doll, 2001; Swearer and Hymel, 2015.
[18] Espelage, 2014, p. 259.
[19] Espelage, 2014; Nickerson et al., 2014; Patton et al., 2013; Rodkin and Hodges, 2003; Swearer and Doll, 2001; Swearer and Hymel, 2015.

witness, and passerby." [20] He elaborated by saying that 'bystanders' play a key role in a bullying situation by observing the bullying without intervening and that 'bystanders' actually "enjoy watching fights, often encouraging the bully. They also help the bully by warning them if an adult is coming." [21] However, he was also careful to point out that some 'bystanders' may also sympathise with the 'victim', may not get involved and may even try to stop the bullying.[22]

The third researcher provided the school as a third example of a microsystem relevant to school bullying, and told me, "One of the most salient and influential environments for children is the school." [23] Elaborating on the importance of the school, she spoke about the importance of school environment, teacher-student relationships, school climate, school belonging, and school connectedness.[24] While she placed most emphasis on the relationships between teachers and students, and the extent to which students feel they can receive support from teachers, she also pointed to the importance of "environmental-structural aspects of school life", in terms of school and class size, timetabling, visibility, accessibility and playground resources.[25]

Her comments about the environmental-structural aspects of school struck a chord with me, as something had been troubling me about the focus on *individuals or groups of individuals*. Not

[20] Hong and Espelage, 2012, p. 312.
[21] Hong and Espelage, 2012, p. 312.
[22] Hong and Espelage, 2012.
[23] Birkett, Espelage and Koenig, 2009, p. 989.
[24] Barboza et al., 2009; Birkett et al., 2009; Espelage and Swearer, 2010; Espelage et al., 2014; Hong and Espelage, 2012; Hong and Garbarino, 2012; Nickerson et al., 2014; Patton et al., 2013; Swearer and Hymel, 2015; Swearer et al., 2010.
[25] Nickerson et al., 2014, p. 160; Barboza et al., 2009; Espelage, 2014; Hong and Espelage, 2012; Hong and Garbarino, 2012; Hong et al., 2014; Huang et al., 2013; Patton et al., 2013; Swearer and Doll, 2001; Swearer et al., 2010.

only was it unclear to me why focus was not also placed on the bullying of or by teachers, but also why there was not more focus on how such interactions are connected to the institutional context itself in terms of compulsory attendance, class sizes, scholastic demands, teaching methods, curricular content, competition, school meals, grading, testing, and so on.[26]

I looked at the doll. There was something about it that troubled me. I walked over and touched it. I began to wonder what it was made of. Surely school connectedness, for example, cannot be reduced to the interactions of *individuals or groups of individuals*. Surely the elements of the microsystem include not only interactions between individuals or groups of individuals, but also interactions between those individuals and the environmental-structural aspects of school? Surely these aspects also have an influence on the social processes taking place within the microsystem? What about the relations between school children and the insulation of the classroom, the temperature of the classroom, the quality of the school playground, the school timetable, text books, homework, uniforms, desks, or seats?

When I asked her whether there has been much focus on the environmental-structural aspects of school, she replied that "Relatively little is known about contextual/environmental factors that may predispose youths to bully others"[27], and that "Additional research is needed to examine school

[26] Ahmad and Salleh, 1997; Andrews and Chen, 2006; Connell, 2001; Duncan, 2013; Eriksson, Lindberg, Flygare and Daneback, 2002; Galloway and Roland, 2004; Horton, 2011, 2012; Kousholt and Fisker, 2014; Rivers, Duncan and Besag, 2007; Tam and Taki, 2007; Tanaka, 2001; Terefe and Mengistu, 1997; Walton, 2015; Willer and Hansen, 2004; Yoneyama, 1999, 2015; Yoneyama and Murphey, 2007; Yoneyama and Naito, 2003.
[27] Barboza et al., 2009, p. 104.

environmental factors as predicting bullying." [28] I agreed, thanked her and the other two researchers for their time, and walked over to the third doll.

Doll 3: The mesosystem

There was only one researcher at the third doll, and he seemed happy to have someone to talk to. When I asked him to explain the doll he was standing next to, he began by telling me what he knew about the mesosystem doll in terms of its relation to the microsystems it is made up of:

> Mesosystem level requires an understanding of the inter-relations among two or more microsystems, each containing the individual … Experiences in one microsystem (i.e., youth-teacher) can influence the interactions in another (i.e., youth-peer).[29]

Put another way, then, the mesosystem is "a system of microsystems."[30] In his brief elaboration of the mesosystem, he provided a number of examples, including the interactions between the microsystems of family and school, family and peer group, and school and peer group.[31] In discussing the inter-relations between the family and school, for example, he emphasised the importance of collaborations between parents and teachers and between parents and school counsellors.[32] He also mentioned the issue of school-related stress and the sometimes unreasonable expectations of parents.[33]

This last comment got me thinking, and I wondered if that would not also apply to the sometimes unreasonable

[28] Hong and Espelage, 2012, p. 317.
[29] Hong and Espelage, 2012, p. 317.
[30] Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 515.
[31] Barboza et al., 2009; Espelage, 2014; Hong and Espelage, 2012; Hong et al., 2014; Huang et al., 2013; Thornberg, 2015.
[32] Hong et al., 2014.
[33] Barboza et al., 2009.

expectations of schools in terms of homework and testing? I also began to wonder about less direct inter-relations of importance for school bullying, such as the importance of language socialisation practices, grooming practices, eating habits, the affordability or otherwise of school uniforms, and the positive or negative perceptions of scholasticism within the family and amongst peers.

When I asked him whether he could elaborate about some of these inter-relations, he explained that he did not know about the impact of these inter-relations because "there is a dearth of research that explored mesosystem factors."[34] We agreed that more needs to be said about mesosystem factors. I thanked him for his time and walked over to the fourth doll where another lone researcher was waiting.

Doll 4: The exosystem

The researcher at the fourth doll explained that the exosystem differs from the mesosystem somewhat in that it comprises the interactions between two or more microsystems, where the individual is only present in one of them. As she explained:

> Exosystem considers aspects of the environment beyond the immediate system containing the individual … This level is composed of interactions between two or more settings, but the individual is in only one of the settings.[35]

The exosystem, then, is "an extension of the mesosystem"[36] that also includes those microsystems of which the individual is not a part. The exosystem thus affects the individual in an indirect way, through the decisions or actions taken in settings

[34] Hong and Garbarino, 2012, p. 273.
[35] Hong and Espelage, 2012, p. 317.
[36] Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 527.

where they are not present.[37] In elaborating about the role of the exosystem in school bullying, the researcher provided a number of examples, including school policies, staff training, budgetary decisions, neighbouring community environments, parental stress, the home situation of teachers and peers, and the mass media.[38]

While she referred to school policies and staff training in relation to how levels of staff supervision, the organisation of physical settings, and anti-bullying policies directly impact the prevalence of school bullying, I began to wonder about other policies and forms of staff training that are perhaps less obviously implicated. Examples of these include the decisions taken on dress codes, food provision, discipline and punishment, timetabling, class sizes, streaming, curricular content, resource provision, teaching methods, evaluation and testing, teacher salaries, and staff workloads. These decisions are taken in settings where the individual child is not present, but directly impact on the school life of the child, in terms of what were earlier referred to as school microsystem factors, such as school environment, teacher-student relationships, school climate, school belonging, and school connectedness.

Remembering that the researcher at the mesosystem doll had told me that there has been little focus beyond the microsystem, I decided not to push the researcher further on the issue. Instead, I noted down my musings, thanked her for her time, and walked over to the final doll.

[37] Patton et al., 2013.
[38] Barboza et al., 2009; Espelage, 2014; Hong and Espelage, 2012; Hong and Garbarino, 2012; Huang et al., 2013; Patton et al., 2013; Swearer and Doll, 2001; Swearer and Hymel, 2015; Thornberg, 2015.

Doll 5: The macrosystem

The researcher at the fifth doll was sitting on the concrete with his back against the doll enjoying the afternoon sun. When I approached, he stood up and offered his hand. We shook hands and introduced ourselves before I asked him if he had time to tell me about the doll he had been leaning against. He began by explaining:

> The macrosystem level is regarded as a cultural 'blueprint' that may determine the social structures and activities that occur in the immediate system level.[39]

Noticing that I was not really following what he meant, the researcher elaborated that the macrosystem level includes the social, cultural, organisational, and political contexts that influence the interactions that occur within the micro-, meso-, and exosystems.[40] The macrosystem thus refers to socio-cultural power structures, norms and beliefs relating to gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, religion, disability, age, appearance, and so on.[41]

Elaborating on the issues of gender and sexuality, he explained that socio-cultural gender norms influence family, school and peer group norms related to what are deemed appropriate or inappropriate forms of masculinity or femininity, and that perceived non-conformity to such norms may result in homophobic bullying, for example.[42] Furthermore, he explained that socio-cultural norms are transferred from one generation to the next via socialisation processes within microsystem institutions, such as the family, school and peer group, and

[39] Hong and Espelage, 2012, p. 317.
[40] Espelage, 2014; Huang et al., 2013.
[41] Hong and Espelage, 2012; Thornberg, 2015.
[42] Hong and Espelage, 2012; Hong and Garbarino, 2012; Patton et al., 2013.

through the mass media.[43] He also mentioned that socio-cultural norms regarding collectivism or individualism and the importance of academic achievement are macrosystem factors.[44]

I was confused. I thought back to my earlier discussions with the researchers at the first doll. They had spoken about *individual* factors that predict bullying behaviour, including age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, obesity, disability, learning ability, intelligence, and socio-economic status. Now this researcher was telling me that these stem from norms and beliefs within the macrosystem. While individuals may differ in terms of the colour of their skin, hair or eyes, their height, their genitalia, their metabolism, their ability to walk or talk, their chronological age, and so on, understandings of such differences are rooted in the social, institutional, cultural and societal contexts of the macrosystem.

This certainly made more sense than imagining that boys, for example, are more often involved in bullying and tend to bully physically just because they are boys. I wondered to what extent differences in the bullying behaviour of boys and girls could be connected to perceptions of masculinity, femininity, and sexuality, and socio-cultural ideas about scholasticism, sporting prowess, and (hetero) sexual prowess, for example.[45] Thinking about the other supposedly individual predictors of bullying behaviour, I also wondered whether it would not also be fruitful to rethink them in terms of the wider social, cultural, organisational and political contexts from which they stem. Rather than focusing on the interactions between individuals or groups of individuals, it would then be possible to consider how

[43] Barboza et al., 2009; Hong and Garbarino, 2012.
[44] Huang et al., 2013.
[45] Connell, 2001; Drouet, 1993; Duncan, 1999; Duncan and Rivers, 2013; Epstein, 1998; Gilbert and Gilbert, 1998; Horton, 2007; Kehily and Nayak, 1997; Kessler, Ashenden, Connell and Dowsett, 1985; Mac An Ghaill, 1994; Martino, 1997, 1999, 2000; Mills, 2001; Phoenix, Frosh and Pattman, 2003; Reay, 2002; Renold, 2001.

those interactions relate to the macrosystem and broader power relations.[46]

When I asked the researcher to tell me more about this particular doll, he replied that there is not much to tell, as there has not been much focus on the macrosystem within school bullying research.[47] He explained that while the "social-ecological framework illustrates the intricacy of human behaviour, it is more difficult to empirically examine this complexity, particularly at the macrosystem level."[48]

Noticing that the other researchers were beginning to pack up their things, I thanked the researcher for his time and bid farewell. I walked back over to the bench and sat down. I placed my notebook on the bench beside me and watched as the researchers made their way back to the parking lot and climbed aboard the waiting bus. As the bus drove off, I looked across the square to where the dolls stood, bathed in the afternoon sunlight. The one that caught my attention was the macrosystem doll. My gaze was drawn to it. It was the largest of the five dolls and the only one visible when the bullying doll was fully assembled.

Reflections

Unsure of whether anyone else would turn up, or whether the man in the lab coat would return to pack up the dolls, I decided to take advantage of the now quiet square and spend some time reflecting over what had been a thought provoking day. Reaching down to pick up my notebook, I noticed that someone had scrawled a formula on the bench in red ink.

[46] Bansel, Davies, Laws and Linnell, 2009; Carrera et al., 2011; Davies, 2011; Horton, 2011, 2012; Kousholt and Fisker, 2014; Ringrose and Renold, 2010; Walton, 2005, 2011, 2015.
[47] Carrera, DePalma and Lameiras, 2011; Thornberg, 2015.
[48] Espelage and Swearer, 2010, p. 62.

B = f (PE)[49]

I looked at it, wondered who had written it, and pondered what it could mean. I thought about the man who had wheeled the doll into the square and unpacked it. I thought about the five dolls and the explanations I had been provided about them.

The first doll, the individual, has received the greatest amount of attention from school bullying researchers and has been explained in terms of supposedly individual characteristics and predictors of bullying behaviour. The second doll, the microsystem, has received somewhat more attention than the larger three, but while examples of microsystems (family, school, and peer group) have been provided, the focus has been less on the settings than on the interactions between individuals or groups of individuals within those settings. There is still surprisingly little discussion of the environmental-structural aspects of microsystems. The third and fourth dolls, the meso- and exosystems, have still not received much attention at all, and seem almost to be an afterthought in discussions. In explaining those two dolls, researchers have focused on individuals or groups of individuals whose actions and interactions have direct implications for bullying interventions. There has been little consideration of those actions and interactions that are less directly implicated in bullying.

Perhaps most surprisingly, the last doll has received very little attention at all, despite the fact that this is the doll from which the other dolls stem and is also the only doll visible when the bullying doll is fully assembled. The explanations provided of this doll raise serious questions about school bullying researchers' continued focus on individuals or groups of individuals. After all, the macrosystem is "the highest level of

[49] Lewin, 1935, p. 73, cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 16.

the ecological model" and its "institutions and associated ideologies … permeate the society as a whole."[50]

In my notebook, I wrote out what I thought the formula B = f (PE) could mean:

> Bullying is a function of the interactions between people and their environments.[51]

In this explanation of the formula, environment refers not only to the *social* context, wherein individuals or groups of individuals interact, but also to the actual systems themselves and the institutions and cultures that constitute them. After all, "Environmental influences on development are of course not limited to human beings."[52]

I thought back to the special issue on school bullying in *Confero* and the essay that had suggested the social-ecological square as a possible meeting point.[53] While social-ecological approaches to school bullying have yet to fully consider the various systems within which bullying occurs, or indeed the environmental-structural aspects of those systems, the theoretical framework does seem to offer promise in terms of thinking about school bullying not only as the interactions between individuals or groups of individuals, but also in terms of those individuals and the environments within which their interactions are situated and which influence those interactions.

I looked out across the square. It was a large square with plenty of room for the researchers I had met earlier and for any who were yet to arrive. It could potentially provide the space needed for cross-paradigmatic discussions of school bullying. However,

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[50] Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 527.
[51] In Lewin, B stood for behaviour more generally. Lewin, 1935, p. 73, cited in Bronfenbrenner, 1979, p. 16.
[52] Bronfenbrenner, 1977, p. 522.
[53] Thornberg, 2015.

such discussions would not only require other researchers to venture out to the square, but also for those who already frequent the square to step away from the inner-most individual doll, and the second smallest doll within which it is directly located, in order to consider equally the importance of the other layers of the bullying doll.

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Pippi Longstocking as Friedrich Nietzsche's overhuman[1]

Michael Tholander

On January 3, 1889, Friedrich Nietzsche walks out from his lodging at Piazza Carlo Alberto in Turin. Suddenly, he witnesses a coachman flogging his old and tired horse. He rushes forward and throws himself around the horse's neck in an attempt to protect it. Then, after bursting into tears, he falls to the ground, unconscious, perhaps struck, for the first time, by the serious symptoms of advanced syphilis.[2]

This event concluded Nietzsche's prolific career at the early age of 44. It would be followed by more than a decade of crippling physical and mental disorder, before he died his second, and definitive, death on August 25, 1900. Thus, despite having

[1] This essay is a rewritten and extended English version of the one published in connection with the hundredth anniversary of the death of Nietzsche: Tholander, Michael (2000). Friedrich Nietzsche – och Pippi Långstrump. *Tvärsnitt, 22(3),* 2-17.

[2] Other theories suggest that Nietzsche suffered from a series of strokes, from dementia or from brain cancer, or that he fell victim to a combination of these maladies. See, e.g., Butler, Paul (2011). A Stroke of Bad Luck: CADASIL and Friedrich Nietzsche's "Dementia" or Madness. In P. McNamara (Ed.), *Dementia: History and Incidence*. Santa Barbara: Praeger.

declared the exacting precept "Die at the right time!"[3] in his most well-known book, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Nietzsche, quite ironically, died all too early, as well as all too late.

During the many years that have passed since his most productive years (1872-1888), Nietzsche has lost neither his attractiveness nor his controversial status. Today, Nietzsche is particularly famous, or infamous, for two things: His statement "God is dead"[4] and his idea of the awaiting "overhuman" (Übermensch).[5] It is the latter idea that is central to this essay. By pointing to a series of illuminative similarities between Nietzsche's 19th century writings about an imagined, forthcoming human ideal and the 20th century fictitious figure of Pippi Longstocking, a literary parallelism will be presented throughout the essay.[6] The intended purpose is to rectify the image of both Nietzsche and his overhuman. Whether or not this also has a bearing on the impression of Pippi Lockstocking is an open question.

[3] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 21, Voluntary death. Each quote from Nietzsche's books in the essay is marked by a footnote that shows from where it has been taken. Some of the quotes have been rewritten in a gender-neutral language.

[4] Expressed for the first time in *The Gay Science:* Book 3, §108.

[5] See, e.g., *The Gay Science:* Book 5, §382; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Zarathustra's prologue, §3; *On the Genealogy of Morality:* Essay 1, §16. The German term "Übermensch" has been translated into the gender-neutral "overhuman" rather than into the more common "overman" or "superman." Graham Parkes also uses "overhuman" in his 2005 translation of *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* for the Oxford World's Classics series.

[6] Pippi and several other Astrid Lindgren characters (e.g., Emil of Lönneberga, Karlsson-on-the-Roof and Rasmus in "Rasmus and the Vagabond") have previously, at least partly, been described as overhumans. See Gaare, Jørgen & Sjaastad, Øystein (2002). *Pippi and Sokrates: Filosofiska vandringar i Astrid Lindgrens värld [Pippi and Socrates: Philosophical Excursions Into the World of Astrid Lindgren].* Stockholm: Natur och Kultur.

The idea of the overhuman

Walter Kaufmann, the renowned Nietzsche scholar, argues that Nietzsche was influenced by Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great American thinker, in the choice of the term "overhuman."[7] Emerson had previously coined the idea of the "oversoul" in one of his essays, an idea that has some similarities with Nietzsche's "overhuman."[8] However, Nietzsche had formulated many of the traits that he considers characteristic of the upcoming, transcending human being long before he used the term "overhuman" for the first time. This may indicate that the term, which Nietzsche actually employs quite sparingly, was used only to allude to Emerson's "oversoul."[9]

The overhuman ideal can be interpreted narrowly to include only the traits that are described when Nietzsche explicitly uses the term "overhuman." However, it is also possible to broaden the meaning of the term and view it as the collection of ideals that he brings out in his writing. The term "overhuman" then becomes merely one of many names for the future pattern of perfection that Nietzsche envisions.

An alternative name that he often uses is "the free spirits,"[10] a label which implicitly reveals that overhumans resist being bound by common beliefs and conventions. Other names

[7] Kaufmann, Walter (1974). Translator's Introduction. In F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*. New York: Vintage Books.
[8] Emerson, Ralph Waldo (1841/2007). The Over-Soul. In *Essays: First series*. Stilwell: Digireads.com Publishing.
[9] That Nietzsche did indeed read Emerson can be noted in a few places in his writing, e.g., in *Schopenhauer as Educator* (1874). That Nietzsche also felt a close affinity to him is revealed in a letter to a friend in which he refers to Emerson as a "brother-soul." See Baudouin, Charles (1924/2015). *Contemporary Studies*. New York: Routledge.
[10] For instance, this term is used throughout *Human, All Too Human*, see, e.g., Preface, §2; Section 1, Of first and last things, §30; Section 5, Signs of higher and lower culture, §225.

include "the unconscientious," "the unfettered," "the great longers," "the untimely," "the premature births" and "the inventive."[11] Like "the free spirits," these alternative names reveal some of the content that lies behind the term "overhuman."

The misinterpreted Nietzsche

Nietzsche has often been viewed as a provocative deconstructionist – a modern protagonist of the same kind of relativism, skepticism and cynicism that the Sophists[12] had launched in Ancient Greece back in the 5th century BC. But his thoughts and ideas also include many constructive elements, which may even be viewed as laying the foundation for a whole philosophy of life. The overhuman ideal is a prime example of this constructive side of Nietzsche. Here, he paints an alternative image of the human race, an image which, according to Nietzsche, makes contemporary people seem like monkeys in comparison. Thus, as he lets *Zarathustra* phrase it, humanity is just "a rope stretched between the animal and the overhuman – a rope over an abyss."[13]

However, it is the fate of all philosophers to be misinterpreted, and by using hyperbolic statements like the one above, Nietzsche is certainly not an exception to this rule. On the contrary, he is particularly affected by malicious readings, and especially with regard to the idea of the overhuman. For instance, a prevailing belief is still that the overhuman corresponds to the Aryan Nazi of the 20th century, even though Nietzsche, unlike many of his contemporaries, often praised Jews and looked down upon German nationalism and

[11] A few of these names are mentioned in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 74, The song of melancholy, §2.
[12] See Kerferd, George (1981). *The Sophistic Movement.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[13] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Zarathustra's prologue, §4.

authoritarianism.[14] Thus, Nietzsche's overhuman cannot be a blond Aryan or serve as a kind of Nazi ideal. The overhuman is individualistic and would never stoop to the kind of herd mentality that was so significant of the Nazi movement.

Nor does the overhuman ideal alludes to an individual who accomplishes as much as possible in as short a time as possible. Thus, it is not about being a successful careerist or status-seeker, who also succeeds in building lasting relationships, raising exceptional children and cultivating a perfect body. The overhuman ideal does not mean that you have to achieve all of the ideals celebrated by society, and neither does it necessarily translate into efficiency. Rather, it is about an approach to life and the events one encounters in it.

Still, the questions linger: How can we readily imagine the overhuman? What portrait can we paint of this ideal? What kind of individual can we envision more concretely? One answer to these questions is to think of the overhuman as Pippi Longstocking, the fictional nine-year old parentless girl created by the Swedish children's author Astrid Lindgren.[15] However, from the start, it is crucial to emphasize that it is *not* Pippi's physical strength, perhaps her most recognizable attribute, which makes her an overhuman. She is not an overhuman in the simple sense of being some kind of female version of "Superman," a third common fallacy about Nietzsche's ideal. Unfortunately, this term has often been the English translation of the German term "Übermensch." But Pippi is not primarily superior due to her physical abilities. She is an overhuman in her approach to life and in her immediate life-affirming actions.

[14] See, e.g., *Human, All Too Human:* Section 8, A look at the state. §475; *The Gay Science:* Book 5, We fearless ones, §348, §377; *Daybreak:* Book 3, §205, §207.

[15] The first book about Pippi was published in 1945: Lindgren, Astrid (1945). *Pippi Långstrump*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren. To date, the books about Pippi have been translated into at least 70 languages. See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pippi_Longstocking [2015-11-18].

Before moving on to the similarities between Nietzsche's human ideal and Pippi, it is worth pointing out that Astrid Lindgren herself, in a letter accompanying the first manuscript, indeed characterized her own creation as an overhuman: "Pippi Longstocking is, as you will find if you take the trouble to read the manuscript, a little Übermensch in the shape of a child."[16] Towards the end of the letter, Astrid Lindgren also ironically adds that she hopes that the publisher will not file a report on her book to the Child Welfare Board, obviously well aware of its potentially controversial content.[17]

Amor fati

One of the more important aspects of the life approach that Nietzsche connects with the overhuman is the stoic willingness to accept life in every part of its joyful and tragic form. As he expresses it in *Ecce Homo:* "My formula for greatness in a human being is *amor fati:* that one wants nothing to be different, not forward, not backward, not in all eternity. Not merely bear what is necessary, still less conceal it ... but love it."[18] Indeed, such a human being would be willing to relive his or her life over and over again, in an "eternal recurrence" of the

[16] Quoted and translated from p. 16 in Lundqvist, Ulla (1979). *Århundradets barn: Fenomenet Pippi Långstrump och dess förutsättningar [The Child of the Century: The Phenomenon of Pippi Longstocking, and Its Premises]*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren. It is unclear whether Astrid Lindgren ever read Nietzsche in the original.

[17] Astrid Lindgren was right in her anticipation of the adverse reception that the book about Pippi could potentially face. One year after the publication, the so called "Pippi feud" broke out, starting with a critical article by Professor of literature John Landqvist in Aftonbladet, a national newspaper. In other countries, the translation process "cleansed" some aspects of the text that were considered unacceptable, making new feuds less likely to occur. See O'Sullivan, Emer (2005). *Comparative Children's Literature*. New York: Routledge.

[18] *Ecce Homo:* Why I am so clever, §10.

same, something that Nietzsche views as the proof of a completed, and very much desirable, self-overcoming.[19]

This grand will to accept the world as it is, in *all* its aspects, is patently displayed by Pippi. Although she lives all by herself, something that should be viewed in light of all children's great fear of losing their parents, there is no resentment in her, no wish that life should have been different. Instead, she resorts entirely to the *amor fati* principle and sees the good in the hand that fate has dealt her: "My mother is an angel and my father is a cannibal king, it is certainly not all children who have such fine parents."[20] From life's military school, she has thus learned the maxim that Nietzsche exalts in *Twilight of the Idols:* "What does not kill me makes me stronger."[21]

The antitype of Pippi is Mrs. Finkvist, a woman who shows clear signs that she wishes she were someone else. On the whole, Pippi is rather tolerant, but in a meeting with Mrs. Finkvist, it comes out that she, quite like Nietzsche, harbors contempt for this type of resentful human being. Their meeting occurs at a party in Villa Villekulla, where the Christmas tree is to be stripped of its decorations, "plundered," and where the children are supposed to be at the center of attention. The thing that annoys Pippi is that Mrs. Finkvist, who believes that children should not be allowed to exist, and who actually shouted "nasty kid" at Pippi earlier the very same day, nevertheless has the audacity to beg for a cake that Pippi has baked for the local children. But when Pippi encounters Mrs. Finkvist's cheerless and greedy manners, her patience runs out:

[19] The idea of the eternal recurrence is central to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (e.g., Chapter 57, The convalescent, §2), but it was introduced already in *The Gay Science:* Book 4, Sanctus Januarius, §341.

[20] The "Pippi-quotes" have been picked from several Pippi Longstocking books by Astrid Lindgren, and also from movies based on her books.

[21] *Twilight of the Idols:* Epigrams and arrows, §8.

"My dear Mrs. Finkvist," she explains with ironic politeness, "this Christmas tree plunder party is suitable for children. That is, it is unsuitable for adults."

People who, like Mrs. Finkvist, find it hard to enjoy parties and festivities, and appear there for the wrong reasons, have often been disappointed with life, Nietzsche argues in *Daybreak:* "[Those] who have been deeply injured by life are all suspicious of cheerfulness, as though it were childlike and childish."[22] Under each bouquet of roses, they discover a disguised grave, which mirrors their dark background. Moreover, they often become a nuisance to others, as Nietzsche points out in *The Gay Science:* "Those who are dissatisfied with themselves are continually ready for revenge, and we others will be their victims, if only by having to endure their ugly sight."[23] It is partly in the light of this resentful type of human being, this enemy of joy and delight, that the overhuman must be understood.

The ultimate test of whether you are full of resentment, like Mrs. Finkvist, or whether you resemble Pippi and have accepted your fate, is provided by Nietzsche in *The Gay Science:* "What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: 'This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more … all in the same succession and sequence' … Would you not throw yourself down and gnash your teeth and curse the demon who spoke thus? Or have you once experienced a tremendous moment when you would have

[22] *Daybreak:* Book 4, §329.

[23] *The Gay Science:* Book 4, Sanctus Januarius, §290. This is probably the most famous paragraph about "the eternal recurrence." Another well-known line, playing down death itself, is the following: "Was that life? … Well then! Once more!" See *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 79, The drunken song.

answered him: 'You are a god and never have I heard anything more divine.' [24]

Yes to life

The resentment against life, which permeates the entirety of Mrs. Finkvist's character, can also be found in Socrates, according to Nietzsche. In *The Gay Science*, he ridicules Socrates' famous last words: "O Crito, I owe Asclepius a rooster."[25] For all those who have ears, Nietzsche argues, these words have to be interpreted as "O Crito, *life is a disease*."[26] The reason is that Asclepius was the god of medicine in Ancient Greece, which clearly implies that Socrates, through death, claimed to be cured of a disease.

But this resentment and animosity towards life are also embedded within wide-ranging belief systems, Nietzsche argues, and not just within individual people. Christianity is an example of such a life-denying belief system. Here, the extensive suffering in the world works as a pretext *against* life itself, according to Nietzsche. Instead, he wants to emphasize the need to accept suffering as *part* of life. Thus, when suffering befalls us, we should not gloomily try to comfort ourselves with the idea that a better afterlife awaits us. We should move on and accept life as it is. We should *live* our lives, not say no to it. We should realize, as Nietzsche points out in *The Anti-Christ*, that heaven is to be found in how we live, *here* and *now*, together with the ones we love: "The 'kingdom of God' is not something one waits for … it does not come 'in a thousand years' – it is an

[24] *The Gay Science:* Book 4, Sanctus Januarius, §341.
[25] Originally quoted in Plato's *Phaedo,* section 118a, written around 360 BC. See, e.g., http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1658?msg=welcome_stranger [2015-11-18].
[26] *The Gay Science:* Book 4, Sanctus Januarius, §340.

experience within a heart."[27] Simply enough, God is in the hands that we hold.

However, when Nietzsche attacks those who say no to life, it is not always the Christians he is after, but also Arthur Schopenhauer's introverted and life-denying pessimism.[28] Schopenhauer, who Nietzsche in many respects was influenced by, argued in accordance with Buddhist teachings that one must give up the thirst for life and live ascetically if one is ever to reach a final fulfillment in life. Contrary to this opinion, Nietzsche, for instance in *Twilight of the Idols,* argues that one has to say yes to life, no matter how cruel it can be: "Affirmation of life even in its strangest and sternest problems, the will to life rejoicing in its own inexhaustibility through the *sacrifice* of its highest types – *that* is … *to realize in oneself* the eternal joy of becoming."[29]

Pippi lives her life in a manner that is exactly as life-affirming as Nietzsche ever could have wished for. She does not despair over her fate. She has come to terms with it. Not in a cold, detached or resentful manner, but by giving it a life-affirming meaning, and by viewing every novel situation as a new set of opportunities. Pippi's solitary existence in Villa Villekulla, her own parentless home, is therefore not a problem for her. When she and her friends, Tommy and Annika, come home from a distant trip to tropical Kurrekurredutt Island, Annika beseeches her to sleep the first night with them, so that she does not feel alone. However, Pippi does not shun aloneness just because Villa Villekulla lay dark, empty and covered with snow. Instead, she displays her cat-like independence, one of the characteristics that have been granted the free spirits, and walks home to her

[27] *The Anti-Christ:* §34.
[28] See, e.g., Schopenhauer, Arthur (1851/2015). *Studies in Pessimism.* https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/s/schopenhauer/arthur/pessimism/index.html [2015-11-18].
[29] *Twilight of the Idols:* What I owe to the ancients, §5.

freezing cold house all alone. "So long as the heart is warm and ticks properly, you don't feel the cold," as she argues.

But Pippi not only affirms life by overcoming sad experiences, aloneness and cold houses in a calm and stoic manner. As part of her free-spirited yes-saying, she also keenly engages in risky business. For instance, while at the circus, she manages to stand on a horse's back, walk the tightrope and defeat Mighty Adolf in wrestling, all within a few minutes. Moreover, on other occasions, she engages in daring rescue operations, saving two boys from a house fire, a girl from an escaped tiger at the zoo, and Tommy from a shark at the coast of Kurrekurredutt Island. Such engagement in risky business is an important aspect of the yes-saying to life, as Nietzsche makes clear in *The Gay Science:* "Believe me! The secret of reaping the greatest fruitfulness and the greatest enjoyment from life is to *live dangerously!*"[30]

However, the will to life is not just expressed in bodily risk-taking, but also in intellectual endeavors. Nietzsche himself was prepared to sacrifice his relationship with both family members and friends in conveying his thoughts and ideas.[31] Pippi, for her part, constantly surprises her social surroundings through her unconventional reasoning. Often, it is adults that question her, but sometimes even Tommy and Annika have doubts about things. For instance, this can be noticed when Tommy asks why Pippi, quite oddly, keeps her horse on the front porch of Villa Villekulla. But although it seems like a fair question, Pippi certainly presents a convincing argument for this order of things: "Well, he'd be in the way in the kitchen, and he doesn't thrive in the parlor." In conclusion then, the will to life means taking on new challenges as soon as they appear, whether it is a matter of staying stoically calm in difficult life circumstances, excelling in bodily undertakings, or defending peculiar ideas.

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[30] *The Gay Science:* Book 4, Sanctus Januarius, §283.

[31] See, e.g., Kaufmann, Walter (1974). *Nietzsche: Philosopher, Psychologist, Antichrist.* 4th edition. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

Self-respect

Another aspect of the high-spirited yes-saying to life is the pride that the overhumans feel with regard to themselves. Thus, pride, one of the seven deadly sins according to traditional Christian ethics, is a virtue to Nietzsche. But this pride has nothing to do with arrogance, conceit or haughtiness, but only with a firm and relentless self-respect: *"What is the seal of liberation?"* Nietzsche asks in *The Gay Science*. "No longer being ashamed in front of oneself,"[32] he answers. Later, in *Ecce Homo*, the answer to the same question reads: "Accepting oneself as if fated, not wishing oneself *different*."[33]

In Pippi, this desirable self-respect becomes visible when awful Bengt and his gang bully her for being red-haired and wearing oversized shoes. Unperturbed by the attacks, she just stands in the middle of the ring of boys and smiles with confidence. As an overhuman, she does not allow herself to be defined by outside parties, but only by her own sense of worth. Likewise, this self-respect comes into sight when Pippi walks past a perfume shop with a poster in the window that asks prospective customers: "Do you suffer from freckles?" At the sight of this poster, and the large jar of salve next to it, Pippi, whose face is covered with freckles, enters the shop and walks up to the saleswoman with determined steps. "No, I don't suffer from them," she exclaims, "I love them!" Then, in the spirit of the *amor-fati* principle, she quickly adds: "And if you should happen to get in any salve that gives people *more* freckles, then you can send me seven or eight jars."

One explanation for Nietzsche's strong belief in the importance of self-respect is his idea of the innocence of becoming. As he puts it in *Twilight of the Idols*: "*No one* is accountable for existing at all, or for being constituted as he or she is, or for living in the circumstances and surroundings in which he or she

[32] *The Gay Science:* Book 3, §275.
[33] *Ecce Homo:* Why I am so wise, §6.

lives ... One is *not* the result of a special design, a will, a purpose ... one is a piece of fate, one belongs to the whole, one *is* in the whole – there exists nothing which could judge, measure, compare, condemn our being."[34] Thus, the overhuman does not waste time worrying about fixed things, like freckles, but instead learns to love them. Moreover, the overhuman realizes that people are being shaped by forces beyond their control. Thus, Pippi would never blame Tommy for never biting his nails, nor Annika for always being properly dressed in freshly ironed cotton.

Life as a creative adventure

But although Nietzsche emphasizes the *amor fati* principle, as well as the idea of the innocence of becoming, he certainly does not believe in passivity or in an inescapable destiny. Instead, he celebrates an active approach to life that demands personal traits such as ingenuity, originality and lightheartedness. One should take advantage of every situation; cultivate one's character; build oneself a distinctive particularity in time and space. Life is about acting regardless of the circumstances; about creating oneself; about living in a playful manner.

That Pippi displays an impressive ingenuity is demonstrated repeatedly. For instance, she does not turn muddle-headed when she suddenly runs out of the blue cloth that she uses while sewing herself a new dress. Instead, she soon decides to add little red patches here and there, and is very happy with that. Indeed, she dresses according to her own taste and liking, and not in line with the prevailing fashion. This also explains why she refuses to wear any other shoes than those her father bought for her in South America, "to grow into," and which are twice as long as her feet. In addition, she finds it quite unproblematic to wear long stockings of different colors, black and brown, on her thin legs. In short, Pippi is both innovative and original, and

[34] *Twilight of the Idols:* The four great errors, §8.

in this way, she fulfills perfectly the overhuman ideal and its independence from conventional norms.

At the same time, this relaxed attitude towards established conventions equips Pippi with the kind of imaginative creativity that an overhuman must have. It is precisely this creativity that allows her to devote a day to search for a "spink" together with Tommy and Annika. Pippi had invented this word, "spink," all by herself, and now she wants to find out whether she can find anything in the world that fits it. Thus, very much like the early Ludwig Wittgenstein, she wants to settle the relationship between the word and the world.[35] However, she soon realizes, as did both Nietzsche and the later Wittgenstein, that the most important aspect of language is what we can *do* with it.[36] Thus, when she finally suggests to Tommy and Annika that "spink" is the name of the beetle they find on the gravel path at Villa Villekulla, the most important thing is not the name-giving *per se*, but the act of persuasion that she is forced to engage in.

This means that language is rhetoric rather than a more or less truthful representation of the world: "[W]ith words it is never a question of truth, never a question of adequate expression,"[37] as Nietzsche argues in *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense*. In line with this, there is no final goal attached to language – such as a complete description of the world – but only a restless hunt for new meanings, truths, paradoxes, and so on. However, as Pippi's spink game shows, this is not something regrettable, but rather something liberating. It contributes to making life a creative adventure. It allows you to transcend the limits that language appears to set before you, and to strive for something new, something adventurous, something joyful. Thus, here Schopenhauer's pessimism is once again attacked. What

[35] See, e.g., sections 4—4.116 in Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1921/1971). *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. London: Routledge.
[36] See, e.g., §1-43 and §122-133 in Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1953). *Philosophical Investigations*. Oxford: Blackwell.
[37] *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense:* §1.

Schopenhauer identifies as the problem of life, the endless pursuit of goals which can never be satisfied, Nietzsche views as the ultimate meaning of life. It is in creative activity – the relentless hunt for change, novelty, transcendence – that happiness is to be found. The fact that you will perhaps never be satisfied with the fruits of the pursuit, but restlessly pursue new goals, is therefore not a problem for Nietzsche. Life is a journey for the overhuman, not a destination. Therefore, Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* also cries out: "Yes, for the play of creating!"[38]

However, the fact that the overhuman approaches life as a creative adventure does not imply that one should be lying idle. To create oneself means hard work and training, and if you are going to get good at something, it also means sacrifice. As *Zarathustra* expresses it: "[Anyone] who would learn to fly one day must first learn to stand and walk and run and climb and dance; one cannot fly into flying!"[39] This also applies to Pippi, who wants to become a pirate when she grows up. Then it is not good enough to be content with a slothful life as princess on Kurrekurredutt Island, as Pippi herself realizes: "If I'm to be a really good pirate one day," she declares, "then it won't do for me only to live court life. It makes you soft."

Dionysian passion

As part of Nietzsche's celebration of creativity, he directs harsh criticism against an overly naive faith in reason. Such faith in reason is shared by many of the great philosophers – from Aristotle,[40] via Seneca,[41] to Kant[42] – who argue that the passions

[38] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 1, The three metamorphoses.
[39] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 55, The spirit of gravity, §2.
[40] See "Book 3" in Aristotle (ca 330 BC/1992). *Nicomachean Ethics*. Mineola: Dover.
[41] See "Chapter 76" in Seneca (ca 40-65/1958). *The Stoic Philosophy of Seneca. Essays and Letters*. New York: Norton.

must be the slave of reason. Nietzsche can be said to reverse this in two ways. First, he argues that human beings are not as rational as we like to think we are. There is an irrationality within us that we gladly turn a blind eye to. Second, it is not even desirable to be governed by a supreme reason. The latter criticism, distrust of reason as the way to human salvation, is a thought that runs through Nietzsche's entire writings, from *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872) to *The Will to Power* (1883-1888).

In *The Birth of Tragedy* the criticism concerns the idea that Apollonian reason, with Socrates, came to dominate over Dionysian instincts and the lust for life. "The utterance *'truth at any price'* is something *Socratic,*" [43] as Nietzsche, quite disdainfully, puts it in *The Philosopher*. This pursuit of Truth, with a capital T, reflects a nihilistic response to the vicissitudes of life, and it prevents passion, fantasy and irrationality – the life-affirming, Dionysian elements. Our salvation lies not in knowing, but in creating, Nietzsche argues. And in creating, we undoubtedly need passion, Dionysian passion, in order to succeed, not primarily reason.

In the posthumously published *The Will to Power*, the criticism of the dominant reason concerns Nietzsche's fear that people, when finally realizing that the Apollonian quest for truth is a chimera, will lapse into a nihilism in which they see no meaning of life. Instead, Nietzsche argues, you should give the world the meaning it is waiting to be given. You do not discover the world, but *create* it. And this is something you must realize if you are not to despair over the transitory nature of the world, not to get caught up in a destructive nihilism.

This criticism of reason is also something that Pippi manifests through her way of living. Instead of dwelling on the past, and questioning the meaning of life, she orchestrates her own

[42] See "Second section" in Kant, Immanuel (1785/1981). *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals*. Indianapolis: Hackett.
[43] *The Philosopher:* §70.

wayward projects. Thus, it is hardly surprising to learn that Pippi often entertains herself with dancing in her loneliness, very much like Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, "the self-enjoying soul."[44] Thunder-Karlson and Bloom, the two local thieves, discover this when they sneak around Villa Villekulla. They are planning to steal Pippi's suitcase, the one that is full of gold pieces, and are waiting for Pippi to go to bed. But Pippi never goes to bed. She is learning to dance schottische. And she does not want to stop until she is sure that she really can. Perhaps Pippi is practicing for her future life as a princess of Kurrekurredutt Island, where she imagines a Dionysian existence: "Princess Pippilotta! What pomp! What grandeur! And how I shall dance! Princess Pippilotta dancing in the light of the camp fire to the rolling of drums. My goodness, how my nose ring will rattle then!"

But Pippi not only dances schottische with herself, lively and passionately, but constantly allows herself to be led by her impulses and whims. For instance, when Pippi meets spring, she does it in her special way, a way that affirms both the imaginative and wild side of her. Basking in the sunshine is not good enough for her, so she steps straight down into a ditch and starts jumping with joy in the water: "It's only in this country that they've got this idea that children shouldn't walk in ditches," she explains, "but in America, the ditches are so full of children that there isn't any room for the water."

Perspectivity

The spontaneity of Pippi also explains why she cannot possibly get caught in the nihilistic trap. Pippi does not seek truth. She says yes to fiction, the fiction that you create yourself. This also means that she embraces the kind of perspectivity that Nietzsche emphasizes, for instance in *On the Genealogy of*

[44] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 54, The three evil things, §2. Dancing is a recurrent theme in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*.

Morality: "There is *only* a perspective seeing, *only* a perspective 'knowing'; and the *more* affects we allow to speak about one thing, the *more* eyes, different eyes, we can use to observe one thing, the more complete will our 'concept' of this thing, our 'objectivity', be."[45] Thus, only our imagination sets the limits for what things can be. The world is therefore inexhaustible to us – if only we are able to recognize the possibility that it includes an infinite number of interpretations.

That Pippi has this creative ability for perspective seeing becomes clear at Kurrekurredutt Island. After saving Tommy from the shark attack mentioned above, Pippi actually starts weeping. This surprises Tommy and Annika, as well as all the cannibal children, because never before has Pippi been seen to lose her good spirits. "You weep because Tommy was nearly eaten up?" one of the cannibal children finally asks. "No," Pippi answers and wipes her eyes, "I weep because the poor little hungry shark did not get any breakfast today." This answer shows that Pippi is able to take the perspective of unfortunate animals, and feel pity for them. It is hard not to draw a parallel to Nietzsche's final perspective taking, weeping at Piazza Carlo Alberto in Turin with his arms around the flogged horse's neck.

In a later episode, as a participant at a school outing, Pippi actually also saves a horse that is being whipped harder and harder by its owner. "You're not going to beat that horse anymore," she says firmly to Mr. Flowergrove, the owner, and breaks the whip into small pieces. Then, in a kind of perspective reversal, Pippi gives him a taste of his own medicine: She picks up a heavy sack from the tormented horse's back and puts it on Mr. Flowergrove's back instead. Then she clarifies the lesson to be learned: "Now we shall see if you're as clever at carrying as you are at whipping."

[45] *On the Genealogy of Morality:* Essay 3, §12.

Pippi's perspective seeing also becomes visible when she arranges a Thing-searcher expedition – an adventurous hunt for lost things in nature – and invites the more limited Tommy and Annika to participate. When the three of them are crawling along a ditch, looking for things, Pippi suddenly finds a rusty old tin can. "Well, I never saw the like!" she cries out, "What a find! What a find!" Tommy, who represents the naive realist, then stares with amazement at Pippi. "What can you use that for?" he finally asks, rather unimaginatively. Pippi then quickly clarifies that it can be used as a jar for cookies, quite a conventional use perhaps, but also as something that turns day into night – if you only care to put it over your own head. Hence, we become aware that Tommy's conviction that the object found is a rusty tin can, and nothing else, limits his life-world in a substantial way, something that Nietzsche, in *The Anti-Christ*, captures with the words "[c]onvictions are prisons."[46] Beyond this, the example also illustrates that original human beings, of Longstocking standard, need not necessarily be the ones who discover an entirely new phenomenon, but rather the ones who manage to see something new in the old. With other words, "a rusty tin can" does not need to be *only* "a rusty tin can." It can be anything you like it to be.

Another example during the Thing-searcher expedition, which shows Pippi's extraordinary perspectivity, is the scene in which the sleeping Mr. Gustavson is transformed into Pippi's "cute little rabbit" and has to face being fed with dandelion greens. Pippi, as the free spirit she is, does not allow herself to be limited by the supposedly real world that Tommy and Annika inhabit. She creates her own world in a free and uninhibited manner. And she not only entertains herself in doing this, but amuses Tommy and Annika as well. She thereby confirms Nietzsche's observation in *Human, All Too Human* that "wherever there is happiness, there is joy in nonsense."[47] Such

[46] *The Anti-Christ:* §54.
[47] *Human, All Too Human:* Section 4, From the soul of artists and writers, §213.

joy in nonsense frees us from the merciless shackles of everyday life.

Childlike self-forgetfulness

As children often display the kind of presence, intensity and spontaneity that Nietzsche finds so desirable in human beings, they often serve as a metaphor for the overhuman ideal in his writings. As he puts it in *Daybreak:* "The ones who live as children live – who do not struggle for their bread and do not believe that their actions possess any ultimate significance – remain childlike."[48] Only those who struggle to find truth, the toil that always ends in nihilism, risk losing themselves in frustration, discontent and cynicism.

When children play, however, they are blissfully lost in the activity itself, and both the outside world and the self are forgotten. The activity itself is the goal and the child is deeply concentrated, something that should also characterize the mature human being, according to a reflection that Nietzsche makes in *Beyond Good and Evil:* "The maturity of a human being – that means to have rediscovered the seriousness one had as a child at play."[49] Immersed in such serious play, one will find oneself in the moment, free from the past and the future; one will appear as a new beginning, a self-propelled wheel, a here and now.

Not even the brusque appearance of tragic death can change this for the overhuman, as Pippi shows. When she plays the monster at the school outing, fiercely chasing all the other children, she suddenly stumbles across a dead little baby bird. At the sight of it, Pippi quickly throws off her game character and kneels down. All activity stops and a complete silence

[48] *Daybreak:* Book 4, §280.
[49] *Beyond Good and Evil:* Chapter 4, Apophthegms and interludes, §94.

spreads. Pippi puts the bird very gently on a bed of soft moss, sighs deeply and whispers to it: "If I could, I would make you live again." But then, in a split second, Pippi moves from the most sentimental mourning of the dead baby bird to a state of ecstatic play, once again picking up the role of dangerous monster. "Now I'm going to cook you for dinner," she shouts at the children, and with shrieks of terrified joy they try to hide among the bushes. The fragility of life must never prevent you from erupting in self-forgetting passion, enthusiasm and creativity. Even the baby bird would have wanted it that way.

Nietzsche, who quite obviously views himself as an overhuman, fears in *Ecce Homo* that he will one day lose his passion, enthusiasm and creativity, the ideals that he recurrently returns to in his texts: "*Willing* no more and *esteeming* no more and *creating* no more – oh, that this great weariness might always remain far from me!"[50] As he writes this, he is certainly unaware that he is less than half a year away from his collapse in Turin. That Pippi, on her part, sees no end to her playfulness and creativity is revealed when she, before her departure to Kurrekurredutt Island, answers Tommy's question about whether she will ever return to Villa Villekulla: "Oh yes, when I retire in about fifty or sixty years' time. Then you and I can play and have a nice time together, can't we?"

Besides this, Pippi also has her chililug pills that will keep her childlike. When Tommy and Annika sit on Pippi's kitchen table and complain about having to grow up, Pippi soon digs out three such pills from a nearby drawer. "Awfully good pills for those who don't want to grow up," she explains while distributing them. For sure, the pills look like ordinary yellow dried peas, as Tommy points out, but Pippi got them from a reliable old Indian chief in Rio, so they ought to work. Especially if you take them in the dark and say the famous

[50] *Ecce Homo:* Why I write such good books, "Thus Spoke Zarathustra," §8.

magic words: "Pretty little chililug, I don't want to get bug." As Pippi makes clear, the last word is vital for a good result – "bug," not the more predictable "big".

Fiction as condition of life

We have now gradually approached how Nietzsche's overhuman looks at, and relates to, knowledge and truth. Put simply, the overhuman resembles the Skeptics[51] when it comes to epistemological stances. The free spirits require *reasons* to believe in something, whereas the fettered ones are content to simply believe, Nietzsche disparaging claims in *The Gay Science:* "*[T]he great majority of people* does not consider it contemptible to believe this or that and to live accordingly, without first having given themselves an account of the final and most certain reasons pro and con, and without even troubling themselves about such reasons afterward." [52] The conclusion is that people must learn to think for themselves, and not just uncritically trust what others say.

Pippi has this kind of skeptical mind, as should be clear by now, but she also wants to encourage other people to gain it. Thus, after fooling a girl into believing that people eat swallow's nests in China, she soon clarifies, with an authoritative voice, that this gullibility is intolerable: "You certainly ought to *know* that's not true. You shouldn't let people make you believe just anything they like." However, as soon as the girl walks away, Pippi immediately starts telling fibs again. Like the overhuman, she has a complicated attitude towards the "truth": She believes in it, questions it, plays with it, hunts it, doubts it, and so on.

[51] The Skeptics belong to the Hellenistic period of Greek philosophy (323-31 BC), but the Sophists of the 5th century BC were partially Skeptics too. See Kerferd, George (1981). *The Sophistic Movement.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[52] *The Gay Science:* Book 1, §2.

In *Assorted Opinions and Maxims,* Nietzsche argues that doubt is actually a condition for the belief in truth: "Belief in truth begins with doubt as to all truths believed in hitherto."[53] This doubt, however, is only seemingly a Cartesian doubt. The overhuman does not employ doubt in order to create a supposedly safe metaphysical system, the way Descartes attempted.[54] The overhuman views fiction as a condition of life, not as something that can be escaped. Doubt is therefore only a liberating tool, not something designed to reestablish new false beliefs. At the most, the various truths one believes in should be allowed to become "brief habits,"[55] as Nietzsche makes clear in *The Gay Science,* that is, fictions that you cherish as if they were the final solution, but which you later, in an unperturbed manner, bid farewell in order to meet new fictions already waiting in the vestibule.

This tribute to fiction, and the realization that fiction is a remarkable means of entertainment, is certainly exhibited by Pippi. Thus, it is not a greater illusion to believe that the chililug pills will protect you from growing up than it is to believe that you will finally find Truth with a capital T. But perhaps Pippi's weakness for fiction becomes most visible when we hear her tell anecdotes from all over the world to Tommy and Annika: About people walking backwards in Egypt; about the Chinese man who hides under his big ears when it rains; about people telling fibs all day long in the Belgian Congo; about the prohibition against homework in Argentina; about people walking on their hands in Indo-China; about "jollification" lessons in Australian schools, and so on. These anecdotes show that Pippi can conjure up other, alternative worlds – perhaps more fascinating than the one we already know. And they show

[53] *Assorted Opinions and Maxims:* §20.
[54] Descartes, René (1644/1983). *Principles of Philosophy.* Boston: Reidel. "Doubt" is one of the most common words in Part 1. The famous phrase "Ego cogito, ergo sum" can be found in Part 1, article 7.
[55] *The Gay Science:* Book 4, Sanctus Januarius, §295.

that almost any fiction is good enough, not only those that are considered true.

Daring to question

Fictions regarded as true are, to Nietzsche, merely those errors which have not yet been detected. Or as he expresses it in *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense:* "Truths are illusions which we have forgotten are illusions."[56] Thus, as he argues in *The Gay Science*, the strength of knowledge does not depend on its degree of truth, but "on its age, on the degree to which it has been incorporated, on its character as a condition of life."[57] However, overhumans do not let themselves be bound by such truths, but dare to question them and go beyond them.

One example could be to tell fibs in the manner Pippi does. Then Annika's naive criticism of Pippi, "It's wicked to lie. My mother says that," does no harm. First, those who come up with this type of objection do not think on their own. Who says your mother is always right? Second, this type of objection does not acknowledge the array of lies. Who says there are not many ways of lying? Indeed, if we focus on the latter question, we soon realize that Pippi does not lie in order to deceive people, something that Tommy, but not Annika, understands: "Don't be silly Annika, Pippi doesn't tell real lies, it's pretend lies."

In this way, Annika is very far from Nietzsche's overhuman ideal. Those who, like Annika, feel incapable of lying, have not understood what truth, in reality, is. They must surely believe themselves to be telling the truth all the time and have not realized that fabrication, or fiction, is an inescapable condition of life. The conclusion is that you can, indeed, lie – if you only remember to do it with Pippi's self-understanding and self-distance. The greatest liars are those who not only genuinely

[56] *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense:* §1.
[57] *The Gay Science:* Book 3, §110.

want to mislead other people, but, in addition, lie to themselves. Annika definitely lies to herself when she, unconsciously self-righteous, believes herself to be telling the truth all the time. However, Pippi does not blame Annika, but instead praises Tommy for defending her own position: "Sometimes you talk so wisely it makes me think you might be a great man one day."

Like Nietzsche's overhuman, Pippi also realizes that knowledge is highly changeable. When Tommy and Annika do their geography homework at Villa Villekulla, Pippi suddenly cries out: "But supposing, just when you've learnt how many Hottentots there are, one of them goes and gets pneumonia and dies! Then it's all been for nothing!" Thus, memorized knowledge, just for its own sake, is not valuable knowledge to Pippi. This also becomes clear when a policeman tries to persuade Pippi of the importance of education. In order to convince her, the policeman argues that it might be very good to know the name of Portugal's capital. But he gets a quick reply from Pippi: "If you're all that anxious to find out what the capital of Portugal is, well, by all means, write directly to Portugal and ask them" – a modern answer, from a free spirit, who has come to realize that it is more important to know *how* to acquire knowledge than to learn it by heart.

Later, when finally attending school, Pippi refuses to accept a habitual procedure that she cannot find any sense in. Here, she challenges the common question-answer routine which, quite asymmetrically, gives the teacher the right to ask the questions, whereas the students are expected to provide the answers. The thing that disturbs Pippi is the fact that the teacher asks questions that she already knows the answer to. "You knew it all the time, so why did you ask then?" she exclaims when the teacher reveals the correct answer to a question. From Pippi's perspective, it is just ridiculous that the teacher asks questions that she knows the answer to. Questions should be asked out of genuine interest and out of a genuine desire to understand things.

"What is education?" Nietzsche asks himself in *The Will to Power*. "[E]ssentially the means of ruining the exceptions for the good of the rule,"[58] he answers. The question-answer routine can be seen as a part of this devastation, even though Nietzsche does not explicitly write this. It might be good for those who are unable to direct themselves, the fettered spirits. But for the free spirits, those who have the power and the will to create themselves, such teaching is devastating. And although this type of teaching often aims at increasing the amount of knowledge possessed by the students, the result is often disappointing. The inner motivation that gives rise to effortless learning disappears when the student is treated as a machine. Thus, perhaps Nietzsche is right when he, in *The Wanderer and His Shadow*, quite provocatively blames the teachers for the lack of an edifying proliferation in school: "[I]t is on their account that so little is learned and that little so badly."[59]

Defense of pluralism

The overhuman's mistrust of truth and knowledge also impinges on the examination and view of Morality with a capital M. A first error with morality, Nietzsche argues, is that it sacrifices individual self-realization for supposedly higher purposes: to optimize the public good (Benthamite utilitarianism),[60] to submit to strict governing by rules (Kantian deontology),[61] or to save the individual for a superior afterlife (Christian mythology). Instead, Nietzsche advocates an Aristotelian virtue ethics,[62] which fits well with traits that Pippi displays – ingenuity, inventiveness, originality, lightheartedness, courage, and so on.

[58] *The Will to Power:* Book 4, Discipline and breeding, §933.
[59] *The Wanderer and His Shadow:* §282.
[60] Bentham, Jeremy (1780/1996). *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.
[61] Kant, Immanuel (1785/1981). *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals.* Indianapolis: Hackett.
[62] Aristotle (ca 330 BC/1992). *Nicomachean Ethics.* Mineola: Dover.

Nietzsche is decidedly most aversely critical of Christian and Kantian ethics. The universal claims of morality that these related schools of thought set up, prevent human virtue and prosperity, he argues. In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche also identifies an ulterior motive behind the desire for a universal morality – to control people more efficiently: "What is wanted ... is nothing less than a fundamental remolding, indeed weakening and abolition of the individual ... one hopes to manage more cheaply, more safely, more equitably, more uniformly, if there exist only *large bodies and their members*."[63]

In Pippi's world, Mrs. Prüzelius can be seen as the embodiment of this type of suffocating universalism. She is a well-intentioned tyrant of the worst kind, a self-appointed improver of mankind – a preacher of morality – that no one wants to be exposed to. She is the guardian of an imagined, homogenous morality, vainly and naively believing her own precepts to be good for everyone. She wants to impose a secure childhood in an orphanage on Pippi, something that presumably would give her a good start in life and insight into the fine, subsumed, disciplined life. But Mrs. Prüzelius never for a moment asks herself whether this is what *Pippi* really wants. She worries about Pippi's parentless existence, but does not realize that Pippi herself is far more concerned about her mother's imaginable distress: "Don't worry," as Pippi soothingly whispers to her up in heaven, "I can look after myself."

In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche, hardly unexpectedly, mocks Immanuel Kant's famous categorical imperative,[64] the principle that, rather like the Golden Rule, states that you should act only according to such maxims that you would be prepared to elevate to universal law. The criticism of the categorical imperative is not primarily that we miss out on all the fun when

[63] *Daybreak:* Book 2, §132.
[64] See p. 421 in Kant, Immanuel (1785/1981). *Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals.* Indianapolis: Hackett.

we follow rigid rules, but that it is highly selfish to believe that one's own moral judgments, and one's own way of living, could serve as a universal law in the way Kant envisioned. But as the moralists in society, very much like Mrs. Prüzelius, nevertheless insist on imposing their own values on others, they are not only willing to sacrifice the individual, but also the diversity and pluralism of society. As Nietzsche expresses it in *The Will to Power:* "[I]nstead of discovering the standard in the highest enhancement of life itself, in the problem of growth and exhaustion, … [the moralists strive to] exclude all other forms of life."[65]

The moralists thus practice a reversed alchemy, Nietzsche argues, and this makes the most valuable individuals worthless. At the same time, the moralists appear as self-glorifying Pharisees, as they naively believe themselves to be living in accordance with the ideals they espouse. In reality, Nietzsche provocatively claims, they are merely disillusioned herd animals that easily succumb to their supposedly filthy inclinations. They thus appear as monkeys in relation to the ideals they exalt.

This universal morality can also be discerned in the naive Annika. When she, Tommy and Pippi are on the run from home and meet Konrad, a peddler that sells a magic gripping glue, Annika soon wants him to wash his very dirty ears. When Konrad innocently wonders why, Annika tries to find a good enough reason: "Well, cause I don't want you to roam along the roads, all alone and dirty and – well, you know, alone!" Then Pippi laughs disarmingly and says: "Well, he doesn't get any lonelier because he's got dirty ears, does he?"

Just like Pippi in this sequence sees through Annika's argument that Konrad should wash his ears, Nietzsche's overhuman realizes the cavities and cracks of moral judgments. One must

[65] *The Will to Power:* Book 2, Critique of highest values, §354.

learn to "*look away from* oneself,"[66] as *Zarathustra* exclaims in the spirit of a relativistic Sophist.[67] Only then are you able to recognize that what is good for yourself is not necessarily good for everyone else. People who say yes to life, overhumans, do not dedicate their lives to limiting the opportunities of others. Instead, they create themselves on their own terms, and let others be in peace. Moreover, as Nietzsche, in a defense of pluralism, makes clear in *Human, All Too Human*, it is also important that we cease treating ourselves as "inflexible, invariable, single individuals", as this would make us more inclined to recognize and appreciate the diversity of life forms in society: "[R]ather than making oneself uniform, we may find greater value for the enrichment of our knowledge by listening to the soft voice of different life situations."[68]

Individual imperatives

A second major criticism that Nietzsche directs towards morality, and which also shows how he imagines the overhuman, is that it often seems to be merely an unreflective habit. This is also confirmed by the fact that many moral philosophers – again from Aristotle to Kant – have associated the moral life with a close orientation to prevailing conventions. But Nietzsche argues that it cannot count as morality if you do things merely out of deep-rooted, unreflective habit. Instead, that means being fettered, rigid and highly inflexible. Thus, within the prevalent moral system, it is impossible to be both moral and autonomous, according to Nietzsche. Therefore, he also refers to overhumans as "immoral" individuals – immoral, but autonomous.

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[66] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 45, The wanderer.

[67] The Sophists have been both celebrated and criticized for their relativism. See, e.g., Kerferd, George (1981). *The Sophistic Movement.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[68] *Human, All Too Human:* Section nine, Man alone with himself, §618.

Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* contrasts the forthcoming overhuman with "the last human beings,"[69] a caricature of people who are so fearful of life that they are unable to strive for anything but safety and convenience, something they achieve by living completely conventionally. Under their crude morality, which is based on unreflective habit, any kind of originality gives rise to a bad conscience. Their morality is therefore a conservative force, which prevents the emergence of new, better habits. It makes them anxious, fearful and spineless, and thwarts all individual attempts to pursue new experiences, happiness and self-realization.

But the truly autonomous, the overhumans, have the courage to challenge conventions. They are free and independent, and are able to think and act differently from what would be expected based on their background, environment and position. Thus, overhumans need to operate on the basis of their very own categorical imperatives. This certainly explains why Pippi sleeps with her feet on the pillow, why she bakes ginger-snaps on the kitchen floor, and why she keeps her horse on the front porch. But it could never mean that Pippi, as an overhuman, would like to force other people to act exactly as she does. When overhumans create themselves, they create laws that apply to themselves only. "We want to be the poets of our life – first of all into the smallest, most everyday matters,"[70] as Nietzsche expresses himself in *The Gay Science*.

Unconventional, but good-hearted

It should now be clear that whereas strength of character to both Kantians and Christians is the ability to master supposedly dirty inclinations and passions, strength of character to Nietzsche's overhuman is instead having the courage to violate culturally inherited manners, routines and habits. Nobody can

[69] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Zarathustra's prologue, §5.
[70] *The Gay Science:* Book 4, Sanctus Januarius, §299.

therefore doubt that Pippi then has to be characterized as an indisputable overhuman. This fact has often caused people to understand Pippi as an instigator of bad behavior among children. Indeed, Pippi's unconventional features also explain why Astrid Lindgren's first, even more provocative, manuscript was rejected in Sweden.[71]

We merely have to take a look at Pippi's full name in order to get an idea of how unconventional she is: Pippilotta Delicatessa Windowshade Curlymint Ephraimsdaughter Longstocking. But a better example of Pippi's unconventional character is her unperturbed confidence towards adult authorities. As we have already seen, she displays such an attitude towards the teacher, when she refuses to answer questions to which the teacher actually knows the answer. Another well-known example is the scene where Kling and Klang, the local police officers, come out to Villa Villekulla and announce that Pippi will be transferred to the Children's Home for Orphans. Pippi then shows, with linguistic cheekiness, that she already is in a Children's Home: "I'm a child," she says and points to herself. "And this is my home," she says and points to Villa Villekulla. "I think that makes it a Children's Home." After this, the well-known chase across the roof of Villa Villekulla starts. Undoubtedly, policemen are the very best thing Pippi knows, next to rhubarb pudding of course, but she still tries to escape. Kling and Klang do their best to capture her, but it all ends when the playfully evasive Pippi takes the policemen by their belts and carries them down the garden path.

But Pippi also violates conventions in a more positive spirit. For instance, she gives Tommy and Annika presents even at her own birthday, when she is the one who should get them. Moreover, when she arranges a big Christmas party for the local children,

[71] See Lundqvist, Ulla (1979). *Århundradets barn: Fenomenet Pippi Långstrump och dess förutsättningar [The Child of the Century: The Phenomenon of Pippi Longstocking, and Its Premises]*. Stockholm: Rabén & Sjögren.

she quite unconventionally hangs all the parcels with Christmas presents in a big tree next to Villa Villekulla, and then lets the children climb up and get them. One should also notice that when Pippi gives presents, she does it without expecting anything in return, sometimes even without revealing herself as giver, as when she lets Tommy find a notebook and Annika a coral necklace upon coming home from the Thing-searcher expedition. In this way, Pippi certainly lives up to the bestowing virtue that *Zarathustra* so tenderly exalts and nurtures: "Uncommon is the highest virtue, and unprofiting; beaming is it, and soft of luster: a bestowing virtue is the highest virtue."[72]

This bestowing virtue also becomes evident when Pippi gives a gold coin to Thunder-Karlson and Bloom, even though they have just been trying to steal her suitcase, the one that is full of gold pieces. Furthermore, it is expressed in her Schopenhauerian care for animals.[73] Above, we have already witnessed this in relation to a flogged horse, a hungry shark and a dead little bird. But there is yet another example to be mentioned: Instead of trying to catch her house mouse in a mousetrap, Pippi gives it yummy cheese at Christmas – as well as its very own Christmas tree. Indeed, "the human being is the cruelest animal,"[74] as Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* argues, but an overhuman like Pippi does not put herself above other animals. Instead, she treats them with the same respect that Nietzsche defends in *The Gay Science:* "The animal has as much right as any human being."[75]

Ultimately, Pippi in a remarkable manner, shows that it is possible to be perceived as good-hearted even if one goes one's own way and breaks established conventions, obligations and expectations. Thus, there is no necessary contradiction, as one might often imagine, between breaking conventions and

[72] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 22, The bestowing virtue, §1.
[73] See, e.g., pp. 95-96 and 175-182 in Schopenhauer, Arthur (1840/1995). *On the Basis of Morality.* Indianapolis: Hackett.
[74] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 57, The convalescent, §2.
[75] *The Gay Science:* Book 2, §77.

simultaneously appearing as a nice person. This is also something that Tommy and Annika's mother seems to have realized: "Pippi Longstocking may not have very good manners, but she has a kind heart."

A dancing star

Being unconventional is thus not about being able to commit atrocities or being vicious. That is also why the destructive nihilist is so contemptible for Nietzsche, the nihilist who, like Fyodor Dostoyevsky's Ivan Karamazov believes that everything is permissible when there is neither a judgmental God nor a definitive truth.[76] Being a free spirit does not mean that you should do exactly what would be gratifying in the moment. And it certainly does not mean that you are allowed to injure people in order to demonstrate that you stand above them, as some perverted Nietzsche interpreters, who probably never read him, have claimed.

On the contrary, insofar as destructive passions and instincts sail up within you, there are endless opportunities to purify and embellish them, as Nietzsche argues in a proto-Freudian manner.[77] As part of the argument, put forward in *Twilight of the Idols*, he also blames Christian morality for taking quite the opposite pathway, that is, for enforcing a life-denying castration of passions: "The Church … never asks: 'How can one spiritualize, beautify, deify a desire?' – it has at all times laid the emphasis of its discipline on extirpation." [78] In contrast, Nietzsche argues that strong passions should be sublimated, transformed into something that society can admire or benefit from. Indeed, strong passions and a turbulent inner world might

[76] Dostoyevsky, Fyodor (1880/1992). *The Brothers Karamazov*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
[77] See, e.g., Freud, Sigmund (1929/1989). *Civilization and Its Discontents*. New York: Norton.
[78] *Twilight of the Idols:* Morality as anti-nature, §1.

even be a prerequisite for great deeds, as *Zarathustra* argues: "I tell you: one must still have chaos in one, to give birth to a dancing star."[79]

But what is a dancing star? It is *not* the fixed, material bodies that we see in the distant night sky. It is rather quite the reverse: It is something dynamic, something immaterial, something close to our skin. It could be anything that makes us transcend our current situation, anything that contributes to new orders, anything that brings about enjoyment. Nietzsche himself would perhaps emphasize the creation of new, life-affirming values – beyond good and evil – as the brightest dancing stars. But you could also settle for something quite earthly and everyday, as Pippi does: Invite your best friends for tea a beautiful summer afternoon, and then cry out "How lovely it is to be alive!"

Perhaps you have to become your own dancing star in order to become an overhuman. "What is love? What is creation? What is longing?"[80] the last human beings ask in *Zarathustra*, quite forgetful of what makes life worth living. But a dancing star *demands* exactly that: Love, creation and longing. If you do not know how to begin, follow the directive that *Zarathustra* gets from his animals after lying isolated and ill for many days: "Step out of your cave: the world waits for you as a garden."[81]

Exemplars

It should now be clear that Nietzsche's overhuman is neither an Aryan Nazi, a thoroughly efficient careerist, nor Superman personified. Instead, the overhuman ideal is very much something desirable and achievable, something that can appeal to all of us, regardless of ideological preferences, something we may have already approached to a great extent.

[79] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Zarathustra's prologue, §5.
[80] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Zarathustra's prologue, §5.
[81] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 57, The convalescent, §2.

Nietzsche himself mentions historical figures such as Jesus and Napoleon as specimens of overhumans,[82] showing that he did not exclusively view the overhuman as a future phenomenon. In our era, there are plenty of individualities which could serve as examples of overhumans. Spontaneously, one easily comes to think of international celebrities such as Aung San Suu Kyi, Malala Yousafzai or the Dalai Lama. But more local, original talents could also be mentioned: Alain Robert, the French urban climber, Eddie Izzard, the British stand-up comedian, or Kristina Lugn, the Swedish poet and playwright, and the star of the Swedish Academy.

However, the label "overhuman" cannot be reserved for famous people. All those who create themselves with courage and joy, despite setbacks and the realization that one's own approach to life may never be conclusively justified or acknowledged, can be considered as overhumans. The conviction regarding the spread of overhumans, which Nietzsche shows in the preface to *Human, All Too Human*, has thus, already, largely been fulfilled: "That such free spirits can possibly exist, ... I, myself, can by no means doubt. I see them already *coming*, slowly, slowly."[83]

That Nietzsche himself was an overhuman, a premature birth, is particularly evident in the light of his immense influence on two of the 20th century's greatest scientific movements: Psychoanalysis (e.g., Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung and Alfred Adler), which emerged early in the century, and poststructuralism (e.g., Michel Foucault, Gilles Deleuze and Jacques Derrida), which emerged late in the century, and which is still very vital. There are few philosophers in history that have such a bright future as Nietzsche. The present century will see many new overhumans and Nietzscheans being born.

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[82] See *The Anti-Christ:* §32 and *Beyond Good and Evil:* Chapter 5, The natural history of morals, §199.
[83] *Human, All Too Human:* Preface, §2.

Become what *you* are

But it must be remembered that Nietzsche, in *Ecce Homo*, emphasizes that he does not want to establish any religion, that he does not want any devotees: "I *want* no 'believers'; I think I am too malicious to believe in myself; I never speak to masses."[84] Thus, even though Nietzsche, with his suggestive style, provides the reader with an inspiring sense of insight and thirst for life, he also raises a warning that you may become a mere imitator if you cling to him too much.

Nietzsche's *Zarathustra* makes the same point when he formulates his mission to himself: "I need … companions, who will follow me because they want to follow themselves."[85] He wants to lure people away from the herd, but does not wish them to become a new herd under his rule. He merely wants fellow-creators, fellow-reapers and fellow-rejoicers. In a similar way, Pippi searches for accompanying creators, reapers and rejoicers, and finds them in Tommy and Annika. She pulls them away from their safe, conventional, mind-numbing bourgeois home and offers them inspiring new adventures. For sure, we all know that neither Tommy nor Annika will ever become copies of Pippi, no matter how hard they try, but at least they are transformed into something more exciting than they were before meeting Pippi.

In conclusion, becoming an overhuman is thus not about copying someone else, whether it is Nietzsche, Zarathustra or Pippi Longstocking. Just as there has only been one Christian, the one who died on the cross,[86] Nietzsche, or any other overhuman, cannot, and should not, be scrupulously emulated. Nietzsche's portrayal of the overhuman is therefore only intended as a liberating tool, but does not really provide any content – that, you will have to create on your own. The

[84] *Ecce Homo:* Why I am a destiny, §1.
[85] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Zarathustra's prologue, §9.
[86] See *The Anti-Christ:* §39.

imperative, expressed by *Zarathustra*, is short and clear: "Become what you are!"[87]

Literature

Nietzsche put a lot of effort into the choice of titles for his works. Thus, they have often been given a poetic timbre that attracts the reader. Here is a chronological list of the titles mentioned in this essay: *The Birth of Tragedy* (1872); *The Philosopher* (1872); *On Truth and Lies in a Nonmoral Sense* (1873); *Schopenhauer as Educator* (1874); *Human, All Too Human* (1878); *Assorted Opinions and Maxims* (1879); *The Wanderer and His Shadow* (1880); *Daybreak* (1881); *The Gay Science* (1882); *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883); *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886); *On the Genealogy of Morality* (1887); *The Anti-Christ* (1888); *Twilight of the Idols* (1888); *Ecce Homo* (1888); *The Will to Power* (1883-88).

In the preface of *Ecce Homo*, written at the very end of his career, Nietzsche clarifies that *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* is his personal favorite among his works: "Among my writings my *Zarathustra* stands to my mind by itself."[88] However, this book, possibly in competition with *The Birth of Tragedy*, is his most inaccessible one. For those who want to read Nietzsche in the original, it may therefore be wiser to begin with *Human, All Too Human*, *Daybreak* or *The Gay Science*, three books belonging to his magnificent intermediate period. These are, like many of his other works, written in aphoristic form. If you prefer to read more cohesive analyses, the essayistic *On the Genealogy of Morality* might be more appropriate. Finally, *The Will to Power*, published posthumously, must also be mentioned.

For those who do not wish to read Nietzsche in the original, there is an excellent book by Robert Solomon and Kathleen Higgins, *What*

[87] *Thus Spoke Zarathustra:* Chapter 61, The honey sacrifice.
[88] *Ecce Homo:* Preface, §4.

Nietzsche Really Said, largely written as popular science.[89] Another recommendable book is Julian Young's *Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*, a comprehensive biography that places Nietzsche's thoughts in the context of his time.[90] Many well-known scholars have also presented their very own readings of Nietzsche, including Karl Jaspers,[91] Martin Heidegger,[92] Gilles Deleuze,[93] Michel Foucault[94] and Jacques Derrida.[95]

[89] Solomon, Robert & Higgins, Kathleen (2000). *What Nietzsche Really Said*. New York: Schocken Books.
[90] Young, Julian (2010). *Friedrich Nietzsche: A Philosophical Biography*. New York: Cambridge University Press
[91] Jaspers, Karl (1936/1997). Nietzsche: An Introduction to the Understanding of His Philosophical Activity. Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press.
[92] Heidegger, Martin (1936-39/1979). *Nietzsche, Volume 1: The Will to Power as Art*. San Francisco: Harper & Row; Heidegger, Martin (1939-46/1984). *Nietzsche, Volume 2: The Eternal Recurrence of the Same*. San Francisco: Harper & Row.
[93] Deleuze, Gilles (1962/1983). *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. New York: Colombia University Press.
[94] Foucault, Michel (1971/1977). Nietzsche, Genealogy, History. In D. Bouchard (Ed.), *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
[95] Derrida, Jacques (1978/1979). *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

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On Emotions, Knowledge and Educational Institutions: An Explorative Essay

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Educational institutions are impregnated with feelings. There are innumerable examples of this: the student is carried away by exaltation at new insights, the teacher is subject to unfathomable ennui when faced with routine teaching or senseless administrative tasks, the pupil feels growing unease and anxiety as the finals approach. The researcher can be carried forward by the search for truth or fall into despair over fallacious results or lack of recognition. Schools and universities are furthermore places where the emotional flow appears and is regulated in a communal fashion—in classrooms, lecture halls or seminaries, in school yards, in conference dining rooms or in the corridors of institutions. Veneration can create interpersonal ties, just like envy, contempt and indifference can be repellent forces. Emotions contribute to the coherence of institutions, but they can also lead to their disintegration. They affect identity building and the development of the individual's personality. They produce wellbeing but also illness and suffering.

In this essay I formulate some reflections around the theme feelings and education.[1] I will outline some essential features of the research and will argue that a historical approach to the

[1] Well-aware of the frequent distinction between emotion and feeling in the literature on the topic, I use the terms as synonyms in the following.

subject will contribute by adding nuance to and complementing the often one-sided and misleading discussions that have marked the debate both within and outside of academia. In a subsequent part of the text I will concretise my reasoning by discussing one specific phenomenon from the past. I have chosen *the example of love* and will discuss the function it serves in higher education. The focus of the discussion will alternate between the Swedish context and international perspectives.

Even though emotions are corner stones of the educational system they are often left unmentioned.[2] In many cases they are considered irrelevant by-products.[3] But the last decades have witnessed a change in attitude.[4] More and more attention has focused on the importance of emotions. Within disciplines such as pedagogics, psychology and sociology researchers have shown growing interest in the part played by emotions in, for example, learning processes and educational situation. [5] Different ideas about emotions as knowledge in its own right have also been formulated and gained resonance.[6] The empirical research that started in the 1930s—and which among other things discussed students' ways of handling tension when faced with finals—has furthermore expanded in a multitude of new directions.[7] Today more than one thousand studies have been

[2] Se for example O'Loughlin, 1997, p. 404ff for a further account.
[3] Hereto compare for instance the discussion in Pekrun and Linnenbrink-Garcia, 2012, p. 259f.
[4] This change in turn is partly connected to a general development often refered to as the *affecive turn* in the humanities and social sciences. Hereto see for example Ticineto Clough, 2007.
[5] For an overview over research dealing with the role of emotions in academia, see Christenson, Reschly and Wylie 2012.
[6] The perhaps most well-known are Martha Nussbaums ideas on the topic. Se for example Nussbaum, 2001. In this essay I refrain from discussing such ideas further.
[7] For an insight into this research and its approach to the role of emotions in academic student performance see Pekrun, Goetz and Titz, 2002.

published, at least according to a recent estimate.[8] Over the last decennium, several scholarly journals have dedicated voluminous theme issues to the relationship between feelings and education.[9] The subject matter has also been the focus of anthologies, conferences and monographs.[10]

Viewed from one perspective, the newly awakened interest seems understandable and legitimate. Certainly human emotional life's close interrelation with and integration into the knowledge-acquiring process has always been present in pedagogic thinking. Each and every teacher has also, since the emergence of the first educational institutions, experienced and dealt with both his of her own emotions and those of others. At the same time many theories and practices in the field of education—not least during the twentieth century—have lacked elaborated and sufficient thinking about the emotional.[11] When the understanding of the importance of this dimension grows it is easy to be complacent about the development.

But critical questions must still be raised. In fact, even a cursory look at the growing literature reveals controversial issues. For as it turns out, many of the published works appear to be related to management concerns, which have gained an increasingly strong position in the educational policies of the Western world. The research has often—implicitly or explicitly—emphasised an instrumental attitude to emotions. They are seen merely as

[8] Pekrun, 2014, p. 6.
[9] See Schulz and Pekrun, 2007b p. xiii; Day and Chi-Kin Lee, 2011, p. 1. Examples of theme issues are found in *Educational Psychologist* (2002), *Learning and Instruction* (2005) and *Teaching and Teacher Education* (2006).
[10] An important anthology is Schulz and Pekrun, 2007a. Se also Newberry, Gallant and Riley, 2013; Schulz and Zembylas, 2009. Monographs worth mentioning are Boler, 2005; Zembylas, 2005.
[11] This is—to mention three examples—lergely true for the various forms of essentialism and perennialism, as well as partly for the progressivistic understanding of learning and educational institutions.

useful tools in pedagogical reform work.[12] In many cases one has advocated what might be called *emotion management*, techniques that educational authorities, school principals, bureaucrats and teachers can and should use in order to reach their objectives.[13] Frictionless normality, a well-developed ability to conform, constant flexibility and goal-oriented, rational creativity are considered desirable qualities that should be promoted in both teachers and students through emotion management. Notable examples are the pedagogic ideals that have emerged in connection with the notion of so-called emotional intelligence (EI). These gained great influence in many quarters from the mid 1990s and onward while at the same time they were subjected to recurrent criticism.[14] The advocates of pedagogical solutions based on EI thought that people should be provided with special emotional competence, so that they would become responsible and productive members of society.

The interest in the role played by emotions in education is thus often tied to an implicit or explicit wish to streamline and to acquire effective instruments for governing.[15] The growing production of knowledge about the relations between learning, emotions and institutions furthermore appears often to be tied to dreams of economic growth and safeguarded welfare. By gaining greater insight into the importance of emotions for teachers and students researchers, politicians and administrators expect to promote creativity and prepare the way for growing

[12] See fo example the critical discussions in Zembylas and Fendler, 2001, especially p. 320ff; Oplatka, 2009.
[13] In this respect, the educational system is part of an all-embracing change that permeate work and everyday life in most parts of the West. This change has been an object of inquiry in for instance sociology, organisation studies and social psykology. A work in this field that has attracted much attention is Illouz, 2007.
[14] For a historical background and critical perspectives, se Landy, 2005.
[15] This is applies not only to streamlining and governing of pupils, but also to teachers. For further discussions, see the contributions to Schulz and Zembylas, 2009. An overview is also found in Woolfolk Hoy, 2013.

entrepreneurship.[16] Furthermore they claim that a greater focus on emotions makes it possible to create a democratic educational system in which the individuality of each student is recognised and where students are given the opportunity to realise their personal learning potential on their own terms.[17]

Such ideas are linked to the focus on emotions which has put its mark on numerous concrete educational practices throughout the Western world.[18] Not least within the school system the pupils emotional lives are brought to the fore. But when this occurs, it is mainly not trough the explicit expression of feelings, but rather through more second hand discussion and verbal processing of the experienced emotions. In this processes the so-called "safe" or "desirable" emotions have been given priority.[19] It is the mark of these desirable emotions that they can be discussed and handled within the frames of what is socially and discursively accepted. In this manner, emotions gain pedagogic value. Hard-to-deal-with, norm-breaking or destructive emotions, however, are excluded.

These changes have in many countries made education into a place for accumulating"emotional capital", to borrow an expression used in the debate.[20] The "effective school" has become synonymous with the "affective school".[21] There are most likely several driving forces behind this development but, as many commentators point out, the changes reflect processes taking place in society as a whole. [22] The accelerating

[16] For a discussion about the endrepreneurial discourse and ideologies related to it, se Wedin, 2015; Ringarp, 2013; Leffler, 2006.
[17] On education and individualisation, see Hartley, 2008.
[18] See Hartley, 2003.
[19] See Hartley, 2003, p. 15; Zembylas and Fendler, 2001, p. 330
[20] Hartley, 2003, p. 6.
[21] Hartley, 2003, p. 6.
[22] The so called therapeutic turn is a long discussed phenomena dating back to the 1960s and 1970s. Momentous works in this tradition are, among others, Rieff, 1987 (originally published 1966) and Lasch, 1991 (originally published in 1979). Later examples exponents for similar views are, fon in-

consumption culture and fragmentation of the living world as well as often complicated and fragile identity-building processes among the young have been of great importance. The mobilisation of both primary educational system and the university for the purposes of the so-called new economy is also an important aspect.

One reaction to this development has been to apply the brakes and to argue for the return of old-fashioned, highly disciplinary school. Several influential debaters have, in recent years, set the new therapeutically directed pedagogic against an educational system in which personal feelings are given second place to knowledge acquisition and rational argumentation.[23] Often arguments have referred to what is perceived as classic enlightenment and humanism. Opponents are portrayed as typical exponents for of postmodern relativism. This attitude has historical antecedents in the attacks on progressive pedagogics that became increasingly forceful during the post-war era.

In extension to the critique of the emotion-oriented education—which is voiced by the political left as well as by the right—one often encounters ideas about the necessity of directing interest away from the emotional and toward the cognitive.[24] Advocates of such a change think that by doing this we will be able to bring back a healthier, less emotionalised situation, which supposedly existed in the past but has been lost in the epoch of therapeutic pedagogics. By substituting feelings with knowledge we take the first step away from the so-called fuzzy-school.

stance, found in Hoff Sommers and Satel, 2005. For further discussions on the subject, also see the contributions in Imber 2004.

[23] In this genre, the works of Frank Furedi are salient. See Furedi, 2009; Furedi, 2004. Another book attracting significant attention has been Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009. I return to some aspects of this book later on. Swedish examples are the polemical writings of Inger Enkvist. See for example Enkvist, 2002; Enkvist, 2003. Nuanced and elaborating philosophfically oriented discussions are found in Smeyers, Smith and Standish, 2007.

[24] Compare for instance Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009.

Only when the fixation on teachers' and students' inner lives is abandoned for the benefit of traditional knowledge-conveying teaching and respect for authorities can we turn thing around and reverse the ongoing decline.

I think it is important to emphasise two aspects of this argumentation. First, the critique of education focused on emotions implies that it is possible to separate emotion and cognition. The notion of a return to a happy time existing before the appearance of therapeutic theories and practices postulates a dichotomy, according to which the prioritisation of knowledge-oriented activities requires a neutralisation of emotions. This idea often presupposes the existence of historical periods during which emotions were irrelevant in an educational context.

Second, the accounts of how the school was transformed from being a knowledge-transferring social institution to a laboratory for emotional therapy are often unreflective in that they ignore the fact that they themselves clearly also are charged with feelings. A rhetorical analysis of such accounts would without difficulty be able to show how they operate within a melancholic modus, placing a lost Golden Age of the past in nostalgic contrast to contemporary times characterised by decay. The expressed visions of a better education, unencumbered by emotions, are in fact often highly emotional themselves. Respect for the teacher, care for knowledge, fellowship in learning and love of truth are common rhetorical devices that express and bring forth feelings.
These two aspects of the critique of the emotion school and of the therapeutic pedagogy are in my opinion expressed in a double manoeuvre by which emotions are rejected and at the same time allowed back in through the very formulation of the argument. The effect of the manoeuvre is that a very central aspect—emotions' relation to education—is clearly present, but by and large without being subject to reflexion. In my opinion, it would therefore be more profitable to approach the

emotion/education problematic in a different manner: by seeking a perspective in which emotions can be surveyed without the research placing itself in the service of political or administrative interests, and at the same time pursue the investigations with appropriate critical distance to the idea that emotions have no legitimate part to play whatsoever. For feelings are always central in educational institutions.

How do we proceed down the path I have indicated? One way would be to lay bare the emotions that existed in the educational systems of the past. Traditionally, little research has been done on the emotional history of education, and the field today remains largely unexplored. But during the last years interest has grown and there are clear signs that it will grow further.[25] The potential benefits of such growing knowledge of the subject are numerous. By historically elucidating the theme of emotion and education we throw light on the fact that emotions often have served important purposes. We also gain empirical evidence of the ever changing relationship between emotions and the acquisition of knowledge. We can furthermore—by referring to the variety and complexity of the past—contribute to a deepening of today's exchange of ideas.

We find one example of how history can cast light on the present in the feeling of love.[26] In a sense, variants of this feeling have always been closely related to pedagogical theories and praxis.[27] Already in antiquity the connection is obvious. One

[25] Compare Sobe, 2012.

[26] The question of the definition of love and the scholarly discussion—not the least in such fields as feminism and gender studies—about its character, functions and expressions is part of a vast and rapidly growing interdisciplinary field, nowadays often refered to as *love studies*. In the following, I refrain from defining the concept in detail and also from attepts to give any exhaustive accounts of its different historical and contemporary meanings as they are treated in today's research. For an insight into the field, see for example Oord, 2010, p. 1ff.

[27] For an overview over different approaches to the theme of love and pedagogy, see Loremsn, 2011, p. 2ff.

need, for example, merely bring to mind Plato's *Symposium* and the Greeks' various ideas about *eros*, *agape* and *philia* to realise the existence of such a connection. Indeed, the very word philosophy—love of wisdom—points toward a connection between emotions and education. At later times the feeling of love has likewise been of crucial importance in many contexts, from the institutions of learning of the Middle Ages to modernity's elementary schools. At the same time, this feeling has often been suppressed within the various organisations.[28] It has, for example, been conceived as a threat against rational control or bureaucratic impartiality.[29]

An appropriate area of study is the university. For the academy is a place where the interplay between various types of emotions appears both complex and especially important.[30] Reflections on the history of love within the higher educational system are therefore well motivated. But before we get to these reflections it may be fruitful to make a digression and draw comparisons to the elementary school. I will chose an example from Swedish history, an example that certainly is comparable to events taking place in other countries. Educational historian Joakim Landahl has, in a study of the Swedish school focused primarily on the second half of the nineteenth century, pointed out that love played an essential role in the teaching.[31] He describes how modernisation and general education brought on a change in the function played by feelings in educational institutions. Especially after the monitorial system and mutual instruction was abandoned, a historically new emotionalisation took shape in which not least the feeling of love became central.

[28] A good overview over the theme of emotions and organisations is found in Fineman, 2000. For a further discussion of the presence of love in education, see the contributions in Liston and Garison, 2004.
[29] See the discussion in Spicer and Cederström, 2010, especially p. 133ff.
[30] Compare for example Ehn and Löfgren, 2007, p. 103ff.
[31] Landahl, 2015.

With examples from pedagogic literature and contemporary descriptions of schoolwork, Landahl shows how growing emphasis was put on love as an effectual means of guiding students. It now became one of the teacher's primary duties to engraft the students with the right feelings, and the most important feeling was that of love. However, the goal was not to create emotional attraction between teacher and student but rather between student and established authorities such as school, fatherland and God. The subordinate's pure love of the authority was emphasised while the impure manifestations of that same feeling—that is, sins and vices—were combatted. According to Landahl a more emotionally cool period in the history of the school gradually emerged. After the turn of the nineteenth century, love did not have nearly the prominent position it had once had. Not until our time did it again gain importance.

It is not difficult to find resemblances between the nineteenth century use of love for educational purposes and our own time's *emotion management*. In both cases, the feeling is primarily viewed as a pedagogical tool used for instrumental purposes in order to achieve social goals, albeit very different such goals. In other words, emotions function as a tool at the disposal of the authority, a tool that serves the purpose of manipulating and governing. From the same perspective, feelings of love can appear as consciously stimulated illusions that serve to keep people in a state of bondage and false consciousness. Only when the influence of emotions is checked is it possible to achieve a democratic and non-discriminatory system of education, in which the knowledge-seeking subject is autonomous—that is, granted power over his or her own life.

Against this background, it is not surprising that the contemporary critique of the emotion-directed education can also be directed against love. In a thought-provoking and much noticed debate book called *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education* (2009) the British pedagogues Kathryn Ecclestone

and Dennis Hayes in one section question the idea that feelings of love are interesting and relevant in an educational context.[32] They have in mind not only love of the educational institution, the teacher, the fatherland and God, but also love of seeking knowledge in and of itself. In the therapeutic discourses the student is encouraged to reflect on his or her own feelings of love engendered in the learning process. But according to Ecclestone and Hayes what happens is that the student in the same instance loses sight of knowledge as such. People sink into introspection instead of directing their attention to things outside themselves. They do not realise that one can dislike and even hate the learning process and yet be faithful to the object of learning. According to the authors, the talk of love of the search for knowledge furthermore hides the fact that the process ideally should be characterised by cool neutrality, *disinterestedness*.[33] Otherwise subjective emotions are allowed to dominate over impartially acquired objective facts, and subsequently diminish the possibilities of having a rational and critical discussion.

An important aspect of Ecclestone and Hayes's reasoning in the mentioned passage is that they are discussing higher education. For there is a crucial historical difference between elementary school and the higher education, which must be stressed. As we have noted, modernisation within the educational system appears to have led to a sort of *emotion management* in which love was seen as a pedagogical instrument for making the students disciplined and for shaping them according to society's desiderata. But in the same time period we can observe the expression and effects of a different kind of feeling of love, which would be of crucial importance. This feeling is not absent at lower levels, but it serves an especially important function in academia. For it is, I will claim, clear that the emergence of the modern research university in the 1700s—and not least toward the end of this century—entailed a new emphasis on the love of

[32] Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009, p. 96ff.
[33] Ecclestone and Hayes, 2009, p. 97ff.

the search for knowledge per se. When older ideals and practices rooted in the medieval educational institutions disappear we see more and more clearly affirmative expressions within the academic life and scientific work as goals in themselves. Many of those who express opinions on what the university is and should be strongly emphasise and praise the search for knowledge per se as an end goal. At the same time, all instrumental purposes and exterior motives are rejected as false or at least as being less important. In my opinion, this change stands out as an important key to understanding the entire history of the modern university. Here I can only give an outline of its contours.

The characteristics of the change are disclosed in many contexts. A paradigmatic example is Friedrich Schiller's inaugural lecture as professor in history at the university of Jena. This lecture was held at the end of May 1789 to a crowded auditorium of enthusiastic students, and its subject matter was the so-called universal history.[34] But before Schiller engaged in his theme he, by way of introduction, drew pictures of two academic ideal types that had their counterparts among both students and teachers. He called these types the bread-fed scholar (*der Brotgelehrte*) and the philosophically thinking human (*der philosophische Kopf*) respectively. According to Schiller, the primary difference between them was that they had what might be called different emotional relations to university life. The bread-fed scholar is driven by an exterior purpose, such as economic gain or honour and fame. His emotional gratification is located entirely outside of the study. The acquisition of knowledge, according to Schiller, becomes merely a means to achieve an external goal. The search for truth per se is emotionally entirely irrelevant. Therefore, the bread-fed scholar always looks for shortcuts, for ways to minimise his workload. He breaks up the mass of knowledge, which is in

[34] The following account is based on Schiller, 1970, p. 360ff. About the inagrual lecture, compare Safranski, 2004, p. 310ff.

reality a unity, so as to simplify the use of the material for his own purposes.
The opposite of the bread-fed scholar is the philosophically thinking person. This person, according to Schiller, loves the search for knowledge as such. He is emotionally excited when faced with the learning process, he entirely lacks ulterior motives for the studies and finds his reward in the process itself. Therefore he is a sworn enemy of dogmatism and ingrained ideas. The philosophically thinking person questions and tests because he values truth more than established systems, convention or adaptation to exterior demands. By thinking and questioning he, at the same time, finds a ”intimate community” with all like-minded people.[35] The love of search for knowledge leads to a deep kinship with everyone driven by similar forces.

Schiller's lecture is for several reasons a key text in the history of ideas of the university.[36] Its content, and its enthusiastic reception, make it well suited to stand as an example of the pattern of new attitudes among both students and teachers vis-à-vis higher educations, as several researchers have pointed out.[37] The notions and the spirit that permeate the introduction bear great resemblance to the programme texts for universities that would be written over the next decennia, up until the establishment of the Berlin university in 1810. In Wilhelm von Humboldt's famous memorandum, written before the establishment of a new seat of learning in the Prussian capital, for example, there are references to the emotional fervour that should characterise an ideally functioning institution of education.[38] At several points in the text—which may be

[35] ”innige Gemeinschaft”. Schiller, 1970, p. 363.
[36] Hofstetter, 2001; Ziolkowski, 1990, p. 238 pp; Karlsohn, 2012, especially p 94ff.
[37] See for exaple vom Bruch, 1997, p. 11ff; vom Bruch, 2001, p. 72ff; Rüegg, 2004, p. 23ff.
[38] Humboldt, 2010. A discussion over the role of Humboldt—as a symbol and as a person—in the development of the modern research university (and also reflections on current research regarding this role) is found in Josephson, Karlsohn and Östling, 2014.

considered one of the most important expressions of the principles that would dominate the modern research university—Humboldt emphasises the importance of enthusiasm, affection, and passion for the sciences in their own right. It is true that he does not use the word love, but he draws a picture of the true researcher's personality that bears strong resemblance to Schiller's philosophical person. Furthermore, over the next centuries, versions of this person crop up everywhere in discussions about higher education. He is portrayed repeatedly in descriptions of university life and in academic memoirs. He recurs in the writings of many of the leading, most influential scholars on education and debaters on the university, from Fichte and Newman to Flexner and Helmholtz, and more recently Jaspers, Arendt, Gadamer, Bloom and Nussbaum (to mention just a few). Schiller's philosophical person is still alive today, though now less widespread.

It would be a mistake to think that the idea of a special kind of passion for the search for knowledge is a recent phenomenon, with roots dating back only two hundred years. It makes its appearance much earlier. The classic Greek *philomat* (lover of knowledge) is an early example, which has counterparts in the medieval church-governed institutes of education. Furthermore, in this context St Augustine's distinction between *cupiditas* (the worldly, sensual and material desire object-desiring love) and *caritas* (the consciously chosen love of God) is of great importance.[39] We find yet another example in early modernity, namely Spinoza's idea of an *amor dei intellectualis*, an intellectual love of God. It is without a doubt connected to Schiller's and his contemporaries' idea of a motiveless love of the process of gaining knowledge, untainted by ultimate purposes and ends.[40]

[39] On this distinction, se for instance Arendt, 1996, p. 18ff.

[40] The affinity between Spinozas conception and the emotions cultivated in the modern university has also lead to the emphazising of the intellectual love of God as relevant for the discussion of higher education in our time. Se fpr example Rowland, 2006, p. 110ff.

It is, however —I would claim—only with the establishment of the modern research university that this type of love clearly takes the shape of a link in an over-all structure. The idea of the university as a separate community in which a number of chosen people without ties to external forces or desire for worldly gain cultivate their love of the knowledge process thus has a significant impact.[41] This idea is also important to the academics' self-conception. During the 1800s, this idea often appeared to mirror the older pre-modern ideal of the seeker of knowledge being an independent amateur (lover) without pecuniary interests, independent of patrons or traditional institutions of learning. This ideal is quite apparent in the writings of people such as Schiller and Humboldt. During the inter-war years, a reassessment took place. The researcher is no longer considered unique or exceptional, but, rather, an ordinary worker in a collective. [42] At this time, several historically central reflexions on science saw the light of day. One example is Max Weber's influential lecture "Science as a Vocation" (published 1919) in which the researcher's emotional ties to his own activities are emphasised.[43]

Over the last years, suspicion has been thrown on the concept love of the search for knowledge. Sociology of science, for example, has successfully shown that a wide variety of factors outside of the university—not least material and social—are of greater importance to motivation and ways of acting than was previously realised. The apparently unadulterated love can thus be associated with underlying, hidden motives, for example academics' boundary work in defence of their own power position, economic gain or exalted social position. Researchers and teachers appear, seen through this lens, as driven by the

[41] This cultivation of love is also often associated with the modern german idea of *Bildung* (self-formation) taking shape during the period when the modern research university also emerges. See for example Beiser, 2003, p. 88ff.
[42] See Shapin, 2008, especially p. 47ff.
[43] Weber, 1995.

same forces as people in, for example, business sector or politics.[44]

Against this background, it is tempting to see the expression of love for the search for knowledge that we find in Schiller and those that followed him as an idealising rhetorical veneer of no importance to real historical circumstances. But this would be a mistake. There are good reasons to believe that this emotion plays a concrete, important part in modern educational institutions. The last years' political and administrative attempts to prevent difficult-to-control emotional tensions in academic life are, not least, indicative of this.[45] The ambition to transform the academic profession, from a calling in the Weberian sense into an ordinary jobb, is often linked to a will to weaken researchers' and teachers' traditional emotional ties to their own activities.[46] Instead, the tendency has been to emphasise other types of positive, emotionally charged aspects of academic work: self-realisation, well-being, intimacy, social competence, etc.[47]

Here, I have only offered an outline of what can be developed into a far more nuanced and empirically-based history. An detailed description of love of the modern search for knowledge and the importance of this love in the history of the university remains to be written. But my outline provides a basis which

[44] One of many possible examples of this line of reasoning is found in the sociological tradition originating in the works of Bourdieu. See Pierre Bourdieu, 1988 and compare for instance Martin, 2010.

[45] These atempts are not the least discussed in the debate about the so called de-erotication of the university. Se for example Burch, 1999; Hörisch 2006; Bell and Sinclair, 2014.

[46] For a good overview of the discussion about professionalisation and de-professionalisation, se Hasselberg, 2012, for example p 17ff, p. 44ff. See also Nixon, 2008, especially p. 12ff for another take on the subject.

[47] In this respect, the development at the university level seems only to be a part of an all-embracing emotionalisation of the working life where the traditional virtuse of duty and responsibility doesn't play as important a role as before. Compare Spicer and Cederström, 2010, p. 134f.

makes it possible to say something about what conclusions such a history could lead to, and of how these conclusions can contribute to research in the field.

The normative aspects of the modern research university's practice have been discussed a good deal. Not least Robert Merton, and the sociology of science that he developed in the inter-war period, has been associated with an interest in the normative aspects of university life.[48] The discussion raised by Merton's posited classic scientific norms (such as universalism, organised scepticism and disinterestedness) has been extensive.[49] Critique of these norms have been formulated in various ways, while at the same time, they have been used rhetorically to emphasise the independence and purity of research.

One of the norms that Merton posited was disinterestedness.[50] According to this norm, scientific work should be done and presented without being affected by the researcher's feelings or partiality, subjective preferences or individual inclinations. Science must also be protected from external interests that may affect the results of the knowledge process. Disinterestedness thus entails—to quote physicist and philosopher of science John Ziman—a "detachment from the life world".[51] It introduces the researcher to an abstract existence marked by pure science, an existence "where ordinary human interests have no place", writes Ziman.[52] Where this norm rules, in other words, there seems to be no space for love of the search for knowledge.

Much effort has gone into determining what disinterestedness meant for Merton, and into discussions about the norm's

[48] See for instance Merton, 1973; Ziman, 2004.
[49] For an overview, see Hasselberg, 2014; see also Hasselberg, 2012, p. 29 pp
[50] See for example Merton, 1973, p. 275ff.
[51] Ziman, 2004, p. 39.
[52] Ziman, 2004, p. 39.

adaptability to modern university institutions.[53] Ever since the norms were postulated, different interpretations have competed. According to one not uncommon view, disinterestedness implies an emotional coolness that ideally promotes cognitive aspects at the expense of emotional ones. The modern university is a place dedicated to objective knowledge and rational argument, not subjectively coloured perspectives and irrational feelings. As mentioned above, it was exactly this conviction that led Kathryn Ecclestone and Dennis Hayes to argue that the feeling of love is irrelevant in a university setting. They did not mention Merton by name in *The Dangerous Rise of Therapeutic Education*. But their references to disinterestedness clearly indicate an attachment to the classical norms which Merton emphasised and which many have been judged characteristic of the modern research university.

The problem with views in line with Ecclestones' and Hayes' is that they confuse two levels: the institutional, on the one hand, and the motivational or psychological level, on the other.[54] Merton had warned against this confusion, stressing that disinterestedness is, first and foremost, a "basic institutional element", a "distinctive pattern of institutional control".[55] The norm says nothing about the motivations of the individual. Disinterestedness is, rather, an authoritative norm that regulates a multitude of individual and, accordingly, diverse motivational forces, leading them in a common direction. Disinterestedness prescribes patterns of behaviour and expression that collectively allow us to identity something as science. It does not, however, require restrictions on feelings or emotional self-amputation.

There are thus good reasons for following Merton in differentiating between institutional norms and psychological realities. But I would also maintain that the manner in which these two levels are connected is not yet fully clarified.

[53] For a summary, see Djørup and Kappel, 2013.
[54] Regarding this kind of misstake, se Wunderlich, 1974.
[55] Merton, 1973, p. 275 and p. 276.

Indications of such a connection become clear not least if one takes a historical perspective such as that outlined above. For if the contradiction between love of the search for knowledge and the disinterestedness of modern science were a reality, one might be lead to assume the latter had displaced the former. One would suppose that the emergence of the research university must have allowed the norm of neutral scholarship, untainted by emotional factors, to dominate over the emotional charge of life in academia. But this is not the case. On the contrary, in a sense the two phenomena seem to go together. As we have seen, the modern university and the scientific work that is done there entail a new emphasis on the love of the search for knowledge. To be sure, the norm of disinterestedness was established at the same time.[56] To put it differently: there seems to exist a parallelism between a special sort of emotional passion at the individual level, and a certain kind of impassiveness at the institutional level.

I do not believe that this historical pattern is a coincidence. One explanation for its existence could be that the love of the search for knowledge promoted within the modern university owes it emergence to the norm of disinterestedness. This at least seems plausible if we accept the idea that love—contrary to what is often claimed—is not allways engendered in absolute freedom, through an unproblematic absorption in the loved object. If we instead assume that restrictions and prohibitions may constitute a precondition for its genesis, it becomes possible to see how norms also play a role in its production.[57] Obstacles to the fulfilment of love can of course be a result of fate or result from social conventions, as is the case in innumerable love stories in art and literature. But they can also be raised by organisational structures as rules, principles and codes.[58] Without such

[56] See Dear, 1992; Ziman, 2004, p. 161ff.
[57] Not the least in the freudian tradition has the emergence of love been understood as dependant on obstacles. See for instance Freud, 1924, p. 25f. Also compare Salecl, 1997.
[58] See the discussion i Spicer and Cederström, 2010, p. 149ff.

thresholds and obstacles, the object of love would not—if we adopt this position—become visible. Yet, although the object becomes visible, it remains unattainable. Only thus can it endure and continue to arouse love.

In our case, this logic would entail that the norm of disinterestedness prescribes an institutional restraint on love by suppressing the subjective, spontaneous and explicit expression of it. At the same time, love is reproduced and strengthened through assuming the character of being eternally unfulfilled. It is further enhanced because disinterestedness entails an endless process. Disinterestness stipulates that the university's search for knowledge not be tied to external interests, with their concrete, realisable goals and limited, instrumental purposes. For this reason, the search can never be completed and abandoned. It is a process that always progresses, a process whose end is constantly being postponed.

One possible proof that disinterestedness is a precondition for the emergence of love of the search for knowledge is found in developments over the last few decades. As we recall, during this period, Merton's norms were criticised. As many commentators pointed out, disinterestedness seems to have lost some of its regulatory power, as the boundary between the university and its surroundings has become less self evident.[59] This period was also marked by scepticism towards a non-instrumental relation to the search of knowledge. Not least sociology of science has questioned the idea of such a relation, alluding to ulterior motives and the self- interest of academics. Furthermore, a series of critical contributions to the debate about higher education written over the last decades have concerned the disappearance of the love of knowledge and the spreading apathy within the university. The theme cropped up as early as the 1960s, with students' critique of the mass

[59] There are also some studies suggesting that academic themselves value disinterestedness less than other traditional norms. Se Macfarland and Cheng, 2008.

university. It makes its presence clear in the 1980s and 1990s, for instance during discussions about canon, education and political correctness. Over the last years it has—just to mention one example—been treated in Anthony Kronman's much-debated *Education's End* (2007).[60] In other words, when the norm of disinterestedness is no longer self-evident, we encounter expressions of sorrow over the loss of an object of love and condemnation of a growing indifference.

Continued investigations into the history of emotions in higher education could help elucidate the relations that I have suggested. But already at this stage we see how reflexions on the past can contribute to the present-day discussion. Much would be gained if the current discussion about educational policies would take the direction indicated above. The debate has, to date, often been based on the presumption that we are faced with a definite choice between therapy and subjective feelings, on the one side, and the transfer of objective knowledge on the other. Only when we replace this absolute choice with the insight that both of these sides always interact will it possible to thoroughly reflect on the purpose and meaning of education.

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[60] Kronman, 2007.

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