

Pedagogy against the state: Some remarks upon events of learning

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents a philosophical sketch, based upon the writing of Alain Badiou, in which real learning is viewed as a movement into new ontological possibilities. The idea of a pedagogy against the state functions on a series of inter-related levels in that the term “state” embraces local ontological states of learning, traditions of teaching and curriculum policy as well as wider political contexts within which educational practices are situated. A key concern of the paper is that by viewing learning as an ontological shift opening up new possibilities for learners, an ethical imperative for pedagogy has to deal with expanding our grasp of what learning is.

Introduction

In very general terms we might argue that in the writings of Foucault (1977), Althusser (1984), Bourdieu (1990), and others, we see the emergence, positioning and regulation of the subject according to the signifier; that is to say, according to established forms of signification and social practice. Here the subject is almost pre-determined by the power of discourse and social practices in that they mark out a place for the subject. Butler (1997: 1–2) illustrates how normalising power processes, manifested in discourse and practice, become internalised to form a kind of psychic super-ego that precipitates a desire for subjection. From such theorisations of the subject we can say then that the production of the subject relies upon processes of representation or recognition.

In this paper I want to explore a different idea of the subject from the writing of Badiou (2002, 2005a, 2005b), a subject which emerges through an *event* and subsequent *truth procedure*. I then want to relate these ideas to learning and pedagogy. I will consider real learning arising through an event which involves a movement into a new or changed ontological state. Learning can thus be conceived as a problem of existence, an idea that resonates with Deleuze’s belief that the power of life is its “power to develop problems” (see Colebrook, 2002: 1). Pedagogy, in relation to such problems, can be conceived as pedagogy against the state as it attempts to embrace new ontological possibilities for the learner and teacher beyond established states of representation in order to expand our grasp of human learning, of what it *is* to learn, to produce new subjectivities and new learning communities. This suggests that immanent to pedagogy is a movement against itself. The ethical imperative for pedagogy is concerned with maximising the power of learning, it is not focussed on what we are and should be, that is to say on some transcendent position towards being, but upon the potentiality and “unknown” of becoming.

The notion of risk taking has often been put forward by art educators in order to promote creative and individual approaches to learning (see Swift & Steers, 1999). The idea of learners being

encouraged to take risks in their specific learning context suggests a pedagogy that is not totally controlled by specified learning outcomes. It suggests a flexible teaching-learning space that attempts to accommodate unpredictable or unexpected directions in learning. Encouraging learners to take risks in their art practice, by implication, suggests that teachers themselves are also taking risks in that they have to be able to “let things happen”; they have to be able to facilitate these learning pathways without a clear sense of outcome. But how can we understand the idea of risk taking? Is it possible to provide a theoretical basis upon which to enhance our understanding of this concept that takes us beyond the prosaic idea of “taking a chance” and thereby provide pedagogy with a more substantial theoretical underpinning of this concept? Some years ago I had a conversation with a leading gallery educator who expressed his extreme frustration whenever he heard the term “risk taking” being used as a central aim of learning in school art education. For him this term had become no more than a romantic cliché.

In this paper, at the risk of raising the ire of my gallery educator colleague, I go some way towards theorising the idea of risk taking through the notions of the “event” and “truth procedure”. These are taken from the philosophical writings of Alain Badiou and they provide a way of thinking about risk taking that explores the dynamics of this process which can be applied fruitfully to practices of teaching and learning.

A brief interpretation of a video of a child painting provides a context of practice for the ideas on learning that the paper develops.

Early encounters: A video of a child painting

The story begins from a panoptic place, a place of surveillance in which all appears to be revealed before the viewer. It is a place at once visual and at the same time visualised according to a panoply of ways of seeing and, therefore, without question, a plethora of ways of meaning. It might be comprehended as a space of power where flows of power are complex and almost always invisible. It is certainly a place of inter-relation; inter-relations between a little boy and two adults but also inter-relations between actions, as well as strategies and tactics that structure and lead action towards its distant horizon. It is a space of multiplicities, invisible inter-relations, ones that are not seen but which are powerfully present between thinking, desiring, intuiting, hypothesising, responding and testing; a rich amalgam of physical, psychic and social processes informing the pathways of becoming.

His story begins in the ground of practice where there is no separation between acting, thinking, reflecting, desiring or feeling. These categories do not exist in his space of practising; their function is to provide the security and even the subjectivity of the viewer’s gaze. He asks for red, then blue and then pink. Paint pots are handed to him one by one as he uses a brush to inscribe the large roll of paper with a series of lines and marks. His gaze is fascinated by the outcome of his actions, the painted arcs, twisting and sinusoidal lines. Painted marks denote an absence of immediately prior actions as well as perhaps a bleeding into a virtual future, all accompanied by attendant psychic and visceral processes. These lines simultaneously constitute relics and futures; they are traces of a disappearing and a prescient forthcoming. Such marks and lines may suggest a meaning to the boy but when others focus upon their presence and form to suggest meaning then crucial moments of being disappear whilst, simultaneously, an existence is inscribed.

[Aside: *This hints at a possible radical dilemma of assessment in school art education where art practice is reduced to the predicative gaze of knowledge, of the signifying chain; it hints at the gap between a learner’s presentation and a teacher’s representation of the latter in an appropriate discourse. It also, more significantly, points to differences between the temporality of practice, the here and now ontologies of practice and the atemporal signifying chain of knowledge.*]

But there are also sounds, voices; other signifiers that accompany painted configurations, noises to indicate a hissing wind followed by a series of stabbing actions that leave their traces in

splodges of green paint followed by a soft murmuring, “footprints”. Again the presence of the mark suggests a significant absence.

In the next phase, (though there are no phases for the boy), curling and intersecting lines become entangled with spoken words, “a windmill” and the sounds of a howling purple storm. Repeated spitting sounds suggest an imagined ferocity emulated and adumbrated by an adult who supports the child’s visual and oral narrative, extending its possibilities, “Is it a storm? What’s happening Luca?”

But the narrative changes; the focus is transformed. Luca makes a slow and deliberate red line as he pushes the brush to his left along the paper. He imagines a train. He pushes the brush along the red line and pulls it back repeatedly and finally to a collision point accompanied by a crashing sound, “It’s a dead end.” He changes colour and describes in line, movement and sound a blue train going forwards and backwards along the same route. He terminates the return trajectory with a thick squiggle and accompanying sound. Then, “Here comes another train,” this time it’s green and it also crashes after making its journey. These hermeneutic and semiotic flows proceed so fluently and undisturbed; they suffer no interruption, only the gentle background of adult support, curiosity and affirmation.

A period of deep concentration follows as Luca uses water to dilute the paint; he makes a zigzag line across the paper. He overlaps green with red and then makes a series of rotations leaving their corresponding loops in blue and red. Noticing paint on his finger tips he makes a finger-print, then another, and another. A transformation occurs; he paints his hand and fingers uttering the word “dinosaur”. He makes a handprint deliberately and carefully. A succession of hand-prints follow coupled with the obvious enjoyment of applying paint to his hand. Then he uses his hand as a template on the paper and traces around his fingers and palm with the brush; he removes his hand and fills in the outline.

His body then becomes the painted surface; Luca paints his hand and then carefully describes a red line on the front of his forearm from his wrist to his elbow, the point where his jumper sleeve has been folded. There is something archaic and primeval in this application of paint to the body surface. He tries to make a print of hand and arm.

An ethics of pedagogy

It is possible to offer a detailed analysis of Luca’s painting and construct a meaning of his presentation. For instance, we might consider the representational and semiotic strategies employed by Luca that together constitute his painting practice and endow it with meaning. We can think of his painting as a temporal flow consisting of different narratives that include scenarios, plots and dénouements; and identify conceptualisations of movement, reversibility and termination. We can reflect upon the metaphoric and metonymic dimensions of his painting; and might analyse the syntactic structure of the painted marks, their fusion with the voice. We could consider the dialogical relations between Luca and his caregivers and how Luca is able to extend his practice through such relations. We might pursue Luca’s control and direction of his practice as well as his direction and regulation of the adults supporting him, thus exploring the micro-politics of this space of practice. All these forms of enquiry can be undertaken legitimately in order to further an understanding of this child’s visual practice and its context of production. But it could be argued that they further our understanding along established lines of thought. That is to say, such enquiry presupposes or is predicated by established epistemological frameworks through which Luca’s painting practice can be understood. Such interpretations of Luca’s painting can be termed truth discourses in their search for meaning.

This discussion engages with a different kind of theoretical discourse, one that is not concerned with analyses that impose their established disciplinary forms upon practice. In other words I am not directly concerned with unearthing or revealing the meaning of practice but with the relation

between the real of practice and its inscription in disciplinary discourses, so as to open up another space in which the real and its following inscription precipitate ethical and pedagogical issues. The direction taken here is not to subject school art practices to an analysis grounded within established knowledge, though this will be incredibly difficult to avoid, but *to consider an ethics of pedagogy through which learners and practices in art education come into existence*. Whilst traditional knowledge and skills are important for enabling action and understanding, this paper hints at a gentle indirect critique of the subjection of learners to established disciplinary knowledge and how such knowledge commodifies learners and teachers.

The ethics of pedagogy discussed does not abandon traditional practices and skills but seeks to make room for local truth procedures (Badiou, 2002) of learning. This means that the pedagogic encounter must avoid over “prescription” or “inscription” *vis-à-vis* tradition and, to use an oxymoron, anticipate unpredictability in learning. Here I want to make a distinction between *normative learning*, comprising much of the daily learning, teaching and assessment processes, and *real learning*, involving a leap into a new space, where the event of learning precipitates a new order of being and becoming that has the potential to invoke new states of existence. This applies to both children/students and teachers. It is crucial to understand that the event is not the learning but that which happens to precipitate learning. That which is precipitated can be conceived using Badiou’s terminology as a truth procedure that remains faithful to the event of learning.

There are two important dimensions to this ethics of pedagogy, the first concerns the child or student as learner and relates to real learning viewed as a problem of existence involving movement into a new ontological state, so that the pedagogic requirement is to support these local processes. The second concerns the teacher-as-learner more directly and involves those teaching-learning encounters through which previously unrecognised or uncounted elements, that is to say, forms of learning and practice children develop, become appreciated whilst at the same time this process of appreciation or recognition makes visible to the teacher the limits or parameters of his or her previous pedagogic situation. This process of revelation thus produces a modified pedagogic space for the teacher in which an expanded understanding of learning evolves. Put another way these pedagogic events relate to the real of the pedagogic situation, those forms of learning behaviour that disturb the teacher’s pedagogic parameters – the symbolic framework that constructs learning – sufficiently so as to change them and make visible forms of learning and learners previously not recognised as such.

Thus I am concerned more with opening up pedagogic spaces to the truth of learning encounters and events rather than analysing (normative) subjects of knowledge. I use the term “truth” as it is found in the work of Alain Badiou in relation to a truth process that builds upon an event occurring in a particular situation (see Badiou, 2005b: 43–51). This will be discussed further in following sections. I use the term real from the Lacanian triad: imaginary, symbolic and Real. In Lacan the Real is that which lies beyond the symbolic, that is to say, beyond those forms of representation, such as language or image, through which we function and obtain meaning in our social networks and contexts. The Real hints at the gaps in the symbolic, it hints at those moments when our symbolic forms break down, when the symbolic order is punctured, when our practices of representation are severely disrupted by something that happens. If we apply the Lacanian notion of the Real to the term “real learning” this relates to situations when assimilated symbolic or representational schemas, which allow learning to proceed, break down due to an encounter that punctures established learning processes and in time this encounter precipitates new forms of learning. The Real of learning cannot in itself be signified, and in that sense it is an impossible encounter, but it can lead to a reforming of the symbolic, it is the Real of the encounter that establishes the possibility for new ways of thinking and acting.

We can see the truth of a learning encounter in Luca’s painting practice above, where, even at this micro level, there is a clear insistence to follow the direction of the practice without any knowledge of the outcomes but where outcomes lead into new forms of practice and enquiry. Here

chance and perseverance are vital aspects of learning which lie in stark contrast to learning promoted by instrumentalist pedagogies.

Being and event

But where does the truth of Luca's painting lie? How might we consider the idea of truth beyond a hermeneutics of practice? In order to consider these questions, which appear to insist upon passing beyond the limits of language, an idea of truth in relation to human action is required in contrast to notions of disclosure or adequation. Here Badiou's (2005a) book, *Being and Event*, discloses the notion that the truth of being emerges from an evental situation through which a subject (as learner) emerges. For Badiou truth is linked to the eruption of an event and its generic consequences, it is nothing to do with knowledge or meaning. Truth is not what knowledge produces; on the contrary, "it is what exceeds, in a given situation, the knowledge that accounts for the situation" (Leclercle, 1999: 8). In other words truth is what cannot be conceived in a particular situation according to existing knowledge, "a truth is a puncturing of such knowledge" (1999: 8). We can comprehend this idea of truth as lying beyond meaning or as a void in current meaning. Whereas Badiou uses the notions of event and truth to describe major eruptions in the fields of politics, science, art and love, and without wishing to distort his philosophical endeavour, I think what he has to say has direct relevance and insight for local states of becoming such as individual learning processes. In relation to education Badiou (2005c: 9) remarks: "...education (save its oppressive or perverted expressions) has never meant anything but this: to arrange the forms of knowledge in such a way that some truth may come to pierce a hole in them".

For Badiou, "the 'and' of being and event names the space of the subject ... the one who unfolds new structures of being and thus writes event into being" (2005a: xxxi). In other words, for Badiou a subject comes into being through the dynamics of an event and truth procedure that punctures and transforms knowledge.

In relation to Luca the young painter then, how might we comprehend the truth of his painting practice? Well, perhaps we can regard the sequence of painting in which Luca engages as a series of unpredictable learning events, that is to say a series of actions each containing points or moments of fracture, revelation and potential that precipitate a movement into a new way of functioning such that, as a learner, Luca emerges through the truth of a perseverance with the new possibilities opened up to him by the chance contingencies of a series of painting events. Here Badiou's idea of an "evental truth" can be employed to consider learning as a process of disturbance and a movement into a new ontological state. We can see this happening as Luca discovers new ways of "painting" (he uses brush on paper to make different marks, he prints with his fingers, he paints his body, and so on) and their corresponding potentialities for further action and thought. The consequences of the event of these moments of potentiality in the practice of painting define new ontological states of learning.

The issue becomes more complex when we consider learning events or encounters from the learner's ontological context and also from that of the teacher. It is difficult to understand from an onlooker's perspective how such an event happens for the learner and its level of significance for future learning. It is also difficult for the teacher not to allow his or her knowledge-frame to structure this encounter and so interpret it from established forms of knowledge to form a closure of meaning. This sounds a little crazy, for how else are we to respond to and so understand a child's learning encounter? Well, here again Badiou is interesting in terms of what he has to say about events and truth procedures.

Badiou describes the "state of a situation" in terms of those practices, knowledges, values and so on that constitute a particular context in which action occurs. In some respects this is similar to Bourdieu's sociological conception of *habitus* which consists of those particular dispositions, forms of understanding, beliefs, values and ways of functioning within a particular social context. For

Badiou an event is something that occurs in a situation *but is not of* the situation, that is to say it has little meaning within the current make-up of the situation. The disruption that Duchamp's readymades effected in the Western art world can be viewed as an event in the sense in which Badiou uses this term. Duchamp's intervention happened within a specific historical context but it could not be understood through the established values, practices and knowledge that constituted the art world of the time. This was because the intervention was so radical that it undermined how art objects, the artist, skill, technique and the spectator were understood. That is to say it shattered those discourses and practices through which art was understood. Truth procedures leading from this event and remaining faithful to it have continued to question how we understand art objects and practices. It is through following a truth procedure leading from an event that, for Badiou, a subject comes into existence.

Although in speaking of Duchamp we are referring to a major disruption affecting a macro context I think it is profitable to apply the idea of a subject formed through the consequences of an event to processes of learning. For a child that which is presented through a learning encounter could, if seized, lead to new states of learning but, understandably, this seizing is often difficult without support or confidence. On the part of the teacher the learning encounter might consist of being confronted by a child's work he finds inexplicable due to his framework of understanding. In such instances this might lead to a puncturing of established frameworks and expanded understanding. However, more commonly, such encounters, where what the learner produces seems at odds with teacher expectations, frequently lead to the child's practice being conceived as lacking or mysterious in relation to the teacher's pedagogical framework. I recall this happening to me on numerous occasions when needing to respond to children's drawings composed of forms radically outside of my expectations or those drawings produced by other children.

The relation between expectation and meaning is expressed by Peirce (1958: 124) in his well-known pragmatist aphorism: "Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object."

It is the severe disruption of our understanding of objects as conceived through their practical effects that suggests something close to Badiou's notion of event, which has no meaning when viewed through current conceptions that are radically insufficient.

Another way of thinking about real learning, close to the idea of disruption, is to think of the idea of "that-which-is-not-yet", taken from Badiou's (2002) *Ethics*.

That which is not yet

The concept of "that which is not yet" has relevance for interrogating as well as theorising the pedagogical space on a variety of levels. This notion concerns a transition from being to becoming and also involves the problematics of existence and recognition, all of which are constant issues in practices of teaching and learning as well as curriculum policies, content and assessment practices. We can think of "that which is not yet" as referring to forms of being that have no existence, that is to say, to being that does not count or is not yet valued. This might refer to emerging states of becoming but also to those forms of being that are often present but absent, that is to say where they have no existence in the sense that they lie outside of dominant modes of understanding and value.

The difference between being, becoming and existence needs to be clarified. Briefly, being and becoming can have no signifier because any attempt at symbolisation entails a reduction. Existence on the other hand arises as a consequence of naming, of being counted, of being recognised. Within teaching and learning contexts it is quite possible for there to be learners whose ontological status is not recognised and so their potential for becoming is constrained and who therefore have no existence within the pedagogical space. A glimpse of this situation can be perceived for instance

when students produce work that is mysterious or incomprehensible from the perspective of the pedagogical framework as formed by the discourses and practices of the curriculum that inform the teacher's practice. It can also be witnessed when learners from other cultures enter into a pedagogic context that fails to support their previous existence and achievements as learners (see Moore, 1999).

As philosophical concepts we might say that being and becoming relate to ontological processes that cannot be captured by symbolic form in that this always involves a reduction. Existence can be conceived as a political-ideological term signifying a particular reduction of being to a particular political-ideological form.

Thus the idea of "that which is not yet" has at least two ethical implications for spaces of teaching and learning:

1. It can be used to unpack the ontologies of learning. If we conceive of learning as a movement into a new ontological state, that is to say, where learning opens up new possibilities, new ways of seeing things, new ways of making sense of what is presented to us in our different modes of existence, then this movement involves "that which is not yet". Accepting such new states involves accepting new states of existence as learners. This idea would indicate a space of potential.
2. It can be deployed to consider the politics of existence in the pedagogic space, particularly in relation to marginalised or oppressed subjects. For instance, when a child from outside of an indigenous culture enters its pedagogical institutions we often find a situation in which the institutional framework does not cater for the lifeworld of the child, his or her cultural background or ways of understanding. In other words the learner's existence is not recognised by the pedagogical context (and may never be) and so the learner occupies a position of "that which is not yet" within this specific context. Similarly, within the dominant culture there are learners whose ways of understanding or strategies of learning are not recognised within the norms of pedagogic strategies employed by the teacher. For example, we know from the work of Bourdieu, Bernstein and others, through the concepts of cultural capital and symbolic violence, that the curriculum content of the pedagogic space can be culturally biased so as to privilege those learners who have access to valued forms of knowledge (cultural capital). Thus many or some of those learners who do not have access might be viewed as "that which is not yet" within the pedagogical context of state education and sadly remain in this ontological vacuum. Again, the being of the outsider, the absent present, can be applied to the field of sexuality where, for instance, gay, lesbian, bisexual or trans-sexual learners are not readily accommodated within the pedagogical framework. Such learners are therefore "that which is not yet", they have limited existence within the pedagogical context (see Addison, 2007).

This important notion has therefore, direct relevance for reflecting upon the position of learners, how they are situated and produced, that is to say, how their pedagogised identities are formed. It is another way of conceiving the relations between being, becoming and existence as described earlier. The first recognises a space of pure potential and whilst this potential is implied in the second it designates pedagogical spaces in which such potential has to overcome powerful prejudices in order to emerge.

Pedagogy against the state

In order to embrace the idea of real learning as a movement into a new ontological state through following local truth procedures, and the ethical implications for the pedagogic space of "that which is not yet", it seems that what is required for pedagogy is a pedagogy against the state. This notion requires some elaboration.

Essentially pedagogy against the state is a term which embraces both states of representation and encounters. States of representation affect our everyday lives as teachers or learners, because they refer to assimilated bodies of knowledge and practice. By implication, therefore, they refer to specific normalised subjectivities that are produced through these knowledges and practices, these states of representation. On the other hand an event of learning, a learning encounter or real learning, as described above, would involve a puncturing of these assimilations and their respective subjectivities and therefore demand a pedagogical practice commensurate to this ontological shift in learning. In other words, if real learning is a problem of existence that involves a movement into a new ontological state, which includes the fracturing of established subjectivities, then pedagogy has to support this encounter with the real. Rather than being driven by assimilated objects or bodies of knowledge it has to try to accommodate learning encounters that precipitate new forms of learning. By implication pedagogy against the state suggests that pedagogy itself must pass beyond assimilated knowledge and practice in order to open up new pedagogies and new learning communities. We might argue that representation controls thought and practice whereas events or encounters open up new ways of conceiving and acting and in doing so lead to new subjectivities and communities.

The notion of pedagogy against the state must also include the political state within which education functions and which largely determines educational policies and practices. In this context therefore pedagogy against the state advocates a spirit of critique towards the wider political context that regulates practices of teaching and learning in schools.

In relation to pedagogy against the state the notions of being, becoming and existence take on a particular significance to the ambivalence mentioned above.

1. It relates to the evolution of real learning. Here pedagogy against the state relates to local ontological and epistemological states where learning can be conceived as a movement against previous modes of understanding into new modes. Thus pedagogy against the state is a pedagogy that attempts to accommodate the unpredictable, from being to becoming, a process that challenges the learner out of a complacency, a comfort zone. This is equally applicable to the teacher and her teaching strategies.
2. State also relates to the context of state curriculum policy where it is all too easy to rely upon established traditions of teaching and learning, that is to say traditional epistemological frameworks that impose specific ontologies of learning which may be incommensurable to the social realities within which they function. This complacency often indicates a failure to mourn traditions that are obsolete but which are maintained by reactionary ideological and political forces (see Atkinson, 2006). It can also refer to underpinning pedagogical principles or theories of learning that are embedded within teaching practices, for instance, transmission-based pedagogies where teachers deliver knowledge and skills to their pupils. This process denotes active teachers and passive learners. Pedagogy against the state here signals a resistance to such complacency and failure to mourn as well as transmission models of pedagogy.
3. We must also use the idea of a pedagogy against the state on a more overtly political level by interrogating the relationship between pedagogy and liberal democratic policies. Here we are concerned with pedagogy as a form of resistance to liberal democratic economics as the driving *raison d'être* for state education. Badiou's idea of politics is helpful here. He does not use the term politics to refer to the manoeuvres of political parties but to a process of thought-action that strikes out from normative or dominant ideological forces in order to create new possibilities for existence.

In summary the ontological difference between "that which is" and "that which is not yet", (from being to becoming) in learning is paralleled in the idea of pedagogy against the state which recognises the struggle of learning in local states of becoming as well as the political struggle for

existence of learners who do not fit within dominant modes of teaching and assessment as determined by institutional curricula and educational policy.

Concluding comments

In conclusion the key point is to emphasise the philosophical position for a pedagogical approach that places emphasis upon the truth event of learning which by implication, as already intimated above, entails a pedagogy against the state; against a prior state of learning as a movement into a new ontological space emerges; against the power of normalising teaching, curriculum, assessment methodologies that obscure “other” forms of learning and teaching. Such forms can also be understood in the Deleuzian sense of “minor” in relation to “major” (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1999: 104). That is to say, where a minor language or art form is not in a relation of inferiority to a dominant or standard form but where the minor produces difference or a “minor treatment of the standard” so as to effect a deterritorialisation of the standard. Or, in other words where the minor is not of inferior quality but marginalised by the current hegemony. Reading dominant forms through minor positions can undermine normalising perceptions of learning and teaching, and so effect new insights into these processes. Such readings can decentre dominant conceptions and reveal their dissimulated social power or, put another way, the “lie” that sustains their hegemony. This paper therefore argues for a pedagogy against the state that attempts to embrace real learning and its local truth processes. In doing so it outlines a theoretical sketch that attempts to provide the notion of risk taking with some conceptual tools to consider the ontological dynamics of this process.

The idea of *negotiated spaces* is an important conception for the above remarks on learning. We negotiate existence every day and this largely conforms to established norms, customs, values and habits. In art practice we might view such negotiations relating to norms that govern traditional or common understandings of the artist, the art object, skill and technique. In some contemporary practices these traditional negotiations are frequently punctured so that, for example, artists and public work together in quite different negotiated spaces that demand new ways of thinking about how we understand the artist, the art object and so on. These new kinds of negotiations open up new ontological states, new subjectivities, and they have relevance for pedagogy in school art education, where we might rethink teacher and learner identities, as well as ideas about knowledge and skill.

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