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… To be hidden does not mean to be merely revealed – Part 1 Artistic research on hidden curriculum

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This text revisits the long-term project Hidden Curriculum, initiated by Annette Krauss. The project addresses unquestioned routines, hierarchies of knowledge (part 1), and the role of the body in learning processes (part 2) from the perspective of secondary/high school education (in the research on a hidden curriculum). A deeper analysis of educational studies on the phenomenon of 'hidden curriculum' in relation to the feminist and critical pedagogies of bell hooks, Paulo Freire, and Jacques Rancière brings forward important insights generated through the artistic research within hidden curriculum. The aim of this text is to address academic canons, corporeality, and investigate everyday norms through revisiting the framework, results, and

processes of the collaborative research into hidden curriculum with secondary high school students.

1. An outline of the project Hidden Curriculum

The art project Hidden Curriculum (HC) revolves around the question how high school students understand, engage with, and ultimately investigate a so-called hidden curriculum in their specific everyday school environment. In the context of this project, the term 'hidden curriculum' has been understood as everything that is learned in the context of school next to the official curriculum. The project's claim has been that there is not only knowledge, for example that is reproduced in schoolbooks, transferred to following generations through the 'official canon.' Rather, a whole range of unintended or unrecognized – maybe even undesired forms of knowledge, values, unofficial abilities, and talents – are generated: authority dependency, pressure to perform, role models, standardized thinking, etc., are taught and learned, without this being necessarily noticed. These other forms of knowledge are not really fixed in books, curricula, and school materials (at least not explicitly), but they form a structural component of the school system and everyday life in school. These other forms of knowledge are investigated in the HC project. They include on the one hand various kinds of actions and tactics challenging enforced cultural values and attitudes (e.g., punctuality, tidiness, etc.). And on the other hand the HC project looks at practices that students develop in order to cope with the requirements in daily life in school, investigating forms of subordination, hierarchies, and silent violence. In very general terms the project deals with the realm of communication within school, trying to address its blind spots, hidden niches, and mute practices that are contained within everyday routines at school. Departing from these rather general considerations and assumptions, the project tries to create a framework that encourages students to investigate aspects of a hidden curriculum in their specific school context. The recurring question posed in the project has been: How would you as students of this specific school try to investigate a hidden curriculum?

The format of the HC project is workshop-based. The workshop series have been realized with students between the age of 13 and 17 years. It took place seven times since 2007 in different countries such as France, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. In order to give an impression of the different HC projects that have been realized till now, I list these inclusive of the involved school and art institutions, the year, and location:

- *HIDDEN CURRICULUM / Beyond Common Sense …* produced by Casco – Office for Art, Design and Theory, Utrecht. Participating students from Gerrit Rietveld College and Amadeus Lyceum, Utrecht, 2007.

- *HIDDEN CURRICULUM / Disbeliefs …* in the context of a collaboration with Lawrence Lemaoana and Mary Sibande, Paris/Johannesburg, 2007.

- *HIDDEN CURRICULUM / Operational Disorder* … in the context of a collaboration of Theater an der Parkaue and Immanuel-Kant-Oberschule Gymnasium, Berlin, 2008.

- *HIDDEN CURRICULUM / CAN WE DISTURB?* … in the framework of a collaboration of Walden #3 (curated by Christiane Mennicke and Ulrich Schötker) and Carl-Orff-Gymnasiums, Munich, 2009.

- *HIDDEN CURRICULUM / MOBILE* … in the context of the exhibition *The World in Your Hand* (curated by Miya Yoshida), with participating students from youth programme, Kunsthaus Dresden, 2010.

- *HIDDEN CURRICULUM / (IN)VISIBILITIES* … produced by The Showroom, London. Participating students from Quintin Kynaston School and Paddington Academy, London, 2011–2012.

- *HIDDEN CURRICULUM / In Search of the Missing Lessons…* Commissioned for the Whitechapel Gallery's Artist in Residence programme with St Paul's Way Trust School and Cumberland School, London, 2012–2013.

The aim of the different workshop series' has been that in groups the students develop ideas that would respond to what 'hidden curriculum' *means* and *does*. Using performance, interventions, drawing, discussions, and interview-formats, the students comment on conventions and unwritten rules in their direct environment. It is a 'thinking by doing' process that tries to situate the hidden curriculum in the specific circumstances of the students' schools and within the conditions of each workshop series at a certain time and place. The different workshops

encourage the pupils to investigate their surroundings, sociopolitical structures that play a role in school, and their own actions and practices within them. Students' preferred media to work with have been interventions, performances, drawing, discussions, and interview-based approaches. This prompted the decision very early on to document the different formats with film, audio, and photography by the students themselves. The students get a basic introduction to using video cameras and sound equipment, and discussions are held around what it means to document. Throughout the years the HC project has materialized into an archive of short video and audio sequences and photos that has become an extensive collection of material due to the engagement of different student groups during the different workshop series.'[1]

Over the years a set of conditions emerged that helped to articulate the framework of the project in order to become a challenging factor on the level of the workshops with the students, the school principles and administration, and the different art spaces involved. One of the conditions for the schools entails that the workshops with the students have to take place during regular school hours. Over the course of six months we would meet for regular meetings each week for no less than two to three hours. On the part of the school this would demand that the workshops would not only take up the hours of the art lessons, but the HC workshops would also run parallel to other subjects like maths, languages, history, etc. Placing the HC workshops outside regular school hours (as after-school activity) would conflict with the project's aim to address and investigate a hidden curriculum during school. This is also the reason the workshop hours should run parallel to other subjects, aiming to address a hidden curriculum as well in other subjects besides art classes. On the part of the teachers this condition triggered comparisons of the HC project to other subjects with the question of how much time (that is, eventually taken away from other subjects) should be dedicated to this project next to the art lessons. An important question has been how much the HC project could live up to the relevance of subjects like maths, natural sciences, history, or languages. Similar discussions have taken place amongst the students during the project

comparing the HC project to other subjects, discussing its relevance and impact on these subjects.

One of the framing demands of the HC project toward the art organizations has consisted in running the project not within the educational program of the art organization, but as an integral part of the 'normal' art program.[2] Placing the project as an educational project seems self-evident and highly appreciated from the point of view of the art organization, since this would allow them to increase their funding possibilities. However, it also runs the risk that the questions and ideas raised in the project are hardly taken seriously in the arts because the project gets pushed into the margins of the educational realm and becomes invisible within a wider perspective in the arts field.[3] What evolved out of working on these organizational frameworks has become crucial for the HC project on many levels, namely the investigation of hierarchies of knowledge and the experience of power (in school and art discourses). I will return to the investigations on hierarchies of knowledge more explicitly further down.

To summarize, the framework of the HC project is crucial since it provides the possibility for the students, the school and art organizations, and myself to find out about the project's context, the specific understandings of and approaches toward a hidden curriculum.

2. Hierarchies of Knowledge

Over the course of the HC project, different trajectories have surfaced quite prominently. I have chosen two of them here. First, the 'hierarchies of knowledge' under the question: What is regarded as legitimate knowledge? And second, the 'physicality of education' to better understand the trajectories of the HC research and articulate the project's own claims and questions. I begin with a selection of project outcomes in the form of videos (here indicated by video stills) produced by the project participants. The stills are followed by brief explanations of the context of each video and aspects of the video itself in order to situate the example

for a deeper analysis. These explanations give insight into the workings of the HC project and introduce particular approaches by different groups of students toward a hidden curriculum.

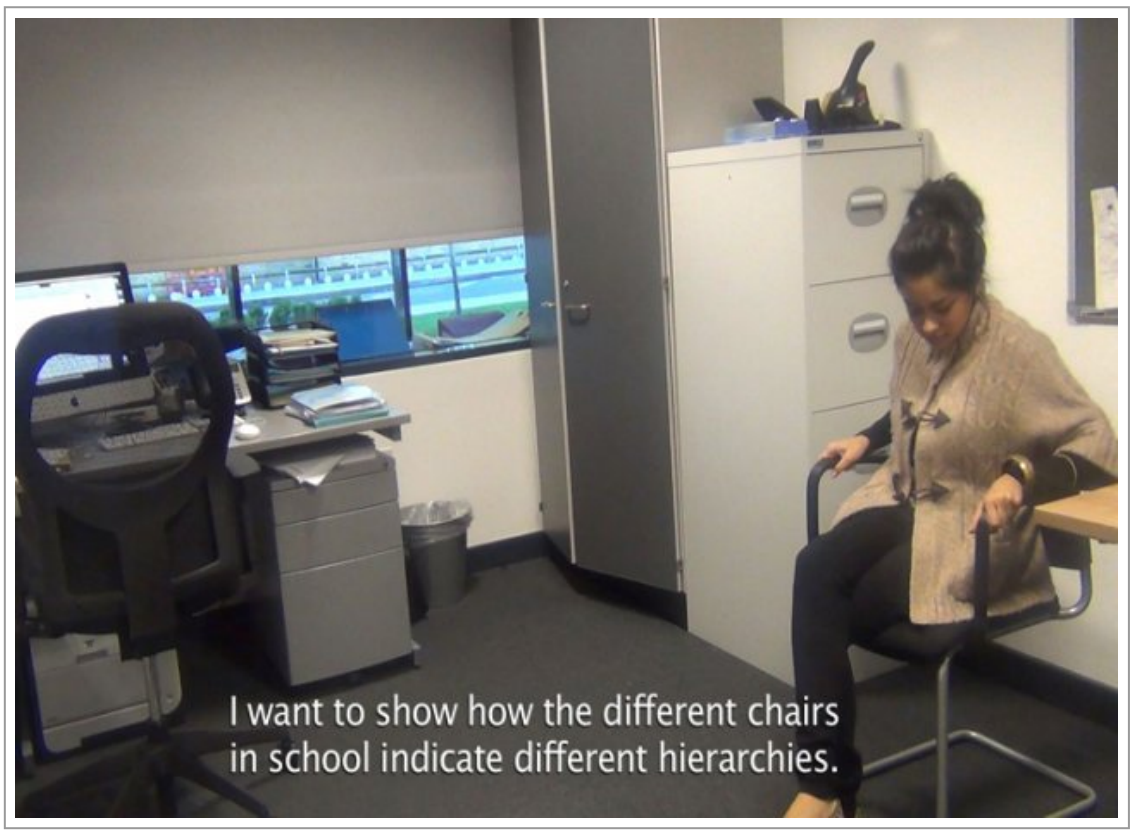

Figure 1: 'Chair Hierarchies,' video still (Ruksana Bhana, St Paul's Way Trust School, London).
Courtesy of *Hidden Curriculum / In Search of the Missing Lessons*, London, 2013.

Interpretation of Figure 1: In the video a student shows different chairs that are used in everyday life at school. She distinguishes the chairs by the different persons who use them at school. The comfortable, spinning chairs are reserved for teachers, while students use static and smaller chairs. Accordingly, she indicates how I, when I introduced the project in the first session sat on a 'student chair' but then self-confidently grabbed a spinning chair during the next session. This is a gesture that the student herself would not dare to do in her school. The student extended her

research on many other objects of everyday life in school. By identifying and thoroughly describing moments of hierarchies, domination, and powerful gestures that are linked to objects and who is using these in which contexts the student shows how these moments are determined by, and at the same time frozen into school objects and form a daily part in the experience of power by this students.

Figure 2: 'School Uniforms are Never Cool,' video still, (Quintin Kynaston School, London).
Courtesy of *Hidden Curriculum /Invisibilities*, London, 2012.

Interpretation of Figure 2: As a response to the workshops question of what constitutes a hidden curriculum for you, some students of the Quintin Kynaston School in London produced a video about how they cope with everyday requirements of wearing school uniforms and the constraints resulting from it. In the video, the girls assemble in the girls' restroom discussing their concerns over wearing school uniforms and

how they bypass the rigid rules of wearing them. One girl (in the middle of the image) shows how she would roll up the hem of her skirt to make it look shorter. Another girl would advise wearing really 'cool' short pants under the skirt that could be shown by tucking up the skirt when the teachers are not around. Some of the students extended their investigations and interviewed some boys revealing an equal attentiveness to their clothes and explaining subtle modifications of their uniforms. Both groups were very critical of the uniforms, which they indicated in the title of the video: 'Uniforms are never cool.' The category 'cool' can in their view hardly be attained by any school uniform. Despite clear contestation, the students also find ways to discuss implicit social rules attached to the uniform. They acknowledged a certain relevance in wearing uniforms to avoid fashion branding and clothing competition between the students. Moreover, one of the girls acknowledged that subverting the clothing protocol of the school uniform (e.g., making the skirt look shorter) could also be seen as adhering to the social norms of a particular fashion that is currently in vogue. The girls also indicated the implementation and expression of social status and hierarchies through the school uniforms itself. To untrained eyes, these uniforms all look the same, but the subtleties of more expensive, precious fabrics do not escape the students' attention and form a distinct layer of social hierarchy in the students everyday life that is hardly addressed at school. The students were well informed and showed a wide variety of perspectives on how they wanted to engage with the topic of uniforms, far exceeding my limited understanding of the politics of school uniforms. The way they discussed the social hierarchies at play was astonishing. Their attempt to also involve their teachers in this discussion was, however, not successful. One teacher, for instance, avoided a conversation by simply stating that he did not see much value in discussing school uniforms.

Figure 3: 'Collectively Rocking Chairs,' video still (St Pauls Way Trust School, London).
Courtesy of *Hidden Curriculum / In Search of the Missing Lessons*, London, 2013.

Interpretation of Figure 3: The video still depicts a moment of a self-designed exercise by a group of students as a particular approach toward a hidden curriculum at their school. The group that developed the exercise 'Collectively Rocking Chairs' had been studying school furniture and trying to redefine their usage or functionality. They were also looking into how group conversations took place in their lessons and analyzed the constellation and organization of the group discussions. In the exercise 'Collectively Rocking Chairs' the students merged both study topics. While exercising collectivity by 're-using' a normally individualized practice that is forbidden in school, namely rocking chairs, the students commented on the norms and conventions of a group discussion. The students

developed a complex exercise that instigated many discussions amongst students and teachers who were invited to join the exercise. Putting a group discussion literally out of balance, the students triggered reflections in participants concerning mutual trust and body language during school discussions. Some teachers expressed a sense of disbelief in the function of the exercise and were hesitant to allow the chairs to rock. Most of the students did not dare to join because they did not have enough trust in each other's capability to support each other. However, once the participants engaged in the exercise, it sparked many exciting discussions that related to the questions of how we work with one another and what the unwritten rules in these relationships are.

In all examples (figures 1–3) certain aspects of a hidden curriculum have been investigated by groups of students. All of these examples relate to the question of what is regarded as (legitimate) knowledge, or what is not recognized as knowledge at all in school. Hence, hierarchies of knowledge are not only established by those in power who decide which knowledges are worth more than others, and by the circumstances that make certain knowledges seem to have no worth. In this way these knowledges being addressed have an impact on the everyday life of the students.

In the first example (figure 1) the student talked about the experience of power being implicit in school furniture. In this particular school there is no written protocol for who is allowed to use which furniture. Nevertheless students learn to compare, distinguish, and develop an implicit knowledge about these objects. This implicit knowledge that we take for granted most of the time also made it quite hard for the student to convince her group to further investigate school furniture under the terms of the study. My usage of the spinning chair became a part of this investigation, it indicated to the students that I entitled myself, as all other teachers, to use these specific chairs. Therefore I seemed to have another position in the realm of the school. This is but one example of how an investigation of the school context would directly influence a discussion of the HC project and the different positions involved.

In the second example (figure 2) the students addressed a school object as well: the school uniform. Although the students still investigated implicit power structures, the way they addressed these differ quite a lot from the previous example. The students articulated their subversion of school norms by finding ways to alter their uniforms on their own terms. The students developed great knowledge about different aspects of school uniforms without ever being formally taught. These aspects ranged from navigating everyday norms to having a sharp view of how discriminatory elements (in this case social class) are reintroduced through the different fabrics of the uniforms. When the students presented their findings to teachers, some of the teachers could not relate to it as knowledge being taught in school, which they understood as being explicit in school books, curricula, or written rules. The students investigated a hidden curriculum that existed precisely in these practices that are not explicit or really addressed in their coursework, but of which they obtain a sophisticated understanding throughout their school life.

The third example (figure 3) is yet another way to address a hidden curriculum of implicit norms and unwritten rules. The 'Collectively Rocking Chairs' exercise allowed students and teachers to physically consider how they related to each other spatially and bodily during group discussions in class. The students investigated what forms of trust different discussions need or presuppose and how this exercise as compared to other forms of discussion relates to individuality and collectivity.

All three examples indicate that learning does not only take place as part of the official curriculum. Students generate different forms of unintended, unrecognized, or undesired knowledge, unofficial abilities and talents: students learn to compare themselves with others, to compete, and distrust each other (e.g., investigated in 'Collectively Rocking Chairs'). They learn to respect authority (e.g., investigated in 'Chair Hierarchies') and learn to anticipate what teachers want to hear and see or how far they can go in order to pursue their own interests during their everyday lives in school (e.g., investigated in 'School Uniforms

Are Never Cool'). These other forms of knowledge are contained within everyday routines at school and form a force that the HC project sets out to collectively investigate. Against this backdrop, research into hidden curriculum crucially deals with the relations between power, knowledge, classroom control, and society, and how these relations are institutionalized in school. In the following I will examine these relations and investigate the various debates out of which the HC project emerges and gains its mode of existence.

3. Studies on hidden curriculum in the field of education

The title of the artistic research project *Hidden Curriculum* is borrowed from the field of education, which has been an important point of reference throughout. This field provides a third area to which the project relates, next to feminist theory and the arts. Further, the debates over 'hidden curriculum studies' within educational studies date back to the 1960s; they have put forward many challenging aspects in relation to hidden curriculum. Below I will identify pertinent characteristics of studies on hidden curriculum in relation to hierarchies of knowledge and try to understand relevant differences to my own artistic research on the subject. Henry Giroux, one of the leading contemporary critical pedagogues, has done extensive research on hidden curriculum studies. His elaborations open up the discussions to critical pedagogy, a highly inspirational field for the HC project alongside scholars such as bell hooks, Paulo Freire, and Jacques Rancière.

In *Theories of Reproduction and Resistance: A Pedagogy for the Opposition*, Giroux defines the hidden curriculum as those 'unstated norms, values, and beliefs embedded in and transmitted tacitly to students through social relations and routines that characterize day-to-day school experience' (Giroux 1983, p. 45). In accordance with Giroux's definition, educational theorists since the 1960s agree that education means more than providing students with instructional goals and objectives. However, they differ significantly in analyzing why, how, and under which premises students in school experience a hidden curriculum. According to Giroux,

four (historical) approaches can be identified that deal with the phenomenon of a hidden curriculum. These approaches significantly influenced further educational studies (Margolis 2006, Marsh 1997, Kentli 2009). I examine the different social inquiries, their underlying assumptions, as well as the questions that were not asked in the respective approaches with regard to hierarchies of knowledge.

Giroux distinguishes a traditional, liberal, and radical approach that he finally integrates in what he calls and develops as 'dialectical perspective.' The *traditional approach*, on the one hand, can be ascribed to those theoretical studies that interpret society as an unquestioned state that school needs to prepare for (Giroux 1983, p. 48). Thus, the assumption that education maintains existing order in society plays a key role. Philip W. Jackson is a prominent researcher of this approach. He is generally credited with having introduced the term *hidden curriculum* to educational studies with his book *A Life in Classrooms* (1968). Through observations of public school classrooms, Jackson identified features of classroom life that would appear in addition to the official curriculum in the form of all kinds of social relations, writing: '[S]chool might be called a preparation for life. Power might be abused in school as elsewhere, but its existence is a fact of life to which we must adapt' (Jackson 1968, p. 12).

The type of knowledge and how it is transferred within schools has been an indisputable matter for Jackson. Students receive adequate knowledge from teachers, and teachers receive it from state institutions that represent society. The hidden curriculum has a positive function in transmitting norms, conventions, and belief systems of school. Jackson regarded hidden curriculum as a positive aspect of the schooling process that would lead to consensus and stability within existing social structures. This uncritical attitude toward existing hierarchical relationships between teachers and students and between schools and the larger society is striking in this approach. Jackson has been criticized for striving for conformity and for being blind to the political significance of education in sustaining hegemonic interests and injustices in society, in relation to class, gender, or race inequalities (Giroux 1983, p. 52).

The *liberal approach*, on the other hand, focuses on how certain dominant interests get legitimized in school. It locates the hidden curriculum in specific social and cultural practices in the classroom that reinforce discrimination and prejudice, thereby asking 'the question of how meaning gets produced in the classroom' (Giroux, 1983, p. 50). Scholars addressing this in their research have examined the socially constructed nature of classroom situations and identified taken for granted authorities and truth claims. One of these researchers, Jean Anyon, studies fifth grade classrooms in the United States. In her article 'Social Class and the Hidden Curriculum of Work' (1980) she compares two working class schools, one middle class school, an upper middle class school, and an elite school. 'Differing curricular, pedagogical, and pupil evaluation practices emphasize different cognitive and behavioral skills in each social setting and thus contribute to the development in the children of certain potential relationships to physical and symbolic capital, to authority, and to the process of work' (Anyon 1980, p. 90). Anyon provides invaluable insights into how the hidden curriculum in classrooms processes serves to reproduce social class structure. Through manifold examples she indicates the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion from knowledge within classroom situations and how hierarchies are produced through intentional and unintentional exclusions from curricula in terms of physical, evaluatory, pedagogical, and interpersonal characteristics of each environment.

As important as this approach is, there is an underlying and in my view problematic assumption that scholars of the liberal approach share, namely that the hidden curriculum is informed and produced merely within the classroom or school. How the social, political, and economic conditions of society outside the school building 'create either directly or indirectly some of the oppressive features of schooling' (Giroux 1983, p. 55), has been ignored by the liberal approach. In addition, I argue that this approach has too simple an understanding of the hidden curriculum that cannot adequately deal with its various dimensions. According to the liberal approach, the hidden curriculum only seems to exist because of

uninformed educators or because relevant materials do not exist. By focusing on these deficits, the approach suggests that the hidden curriculum could potentially be revealed and eliminated by providing simply a different knowledge. Moreover, this approach presumes that knowledge is a static, unchangeable object that can be eliminated and (re)placed, depending solely on one's power position. Following Donna Haraway's view that objects of knowledge are active, (see Haraway 1988, p. 595) the discussed approach above risks reinstalling the hierarchical binary of passivity/activity into knowledge processes at school.

A third approach that investigates the hidden curriculum is a so-called *radical perspective.* Theorists replace the consensus-driven traditional approach with a focus on conflict. The liberal approach, with its emphasis on the generation of meaning by students and teachers in the classroom, is juxtaposed with a focus on wider social structures. Influenced by Marxist theory, theorists of the radical perspective criticize schools for serving capitalist structures and the state. Consequently, they look into the schools' embeddedness in an economically driven society: 'Schools are not agents of social mobility but reproduce the existing class structure. They send a silent, but powerful message to students with regard to their intellectual ability, personal traits, and the appropriate occupational choice, ... which takes place through the hidden curriculum' (Bowles and Gintis 1976, p. 31). The quote stems from the most influential examination of this field, namely *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life* (1976) by Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis. Grounded in political economy, this text has become key for the Marxist theory of sociology of education. Bowles and Gintis regard schools as instruments to transfer and legitimate the reproduction of inequalities and domination. In what they termed the 'correspondence thesis' they investigate how schools are internally organized with respect to capitalistic workforce through its structures, norms, and values. For Bowles and Gintis, the hidden curriculum has to be seen as the process of instilling these behaviours and norms through the naturalized, everyday features of school life. Their approach differs from the traditional perspective and ties in with the

liberal approach in its argument against the seeming neutrality of school. They explain that what appears on the surface as a necessary and neutral process of social reproduction in fact serves the demands of more powerful institutions and dominant social groups. The main criticism of the radical approach is firstly its focus on class relation in which race and gender remain unaddressed. Secondly, the radical approach can be criticized for its pessimistic structuralism that places people as passive recipients in the economic social system and therefore in knowledge processes.

Giroux's own approach acknowledges the different inquiries within the diverse field of hidden curriculum studies for providing valuable insights into the everyday mechanisms of power in school. However, he also criticizes the varied perspectives for cutting short significant features of the hidden curriculum, namely the relationships between schooling, capitalism, and knowledge production within and outside the classroom. In what Giroux terms 'dialectical critique' (Giroux 1983, p. 59), he reformulates the term hidden curriculum by including these categories and reclaims its value as an important theoretical element in critical pedagogy.

My understanding of hidden curriculum resonates well with Giroux's, who criticizes the positivism of the traditional approach that conforms to the hierarchies of knowledge in society using school as striving tool towards these. The liberal approach is feasible with its contestation of hierarchies of knowledge in the context of school, but is disagreeable for its one-sided social constructivism of eliminating classroom hierarchies. Lastly, my understanding of hidden curriculum in relation to hierarchies of knowledge differ from the radical approach and its focus on class hierarchies and reductive structuralism in terms of political economy. Giroux's method is valuable given it connects the critical features of the different approaches, demanding a multidimensional approach toward the hidden curriculum that is sensitive to difference in terms of race, class, and gender. Giroux does not understand school simply as a place where students are organized, instructed, and controlled by the interests

of a dominant class. Students are not passive containers for storing information—they creatively act in ways that often contradict expected norms and dispositions. These contradictions might open up spaces for students and teachers to critically reflect upon and resist mechanisms of social control and domination. Ultimately, education, including the hidden curriculum, has to be seen as being politically able to create alternative cultural forms.

Analyzing the different approaches, I mostly agree with Giroux's criticism and claims. However, I disagree with all approaches, including Giroux's, in their use of the direct article when talking about 'hidden curriculum.' This seemingly minor shift is crucial for me since it implies there is not merely *one* hidden curriculum that these social inquiries are directed toward. Following the feminist approach of politics of location (explored significantly through Haraway's critical positioning in situated knowledges), it is important to be strict about the specific historicity of a knowledge claim without being trapped in social constructivism. Thus, we need to understand that there is no such thing as *the* hidden curriculum. I will therefore rather speak of 'a' hidden curriculum in the following.

Against the backdrop of the different approaches a hidden curriculum can be seen on one side as a tool to address assumptions and interests that go unexamined in the discourse about and materials that shape school experience. On the other hand, Giroux demands that research into a hidden curriculum 'has to be grounded in values of social justice and personal dignity' (Giroux 1983, p. 61). What is important to note, here, is that schools are understood as sites of domination *and* contestation. Accordingly, an investigation of a hidden curriculum has to look at both dimensions. This would also include looking at different types of contestation, since not all forms of oppositional behaviour have radical implications. Rather, contestation has to be seen as contradictory in itself, since it might reiterate or strengthen existent power dynamics and 'ultimately tend to be reproductive' (Giroux 1983, p. 120). Therefore, a study on hidden curriculum has to be concerned with reproduction *and* transformation on different levels. This relates to the video pieces by the

students (figure 2) in which they investigate how they deal with their school uniforms. The students discuss how their subversion practices also risk reproducing existing social norms and conventions. For example, subverting the clothing protocol in school, they might very easily adhere to other fashion norms in society without necessarily being aware of them. On the level of school authority and the school's vision, the students also indicated how the school uniform, supposedly a tool for equality in school, introduces other forms of inequality.

4. The feminist and critical pedagogies of bell hooks, Paulo Freire, and Jacques Rancière

Giroux's multidimensional approach resonates strongly with bell hook's contribution to feminist pedagogy. Her proposition lies in a multidimensional approach to education and her insistence on a democratic classroom.[4] In *Feminist Theory: From the Margin to Center* (1984), hooks unfolds her intersectional definition of feminism stating that '[R]ace and class oppression should be recognized as feminist issues with as much relevance as sexism' (hooks 1984, p. 25). Forms of domination infuse society and therefore also education, not only in questions of gender and sex. hooks urges us to examine the 'inter-relatedness of sex, race, and class oppression' (hooks 1984, p. 31) and 'our role in their maintenance and perpetuation' (hooks 1983, pp. 25–26).

The exercise 'Collectively Rocking Chairs' (figure 3) highlights several aspects of this. The reactions of the teachers that students asked to join the exercise and more importantly to use it in their classroom activity was especially striking. After one workshop session in which the students involved a wider public of the school community, I had the opportunity to talk with a teacher who decided not to participate. He explained his decision by stating that the school had problems with some of the female students in the workshop, because they would not study seriously. Additionally, he pointed out that we do not know much about them, since they come from Bengali communities. He also mentioned that the male

students would be particularly receptive toward a, in his eyes, nonsensical exercise.

It was poignant to me that the teacher linked the seriousness of studying to being incompatible with the female students. The proximity to his utterance of not knowing the female students, because of their Bengali upbringing, raised questions in relation to the students' gender and ethnicity. In my opinion, the way he talked about the male students showed his different expectations toward them that included a victimization of the male students. Moreover, the teacher identified the exercise as nonsense. This is a recurring issue in the HC project: when the playfulness of the students' ideas clashes with dominant expectations of what seriously studying entails. Indeed the students took great pleasure in developing the exercise, but at the same time didn't shy away from scrutinizing the exercise as a comment on how classroom conversations are held, and how these affect trust amongst the students. Convinced of the practical-theoretical dimensions of the exercise, other teachers introduced it in their classes. During the exercise the students and teachers would discuss its relevance to how they discuss and work with each other practically and theoretically. The exercise entered other workshop sessions of mine too, through which forms of collaborations and their spatial arrangements are discussed. The 'Collectively Rocking Chair' has gained quite some prominence, showing how an exercise can intervene in the everyday life of school or workshop settings and challenge taken for granted set-ups.

hooks identifies the production of pedagogic pleasure as an important aspect for a feminist politics in the classroom (hooks,1994, p. 7). Lena Wånggren and Karin Sellberg compellingly elaborate on this difference from other critical pedagogies that lack the notion of pleasure in classroom situations (Wånggren and Sellberg 2012, pp. 542–555). Although hooks (and Wånggren and Sellberg) refers specifically to academic classrooms, I consider the notion of pleasure as crucial for secondary schools' everyday life as well. Not only can the classroom be exciting, but this 'excitement can co-exist with and even stimulate serious

intellectual and/or academic engagement' (hooks 1994, p. 7). Regarding the lack of interest and apathy that dominate stories and feelings about the classroom experience, hooks regards the pleasure of teaching and learning indeed as an 'act of resistance' in itself (hooks 1994, p. 10).

Returning to the elaborations in academic educational literature on hidden curriculum, I was struck by how little research has involved the students themselves and their views on hidden curriculum. Students had been observed, their conversations and their relations with teachers in classrooms were interrogated. However, there is hardly any mention of an active involvement of the students in finding out what a hidden curriculum could be. This has been an important finding on my side, since this is exactly where the artistic research on hidden curriculum ties in, namely in the collaboration with the students. The idea has been from the beginning of the project to develop together with students a framework for how to approach what a hidden curriculum could be, mean, and do. The term collaboration, seen as an equal engagement in working together is of course not without problems. As hidden curriculum studies show, classroom situations are imbued with social hierarchies and imperatives articulated toward students. Addressing this seemingly impossible endeavour of collaboration and investigating the problematic that surrounds collaboration in a classroom lies at the heart of the project. The art project links the question of 'what' a hidden curriculum could be for a specific group of students with the questions 'who' investigates it and 'how.' Working collaboratively with students demands one be attentive to the danger of obscuring authority or hierarchies, by investigating and locating the production of knowledge in the social hierarchies in which we are entangled in such a project. The aim would be to make all participants aware that inserting such a project into the classroom bears its own blind spots and structures of hierarchies. The example of the student who investigated how different hierarchies were attached to objects in schools (figure 1) is an important aspect of the project. The way she addressed my role in re-inscribing hierarchies by self-confidently grabbing a spinning chair that would be reserved for teachers was an excellent way of tackling unquestioned relations within the structure and practices of the HC

project. Discussing the politics of the particular spinning chairs in the classroom made it clear to many of us that we have a mutual investment in this project, and I can learn as much from the students as they might learn from me or the project set-up.

The emphasis on and the continuous struggle for a process of collaboration has been majorly inspired by what hooks calls an 'engaged pedagogy.' Although hooks did not explicitly frame her writings on teaching and classroom experiences in relation to a hidden curriculum research, many aspects of her work helped to structure the HC project. In *Teaching to Transgress* (1994) she elaborates on education as 'a way of teaching that anyone can learn,' which should not be limited to an understanding of enabling different kinds of learning for different students. More importantly, teaching has to be organized in a way that it includes the teacher as someone who learns in the classroom as well.[5] hooks is convinced that 'education can only be liberating when everyone claims knowledge as a field in which we all labour' (hooks 1994, p. 14) . She understands education as an ongoing recognition that everyone influences the classroom dynamic to which everyone contributes (hooks 1994, p. 8). Education needs to engage many and diverse teachers and students to consider ideas, issues, and suggestions of reciprocity. In this way the classroom may provide 'a location of possibility,' where we can 'collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress' (hooks 1994, p. 207).

In terms of the HC project, its set-up does not only speak to the school situation and its hierarchies, it also addresses the studies of hidden curricula on the level of university. As already indicated, the studies discussed above have been undertaken by academic researchers that decide what would be important to address in relation to a research on hidden curriculum in education. The dimension of what research on a hidden curriculum would look like from the perspective of those who are part of it (students, teachers) remains unaddressed. This produces a distance between the ones who have the power to investigate a hidden curriculum in school, and the ones who might receive information about

it. With regard to what I discussed in the previous chapter this runs the danger of reinstalling a conservative recipient attitude and renders the students and their situation in school as passive. Instead, the HC project tries to open up this research to a situation in which students investigate their school situation in terms of a hidden curriculum. By initiating collaborative research into a hidden curriculum the project takes seriously the relevance of redefining what knowledge is and the importance of mutual classroom engagement in dimensions that are normally confined to university research. In this sense, the artistic, collaborative research project is an intervention into both the realm of primary and high school, and university research. Consequently, the hierarchies of knowledge and their relation to a hidden curriculum are not only to be addressed within the primary and high school context but also within higher education and academic research that is conducted around it.

What links the engaged pedagogy through hooks and Giroux's dialectic critique is their critical and antiracist approach that challenges the hegemonic canon. Both have grounded their ideas in the work of Brazilian educator and philosopher Paulo Freire, a leading advocate of critical pedagogy. A closer look at his pedagogies will help to better understand both hooks and Giroux as well as relevant issues within my artistic research around hidden curriculum and hierarchies of knowledge.

Freire has developed a large body of work fighting illiteracy in Brazil and supporting the development of a critical consciousness. He developed the idea of the 'pedagogy of the oppressed' (Freire, 1970). What characterizes critical pedagogy for him is the acknowledgement that education is a political act. Consequently, politics and pedagogy cannot be separated – critical pedagogy is a struggle for justice and equality. According to Freire, students and teachers have to become aware of the 'politics' that are imbricated in education. What students are being taught and the way they are being taught is never politically neutral or disinterested. It always serves a political agenda. The contestations around the neutrality and disinterestedness of schooling echoes Bourdieu's studies on education, who, since the 1960s/1970s has argued that schools institutionalize

dominant 'cultural capital' through the meanings and rules that constitute the day-to-day workings of classroom experience. In his writings 'cultural capital' refers to those systems of meanings, linguistic, and social competencies, and elements of style, manner, taste, and dispositions that the dominant class permeates society with as being the most legitimate. [6] While appearing to be neutral, schooling reproduces the unequal distribution of cultural capital.

"The most important and, in relation to school, most effective part of the cultural heritage, the disinterested education and language, is transmitted in an osmotic way without any methodical effort and influence. This is exactly what contributes to reinforce the conviction of the members of the cultivated class, that those forms of knowledge, aptitudes and attitudes that have never been perceived as results of learning processes, are solely owed to their natural talents (Bourdieu 2001, p. 31)."[7]

Whereas Freire provides useful insights and practices when working with disadvantaged groups and the working class in Brazil where he developed his literacy programs, Bourdieu's theories enable us to understand the middle class in Western societies. According to Beverly Skeggs, Bourdieu offers tools to identify 'their authorization, exchange and use of distinction. [...] He can show how the bourgeois perspective is implemented, how interests are protected and pursued and how authorization occurs' (Skeggs 2004, p. 30). This is especially helpful when trying to identify mechanisms of exclusion within school education and the moments of learning that are unvoiced in the classroom.

Having in mind the struggle around neutrality in schooling processes and the difficulties of taking a stand, I return to the student-teacher relation. Being one of the most contested relationships in schooling, Freire, hooks, and Giroux dedicated a lot of attention to it. Freire famously criticized traditional educational systems for their 'banking' concept of education. Students are, according to Freire, seen as an empty container that can be filled by the teacher. This understanding and practice 'transforms students into receiving objects. It attempts to control thinking and action, leads men and women to adjust to the world, and inhibits their creative

powers' (Freire 1970, p. 77). In this model, Freire identifies the teacher as the subject (that is, the active participant) and the students as passive objects. Teachers, as the ones who know, are the epistemological authority in this system; students' pre-existing knowledge is ignored, apart from what was expected to be 'deposited' into them earlier. The banking paradigm relegates students as being 'adaptable, manageable beings. ... The more completely they accept the passive role imposed on them, the more they tend simply to adapt to the world as it is and to the fragmented view of reality deposited in them' (Freire 1970, p. 60). This understanding of the teacher-student relation has important implications for how authority is viewed in educational processes. Naturalizing the teacher-student relation in terms of who has and who provides knowledge and who does not, fixes structures of authority in school. Instead, Freire clearly positions students as active participants in educational processes. And this in turn has important consequences for processes of learning. First of all, learning can then no longer be understood as a process in which a one-way transmission of knowledge takes place, in which some have knowledge and others need it. Rather, the relation between teacher and student has to be seen as one of mutuality. Accordingly, knowledge is not to be understood as something that a person *has*, but something that has to be *engaged with* from all sides within education.

Furthermore, if this relation between teacher and student is active and mutual, it is never entirely controllable. This explains why Freire and (as I showed before) hooks and Giroux refuse an entirely oppressive structuralism and pessimism. If the relation between students and teachers is active and therefore not entirely controllable, it has to be seen as a process that is not only ruled by structural necessities, but which bears the potential for contestation and ideally provides a platform for teaching to transgress.

We find a slightly different yet comparable articulation of critical pedagogy in Jacques Rancière's famous statement that 'the most important quality of a schoolmaster is the virtue of ignorance' (Rancière

2010, p. 1). In his book *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Educational Emancipation* (1987) Rancière criticizes common education in which the teacher thinks he or she knows exactly which steps have to be taken and which examples are easy enough for the acquisition of knowledge. This is very similar to Freire's critique of education. Whereas Freire, hooks, and Giroux focus on the passivity of students, Rancière looks at how knowledge (re)produces an authoritarian distance between teachers and students. This authority does not only exist in the difference of knowledge, but also in the power of the teacher to define the distance between student and teacher. This produces students whose knowledge always remains inferior to the teacher's, thus both are caught in a hierarchical relationship of knowledge. Rancière calls these relations of superiority and inferiority 'the method of stultification.' As an example that counters these seemingly given relationships, Rancière introduces the historical case of Joseph Jacotot, a French teacher in the early nineteenth century. During the period of Restoration in France Jacotot was exiled to Belgium, where he developed an unconventional method of teaching. Being a professor in Louvain, he had to teach French without being able to speak Flemish. He decided to use his own ignorance as a teaching method. Without any explanation, he gave his students a French text to read along with its translation. This had several implications. First of all, he brought two languages into relation with each other without being directly explicatory. Second of all, and possibly more important, he removed himself from the centre of the classroom as the one who would normally transmit knowledge. To his surprise, the experiment worked well. The students learnt French and crucially, they developed their own methods of learning, relating the two texts in a way that would best help their learning process. What is important here is not the teacher's knowledge, but his intentional use of his ignorance to establish equality as the centre of the educational process. This 'practice of equality' is what Rancière regards as the important moment of emancipatory education. Equality is practiced here as starting point rather than destination. In the case of Jacotot's example, it is the 'how' to learn (two books in different languages without direct explanatory link) that relates to 'who' is

producing knowledge. Wånggren and Sellberg poignantly link Rancière's, Freire's, and hook's engagement with pedagogy by suggesting that 'the "ignorance" of the schoolmaster is pivotal in a classroom dynamic that emphasizes the importance both of redefining "knowledge" and of mutual classroom engagement' (Wånggren and Sellberg 2012, p. 546). Decentring oneself as a teacher in the classroom not only has consequences for the way students' positions are understood and related to, it is also crucial for how 'knowledge' is conceptualized in the classroom situation. It supports an understanding of knowledge that is not treated as an external body of information whose production appears to be independent of particular human beings. In this way knowledge cannot be regarded as neutral, but as the result of a human activity *situated* in human norms and interests. The critical pedagogies discussed above share a view on knowledge that is integrally linked to the question of hierarchies and social relations.

How can we think of Rancière's 'ignorance' in the context of the HC project? Against the backdrop of the different educational studies that I have discussed, I understand a hidden curriculum as something that evolves from the interaction between sociopolitical and economic conditions of schooling (inside and outside the school institution) and the process of learning a very specific student's situation at a certain place and time. As a consequence it is not necessarily me as teacher, artist, or researcher who would know about it, but the students themselves who are able to find out about it. Thus I claim to use my ignorance deliberately to engage in a collaborative investigation and experiment around hidden curricula. Against this backdrop I address three critical elements of practicing a 'deliberate ignorance' that complicates such a stance, but at the same time might show its potential. Key to this experiment on 'ignorance' is interrogating the premises which affirm the roles of 'teacher' (a) and 'student' (b) and my own role (c) in the project, in order to challenge a conservative relation between the three parts.

It is useful to discuss some of the reactions of involved teachers (a) in relation to the framework and conditions of the HC project. These set-ups,

as I introduced in the outline of the project, are important for the collaborative research. They are devised in a way that challenges processes of thinking on many levels. Some teachers involved were quite doubtful about the collaborative research and voiced critique in the sense that my attitude was irresponsible, considering that I wanted to work together with young people and 'did not know what to do.' These teachers demanded a clear step-by-step plan and requested a defined outcome. A tangible 'product' would be the best way of 'providing security' for everyone involved.[8] The teachers were not only touching upon the reproduction of an authority structure by a step-by-step approach that was criticized in Rancière's *Ignorant Schoolmaster*, they were also preoccupied with eliminating risk in educational settings. This provoked tensions, since the set-up of the project explicitly and intentionally included various openings for uncertainty and instability when it comes to deliberately not knowing. In a common educational setting this is seen as risk—intellectual, but also social and practical. It runs counter to the predictable outcomes in the structuring of school lessons, and of school life in general. The school structure and the acting participants in it aim for stability and certainty in terms of knowing step-by-step plans and predictable outcomes. In *Teaching to Trangress* hooks demands from engaged pedagogy that instructors face their deep fears about loss of control of the classroom (hooks 1994, p. 34). This is not surprising since the 'prevailing pedagogical model [is] authoritarian, hierarchical in a coercive and often dominating way, where the voice of the professor is the privileged transmitter of knowledge' (hooks 1994, p. 85).

The approach of 'not knowing' sometimes led to tensions in the workshop groups together with the students, especially when we tried to figure out how to continue certain processes (b). We had to come to terms with the fact that there was no infallible secure way of proceeding. Even more, since I deliberately put myself in a situation in which I was not able to provide the answers, the students had to find out by themselves how they would approach certain steps in their research on hidden curriculum. Some of the students approached me with a somewhat angry sense of impatience that I should finally tell them what a hidden curriculum really

was. It was understandable that the students turned to me, since I brought the questions and the project to them. However, they seemed to not take seriously my ignorance about the hidden curriculum or did not know how to cope with it. Many students conceived our discussions as 'one of these strange student-teacher games'[9] in which a teacher asks a question although she already knows the answer, but acts as if she did not in order to motivate the student. The students recalled these experiences when teachers obscured their position of the 'knowledgeable' as a motivation to ask certain questions. These 'as-if-ignorances' (as I called them) reinstall in a forceful way the hierarchies between those who are supposed to know and those who are not. This example shows that participants in schooling processes are in danger of internalizing the 'as-if-ignorances' and interpreting situations for it be fulfilled. hooks describes these kind of situations also in terms of students resisting their responsibility to engage in classroom, 'since the vast majority of students learn through conservative, traditional educational practices and concern themselves only with the presence of the professor' (hooks 1994, p. 8). hooks instead suggests that she very deliberately tries to turn students away from her voice and her presence, and to listen to each other.

The hierarchies of who is allowed to know and who is not are reiterated between students themselves. In many situations, especially in the beginning of the workshops, the students tried to install my role as the explicator in the project, when they had to make decisions on, e.g., what would be a good aspect to dive deeper into, or where to go in the school building to proceed with some actions. By trying to force me to decide, they were posing questions to their own group: Who is speaking? Who is entitled to speak? And who, they assume, has the knowledge to explain? This means installing new practices aiming at a different teacher-student relationship is a lengthy practice that challenges the very norms that are ingrained in everyday life in school. It is a necessary process in order to transform 'the classroom into a democratic setting where everyone feels a responsibility to contribute' (hooks 1994, p. 39).

These situations also cast light on my own role (3) that needs some further scrutiny: the group dynamics changed a lot depending on the locations where we met, and my own role shifted constantly in relation to settings. In school I found myself frequently addressed by the students as an artist or – as one of them put it – 'different from the teachers.' One student pointed out that the reason for this could be that the project allowed them to climb up on cupboards, as opposed to what their teachers would do, which would be to try to get them off them, or prevent them from climbing in the first place. During the project I became aware that there were many moments like this that would come to define their perception of my role within school. This included the way the students sat on the tables when we met, or how we used mobile phones in the school building in order to organize ourselves during the sessions. In school I adopted the role of the 'ignorant' artist more easily, since I did not know the environment, processes, and routines at play. When the students went to art spaces involved (e.g., Casco, Utrecht; Whitechapel Gallery, London), I found myself increasingly adopting the role of an instructor or tutor. In my opinion, this was due to the fact that the students were entering an environment they were not used to and were looking to me for guidance on how to relate to this new environment. Consequently, my self-assigned role of the 'ignorant artist' became difficult to maintain and shifted depending on the context we were working in. What is challenging about working within such different kinds of (power) structures is that you cannot deny that you are part of them, so you have to find a way to question them, interrogate the premises which affirm certain roles within this processes, and at best start a process of renegotiation. Having a closer look at the ambiguity of my role in the workshops is very helpful here. By *trying* to leave behind the role of an authority figure, I see how implicated I am in its reproduction nonetheless, simply by entering the institution of a school or an art space. Within the workshops we seek to try to find out how the students' ideas can become constitutive of what ends up happening there. This corresponds with how I understand Rancière's 'practices of equality' as a collaborative process. It does not mean that inequality can be diminished

or eliminated by simply taking a radical position and hoping the rest follows. Rather, as Marina Vishmidt commented in a conversation around the HC project: 'It's a contingent process of experimentation in the social field that posits equality as a desire that can be actualized, and then figures out how, and why it fails when it does' (Krauss, Pethick, and Vishmidt 2008, p. 34).

Comments

[1] The archive is currently in process of being transformed into an digital iteration, soon available at: http://hiddencurriculum.info/index.html.

[2] For several years art organizations have established what has become known as 'educational programmes' as a trajectory within their arts programmes. In these educational programmes, very often workshops, guided tours, and outreach projects are conducted to include groups of people that are not regular gallery visitors. These educational programmes have gained a lot of critical attention through their increasing possibilities for funding. However, these tendencies also have a major impact on the division and shifts within art and education discourse. Carmen Mörsch carried out extensive research in this area. Against the backdrop of the British funding model, Mörsch elaborates on the relationship between art and state funding, and cultural production in the context of education and economy (Mörsch 2004, pp. 179–185).

[3] One of the distinct aims of the project has been the intervention into what has become known as 'institutional critique' in the arts, investigating and commenting on the production processes of art. The HC project contributes to these debates in order to break open its hermetic appearance within the art discourse toward broader questions of (de-)institutionalization and hierarchies of knowledge including other institutions such as schools. As a matter of context and for lack of space I will limit the investigations in this thesis to the realm of high school.

[4] What bell hooks insistently addresses since the 1980s is known as an intersectional approach. While widely discussed in feminist academia, hooks points toward the limitation of gender as a single-issue analysis.

Power relationships, she indicates, cannot concern solely gender inequalities but have to address other inequalities in their inter-relatedness (hooks 1984, p. 31). In 'The Complexity of Intersectionality,' Leslie McCall writes that intersectionality is crucial to any feminist project by addressing 'the relationships among multiple dimensions and modalities of social relations and subject formations' (McCall 2005, p. 1771).

[5] hooks addresses both secondary schools and university classrooms.

[6] For an interesting discussion of Bourdieu's notion of cultural capital and schooling see Giroux, *Theory and Resistance in Education*, p. 188.

[7] My translation of "Der bedeutendste und im Zusammenhang mit der Schule wirksamste Teil des kulturellen Erbes, die zweckfreie Bildung und die Sprache, wird auf osmotische Weise übertragen, ohne jedes methodische Bemühen und jede manifeste Einwirkung. Und gerade das trägt dazu bei, die Angehörigen der gebildeten Klasse in ihrer Überzeugung zu bestärken, dass sie diese Kenntnisse, diese Fähigkeiten und diese Einstellungen, die ihnen nie als das Resultat von Lernprozessen erscheinen, nur ihrer Begabung zu verdanken haben." (Bourdieu 2001, p. 31). The text of the English edition (Bourdieu 1974, pp. 32–46) differs significantly from the original German.

[8] Conversation between teachers and myself in the preparation phase.

[9] Conversation during a HC workshop.

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