About Impostors and Other Educators

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Jean-Jacques Rousseau, one of history's most renowned educators, was known to be an impostor. In his youth, by his own admission, he posed as a nobleman traveling *incognito*, swindled donations for the restoration of the *Holy Sepulchre* into his own pocket as secretary to an equally high-flying prelate, and once even kept an orchestra in suspense as an unsuspecting composer—albeit only until the premiere. In short, Rousseau was a dilettante and occasional offender in an epoch that was not short of impostors. He was much more successful later as a writer and teacher. But to some, he is also considered an impostor, especially in education. After all, the same Rousseau who wrote *Emile*, the most influential piece of educational literature of its time, did not seriously complete a single educational process or lesson and had his own children removed from the house with the help of his mother-in-law. The fragments of pedagogical experience he could have cited were nothing that could have established a reputation as a mediocre, let alone brilliant, pedagogue.

But that need not have been an obstacle for Rousseau. It would have been obvious to pretend to be a successful miracle teacher. One of the earliest narrative explorations of pedagogy, Till Eulenspiegel's attempt to teach a donkey, was a parody of such imposture. Since the late 16th and early 17th centuries, there had been repeated imposture of this kind, since Ratke's fast-track courses and the lawyer Glaum, who promised to teach any art in eight days. Even in Rousseau's time, the superstition that miraculous progress in learning could be achieved with ingenious methods had not faded. However, Rousseau has no such pretenses but instead claims that he was "not suited" to the teaching profession because he lacked professional attitudes such as "patience" and "cold-bloodedness" (although not knowledge). One year as

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a tutor was "plenty of time" to "cure" him of the "delusion" that he was pedagogically gifted (1781, 381).

Rousseau's astonishing honesty points to a change and a difference. The valorization and scientization of the medical art, for example, have not caused miracle elixirs and alternative practitioners to die out—on the contrary. *Nuremberg funnel*-wielding miracle teachers, on the other hand, have not become more common with the mass spread of professional education, but are increasingly rare. Today, they are a largely extinct species. At best, the impossible is still promised by distance learning courses, but their providers no longer dare to meet in person like impostors of stature. We hear of the cobbler as a captain, the comedian as a queen, the postman as a medical officer; principalities and major banks were founded on imposture. But where is the public scandal about someone who set out to pretend to be a teacher, despite lacking all of the documented qualifications to do so, or the furor about the teacher who promised more in terms of education and upbringing than the pupils were ever able to demonstrate?

What might be the reason for this lack? Of course, one is tempted to put it down to the poor reputation of the teaching profession. There is nothing that even comes close to a uniform or a doctor's coat in terms of public image. Some people do, however, pretend to be postmen or politicians—two professions that probably don't promise much more prestige. Another possibility could be that the need for pedagogical masquerade is alive and well, but cannot be fulfilled. This may be because it is too much to ask of lay people; or it may be because classrooms and lecture theatres are difficult to access for outsiders. Both may be true in some ways, but on the whole, they are not really convincing. After all, it is hard to see why barracks and hospital wards should be easier to access and the professional attributes there easier to imitate than the teaching profession, especially as no other profession is so extensively and thoroughly experienced and tested, from all possible angles, as the teaching profession. There are at least 9 years for this to take place, and even longer depending on school attendance and compulsory schooling.

So, if there is no lack of attraction or opportunity, why is it that impostors are rarely exposed among educators? Is it because educators are impostors anyway? Or are all impostor educators? Or is assuming the role of a pedagogue simply not a nuisance, at least not on its own, not without additional

aggravating conditions? The same question should be asked of pedagogues and impostors. There is no obvious answer, and, as far as I know, there is no academic research that could make judgments easier or more difficult. However, a few as yet unsystematized considerations can perhaps outline why the topic is neither arbitrary nor superfluous. I will begin with a few observations on the logic of imposture in general (I) and in pedagogical terms (II), followed by a few reflections on the practical (III) and disciplinary function of imposture (IV) and its consequences for teacher training (V). Imposture is of interest here solely as a specific form of linking knowledge and action. Therefore, I cannot go into the much broader discussion about the image of pedagogy in the literature or the development of professional theories here. This is a sketch, not a painting.

I

What is an impostor? Mere fraud or swindling is a craft, whereas true imposture is an art. At least that's how the literary grand master of the trade, Felix Krull, would see it. "According to my theory," reads the sixth chapter of the first book of Thomas Mann's *Confessions*

> […] every deception which is not based on any higher truth and which is nothing but a bare lie will be clumsy, imperfect and transparent to the first person who sees through it. Only deception that does not deserve the name of deception has a chance of success and a vital effect among people, but is nothing more than the endowment of a truth that is ubiquitous but has not fully entered the realm of reality with those material characteristics that it needs in order to be recognised and appreciated by the world.

"[…T]he endowment of a truth that is ubiquitous but has not fully entered the realm of reality" (ibid.) - this almost Hegelian motif succinctly characterizes the core of imposture as a general figure. Imposture presupposes both the ability to simulate something and the objective possibility of doing so. Its truth lies in the fact that something can only appear to be real, although objectively it is not if it is equipped with precisely this difference beyond the imposture. Appearance can only be taken for the thing itself if it can otherwise manage without the reality that is imputed to it if it has its own reality. It must be possible quite simply to behave like a doctor, soldier, or

blue-blood without a license or without being in the service or of nobility. The difference between the two, the original and the present, lies solely in the fact that what the original already is, regardless of its nature or origin, is attributed to the copy by virtue of its own assertion and representation—without this difference being allowed to have any practical significance of its own. The central idea—according to Krull after some hotel experience—is the idea of "interchangeability":

> If they had changed their suits and outfits, the waiters could just as easily have been the masters, and many a waiter could have been one of those with a cigarette in the corner of his mouth, lolling in the deep baskets. It was pure coincidence sic!) that it was the other way round… (3rd book, 3rd chapter)

The best-known example of the perfect game of interchangeability is Flambeau, the thief whom Chesterton's *Father Brown* can only unmask as a wanderer between worlds—sometimes a waiter, sometimes a club member—thanks to his abrupt changes of pace. Until proven otherwise, he is what he is to every observer. Until proven otherwise, of course, because while the rich remain rich even with the air of a waiter, the aristocrats remain aristocratic even as clochards, and the impostors lose their power along with their beautiful appearance. They are only what they are believed to be. Their ability consists in identifying those material characteristics that make someone appear as someone special in the eyes of the observers: Nobles as nobles, rich people as rich people, doctors as doctors, officers as officers, etc. It is, therefore, necessary to find the insignia of a real appearance, with which a possible existence can be helped to become an apparent reality.

This can be surpassed if the appearance is cancelled out by its realization, if the waiter or tailor becomes an officer, prince, or king through appointment or marriage, as in a fairy tale. Then they are what they pretended to be. Only then are they no longer an impostor, but a tailor or waiter who has become a king or whatever. As a practicing Hegelian, Krull rejects such an idea of becoming a lord by adoption. The dialectical peak of imposture is reached for him, however, when he succeeds in making the false appear as the *actual* truth. In the encounter with the marquis, he suggests to the waiter the appearance of a better existence, in which he merely plays a waiter. Only on this level can imposture rise to its own higher truth, which leaves behind the other, non-piled-up existence as a false being.

For Chesterton's double simulant, the situation is also complicated by the fact that he wants to link different existences. At the same time, he is proof of the great difficulty of the perfect imposture. Flambeau fails because of his false perfection, being exactly as the insignia of the stacked roles requires. There is a lack of distance and tolerance of ambiguity for the self-assurance signaling, limited violation of norms, which exceptionally allows the guest to hurry among guests, the waiter to stroll among waiters—and thus blurs the perceptible boundaries between the two without leaving any doubt about the overall picture. The trick is to make the offense seem like an offense and thus confirm the appearance. What's more, it is the individual deviation that gives the rule-following that personal touch that makes the overall impression credible, while those who follow the rules of etiquette to the letter appear fake or obsessive, like a petty bourgeois in a parlor. However, the breach of standards must not go too far. It must not violate the simulated horizon at any point in such a way that the referential system of material characteristics is called into question and thus weakened in its signifying power. You have to play with the insignia, but you must not let it go.

A third factor must be added to ability and knowledge, role-taking and role-distance, in order to distinguish imposture from other versions of the same action: the intention to deceive. Don Quixote is not an impostor. On the contrary, he believes he is what he only pretends to be from the point of view of others. Imposture is based on the fact that one can knowingly operate with the ignorance of others, whereas in megalomania, one unknowingly violates the knowledge of others. Where both know about the falsehood of the appearance, they play theatre; where both believe in its truth, it is at best a *folie a deux* (induced delusional disorder), if not—at least that is what the interactionists say—the normal case of social interaction. Krullian or Flambeauian imposture is only possible if the actor is constantly aware of the difference between the observers' perspectives by constantly observing others and themselves, and wants to utilize this differences.

The difficulty lies in concealing the intention: since the beautiful appearance, as Schiller described it, can only be achieved where involuntary and arbitrary movement coincide, it is important to make the arbitrary creation of appearance appear as an involuntary signal, the calculated violation as spontaneous individuality—and the accidental as well as the deliberate offense as a game with a higher truth. All the way up to the crowning achievement

heralded in Krull, which remains a fragment, but has not yet been reached, in which the revelation of imposture appears as the imposture of an even higher one—as if every false carpenter were a "tsar."

All in all, then, there are four basic forms of imposture to which we will return. Using the language of figure skating, the first, the simple assimilation to another existence, could be described as a *simple Krull*. The *Flambeau* is somewhat more difficult: the serial, possibly circular linking of two or more impostures in such a way that the actor appears to be different from others. The *double Krull*, the art of allowing a completely different existence than the actual one to shine through in a real one, is already approaching the peak. This parallel validity of different realities is, incidentally, the imposture that can be sustained longer than all the others because it can hardly be interrogated empirically. The final point is a variation of the double Krull, the *Tzar-Carpenter loop*, in which the uncovered high imposture is staged as the low imposture of an even higher existence.

II

We lack an educator on par with Krull or Flambeau. As much as village schoolmasters leavened the literature of the 19th century and student counsellors the literature of the present day, it hardly ever occurs to them to dress themselves up as teachers. It is true that there are countless laymen who occasionally become teachers. These range from travelling salesmen who are mistaken for the new teacher, to temporary staff who fill in when there is a shortage of teachers. This tradition can be traced back to the time when self-taught teachers populated the teaching profession, and the difference between a layperson and a teacher was the appointment itself. Nowadays, with mandatory teacher training, such lay people are usually limited to short guest appearances, but not without, of course, *en passant*, so to speak, showing the teaching profession how to give better lessons with pure common sense.

There are only a few well-known literary figures who can be described as impostors among teachers in the sense introduced above. Their greatest admirer, for example, was Jean Paul, for whom the happy little *schoolmaster Wuz* invented his own collection of scholarly works, while the famous *Fibel* invented the same *Fibel* (the *Primer* in German-speaking contexts) and an

impressive list of other works along with his biography. In *Wuz* and *Fibel*, we encounter the autodidact who fabricates himself the insignia that rightly makes him appear to be what he already is, an educational role model. Similarly, the most recent impostor story I know of, Chingiz Aitmatov's account of *Düischen*, the first teacher in his Kyrgyz *Ail*, shows the educational impostor as a transitional phenomenon in a still undeveloped school system, in which pedagogical imagination is always more effective than didactic training.

From *Wuz* to *Düischen*, the educators who were pontificating embodied a fundamental dilemma from the early history of the profession. On the one hand, they were all keen to emphasize the difficulties of the teaching profession—the teachers, the normal school pedagogues, the seminar founders, and the school inspectorate. Only those who had acquired a specific qualification were to have access to the catheter. Through constant specialization, diversification, and scientization, the profession and its own performance could be upgraded, and better equipment and recognition gained. As Neumann and Oelkers (1984) have shown, the teaching profession began to become more and more specialized, pushing the demands on subject and methodological knowledge to the limits of what could be achieved. On the other hand, training was anything but a guarantee of good results, and teaching was a daily testimony to this. It was, therefore, necessary to decouple the employment requirement of qualifications from possible employment consequences, i.e., teaching results. The resolution of this dilemma can be found prototypically in Dinter's *Teaching sermons* from 1800, in which, at the same time, difficulty is emphasized, not the mastery of the difficulties, but the right attitude is taken as the yardstick for the conduct of the office. According to Dinter, it is the lack of "pure childishness" that leads to "the most skillful schoolteachers not always being the most useful" (1803, 226ff). Similarly, in 1765 Herder described the merely knowledgeable teacher as a stiff, dusty, pedantic bore and contrasted him with the ideal of the friendly, guiding entertainer who teaches with grace, whose personality is able to captivate, and whose teaching is a sheer joy.

> A school teacher must have talent, not actual erudition, but talent, talent, in order to be able to teach science to his favorites easily and yet thoroughly, completely, and yet playfully. And this is the grace without which he always remains an unfinished teacher. (1765, p. 13)

Good entertainment, instead of dry didactics, is the educational magic formula that has been heard ever since and is still heard today by almost all students and entrants to the teaching profession as their greatest career aspiration, whereby it is tacitly hoped that good entertainment will have a teaching and educational effect through harmony, however pre-stabilized. For Herder, as with Dinter, this guarantees the right attitude: "And where is grace more evident than in the manners of the teacher, where one immediately distinguishes a real virtue from a merely political one, which is just a veneer" (ibid., p. 15).

This basic figure now pervades the pedagogical literature on the teaching profession from Herder's *Riga Inaugural Address* to Pestalozzi's *Schoolmaster* and Spranger's *Born Educator* to the literature of the present day that forges competence in action. The idea always resonates that, beyond all the knowledge and skills that can be learnt, the teaching profession is characterized by something very special that elevates it above all others. The fact that this is not just about good entertainment, but much more, is also evident in the literature about great teachers, for whom, as with Rousseau, a careful distinction is made between technical practice and true conviction. In the case of failure, pedagogy finally becomes a "truth that has not yet fully entered the realm of reality" due to adverse circumstances. In this way, the didactic Herbart is immunized against the failure of his *Königsberg seminary*, the educator of humanity, Pestalozzi, against his inadequate abilities as a warden. Nohl notes in his review of great educators that "the pedagogical attitude […] is the heart of every true educator." Because, he continues:

> In this cruel life today, every profession has its task, which has an effect on the whole. That of the educator is to emphasise the viewpoint of humanity in state and society, economy and technology (1958, p. 83)

In most cases, the right attitude is enough for everything else. Reasoning and preparation are then superfluous: "The good educator knows without much thought what to do and how to do it" (ibid.)—and cannot be refuted or discouraged even by failures. Education thus achieves a helpful coupling: just as it is the guardian of the human, its mistakes are all too human.

The guild is maneuvering itself into a relationship trap in which it is stuck. It decouples the evaluation of its professional practice from what distinguishes it, namely its training and the opportunities it has acquired, in favor of

something that, according to everyday experience, does not have to be learned and can be achieved without great difficulty: Attitude, manners, goodwill, in short, grace, as Herder calls it. However, as Herder already knew, such grace can scarcely be found in everyday school life. Nevertheless, it remains the ideal to which education refers, contrary to most observable experience.

As a small, unintended side effect, the educational impostors from the life of *Fibel* to Aitmatov's *first teacher* can be distinguished from *Krull*, *Flambeau* and their many colleagues in one central point: While the defining characteristic of the high art of extra-pedagogical imposture is to appear to be just like those to whom one merely pretends to belong, the shining lights of educational imposture often achieve their eventual success with precisely those behaviors and virtues that distinguish them from the rest of the pedagogical staff and which are consistently portrayed as unprofessional or at least non-professional behaviors and virtues: Kindness over caning, being tolerant instead of meticulous, friendship instead of office, closeness to life as distance from the curriculum, etc. Since Jean Paul's Idylls, their complete didactic cluelessness has not only not been the undoing of the pedagogical impostors, but has been highly recognised. Indeed, it almost seems as if teachers, as educational professionals, are inhuman and completely human only where they do not act as such professionals. The true educators can be recognised among the impostors by the fact that they deny Krull's material characteristics, the insignia of the profession, at times in favor of an attitude that is demanded by the professional ideal and not specific to the profession. Not assimilating themselves to others, but assimilating others to themselves, appears to be their highest goal.

Educational impostors move in an environment that is hostile to their nature, like sheep in wolves' clothing among wolves. The most extreme expression of this reversal of the usual imposture can be seen in popular films about teachers, where someone plays a schoolteacher, or worse still (like Theo Lingen in a clownish double role), a principal. The latter remains inconspicuous as a drudge or shooting gallery figure. The most abnormal behavior does not make them remarkable; they remain interchangeable and credible like any other teacher. What wins the hearts of the audience, however, is the way the principal undermines the everyday rituals behind this mask, shows mercy before justice, understanding instead of punishment, and turns everything around by behaving in a way that is not typical of a professional,

but is simply human. Their triumph lies in the fact that the well-intentioned among the licensed educators recognize the principal as the real educator precisely because of their anti-professional mumbo-jumbo. This interplay takes on its most amusing form in Spoerl's *Feuerzangenbowle*, when the fake pupil Pfeiffer is preferred to the original by the real-life superintendent Crey (a triple Krull). Remember: impostors are the better educators.

III

The tension between the unattainable ideal and a grey everyday life has strange consequences for the educational profession: to a greater or lesser extent, almost everyone becomes an impostor. This begins with the lesson plans that have to be drawn up during the internships in teacher education. They are all too often crammed full of understandable, but nonetheless exaggerated, didactic poetry about great goals and noble intentions. Somehow, the lessons that build on this (except in rare moments of luck) are never quite what was announced, and the educational expertise required to judge them always comes up with something that may have been lacking in terms of technical rigor and/or the perfect height of graceful teaching. This often leads to a rewriting of the lesson plan so that what was a coincidence or a mishap appears to be an artistic intention. But anyone who thinks that these are mere beginners' errors is mistaken. Model lessons and model experiments suffer from the same tendency, albeit to a lesser extent, when trained by experience. Both truly great lessons have rarely been attended by anyone; the fruitful moment (Copei) is usually unplanned. If one assumes that the requirements of qualification and grace set with convolutedness and professional morality are unattainable limits, then there is no good teaching below a simple Krull: it is always an attempt at simulation, a living truth that has "not fully entered the realm of the real." What distinguishes beginning and experienced teachers is not least the ability to cope with the difference and to stylize it as a practical contingency of knowledge and action. In terms of form, the latter is almost always a *double Krull*, i.e., the attempt to make a higher calling appear through didactic signals in a poorer reality.

This is by no means the only way to bridge the gap between complication and grace. At grammar schools (*Gymnasium*), the double Krull of the academic condemned to the teaching profession, who has only been driven into

the narrow cage of the classroom by adverse circumstances or educational ethos, is widespread. In the upper secondary, in preparation for the A-Levels (Abitur), this easily turns into a *Tsar-Carpenter loop* in which all didactics are abandoned, and a scientific mini-college is opened. The *Flambeau* is, above all, part of the inventory of young colleagues who want to appear to pupils as a friend or schoolmate, but to colleagues as one of their own. Naturally, this tension is particularly evident wherever lessons are observed and analyzed. The *double Krull* is also practised by school inspectors, for example, who want to be seen by their colleagues as educational advisors, although experience shows that they are almost only visible in control and monitoring. Conversely, one of the most popular and empirically pointless didactic arguments is that one would like to teach this or that, but unfortunately, the curriculum prescribed by an unrealistic school authority completely prevents this. In fact, these curricula are drawn up by practitioners and deny almost nothing of what is up for debate.

The problem of external control is somewhat alleviated by the ever-increasing complexity of teachers' work and training. The two or three basic types of elementary and grammar school teaching have been replaced by countless combinations of levels and subjects, making at least ninety percent of all other teachers laypeople in their respective fields. Which music colleague is allowed to pass judgment on language teaching, and which physics teacher on mathematics? It should come as no surprise that cross-curricular teaching is hardly possible with this kind of laicization. Lay judgments are even less likely to be accepted by parents, politicians, and the public if they come without any previous pedagogical training. But be careful: even if the layman's judgment is based on conspiracy, it is not the lack of expertise that devalues the layman's judgment but the lack of conviction. "The silent applause of an expert […] is worth more to us than the loud praise of the uneducated crowd," because, as Dinter says right at the beginning, "that way of thinking which elicits the applause of the crowd for the ultimate purpose of its endeavors cannot exist with true morality" (1803, p. 3). The ""uneducated multitude" ultimately includes all those who do not have exactly the same education and experience.

This tension also characterizes the relationship between theory and practice, educational theory and everyday school life. Anyone who comes to a school from the university will be familiar with the casual question of when

and how they themselves taught, as if the suitability of the suggestions or the validity of the observations depended on how much teaching experience they had. The first thing students are still advised to do when they start their traineeship is to forget everything they have been crammed with during their studies; now comes the practice, where everything is completely different. After all, hardly any state parliament shies away from demanding that future school inspectors, as well as teachers at teacher training colleges and departments, have teaching experience, but no previous training in educational science. To have enforced this self-referential practice as the norm is one of the great, almost improbable achievements of the teaching profession, which has only been achieved in a similar way for the medical professions and the clergy. My former academic mentor used to say disgruntledly that in the past, you were from the aristocracy; today, you come from practice.

It makes sense to justify this feedback with the greater insight of those who have had a taste of real practical experience. Compared to other professions, however, this makes little sense. Self-reflection is a limited, if not undesirable, validity criterion in almost all professions. Nobody would seriously think of aligning criminal law with the legal theories of offenders, of tying the truth of political science findings to the approval of political professionals, declarations of war to the standards of generals, or environmental decisions to the insight of polluters. In almost all areas of society, from the cowshed to nuclear power, leaving the power of judgment solely to the discretion of those exercising it is considered criminally reckless. Only in schools. From an epistemological point of view, there is no justification for this as Kant already argued in his discussion of the statement, "[t]his may be correct in theory, but is not suitable for practice" (1793). Self-reference has little to do with a specific competence of judgment that can only be acquired in practice. Rather, it is an expression of a community of perpetrators. Neither school authorities nor teachers want to be assessed and paid according to teaching performance. Given the enormous targets that have elevated difficulty and grace to the professional ethos of the profession, no one can assume liability for their fulfillment. It must, therefore, be in both interests to decouple empiricism and judgment, like the impostors in the *double Krull*. The easiest way to achieve this is with the agreement of those who know that things are not much different for them. Simply put, one crow does not peck out another's eye.

IV

The reservations between theory and practice are, of course, mutual. A practitioner who makes an objection saturated with experience at a learning psychology conference is smiled at indulgently, while his colleague who argues with practical obstacles is scolded at the educational science conference for being hostile to reform. The man who is generally regarded as the founder of scientific pedagogy in Germany already knew how to object to such practitioners who want to assert "the weight of their experiences and observations":

> On the other hand, however, it has been often and widely proven, analysed and repeated, to the point of fatigue, that mere practice actually only gives sloppiness, and a highly limited, not decisive experience… Thus, it can happen that a great schoolman, even at the end of his days, indeed a whole generation, and successive generations of teachers, who always proceed in the same or slightly different tracks, side by side and one after the other, have no idea of what a young beginner learns immediately and with full certainty in his first lesson through a lucky throw, through a correctly calculated experiment. Not only can it happen that way, but it happens reliably. (Herbart 1802, p. 140)

And this is explained by a young lecturer with just 2 or 3 years of home-teaching experience. Since Herbart, this tone has become the self-image of science, but, as Oelkers (1989) has shown, not without a guilty conscience. This is because scientifically prepared or advised pedagogy was by no means and at no time obviously more successful than the schoolmen caught up in the shuffle. From Ratke to the late 18th century, the mockery of the "*Idealenkrämer im Erziehungswesen*" (Schummel, 1779), not unlike the alchemists, who always have their mouths too full and rarely do more than cause confusion. "There have always been project makers at all times, but often neither they nor their projects have had the qualities that are required" (Berguis, 1773 quoted by Heinemann 1974, p. 345).

With the structural change to bourgeois society, the crisis as an omnipresent cause for action (cf. Koselleck, 1959) emerged alongside the project as the central figure of pedagogical belief in progress. At least according to comparative historical education research as well as modern organizational theory, it has been part of the basic pattern of every educational innovation ever since that a crisis must first be discovered, an awareness of the crisis must be sharpened, in order to be able to introduce the reform as therapy (cf. the

example of curricular reform Kirst & Meister, 1985; Haft & Hopmann 1987, 1990; Goodson, 1982; Cuban, 1991, 1992). In this respect, it is no different from scientific progress as a whole (Kuhn, 1962; Tenorth, 1983). However, an end to the school crisis is never in sight: happy times are only ever to be had in the past perfect or future perfect tense. We had them before the outbreak of the crisis and will perhaps have them after successful innovation, but only if the next crisis is not quicker. As far as I know, there is no empirical evidence of an end to the crisis. This forces us to constantly uncover new obstacles and set new goals in order to maintain credibility. The double game of obfuscation and conviction is repeated on a scientific level as a progressive complication of scientific designs and methodologies, which even allows multi-year research projects to be announced merely as pilot studies and which, at the same time, in third-party funding applications and research reports, announces the significance for practice that is taken for granted as the benchmark of research—even if only as the result of suitable follow-up studies, i.e. for the day after tomorrow. One of the central topics of education since the late 18th century has thus been a spiraling metaphor of crisis, which, with ever-new complications, makes ever-new bursts of innovation appear necessary, right up to the neat trick of seamlessly using therapy as a new crisis in the suppression and reintroduction of small rural schools (cf. Wigger, 1991 in an analytical masterpiece).

Scientific school counselling, curriculum development, and teacher training have put this dialectic in an awkward position. There seems to be no good path from scientific knowledge to practical school action, unless it is through deception or self-deception. After initial successes, what survives of the reforms seeps into existing structures. Other projects are rejected from the outset with reference to the fact that previous proposals have never achieved what they were previously said to have achieved. Reform trends and fashionable topics chase and contradict each other without ever succeeding in accumulating reliable experience in the manner of a proper craft. From a practical point of view, educational science looks like an unbroken chain of failed impostures, which is much more difficult to deal with than an imposture that has been admitted or abandoned. Because if impostors are only what they are believed to be, then they are nothing; if they are no longer believed, they are nothing. And quite a few school people make the same judgment about academic education. Conversely, the hiatus between

aspiration and reality in everyday school life does not remain hidden from academically trained practical analyses. This is where they tend to locate the causes of failure, based on empiricism or historical experience: the colleagues or the circumstances were not yet up to the new.

It would certainly not be unreasonable to recommend more modesty in educational projects and crisis interventions. But does it solve the problem? Calling for better theories and better research, without specifying exactly what the improvement should consist of, would be mere hot air. Because, as with Dinter's teachers, no one will be able to deny the seriousness and goodwill of everyone else. The misunderstanding seems to me to lie in seeing the difference between project and gain, between crisis and reform, as an avoidable evil. This difference is constitutive of education!

V

Nowhere is the problem of the interplay of teaching reality and didactic intention, of practice and theory, more visible than in practical training and other formal didactic planning in lesson observation. The same lesson presented should be regarded as instruction aimed at the subject and at the same time as a (necessarily imperfect) endeavor to achieve something completely different, namely "didactic recognition," for those observing "teaching quality." This is not an easy endeavor: Because this dual character is already established with the simplest lesson, with the first question on the first day of school, "[w]hich of you can tell me what is one times one, what the days of the week are called, what is wrong in this series?"

Presumably, the first teacher was the one who asked questions not for their own sake, but for their teaching effect. In any case, the rhetorical question is one of the oldest and most widespread teaching methods of all. Children learn it in primary school from day one and mirror it with the equally popular and unanswerable "do you know what" questions: "Do you know what my mum said yesterday, what I experienced yesterday, what I saw on the way to school?" Contrary to popular belief, this is not a poor perception of perspective, but the children have correctly recognised that school questions are not aimed at the respondent's knowledge, but their lack of knowledge. The good educational question lets it shine through that there is a solution that the questioner knows and is keeping quiet for the time being. "But

first you have to guess!" Part of the questioning game is that the question is not immediately disguised for what it is—a bit of a low trick, just feigned ignorance. The other person should have the opportunity to respond to the game, to reveal the *double Krull* or the *Tsar-Carpenter loop*: "Now tell me! You know it!" When pupils are constantly asking questions in this way, they are said to be motivated.

The first didactician was the first to go one step further and ask such questions not for the sake of the pupil, but to teach the audience about teaching. According to tradition, this was none other than Socrates with his attempt to teach the doubling of the square by way of example. On the one hand, Socrates asked his famous questions to demonstrate that the student does not know what he knows. On the other hand, he continuously demonstrated that he, Socrates, knows what the pupil does not know. It does not make matters any better that this primal scene of didactics is embedded in a dialogue about the teachability of virtue, which comes to the conclusion that it cannot be taught. Nonetheless, later didactics made a didactic virtue out of the questioning technique of this scene and taught it at best as maieutic, more often as stubborn catechetics. This Socrates is now praised for awakening dormant knowledge close to his pupils instead of blaming the abuse on a slave of a pupil. He is not being taught for his own sake but is being shown off.

Of course, things are no better among didactics. "Do you see, Menon, that I am not teaching him anything, but only asking him everything," Socrates asks Menon, thereby teaching him. The subject of one lesson is the doubling of the square, that of the other the lesson itself. Didactics begins not only with the doubling of a square, but with intentions. The same scene is supposed to be different things to two people, Menon and the slave, and yet the same thing, namely, teaching. As with every *double Krull*, the art is to allow a different meaning to shine through in the observable case. And what good didacticians have in common with *Flambeau's* impostures is their ability to stage the material features in such a way that the respective audience becomes aware of precisely those aspects that are relevant to them: to the slave, the geometry, to Menon, the didactics. If Menon considered geometry or the boy didactics to be the actual topic—the lesson would be a grandiose failure, as is sometimes the case in everyday practical training.

Since then, the doubling has been repeated in every demonstration lesson. There is no correspondence between the two levels. Math lessons are not better because they are didactically rehearsed. There is even some evidence to suggest that the use of students in teacher training often results in worse lessons for the pupils than if they were taught the same thing by an experienced teacher or without an audience (which is why such exercises were often moved to the schools of defenseless orphans in the past). On the other hand, didactic observation can profit just as well from a bad example. For them, the learning outcome is secondary to the didactic message. The reconciliation of both levels is only possible if the didactic intentions coincide, for example, in such a way that the interests of the slave are served by Menon being able to teach better in the future. That is a hope—nothing more.

VI

The same experience is repeated at all levels, from the smallest teaching method to the most complex innovation. Educationally, knowledge and action are not in a linear relationship but in a tense relationship between different realities, as is the case with every imposture. An imposture can be parodied or denounced, but not faked. It is impossible to put together an imposture in secret. Both impostures would fall into one for the observers; there would be no difference between the copy and the original. At the same time, it isn't easy in teaching and research to fulfil the profession's self-image in the long term without imposture (or self-deception). However, the peculiar nature of the pedagogical field usually allows, and sometimes forces, people to present themselves as someone who is or wants to be something other than what they appear to be. This is precisely why impostors are so rare in education, but impostures are the order of the day: teachers who are not actually teachers (but people, scientists or conservationists); curricula that are calculated to achieve global goals; academic lecturers who flirt with their inner distance from the topic or the provisional nature of their explanations; questions that are actually aimed at something other than their answer. It should never be completely fictitious. Something of what is implied must be objectively possible. Because "deception only has a chance of success and a lively effect," says Krull, "which does not deserve the name of deception,

but is nothing more than the endowment of a living truth that has not fully entered the realm of reality."

If the deception is seen through and is still maintained, then it is not imposture, but merely an embarrassing lapse. That's why there is a threatening crunch when professionals in the profession meet at conferences, in commissions, committees, working groups, or even during internship visits and other observation situations. They can only work together if they respect each other's boundaries and intentions. Both know that the other can disenchant them and thus remove the basis for their business. Only a sense of community can prevent them from being exposed. "We're both decent blokes, aren't we?" says Stanko, the blackmailer, to Krull, the thief. He is right. But to say any more about it would show a frightening lack of grace.

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