

Rethinking biographies, Respecting beginnings

Extensions:

**Additional Slides and
Bibliography**

Christoph Trüper (M.A.),
Frankfurt / Main
www.text-traeger.info



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Why worry (philosophically) ?

... about children's status/ situation ?

- An ethically valuable and viable special status is required for agents to prosper in a protected way unfolding their creative potential
- Thinking about the import of biographical time – the balance of correction and care – the importance of individual moments in live, not just as stages – makes us more welcoming of other 'atypical' agents (senior citizens, migrants, people with certain disabilities, 'quixotic' people)

A Quandary: „Paradox of the Self“

(cf. R.Nogge, 2008)

- **Autonomy & Self-authorship:** A real element of the self is required to be authorised – i.e. sanctioned – by the self as an authentic part of itself
- How can this be, at very early, ‘primary’ stages, since the self must at one time integrate elements that are clearly alien to itself, of foreign origin: it must be composed from external, foreign elements beyond itself

R. Noggle's „Paradox of the Self“

(2)

- From the very beginning, an authentically autonomous element of the self/ a biography must be sanctioned by the self as part of itself.
- How can this be,
 - if most elements are initially of foreign origin (to the self)
 - and there is no self to be referred to in the very beginning?

The Paradoxes Implication

- Speaking of developing agents: Where is the person(al) – the instance to be referred to – in the beginning: during childhood?
- The answer: 'none to be found' has grounded serious denigrations, denial, social exclusion
- What happenings (events) in a life course are to be counted as real, authentic / normatively significant parts of the biography?

„Paradox of the Self“ (3)

- R. Noggle's solution: Massive interventions be allowed at an early stage which would be deplorable at any later, more senior, stage in life
 - Included: Conditioning, blind obedience, uncritical acceptance of authoritative proposals,...; also: a seizable amount of paternalism.

(op.cit., partition 6)

An Alternative Possibility

- Alternative: Respect what is already there sensitively and sensibly of an unimpeachable self
- Reject some of the unfinished agent's impulses, desires, assertions [→ urgent, brute cases]
- Respect her point of view: Enhanced perspective taking
- Respect creativity: New life springs from old situations/ influences
- Reflect on limits of anyone's knowledge and influence

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