

## **The making of the (in)-authentic child**

Carl Anders Säfström<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Maynooth University

Through a close reading of Jaeger (1939, 1943) and Cassin (2014, 2016, 2020), this paper will clarify how a dominant Platonian/Aristotelian educational Theory establishes educational thought as primarily a psycho-social theory connecting the inner structure of man and state. As the paper will show, such structure reflects an original patriarchal social scene, reproduced through education (paideia, areté) and whose foundational aim is to perfect the state through educating man. As clarified in the paper, the patterns of perfection play into the construction of the authentic child as the object for the construction of a perfect citizen (productive, law obedient, and ethically responsible) through education. What is internal to such educational theories is the tension between the perfect and the imperfect child, between the authentic and the inauthentic child. With the help of Butler (2020), the paper will show how the inauthentic child is not a mistake but central for establishing the liberal democratic state and how education Theory works in such an idea of a state. Mainly the paper makes clear how the inauthentic child is not granted full existent on the public scene but are reduced to something that does not fully materialise, do not matter. Instead, such a child is made the target for compensatory measures taken by state policy and research backing such policies.

Such reduction is not primarily analysed in the paper in its blatant violent act towards the child deemed inauthentic. Instead, it focuses on the foundational anomaly of how certain educational Theory reflects an unavoidable reality of inequality. As the paper shows, such reality excludes some children from entirely existing on the social scene.

This paper then will mainly be doing three things: firstly, it will identify the archaic patterns that determine the relationship between child and state; secondly, it will clarify the archaic foundation on which we consider a child being an authentic representation of the culture in which we live; and thirdly, the paper will discuss the contestation that follows from the anomaly of basing culture as well as politics and education on an idea of an authentic child, and therefore also determining who the inauthentic child is. The paper will be concluding by suggesting a way beyond conceptualisations that put all the weight on the child, authentic or not.