



## Educational Space in Time: Reflections on Limits and Options for Educational Ambitions in History

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**Abstract** • This article studies educational ambitions in the context of the time-bound limits and possibilities offered by the educational space in order to better understand people's educational mindsets and behaviour across time. The concepts of educational space and educational ambition, as well as their application across time, are elaborated by distinguishing four indicators that appear to determine the limits and conditions of the educational space in the history of early modern and modern Europe. These are the demographic situation, the socio-economic circumstances, the power balance between private and public, and the time-bound manifestation of the educational mindset. The article also explores how some classic educational concepts—here, the *sentiment de l'enfance* coined by Philippe Ariès and the concept of “discipline”—could be used in the history of childhood and education by relating them to time-bound limits and positive conditions of the educational space.

**Keywords** • Educational space in time; educational ambitions; life stages; Ariès; Foucault

### Introduction

When I introduced the concept of educational space in my book *Het verlangen naar opvoeden*, in English *The Longing after Education*, my intention was to find an alternative to the often schematic positions in the long-lasting debate between historians and social scientists regarding the most eye-catching thesis of the French historian Philippe Ariès in his classic study *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime* (1960).<sup>1</sup> Ariès wrote about the historicity of the *sentiment de l'enfance*, a concept of childhood through which adults would approach childhood as a specific life stage characterised by the need for education with the child considered an *animal educandum*; that is, a child that should be reared and educated. The *sentiment de l'enfance* started its revival during the twelfth century, after having almost disappeared at the end of the Roman Empire, but only became the intended standard for the society as a whole in the nineteenth century. This rebirth of a mind-set occurred together with the *sentiment de la famille*, the institution where this approach of children started.<sup>2</sup>

Ariès's interpretation, which meant the start of the cultural turn in history of education, was appraised, criticised, and refuted. The discussion centred on the question of whether specific attention for children was a new historical phenomenon

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- 1 Jeroen J.H. Dekker, *Het verlangen naar opvoeden: Over de groei van de pedagogische ruimte in Nederland sinds de Gouden Eeuw tot omstreeks 1900* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2006), 13–21.
  - 2 Philippe Ariès, *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'Ancien Régime* (Paris: Éditions du Seuil, 1973; or. 1960), 23–41 [English translation: *Centuries of Childhood*] (New York, Vintage Books, 1962); *Centuries of Childhood* (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1973).

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and the result of the modernisation of society—the so-called evolutionistic position in the debate—or an almost structural characteristic of human beings of which the manifestation could vary greatly over time and place. The latter position is usually termed the revisionist or structural position.<sup>3</sup>

Among the adherents of the evolutionistic position were influential historians such as Élisabeth Badinter, Edward Shorter, and Lawrence Stone.<sup>4</sup> They identified the birth of this *sentiment de l'enfance*, which in their view also included motherly love, as taking place after the Middle Ages. This 'black legend', as the position was characterised by Rudolf Dekker, meant that the child's world from being downright miserable in the past became better over the course of time, with a decisive acceleration due to the Enlightenment. Loyd deMause summarised this view in agreement as follows: "The history of childhood is a nightmare from which we have only recently begun to awaken."<sup>5</sup>

The structural or revisionist position in the debate, which Rudolf Dekker characterised as the 'white legend', resulted in a series of studies about a variety of manifestations of practicing the *sentiment de l'enfance* across time and region. Those historians mostly focused on the history of early modern Europe, the Middle Ages, and Antique Greece and Rome, and were often driven by a need to demonstrate examples of practicing the *sentiment de l'enfance* in their period of expertise. Linda Pollock stated that, from the sixteenth century, a 'concept of childhood' existed, with the majority of children being well-treated rather than being subjected to brutality, and Alan Macfarlane and Stephen Ozment explored the loving family. Research in this tradition has also been conducted by Ralph Houlbrooke, Harrie Peeters, Shulamith Shahar, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Jan Baptist Bedaux, Jacques Gélis, and recently by Claudia Jarzebowski and Linda Oja.<sup>6</sup> At times, this structural

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- 3 Jeroen J.H. Dekker and Leendert F. Groenendijk, "Philippe Ariès's Discovery of Childhood after Fifty Years: The Impact of a Classic Study on Educational Research," *Oxford Review of Education* 38, no. 2 (2012), 133–47. Cf. Jeroen J.H. Dekker, *Educational Ambitions in History: Childhood and Education in an Expanding Educational Space from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2010), 15–17; Jan Baptist Bedaux, "Introduction," in *Pride and Joy. Children's portraits in the Netherlands 1500–1700*, ed. Jan Baptist Bedaux and Rudi E.O. Ekkart (Gent/Amsterdam/New York: Ludion and Abrams, 2000), 11–31.
  - 4 Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975); Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500–1800* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1977); Élisabeth Badinter, *L'amour en plus* (Paris: Flammarion, 1980); Rudolf M. Dekker, *Uit de schaduw in 't grote licht: Kinderen in egodocumenten van de Gouden Eeuw tot de Romantiek* (Amsterdam: Wereldbibliotheek, 1995); Rudolf Dekker, *Children, Memory and Autobiography in Holland: From the Golden Age to Romanticism* (London: Macmillan, 1999).
  - 5 Loyd DeMause, ed., *The History of Childhood* (New York: Psychohistory Press, 1974), 1. Cf. Claudia Jarzebowski, *Kindheit und Emotion: Kinder und ihre Lebenswelten in der europäischen Frühen Neuzeit* (Berlin/Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2018), 62, on DeMause.
  - 6 Among the revisionists are Alan MacFarlane, *Marriage and Love in England. Modes of Reproduction 1300–1840* (Oxford/New York: Basil Blackwell, 1986); Steven Ozment, *When Fathers Ruled: Family Life in Reformation Europe* (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 2001, or 1983); Steven Ozment, *Ancestors, The Loving Family in Old Europe* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450–1700* (London/New York: Longman, 1984); Harry F.M. Peeters, *Kind en jeugdige in het begin van de moderne tijd* (ca. 1500–ca. 1650) Hilversum/Antwerpen: Paul Brand, 1966); Shulamith Shahar, *Childhood in the Middle Ages* (London/New York: Routledge, 1990); Shulamith Shahar, "The First Stage of Childhood and the 'Civilizing Process,'" in *Paedagogica Historica, Supplementary Series 2, Education and Cultural Transmission: Historical Studies of Continuity and Change in Families, Schooling and Youth Cultures*, ed. Johan Sturm, Jeroen J.H. Dekker, Richard Aldrich and Frank Simon, 163–78 (Gent: C.S.H.P., 1996); Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, *Montaillou, village occitan de 1294 à 1324* (Paris:

position was based on biological insights that were used to show the necessity of specific parental care for children to survive. In 1970, the psycho-historian David Hunt claimed that a ‘concern for children’ was ‘a part of human nature’. He concluded: “The argument in *Centuries of Childhood* is thus biologically almost inconceivable.”<sup>7</sup>

Many representatives of the structural turn have also emphasised the normality of affectionate relationships between parents and their children and within the parental couple. This was often done because they, like many evolutionists, misunderstood Ariès’s thesis. According to Ariès, the absence of the *sentiment de l’enfance* meant the absence of a specific life stage and thus of awareness of the *sui generis*—that is, the unique character—of children, but not the absence of parental love and affection.<sup>8</sup>

The debate between evolutionists and structuralists resulted in many beautiful studies on the history of childhood. Curiously, this was partly because of these misunderstandings, which created extra motivation to demonstrate the existence of the *sentiment de l’enfance* over the long term. This did increase our knowledge of child and education in the past with the use of new sources, concepts, and interpretations. As a result, the opposition between the ‘white’ and ‘black’ legends became less strong; a pure gain for the history of childhood and education where schematic approaches sooner or later get stuck on the variety of human behaviour in the past.

It is within this context that I have argued that, instead of tracing the birth of educational longing and of the *sentiment de l’enfance* in specific periods, one should focus on its time-bound manifestations in the context of available educational

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Gallimard, 1975); Danièle Alexandre-Bidon and Didier Lette, *Les enfants au Moyen-Age V–XVe siècles* (Paris: Hachette, 1997); Jacques Gélis, “L’individualisation de l’enfant,” in *L’histoire de la vie privée: De la Renaissance aux Lumières*, vol. 3, ed. Philippe Ariès and George Duby (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1987), 311–29; Jacques Gélis, *L’arbre et le fruit: La naissance dans l’Occident moderne XVIe–XIXe siècle* (Paris: Fayard, 1984); Jan Baptist Bedaux, *The Reality of Symbols: Studies in the Iconology of Netherlandish art 1400–1800* (The Hague/Maarssen: Gary Schwartz/SDU, 1990); Bedaux (2000); Annemarieke Willemsen, “Out of Children’s Hands: Surviving Toys and Attributes,” in Bedaux and Ekkart (2000), 297–303; Linda A. Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent–Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 262–71; Linda A. Pollock, *A Lasting Relationship: Parents and Children over Three Centuries* (London, Fourth Estate, 1987). Cf. Scarlett Beauvalet, “Children and Childhoods,” in *A Cultural History of Education in the Renaissance*, ed. Jeroen J.H. Dekker (London/New York/Oxford/New Delhi/Sydney: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020), 65–83; on Germany, Jarzebowski (2018); on Scandinavia, Linda Oja, “Childcare and Gender in Sweden C. 1600–1800,” *Gender & History* 27, no. 1 (2015), 77–111; on the Dutch Republic, Jeroen J.H. Dekker and Leendert F. Groenendijk, “The Republic of God or the Republic of Children? Childhood and Child-rearing After the Reformation: An Appraisal of Simon Schama’s Thesis about the Uniqueness of the Dutch Case,” *Oxford Review of Education* 17 (1991), 317–35.

7 David Hunt, *Parents and Children in History: The Psychology of Family Life in Early Modern France* (New York: Basic Books, 1970), 46, 49. Cf. Bedaux (2000), 11–12 with the same way of reasoning; Jan Baptist Bedaux, “From Normal to Supranormal: Observations on Realism and Idealism from a Biological Perspective,” in *Sociobiology and the Arts*, ed. Jan Baptist B. Bedaux, and B. Cooke (Amsterdam/Atlanta: Editions Rodopi, 1999), 99–128.

8 Ariès (1973), 134, explained that the temporal absence of the “sentiment de l’enfance” does not mean “que les enfants étaient négligés, abandonnés, ou méprisés,” but deals with “une conscience de la particularité enfantine, cette particularité, qui distingue essentiellement l’enfant de l’adulte même jeune. Cette conscience n’existait pas. C’est pourquoi, dès que l’enfant pouvait vivre sans la sollicitude constante de sa mère, de sa nourrice ou de sa remueuse, il appartenait à la société des adultes et ne s’en distinguait plus.”

space.<sup>9</sup> This approach would guarantee a better balance between continuity and change, not hindered by a schematic division of a history of childhood and education before and after the birth of the awareness of the *sui generis*—that is, the unique character—of children.

### Educational space in time

In my view, the concept of educational space should cover both physically enclosed places such as a family home, a nursery, a school, a classroom, a playing field, an orphanage, or a residential institution, and also cultural and psychological phenomena such as the educational mindset.<sup>10</sup> A vital feature of educational space is its limits, which get in the way of or even obstruct child rearing, and the positive conditions of this space that promote, generate or enable child rearing and education. On one hand, educational space delineates “the always restrictive availability of education,” but on the other hand it contains “a series of conditions that make educational ambitions possible”; this characterisation is inspired by the definition of culture as a dynamic process characterised by limits and conditions within cultural history and cultural anthropology.<sup>11</sup>

Educational space is space in time. Fernand Braudel—the most famous member of the second generation of the *Annales* group of historians related to the journal with the same name and oriented to an integration of historical and social sciences—wrote about the plurality of social and historical time, or *pluralité du temps social*. After applying this in *La Méditerranée et le monde méditerranéen à l'époque de Philippe II* (1949), he developed the concept further in an article that became a classic: *Histoire et sciences sociales. La longue durée* (1958).

Braudel distinguished between three historical times: the short term (*temps événementiel*), the medium term (*conjuncture*), and the long-term (*longue durée*).<sup>12</sup> He related economic processes to the *longue durée*, as in *Civilisation matérielle*,

9 Dekker (2006), 23. Cf. Jeroen J.H. Dekker, Leendert F. Groenendijk, and Johan Verberckmoes, “Proudly Raising Vulnerable Youngsters: The Scope for Education in the Netherlands,” in *Pride and Joy*, ed. Bedaux and Ekkart, 43–60. Cf. Jeroen J.H. Dekker, Bernard Kruithof, Frank Simon, and Bruno Vanobbergen, “Discoveries of Childhood in History: An Introduction,” *Paedagogica Historica* 48, no. 1 (2012), 1–9; Willem Frijhoff, “Historian’s Discovery of Childhood,” *Paedagogica Historica*, 48 no. 1 (2012), 11–29.

10 Dekker (2010), 11–15; Jeroen J.H. Dekker, *De pedagogische ruimte in de tijd* (Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2019), 9–11; Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “Introduction: Education in an Emerging Communication and Knowledge Society,” in Dekker (ed.) (2020), 1–17. Cf. Luis Grosso Correia, ed., “Special Issue: ISCHE 41 (Porto) Spaces and Places of Education,” *Paedagogica Historica* 57, nos. 1–2 (2021), 1–219; Paul Smeyers, Marc Depaepe, and Edwin Keiner (eds.), *Educational Research: The Importance and Effects of Institutional Spaces* (Dordrecht: Springer, 2013); John Loughman and John M. Montias, *Public and Private Spaces: Works of Art in Seventeenth Century Dutch Houses* (Zwolle: Waanders, 2000).

11 Dekker (2010), 11. On the use of ‘space’ in cultural history, see George Steinmetz, “Logics of History as a Framework for an Integrated Social Science,” *Social Science History* 32, no. 4 (2008), 548. On culture, Willem Frijhoff, *Cultuur, mentaliteit: illusies van elites?* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1983); Jeroen J.H. Dekker, *Het gezinsportret: Over de geschiedenis van opvoeding, cultuuroverdracht en identiteit* (Baarn: Ambo, 1992), 12–13; Carlo Ginzburg, *Miti Emblemi Spie: Morfologia e storia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1986).

12 Fernand Braudel, “Histoire et sciences sociales: La longue durée,” in Fernand Braudel, *Écrits sur l'histoire* (Paris, 1969, or 1958, *Annales E.S.C.*, no. 4, 725–53), 71–72. Cf. Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “Educational sciences and the History of Education: ‘La longue durée’ or the Short Timeliness,” *Bildungsgeschichte: International Journal for the Historiography of Education* 3, no. 2 (2013), 248–51.

*Economie et Capitalisme* (1979). He was also aware of the *longue durée* of cultural and mental processes, which were characterised by *cadres mentaux*, mental frames that almost behaved like prisons of the *longue durée* with hardly any opportunities to escape. In his recent book on the Renaissance, Bernd Roeck described them as “insurmountable walls of the spaces of possibility.”<sup>13</sup>

The discussion about Ariès’ thesis was basically a debate about whether or not the *sentiment de l’enfance* was a *longue durée* mental frame or an innovation of the modern era. I propose to explore this mental frame’s time-bound manifestations within a changing educational space. In my previous work, I distinguished four indicators with crucial impact on limiting or stimulating the educational space and thus the realisation of educational ambitions. Those indicators are the demographic situation, the socio-economic circumstances, the educational power balance between private and public, and the extent and manner in which the educational mindset was able to realise the *sentiment de l’enfance* by trying to understand the child’s world.<sup>14</sup>

The educational space of childhood has developed over time in Europe, both in terms of limits and as positive enabling conditions. Until well into the nineteenth century, the strongest limit for the educational space was the demographic situation. For centuries, high infant and child mortality, as well as early death of parents, characterised the life of all people, rich and poor alike. This extreme vulnerability of children and their parents, particularly mothers, was the main cause of the end of educational ambitions.<sup>15</sup> Adulthood, the expected horizon of childhood, was uncertain because of regular epidemics of the plague, smallpox, typhoid and dysentery, not to mention the consequences of wars and famines.<sup>16</sup>

In the course of the nineteenth century, demography slowly transformed from a limit to a positive condition. The main reasons for this change included better infrastructure for water and sewerage, more emphasis on hygiene, better medical care, and later on the introduction of antibiotics, after the Second World War complemented by vaccination programs against infectious diseases. Behind this transformation was modern economic growth and, from 1900, social and educational policies. By reducing child mortality and increasing the health of children, the demographic development changed from limit to condition. Now the main obstacle to education was removed for the majority of children. They could be educated to adults instead of dying prematurely.

The economic development was a factor that both could limit and extend educational space. Economic modernisation during commercial capitalism in early

13 Braudel (1969), 43–45, 50–51: “les cadres mentaux aussi sont prisons de longue durée.” Cf. Marc Bloch, *Apologie pour l’histoire ou métier d’historien* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1975), 158: social conditions are “dans leur nature profonde, mentales.” Cf. Bernd Roeck, *Der Morgen der Welt: Geschichte der Renaissance* (Munich: C.H. Beck, 2017), 20.

14 Cf. Dekker (2010), 12.

15 Peter N. Stearns, *Childhood in World History* (New York/London: Routledge, 2006), 55. Cf. Rudolf Dekker (1995), 31.

16 Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, “L’enfant, la mémoire et la mort,” in *Histoire de l’enfance, vol. 1, De l’antiquité au XVIIe siècle*, ed. Egle Becchi and Dominique Julia (Paris: Seuil, 1998), 200–30, pp. 208–17, on parental grief in early modern Europe. On the Netherlands, Chris Vandenbroeke, “Zuigelingssterfte, bevallingsstoornissen en kraambedsterfte (17<sup>de</sup>–19<sup>de</sup> eeuw),” *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis* 60 (1977), 133–63; Chris Vandenbroeke et al., “De zuigelingen- en kindersterfte in België en Nederland in seculair perspectief,” *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 94 (1981), 461–91.

modern Europe limited the educational space, both inside Europe by increasing child labour and outside Europe through colonialism and slave trade. The same economic modernisation was also a positive condition that contributed significantly to higher literacy levels by investing in schooling in the so-called European Megalopolis, Europe's urbanised part, with the centre gradually shifting from the Mediterranean to north-west Europe.<sup>17</sup> In a reciprocal relationship between education and economy, those investments in schooling contributed to economic growth by producing more competence and knowledge.<sup>18</sup> In the nineteenth century, the historically unprecedented economic growth caused by the Industrial Revolution was important for mass schooling and compulsory education around 1900.<sup>19</sup>

However, this industrial development also placed limits on the educational space. Particularly in the first phase of the Industrial Revolution, it caused an intensification of child labour, which became heavier and riskier than before because of longer working hours and faster work pace determined by machines. For many children, childhood became shorter and more disciplined instead of longer and more child-oriented, as a linear-evolutionist interpretation of history of childhood should expect. This hard reality of childhood was incompatible with a more explicit child-oriented discourse in this very period (more on this below), and soon resistance emerged, first in England, which had numerous industrial chimneys that were cleaned by skinny children, a practice touchingly expressed in *The Chimney Sweepers* by the romantic English poet William Blake (1757–1827). The poem was formulated from the perspective of the child and starts as follows:

When my mother died I was very young,  
And my father sold me while yet my tongue  
Could scarcely cry ‘Weep! weep! weep! weep!’  
So your chimneys I sweep, and in soot I sleep.<sup>20</sup>

Opposition toward industrial child labour eventually resulted in child labour acts and school acts. When school attendance increased, child labour decreased and eventually the school gained the upper hand.<sup>21</sup>

Realisation of educational ambitions was, and remains, dependent on who is in charge of the educational space, an issue narrowly related to the power balance between private and public. Private primarily means parents and family, and also

17 Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, Économie et Capitalisme Xve–XVIIIe Siècle, volume 3: Le temps du monde* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1979), 71–234; Jan Luiten Van Zanden, *The Long Road to the Industrial Revolution: The European Economy in a Global Perspective, 1000–1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2009), 257, 259; Mihoko Suzuki, “Literacies: Early Modern Literacy in a Global Context,” in Dekker (ed.) (2020), 151–72.

18 Catherine Secretan and Willem T.M. Frijhoff, eds, *Dictionnaire des Pays-Bas au siècle d’or* (Paris: CNRS Éditions, 2018), XX; Dekker (2020), 11; Jean-Luc Le Cam, “Learners and Learning,” in Dekker (ed.) (2020a), 107–27; Jean-Luc Le Cam, “Teachers and Teaching,” in Dekker (ed.) (2020b), 129–50.

19 Cf. Johannes Westberg, Lukas Boser and Ingrid Brühwiler (eds.), *School Acts: The Rise of Mass Schooling. Education Policy in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan/Springer Nature, 2019).

20 William Blake, *The Chimney Sweeper* (<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/43654/the-chimney-sweeper-when-my-mother-died-i-was-very-young>, accessed October 10, 2021).

21 Westberg et al. (2019); Dekker (2006), 369–77.

private institutions with educational ambitions (initially mainly the churches). Later, the Reformation Protestant and Roman-Catholic churches gained more influence on parenting and education through such activities as schooling and church-bound charity organisations. From the late eighteenth century, secular philanthropical societies also became players in the field of education.<sup>22</sup> Public means central, regional and local state, which in early modern Europe was narrowly connected with the dominant church. In the quest for power to realise educational ambitions, private and public could cooperate, but their relationship was often characterised by competition and struggle.<sup>23</sup> Most eye-catching were the tensions between state and church in the struggle for mass schooling and compulsory education in European countries such as France, Germany, and the Netherlands, and the cooperation between state and private philanthropy in child protection policies.

The fourth indicator—the state of the educational mental frame, as expressed both on an individual and institutional level and within both private and public institutions—was decisive in terms of coping with limits and conditions of available educational space. This mental frame was embedded in time-bound world views, which cover mental frameworks of ideas and beliefs with which the world is approached. Worldviews can be religious and secular; they vary from world views with a very long term, such as the main book religions, to more time-bound world views like liberalism and communism. For the examples explored in this article, important world views are Christian Humanism and Reformation in early modern Europe, and Enlightenment and Romanticism in the nineteenth century.

The mental frameworks that were characterised by a *sentiment de l'enfance* and embedded in those world views were a driving force behind educational processes such as compulsory education, justified by educational, economic, political (citizenship) and social arguments; and child protection acts, justified by “the best interest of the child” and by social and political goals such as decreasing poverty and preventing future societal unrest.<sup>24</sup> Such mental frameworks mobilised parents and institution with educational ambitions such as the state, churches and philanthropical societies.

This mobilisation—which, among other things, implied the rise of mass schooling—also implied a pedagogisation. The process of pedagogisation refers to an ever-growing societal interest in the importance of education in relation to all kinds of social, economic, and cultural issues, and is related to the birth of empirical educational sciences at the end of the nineteenth century. This resulted in making children objects of scientific research and in observing them with a disenchanted instead of Romantic gaze. This development fits Max Weber's concept

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22 Cf. Jeroen J.H. Dekker, *The Will to Change the Child: Re-Education Homes for Children at Risk in Nineteenth Century Western Europe* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2001). Cf. Peter Becker and Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “Doers: The Emergence of an Acting Elite,” *Paedagogica Historica* 38, nos. 2/3 (2002), 427–32 [special issue: *Doers: Philanthropists and Bureaucrats in the 19th Century: Views on Education and Society, Communication, Collaboration*, ed. Jeroen J.H. Dekker and Peter Becker].

23 Steinmetz (2008), 546.

24 Cf. Marie-Sylvie Dupont-Bouchat, Éric Pierre, Jean-Marie Fecteau, Jean Trépanier, Jacques-Guy Petit, Bernard Schnapper, and Jeroen J.H. Dekker, *Enfance et justice au XIXe siècle: Essais d'histoire comparée de la protection de l'enfance 1829–1914, France, Belgique, Pays-Bas, Canada* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2001); Dekker (2001), 128–40.

of disenchantment (in German, *Entzauberung*) as long-term development in the Western world.<sup>25</sup>

### Educational ambitions

Educational ambitions require educational space, as defined above. Educational ambitions denote the goal-oriented will to educate and form the driving force to educate for individual educators, first of all parents and later also educational professionals, and for both private and public institutions such as the church, philanthropic societies, and the school. It is the educational ambitions that differentiate education from child rearing: the education ambition refers to those practices with an explicit focus on an educational goal and intends to guide children's development in the direction of the period-bound educational goal. Education ambition would stimulate a will to change children's behaviour, particularly when educational ambitions target at-risk children in out-of-home settings, such as neglected children and children with behavioural problems.<sup>26</sup>

The direction of educational ambitions has changed across time. In early modern Europe, the goal of achieving Christian salvation dominated, while around 1800 Enlightenment-inspired education focused on making good citizens out of children. At approximately the same time, authors such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau—a philosopher in between Enlightenment and Romanticism, with his highly popular *Émile* (1762)—and Friedrich Fröbel—the full-blooded Romantic pedagogue with experience in educational practice, which led to his *Die Menschenerziehung* (The Education of Man) of 1828—shifted attention from education as a filler of a child's *tabula rasa* to the child as an entity full of content, to be stimulated instead of filled, for example by child's play. From about 1900, the child's best interests became a dominant goal, while stimulating child's happiness became an almost independent educational goal, especially from the 1970s onwards.<sup>27</sup>

The emergence of new goals, made possible by changes in the educational space, does not mean that existing goals faded to the background. Instead, the history of educational space is marked by the coexistence of various, often divergent and sometimes openly competing educational ambitions. An example is the nineteenth century school struggle between state and religiously inspired movements in

25 On pedagogisation, Marc Depaepe, *De pedagogisering achterna: Aanzet tot een genealogie van de pedagogische mentaliteit in de voorbije 250 jaar* (Leuven/Amersfoort: ACCO, 1998); Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe (eds.), *Educational Research: the Educationalization of Social Problems* (New York, Dordrecht, London: Springer 2018); Max Weber, "Wissenschaft als Beruf," in *Gesammelte Aufsätze zur Wissenschaftslehre*, ed. Johannes Winckelmann (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr Paul Siebeck, 1982, or. 1919), 594. See Jeroen J.H. Dekker, "Demystification in the Century of the Child: The Conflict between Romanticism and Disenchantment in (Residential) Youth Care from the 1830s to 2000," in *Professionalization and Participation in Child and Youth Care: Challenging Understandings in Theory and Practice*, ed. Erik J. Knorth, Peter M. van den Bergh, and Fop Verhey (Burlington: Ashgate, 2002), 31–33, and Jeroen J.H. Dekker, "The Century of the Child Revisited," in *Children's Rights: Progress and Perspectives. Essays from the International Journal of Children's Rights*, ed. Michael Freeman (Leiden/Boston: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers/Koninklijke Brill NV, 2011; or. 2000), 482–86.

26 Jeroen J.H. Dekker, "Children at Risk in History: A Story of Expansion," *Paedagogica Historica* 45, nos. 1/2 (2009), 17–36; Dekker (2010), 10–11; Dekker (2001).

27 Cf. Stearns (2006), 157; Peter N. Stearns, "Happy Children: A Modern Emotional Commitment," *Frontiers in Psychology* 10 (2019), article 2025, 1–8.



countries like France, Germany and the Netherlands.<sup>28</sup> Another example are the attempts of the progressive education movement to reform schooling, using the works of Friedrich Froebel, John Dewey and Helen Parkhurst (the Dalton Plan), among others, as inspiration.

### **Educational space and the classic concepts for the history of education**

The concept of educational space may be related to a range of classic concepts in the history of childhood and education.<sup>29</sup> Here, I focus on two of these. The first, explained above, is *sentiment de l'enfance*, which also covers the concept of the educational relationship.<sup>30</sup> The second is discipline. While far from absent in the history of pedagogical ideas, it became well-known by Michel Foucault in *Surveiller et punir* (1975), a study about the history of discipline as an instrument for behavioural change focusing on institutions like the panoptic prison, the residential educational institution, and the school. The concept was introduced fifteen years earlier into the cultural and social history of education, again by Ariès.<sup>31</sup> Below I explore the two concepts in their time-bound manifestation, by focusing on parental behaviour in early modern Europe and then on schooling and residential re-education in the nineteenth century.

### **“Sentiment de l'enfance” in the educational space of early modern Europe**

As we have seen above, the physical vulnerability of children and their parents in early modern Europe placed limits on educational ambitions.<sup>32</sup> Parents lived with the constant fear of their child's death: the ‘dark legend’ of the evolutionists was, in demographic terms, a hard reality.<sup>33</sup> According to several supporters of the ‘dark legend, such as Edward Shorter, this high risk of death of young children restrained parents from entering a loving and emotional educational relationship. However, many personal documents and paintings show that the mindset of a lot of those

28 Dekker (2010), 11; Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “In Search of Multiple Compatibility: Modernization, Secularization, Religion, and Education in History,” *Bildungsgeschichte: International Journal for the Historiography of Education* 11, no. 2 (2021), 171–75.

29 For cultural transmission, see Harvey Siegel, “Education and Cultural Transmission/Transformation: Philosophical Reflections on the Historian's Task,” *Paedagogica Historica Supplementary Series* 2 (1996), 25–46, 28, 37–38; Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “Cultural Transmission and Inter-Generational Interaction,” *International Review of Education* 47, no. 1 (2001), 77–95; Wilna A.J. Meijer, “Cultural Transmission and the Balance Between Tradition and Enlightenment: The Example of Islam,” in *Religious Education in a World of Religious Diversity*, ed. Wilna A.J. Meijer, S. Miedema and A. Lanser-van der Velde (Münster/New York/Munich/Berlin: Waxmann, 2009), 181–94.

30 Cf. Ben Spiecker, “The Pedagogical Relationship,” *Oxford Review of Education* 10 (1984), 203–9.

31 Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir. Naissance de la prison* (Paris: Gallimard, 1975) [English translation: *Discipline and punish*. Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1977]. While the title of Ariès (1973) suggests a history of child and family, the biggest chapter is about the school, see Jeroen J.H. Dekker and Daniel M. Lechner, “Discipline and Pedagogics in History: Foucault, Ariès, and the History of Panoptical Education,” *The European Legacy* 4, no. 5 (1999), 37–49; Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “Éduquer et punir: Michel Foucault et l'histoire de l'éducation surveillée,” *Sociétés et Représentations* 3 (1996), 257–68.

32 Stearns (2006), 55. Cf. Rudolf Dekker (1995), 31.

33 Rudolf Dekker (1995), 31.

parents was not that different from ours.<sup>34</sup> They loved their children, tried to care and educate them to adulthood, became worried when their children were ill, and sad or inconsolable when a child died.

As pious Christians resigned to God's will, the parents' affection for their child was evident, as was their grief. Well-to-do parents often had portraits painted of their children while still very young, conscious of their poor life expectancy. This is reflected in the fact that almost half of the children in Dutch seventeenth-century child portraits were aged between 0 and 12 months.<sup>35</sup> Funeral portraits provide a specific kind of evidence of grief on the child's death.<sup>36</sup> Also, many family portraits include already deceased children, to show their membership of the family.<sup>37</sup> Parents also often died prematurely. Evidence of communal educational responsibility for child rearing included the numerous orphanages, often in impressive buildings such as *Ospedale degli Innocenti* in Florence.<sup>38</sup>

Setting aside the discussion on whether this affection for children was new to the Renaissance, it is uncontested that the *sentiment de l'enfance* became more manifest during this period. In this communication and knowledge society with many subjects on the discussion table, education and childhood were discussed profoundly. Among the humanists joining this discussion were Juan Luis Vives (1493–1540) with *De institutione feminae christianae* (1523), Pier Paolo Vergerio (1370–1444) with *De ingenuis moribus ac liberalibus studiis* (1472), Leon Battista Alberti (1404–1472) with *I Libri della famiglia* (1433–1440), and Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466–1536). With *Declamatio de pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis* [abridged as A Declamation] (1529) and *De civilitate morum puerilium* [On Good Manners] (1530), Erasmus decisively influenced the educational discourse in Europe for several centuries.<sup>39</sup>

According to Erasmus, reaching adulthood with a balanced personality was only possible when the product of nature was cultivated by education.<sup>40</sup> Children “are to be seen initially as empty vessels to be filled by the teacher, or as wax to

34 On personal documents, Rudolf Dekker (1999); Rudolf Dekker (1995); Dekker (2006), 138–46; Benjamin B. Roberts, *Through the Keyhole: Dutch Child-Rearing Practices in the 17th and 18th Century: Three Urban Elite Families* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1998), 213; Dekker (2010), 36–37, 40–41; Scarlett Beauvalet, “Life Histories,” in Dekker (ed.) (2020), 173–92.

35 See Bedaux (2000), 23, 32, n. 29.

36 Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “Images as Representations: Visual Sources on Education and Childhood in the Past,” *Paedagogica Historica* 51, no. 6 (2015), 709–14; Jan Baptist Bedaux, “Funeraire kinderportretten uit de 17de eeuw,” in *Naar het lijk. Het Nederlandse doodsportret 1500-heden*, ed. Bert C. Sliggers (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1998), 88–114; Bedaux and Ekkart (2000), 292–93, 192–93; Dekker, Groenendijk and Verberckmoes (2000), 56–57.

37 E.g. Bernhard Strigel (c. 1465–1528), *Portrait of Konrad Rehlinger of Augsburg with his Eight Children* (1517) (München: Alte Pinakothek), see Dekker (2006), 90–91; Anonymous, *Family Group, Probably the Family of Jan Gerritsz. Pan*, 1638, panel, 87 x 178 cm (Collection Stichting Portret van Enkhuizen/Thade van Doesburgh), see Bedaux and Ekkart (2000), 162–63, Marie-Christine Autin Graz, *Children in Painting* (Milan: Skira Editore S.p.A., 2002), 106, and Dekker (2015), 712–13.

38 For Dutch orphanages, Simon Groenveld, Jeroen J.H. Dekker, Thom R.M. Willemse, and Jacques Dane (eds.), *Wezen en Boeffes: Zes eeuwen zorg in wees- en kinderhuizen* (Hilversum: Verloren, 1997). For Italy, Philip Gavitt, *Charity and Children in Renaissance Florence: The Ospedale degli Innocenti 1410–1536* (Ann Arbor, the University of Michigan Press, 1990).

39 Dekker (2020), 1, 14.

40 Paragraph based on Jeroen J.H. Dekker and Inge J.M. Wichgers, “The Embodiment of Teaching the Regulation of Emotions in Early Modern Europe,” *Paedagogica Historica* 54, nos. 1/2 (2018), 52.

be moulded.<sup>41</sup> Before John Locke's ideas about the child as *tabula rasa*, Erasmus considered education as adequately filling the child's blank slate. This should be done in a way that children would enjoy; as Erasmus put it, it is easier to sail a ship with the wind and tide than against them.<sup>42</sup>

While not opposed to discipline in education, Erasmus firmly rejected any form of physical maltreatment of children. He encouraged parents to actively educate their children. He considered neglectful parents to be those "who abandon and expose their children" and "therefore deserve to be punished by the existing laws" on abandoning and exposing. This view only came into effect four hundred years later in child protection laws set up in the interest of the child instead of the parents.<sup>43</sup> Erasmus' ideas were popularised thanks to the invention of printing in numerous child-rearing advice books, emblem books, and genre painting, all based on the same view on the child as an *animal educandum*. While Humanism was not a mass movement like the Reformation, its educational ideas encouraged through those publications in a more popular style the masses to approach their child with a *sentiment de l'enfance*.<sup>44</sup>

### ***Discipline, Regulation and Supervision in a growing educational space***

Greater attention to educational responsibility was accompanied by greater emphasis on discipline. In early modern Europe, the reformed Protestant and Roman-Catholic churches asked this for their believers,<sup>45</sup> the early capitalist economy for their future labourers, and the emerging state bureaucracies for their citizens. This call for more discipline became manifest in parental styles that were encouraged by rules and advice in numerous child-rearing advice about how to raise children and restrain their behaviour,<sup>46</sup> in a more disciplined school culture<sup>47</sup> that included the Lutheran and Jesuit gymnasia, and in orphanages. An acceleration took place in the educational space of the nineteenth century in schooling and residential re-education homes.

Whether it was physically necessary to discipline children was an important discussion topic among humanists. Orthodox Protestants justified physical discipline to regulate children's behaviour as following God's will by referring to original sin.

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41 James Mearns, "The influence of Erasmus' Educational Writings on Nicolas Bourbons' Paidagogeion," *Bibliothèque d'Humanisme et Renaissance* 72 (2010), 65–81.

42 John M. Parrish, "Education, Erasmian humanism and More's Utopia," *Oxford Review of Education* 36 (2010), 589–605.

43 Desiderius Erasmus, "A Declamation on the Subject of Early Liberal Education for Children/ *De pueris statim ac liberaliter instituendis declamatio*," translated and annotated by Beert C. Verstraete, in Desiderius Erasmus, *Literary and Educational Writings, 3–4, volume 26 Collected Works of Erasmus (CWE)*, based on *Opera omnia Desiderii Erasmi Roterodami* (Amsterdam, 1969–), ASD I–2, 23–78, ed. J. Kelley Sowards (Toronto, Ont: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division, 1985, or. 1529), 291–346, p. 313. Cf. Dekker (2001), 104–16; Dupont et al. (2001).

44 Dekker (2020), 14.

45 See C. Scott Dixon, "Church, Religion, and Morality," in Dekker ((2020), 35–41.

46 See Jeroen J. H. Dekker, "The Restrained Child: Imaging the Regulation of Children's Behaviour and Emotions in Early Modern Europe: The Dutch Golden Age," *History of Education and Children's Literature*, XIII, no. 1 (2018), 17–39 [special issue: *Images of the European Child*, ed. María del Mar del Pozo Andrés and Bernat Sureda García].

47 Ariès (1973), ch. V, part 2 entitled "Les progrès de la discipline," 265–97.

However, they did not recommend violence arbitrarily<sup>48</sup> and reflected seriously about how to approach child's nature without force. Physical force was a last resort that was only to be used after all other educational instruments had failed.<sup>49</sup> Others applauded physical chastisement and did not recommend it only as last resort; these included Michael Tarchaniota Marullus (1458–1500), who preferred a Spartan education with physical chastisement over education by speaking, and also Petrus Paolo Vergerio and Bartholomäus Metlinger.<sup>50</sup>

Erasmus not only rejected the justification of physical force by original sin, but considered such education simply as sadism.<sup>51</sup> He referred to the practice of teachers flogging their pupils daily without any relationship to children's behaviour, but simply as a disciplinary style.<sup>52</sup> Memories from his own childhood supplemented with observations made as an adult still evoke horror in him about this practice. Such people should never have been made teachers, but only "butchers or executioners."<sup>53</sup>

Erasmus rejected physical discipline, which to him was child maltreatment, on three grounds: it was criminal, it was morally awful in terms of its long-lasting impact on the child, and it was educationally ineffective. He argued that it should be punished as a criminal act against human law that "places restrictions on parental authority and permits even servants to take legal action against masters for maltreatment."<sup>54</sup> He also argued it was against Christian morality and could not be justified by referring to the doctrine of original sin and to proverbs in the Bible such as in Proverbs 13: 24: "One who spares the rod hates his son." Erasmus said, "nowadays we must interpret these sayings from the Old Testament more liberally" instead of literally in the tradition of Augustine and Luther and Calvin, who considered the Bible as *sola scriptura* and *Deus ipse loquens* respectively.<sup>55</sup> Finally, Erasmus argued that physical discipline was educationally ineffective for not fitting child's nature.<sup>56</sup> Among his allies were Michel de Montaigne (1533–1592)<sup>57</sup>, the Dutch author of popular emblem books Jacob Cats (1577–1660),<sup>58</sup> and the Italian humanist and cardinal Jacopo Sadoletto (1477–1547) who in *De liberis recte instituendis* (1533) made a plea for the power of persuasion and education instead of violence.<sup>59</sup>

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48 Jarzebowski (2018), 295: "als Instrument der Durchsetzung des göttlichen Willens."

49 Leendert F. Groenendijk, *De pedagogiek van Jacobus Koelman. Inhoud en bronnen/grondslag en ambitie. 'Een klare bestiering om de kinderen voor den Heere op te voeden'* (Apeldoorn: Labarum Academic, 2017), 219. Cf. Dekker et al. (2000), 10, 50–51.

50 Jarzebowski (2018), 45, 48, 60 n. 97.

51 Ibid., 69.

52 Erasmus (1985, or. 1529), 326–32. Cf. Jarzebowski (2018), 15, n. 74.

53 Ibid., 326–27.

54 Ibid., 329.

55 Ibid., 332. On protestant reformers, Dixon (2020), 25–30.

56 Jarzebowski (2018), 57.

57 Ibid., 66–67.

58 Jeroen J.H. Dekker, "Dangerous, Seductive, and Innovative. Visual Sources for the History of Education," in *Folds of Past, Present and Future. Reconfiguring Contemporary Histories of Education*, ed. Sarah Van Ruyskensvelde, Geert Thyssen, Frederik Herman, Angelo Van Gorp and Pieter Verstraete (Oldenbourg: De Gruyter, 2021), 392–401.

59 On Sadoletto, Richard P. McBrien (ed.), *The HarperCollins Encyclopedia of Catholicism* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1995), 1152; Jarzebowski (2018), 60–61, 57, n. 86.

### *Discipline: a concept in the history of education*

Ariès was one of the first historians to systematically make use of the concept of discipline in the history of education in *L'enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien régime* (1960). However, it was Michel Foucault who received the credit for this through *Surveiller et punir*, published fifteen years later.<sup>60</sup> While strongly influenced by Ariès's ideas on discipline, *Discipline and Punish* only refers to Ariès's study once.<sup>61</sup> However, in journal articles and interviews, Foucault demonstrated his admiration for Ariès as one of the pioneers of the history of mentalities.<sup>62</sup> After Ariès' death in 1984, in his obituary in *Le Nouvel Observateur* Foucault expressed his admiration for Ariès for transforming the history of mentalities on the main life events of birth, growing up, adulthood and death.<sup>63</sup>

Foucault saw the origins of the disciplinary system in the transformation of the sixteenth and seventeenth-century school. The Enlightenment-inspired ideas on the prison by Jeremy Bentham in his *Panopticon* were, so Foucault claimed, a development of already existing sixteenth-century ideas and practices of school discipline. In this respect, Foucault followed in the footsteps of Ariès, who juxtaposed the "liberalism of the 18th century"—a more child-oriented school regime narrowly connected to the ideas of Charles Rollin (1661–1741) in his *Traité des Études* (1726–31) and the result of a "sentiment nouveau de l'enfance"—with "a contrary influence, which obtained a partial triumph, and which imposed a semi-military condition on the school population"; for example, by schools looking like barracks and being characterised by a supervision system better than that in an army. This resulted in "the second half of the 18th century [...in ] the rise of the military idea, at the same time as that of the liberal idea, inside school life."<sup>64</sup> For, so Ariès wrote fifteen years earlier in a semi-Foucauldian language and describing a *panopticum* without using that very word: "An authoritarian and hierarchical discipline was established in the college. [...] The pedagogues would adapt it to a system of supervising children which, at least in theory, was constantly in operation, night and day alike."<sup>65</sup> This took place in an educational space with increasing schooling, in response both to a religious and moral demand from the Reformation and to a transforming and modernising economy, resulting in the expansion of schooling on all levels. The move was supported by new didactic ideas and methods by humanists such as the Roman Catholic Juan Luis Vives (1493–1540), seventeenth-century Bohemian Protestant Johann Amos Comenius (1592–1670) with his innovative *Orbis sensualim pictus*, the Lutheran educationalist Philipp Melancthon (1497–1560), and the Jesuit Petrus Canisius (1521–1597).<sup>66</sup>

60 The part on Ariès and Foucault is partly based on Dekker and Lechner (1999) and Dekker (1996).

61 Foucault (1975), 143, n. 3 [(1977), 141].

62 Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits: 1954–1988, III 1976–1979*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994a), 503 (or. 1978, *Le Matin*, 20 January, 'Une érudition étourdissante'); Michel Foucault, *Dits et écrits: 1954–1988, IV 1980–1988*, ed. Daniel Defert and François Ewald (Paris: Gallimard, 1994b), 650 (or. 1984, *Le Matin*, 21 February).

63 Foucault (1994b), 646–49 (or. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 17–23 February 1984).

64 Ariès (1973), 295 [(1962), 267]. Cf. Foucault (1975), 171 [(1977), 169].

65 Ariès (1973), 316, 373 [(1962), 284, 333].

66 Dekker (2020), 12–13; See Le Cam (2020a) and (2020b); Björn Norlin, "Comenius, Moral and Pious Education, and the Why, When and How of School Discipline," *History of Education* 49, no. 3 (2020), 287–312.

In the nineteenth century, this coming together of the military and liberal idea became even more important because of mass schooling and eventually compulsory education. When schooling became normal and even compulsory, this did not necessarily mean that the liberal idea won.<sup>67</sup> The competition between discipline and child-oriented education continued. Child-oriented education was encouraged by authors such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Friedrich Fröbel.

As a romantic pedagogue, Fröbel did not believe in discipline as an important educational instrument. He trusted the child's development and propagated the role of play, as several passages in his book make clear. These include: "Instruction leads the five-year old child simply to find himself [...] Self-activity of the mind is the first law of instruction"; "Play is the highest phase of child-development [...]; it is self-active representation of the inner [...] The plays of childhood are the germinal leaves of all later life"; and about parental responsibility: "The aim and object of the parental care of the child [...] is to awaken and develop, to quicken all the powers and natural gifts of the child, to enable all the members and organs of man to fulfil the requirements of the child's powers and gifts."<sup>68</sup>

This Romantic view continued in the *Vom Kinde Aus* or *Reform Pädagogik* movement with Ellen Key's eye-catching announcement in 1900 of *The Century of the Child*. Key performed a complex balancing act by both embracing the Romantic view on the child and social Darwinism and eugenics. On one hand, she stated that "[t]he first right of the child is to select its own parents," and proposed letting the state implement this right by pre-marriage tests, for in case of "diseases which can certainly be transmitted, society must interfere to restrict marriage." On the other hand, in words near to romantic poems by William Wordsworth or William Blake, or Fröbel's texts, she predicted: "The time will come in which the child will be looked upon as holy."<sup>69</sup>

In *The Century of the Child*, the two approaches to the schoolchild encountered by Ariès come together. While applauding a child-oriented approach, Key unleashed a merciless attack on the prevailing school system. Having never attended a school herself, she wrote that her "first dream is that the kindergarten and the primary school will be everywhere replaced by instruction at home." According to Key, "results of the present-day school" are exceptionally negative and are described as follows: "Exhausted brain power, weak nerves, limited originality, paralysed initiative, dulled power of observing surrounding facts, idealism blunted under the feverish zeal of getting a position in the class."<sup>70</sup> Still, the school was not the most intensive disciplinary educational model in the nineteenth century. This was, so Michel Foucault, the re-educational institution.

Foucault's *Surveiller et punir* ends with his analysis of the agrarian colony of Mettray near Tours, founded in 1839 for the re-education of delinquent boys, and one of the first in Europe.<sup>71</sup> Specific out-of-home interventions for marginal and at-risk children became acceptable for a European elite that was active in a growing number

67 Cf. Westberg et al. (2019); Dekker (2006), 369–77.

68 Friedrich Fröbel, *The Education of man* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1893, or. 1826), xv, 8–9, 11.

69 Ellen Key, *The Century of the Child* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1909, or. 1900), 46, 59–60. For a recent dissertation on Key's authorship, Emma Vikström, *Skapandet av den nya människan: Eugenik och pedagogik i Ellen Keys författarskap* (Örebro: Örebro University, 2021).

70 Key (1909, or. 1900), 231, 275. See Dekker (2002), 27–31, Dekker (2011), 133–150.

71 Dekker (2001), 61–68.

of philanthropic societies concerned with social issues as youth criminality and child abandonment.<sup>72</sup> This eventually resulted, towards the end of the nineteenth century, in thousands of re-educational homes in Europe, with Mettray for decades being one of its icons. Children who were at risk and on the margins of society were temporarily isolated from society with the intention of preventing lifelong social marginalisation in the long term. The French Mettray impressed Foucault when he developed his theory of discipline. Mettray was not just an example, but, so Foucault said, “the most intensive disciplinary model, where all behavioural coercive technologies were concentrated.”<sup>73</sup>

## Conclusion

Studying educational ambitions in the context of the time-bound limits and possibilities offered by the educational space makes it easier to understand people’s educational mindset and behaviour across time. Moreover, classic educational concepts such as *sentiment de l’enfance*—meaning that childhood is considered a specific life stage and the child an *animal educandum*—and discipline could be better exploited when relating them to time-bound limits and positive conditions of the educational space. Finally, it makes sense to distinguish four indicators that determine limits and conditions in order to better understand how people in the past had to cope with economic and demographic limits and what role the educational mindset played in this process.

To clarify this point, I return for a moment to the history of child maltreatment. As shown above, the adherents of the evolutionistic interpretation of history of childhood argued that maltreatment of children was recurrent because of the absence, or only very weak manifestation, of a *sentiment de l’enfance*. However, when looking at the educational space in early modern Europe and observing the demographic and economic “unsurmountable walls of the spaces of possibility,” we understand that it was enormously challenging to be a good parent and educator and to realise educational ambitions in those circumstances, despite the educational mindset of those people not being basically different from ours. This configuration of limits and positive conditions explains that neglect and maltreatment in such a world occurred probably more frequently than in ours.<sup>74</sup>

Today, notwithstanding inequalities in time, region, social groups, and temporary declines due to wars or economic crises, it was a matter of course for many children to grow up instead of dying early and for their parents to raise them instead of bringing them to the graveyard. Increasing budgets for schooling, child care and state inspection, and the legal framework of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child are further reducing limits for the realisation of educational ambitions. Finally, child care became based on scientific knowledge and developed into a profession instead of an activity of un-trained people.<sup>75</sup> Thus, all indicators

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74 Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “Child Maltreatment in the Last 50 Years: The Use of Statistics,” in *Educational Research: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Statistics*, ed. Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 43–57.

75 Cf. Jeroen J.H. Dekker, “A Belief in Magic: Professionalization in Post Second World War Forced Child Protection,” in *Educational Research, volume 9: Discourses of Change and Changes of Discourse*, ed. Paul Smeyers and Marc Depaepe (Dordrecht: Springer, 2016), 189–206. See Marieke Dekker, *Effectiviteit aan de horizon: Een studie rond onderzoek naar resultaat op het gebied van de justitiële kindbescherming in Nederland tussen 1945 en 2005* (Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, PhD thesis, 2016).

for the educational space now mostly supported educational ambitions. Those indicators include demographic and economic circumstances, active involvement of public and private agencies in education, and an active educational mindset. The opinions that Erasmus published five hundred years ago about maltreatment of children as criminal and immoral violence, are now generally accepted in national and international laws as a moral and legal standard.

With many once unsurmountable walls replaced by positive conditions, education and child-rearing without maltreatment should be much easier now. However, we know that, notwithstanding a much more supportive educational space, this standard was not always met, as recent reports in many countries on child maltreatment and abuse, published by investigational committees mostly installed by the state or the church, have shown.<sup>76</sup> Apparently, the configuration of limits and positive conditions of the educational space was not sufficiently protective.

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76 Johanna Sköld and Shurlee Swain (eds.), *In the Midst of Apology: Professionals and the Legacy of Abuse among Children in Care* (Sydney: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 127–36; Janneke Wubs and Sara Ham, “Onderzoek naar geweld in jeugdzorg door commissies in andere landen: Een overzicht van bevindingen,” in *Onvoldoende beschermd. Geweld in de Nederlandse jeugdzorg van 1945 tot heden: volume 2, Sector-en themastudies, ch. 15 [Inadequately protected. Violence in Dutch youth care from 1945 to the present day]*, ed. Christiaan Ruppert, Catrien Bijleveld, Mariëlle Bruning, Jeroen J.H. Dekker, Jan Hendriks, Trudy Mooren, Carol van Nijnatten, Wim Slot, and Micha de Winter (Den Haag: Commissie Onderzoek naar Geweld in de Jeugdzorg, 2019), 532–65; Claire McGettrick, Mari Steed, James M. Smith, Maeve O’Rourke, and Katherine O’Donnell, *Ireland and the Magdalene Laundries: A Campaign for Justice* (London/New York: I.B.Taurus/Bloomsbury Publishing, 2021); Jeroen J.H. Dekker and Hans Grietens, “Sexual Abuse of Children in Foster Care and the History of Dutch Child Protection: Actors in Fading Spotlights,” in Sköld and Swain (2015), 127–36; Jeroen J.H. Dekker et al., *Jeugdzorg in Nederland, 1945–2010. Resultaten van deelonderzoek 1 van de Commissie-Samson: Historische schets van de institutionele ontwikkeling van de jeugdsector vanuit het perspectief van het kind en de aan hem/haar verleende zorg* [Part I, Text, Part II, Appendices] (Groningen: Rijksuniversiteit Groningen, 2012); Commissie Samson, *Omringd door zorg, toch niet veilig: Seksueel misbruik van door de overheid uit huis geplaatste kinderen, 1945–heden* (Amsterdam: Boom, 2012). On child abuse in Roman Catholic institutions, see McGettrick, Steed, Smith, O’Rourke, and O’Donnell (2021); Jean-Marc Sauvé et al., *Rapport de la Commission indépendante sur les abus sexuels dans l’Église, Les violences sexuelles dans l’Église catholique: France 1950–2020* (Paris: Ciase, 2021); Wim Deetman, N. Draijer, P. Kalbfleisch, H. Merckelbach, M. Monteiro and G. de Vries, *Seksueel misbruik van minderjarigen in de rooms-katholieke kerk*. (Amsterdam: Uitgeverij Balans, 2011).



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