



Towards a New Human Being

Edited by

Luce Irigaray · Mahon O'Brien
Christos Hadjioannou

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The original version of the book was inadvertently published with the following corrections: (1) In the Contents, Introduction was not listed, and Prof. Luce Irigaray's name was not displayed in the Introduction and Epilogue. (2) Prof. Luce Irigaray's name was not displayed after the titles of Introduction and Epilogue. (3) Index was not included at the end of the book. The book has been updated with the listed corrections.

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Luce Irigaray is one of the leading thinkers of our age. She is the author of more than thirty books translated into various languages, the most recent of which are *Sharing the World* (2008), *In the Beginning, She Was* (2012) and *Through Vegetal Being* (co-authored with Michael Marder, 2016). She is also the co-editor (with Michael Marder) of *Building a New World* (2015), a volume in which early-career researchers from her seminars explore new ways of thinking, in order to promote a world-wide community respectful of differences between the sexes, generations, cultures and traditions.

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Andrea Wheeler is an Assistant Professor of Architecture at the Iowa State University, USA, where she teaches classes on Green and Sustainable Architecture and is a studio instructor. Her work is about sustainable buildings: she cares about lifestyle change, the actual performance of buildings and challenging the sustainability agenda in architecture. Most recently she presented papers at conferences organized and hosted by the philosopher Luce Irigaray including 'Thinking Love' at the University of Bristol, UK, in June of 2016 and *To Be Born: Genesis of a New Human Being* at the University of Sussex, Department of Philosophy, UK, in February 2017. She will be a visiting research fellow at the Center for Research in Arts Social Sciences and Humanities (CRASSH) at The University of Cambridge, UK, in the Summer of 2019.

Introduction: Creating the Background for the Emergence of a New Human Being

Luce Irigaray

It is unusual for an author to write the introduction of a book the background of which is inspired by their own work. This might seem pretentious, narcissistic and above all disrespectful of the rules which are presumed to guarantee the value and truth of the thought. But what about these rules? And this truth? And do those who will most criticize such an initiative call into question the Socratic or Platonic truth? Or will they instead disapprove of this Introduction in the name of the Socratic or Platonic way of thinking? And yet at that time the philosophers lived and thought in a sort of friendly community, and they tried to approach truth together. Truth was not imagined to be the result of an aseptic academic training which required the thinkers to rigorously separate living and thinking. To be a disciple, then, amounts to being a kind of parrot which devotes its life to passing on the words of a master in the most neutral and repetitive way. But what does neutrality mean here? Where or what has become the vital energy which animated the discovery of the truth conveyed by the work of the master? Does not assenting to him or to her amount to sterilizing not only one's own potential to think but also to live, and passing on to others, especially to younger researchers, a deadly legacy? Could this correspond to teaching

truth? According to me, not at all. And the situation in which we are today must incite us to care about life instead of promoting a deadly culture.

Taking charge of our life is the main issue which has inspired the writing of *To Be Born*. And this undertaking cannot stop at mere physical care, it also concerns cultural or spiritual becoming. Unfortunately, our past culture has neither brought up nor educated us towards developing our life through an appropriate cultivation of it. Rather it has separated the care corresponding to our physical needs from the one which would correspond to our becoming humans through a cultivation of our mind. Furthermore, our human prematurity, as the artificial character of our culture, made us dependent on parents or masters without the possibility of discovering by ourselves how to develop and take charge of our own being. For various reasons this sort of education and culture no longer suits our epoch.

However, to think alone and in spite of a sociocultural background is a heavy, and almost impossible undertaking for a living being—only some ‘great men’ can succeed in carrying out such a task, according to Hegel. Indeed, it is difficult to survive, what is more to develop, independently of an appropriate background and milieu. We cannot constantly emerge from our environment towards living and thinking in spite of our sociocultural surroundings. It is not completely impossible to do that thanks to relating to nature and some spiritual figures of the past, but it may only ultimately be possible.

No doubt another support exists to ensure the development of our life and of our thinking: the relation between two, basically the amorous relation between two naturally different beings. And we cannot leap over this relation if we want to build a new culture, one which can overcome a metaphysics based on supra sensitive values without for all that falling into a worse nihilism, in order to meet the requirements of our epoch.

But why not attempt to also create a sociocultural milieu which supports our creative development? Why not bridge the divide between private and public life—a divide that Hegel still sanctions? Why do we consent to be neutralized, not to say castrated, individuals as soon as we enter the public space? And what does it mean, in this case, to be a

man or a woman? Does this not amount too often to a sort of regression to an uncultured natural belonging in the darkness of some or other bedroom, on one hand, and the endorsement of a natural or cultural parental or filial role, on the other hand? Could this correspond to the achievement of our human destiny? Obviously no. To be a man or to be a woman cannot be reduced to having a sex and generating at best children with it. It rather corresponds to being a living being endowed with a morphological structure which determines its way of being and of relating to itself, to the other(s) and to the world. To be sexuate means to have a specific identity and subjectivity and to inhabit in a particular way a world, the horizon and organization of which depend on a sexuate belonging.

We have not yet discovered this aspect of our sexuation as well as the potential of its creativity in exchanges which respect our mutual difference(s). And yet this can open a new cultural horizon which does not confine itself to the family home but pervades all our world and our culture. It even leads us to adopt another logic, because to share in difference constrains us to take on the negative of the particularity of our own sexuate being, that is, the fact that we can never be or become the other.

One of the changes that we little by little innovate in our meetings, in particular those about *To Be Born*, is to think in a sexuate way and in a mixing of the sexes. And this not only inaugurates the nucleus of a more living and ethical cultural community, thanks to the respect for mutual otherness, but also brings more quality, flavor and pleasure to the exchanges. To listen to the words of a woman or of a man, instead of to the abstract discourse of castrated individuals, introduces a sensitive and even sensuous dimension into the talks and discussions. They become the flowering of our lives and our desires and are no longer more or less competitive and conflicting performances. Furthermore, the consideration for the difference of the other teaches us the respect, and even the taste, for meeting between beings belonging to other countries, cultures and even other kingdoms—which are indeed present in some texts of this book.

Behaving in a cultured way with others differently sexuated, we learn how to train our instincts and drives. And this benefits our intimate,

cultural and even civic and political lives and relations. Without our knowing it, something else also happens: the traditional privilege of sight is imperceptibly balanced by the intervention of touch. Academic morality must not worry about that, we do not touch one another if not through taking into account our sensitivity, our feelings, our desires. Being together in an academic space no longer entails that we leave our bodies outside, as our traditional education too often asked us to do. It is instead an opportunity to train ourselves in behaving in a cultured, friendly and fruitful manner as comprehensive beings. We are no longer watching for each other with more or less competitiveness and invidious comparative assessment. Instead, we endeavor to set together a mood which favors the emergence and the development of thinking for each of us. It is one of our ways of working on the arising of a new human being and the happening of a new world.

There is no doubt that such an evolution cannot occur overnight. However, anyone who participated in our collective seminars and conferences would not deny that the atmosphere is different from the usual ones and that he or she themselves have changed by taking part in our meetings. The very few exceptions which do not agree with that correspond to people who do not want to evolve at a personal or collective level, who are too narcissistic, egocentric or blindly ambitious to perceive the issue at stake, its relevance and its urgency. Then they leave or are unwittingly dismissed.

But what if we do not take charge of the evolution of the human being and of its world? Must we let this evolution result from entropy and saturation? From our own exhaustion and being exceeded, even destroyed, by our own creations? Or from conflicts and wars? Unless we entrust our future destiny to the pressure of our various environments? Is it not time for us instead to assume the responsibility of our evolution without passively undergoing it?

Obviously we do more than behave differently when we meet and work together. We also think differently. The collective mood that we endeavor to create aims at that—at making researchers able not only to repeat, to imitate, to comment on the work of their intellectual teachers or masters, but to think by themselves and from their own experiences, desires and lives. And if this gathering of texts has as its starting point

To Be Born, each contributor has treated what he or she received from the book in their own way and in accordance with their own will. *To Be Born* has created a background from which each had the opportunity to be, to become, to think in a particular mode.

So, for example, some contributors have tackled, each in their own way, the necessary changes in bringing up and educating the child which are required in order to make possible the genesis of a new human being. Jennifer Carter above all broaches the question of how to bring up the little child towards a more achieved flowering of its potential through favoring its meeting with other living beings, taking into account its longings and considering its specific sexuate belonging. Maria Fannin reflects on what a child can teach us, in a sort of reversal of our usual mode of conceiving of education according to which we impose on the child, as parents or teachers, our own ideas and views on the human being and the world. Elspeth Mitchell analyzes the extreme difficulty in which the little girl finds herself in our culture in order to develop as a girl, and not merely as a daughter of the father, and how remedying this problem could contribute to the evolution of our humanity and of our world. Katarzyna Szopa interprets the paralyzing impact on desire of our traditional conception of sexuality and family model, which a new understanding and practice of sexuate difference alone can overcome, liberating in this way desire from the trap of the Oedipal triangle and the subjection to genealogy.

Other contributors have worked on the elaboration of a new environment, as specifically a way of dwelling or as the political or sociocultural context in which we live. Starting from the thought of Heidegger about the fourfold and a personal experience, Andrea Wheeler, who is an architect, writes on the manner of building houses sustainable as such but also for our development as sexuate living beings. Harry Bregazzi, at a more political level, questions the means of creating and maintaining a peaceful climate both by avoiding conflicts and wars, which result from our identification as parts of a cohesive whole, and by cultivating a living together which is based on a new understanding of human subjectivity. Following the project of Harry, in a way, Emma Jones criticizes the current emphasis on identity politics, arguing that the true issue is less identity as such than the manner in which identities can or

cannot relate to one another in a positive and fruitful way. It was crucial to consider in this volume whether a religious belonging can allow for the emergence of a new human being because it is an element which serves to define and divide different identities. The two contributors who broach this topic treat it in an almost universal way. Abigail Rine Favale, as she usually does, reads the oldest text of the Judeo-Christian tradition, the Genesis, in a manner that unveils the divine relational character of humanity, especially of its sexuete difference, an aspect of the myth of creation that is still generally ignored and misapprehended, whatever the positive words of Pope John Paul on this subject. Phyllis Kaminski, who is a theologian, stresses the phenomenon of incarnation as the manifestation of the absolute of life itself, the mediator of which would be a woman, and the potential of which we ought to cultivate towards a new humanity by breathing, using living words and developing a sexuete relational flesh.

The last four contributors write on theory itself, especially on philosophical theory, which more than ever needs to be rethought given the challenges that we are facing. Indeed the increasing power of the sciences and technology as well as the multi- and inter-culturalism, the Freudian discovery of the unconscious and of the importance of sexuality, the women's emancipation or liberation, the criticism of our past metaphysics and of our subjection to supra sensitive values or the impact of materialism and ecology, to quote only some of the most pressing problems we have to solve, constrain the thinker to consider how human subjectivity can be restructured and the truth redefined. With this purpose in mind, some philosophers today search in the work of past authors elements which could be envisioned in a new way. Some others treat above all what our tradition has ignored, but often as an opposition to it, which remains in the same logical horizon. In an academic context many content themselves with criticizing past metaphysics. However, if criticism is present in almost all the texts of this volume, the atmosphere of our meetings and the tone and thinking of *To Be Born* are such that no text stops at mere criticism. For example, if the chapter written by Andrew Bevan is largely devoted to questioning Socrates' thought as a practice of 'dying while living', he tries to interpret this practice as a sort of self-affection which confines itself to

a mental level and needs to be developed also at physical and sensitive levels. Katrina Mitcheson analyzes how Nietzsche conceives of pregnancy, especially regarding the genesis of the overman, and she notes that if the Nietzschean method aims at transforming the old man of the West into a new human it still corresponds to a Platonic giving birth because of the lack of intervention of the other, especially of the sexuate other, in such a process, which thus remains an ideal solitary undertaking. Christos Hadjioannou interprets *To Be Born* as a kind of ontological turn reversing the focusing on death of Heidegger into a focusing on birth, which, amongst other things, allows for the transformation of a *Dasein* in the neuter into a sexuate *Dasein*, which we can assume through cultivating our breathing and giving rhythm to our living existence. Mahon O'Brien meditates on the relation of Heidegger to a metaphysics based on presence, and he wonders whether the nature of mood which prevails in the Heideggerian work could or could not overcome such metaphysics, given in particular his manner of behaving towards and talking to his two main sexual partners: Elfride Heidegger, his wife, and Hannah Arendt, one of his young mistresses.

There is no doubt that all the papers which compose this book contribute towards the advent of a new human being: through a different way of bringing up and educating children, through the constitution of an other environment and sociocultural milieu or the criticism of past metaphysics and the introduction of new themes into philosophy, especially those of self-affection, of otherness and relationality, and an attention paid to the cultivation of our natural belonging, as sexuate in particular.

But what about the new being? In other words, the ontological nature of the new human being remains as a background or a horizon. It is presumed to exist without any word which could express it. Perhaps it is always, and at best, the case when it is a question of our being. Without the possibility of its seizure by any logos this being happens, it is. And I am myself surprised when I am asked about the ontological or mere empirical status of *To Be Born*.

For me, there is no doubt that *To Be Born* is essentially—if I allow myself to use this word—a book on the ontological nature of a human being capable of overcoming past metaphysics and nihilism. Could

I dare to suggest that this book meets the expectations and quests of previous philosophers like, for example, Nietzsche, Heidegger and even Merleau-Ponty? And, that a response to their waiting could come only from a woman? But it is not merely a matter of a different way of thinking, it is also one of experiencing differently the real and the truth of our being. Furthermore, and for this very reason, *To Be Born* is not only the result of a process dependent on understanding, imagination or even the will of one person alone. This book tries to bear witness to an event—the advent of a new being born from the meeting between a man and a woman.

The new being which then happens is not a child but a being born of each to their own being. Of course, they were already conceived by a man and a woman, they were already born but not born to their own being. They give to one another this being. And being then acquires an ontological dimension extraneous to supra sensitive values, which exempts them from searching for it outside of themselves and their relation. Indeed, ‘to be’ never concerns only one being but the relation between beings, beginning with two beings. To be is the copula which unites them towards being.

We always try to capture being in an identity. But being, in particular our own being, results from a conjunction and can neither be nor develop or flower without con-joining. To speak of being, and of a new being as such is thus impossible. Being remains always an event or advent to which we can give birth through our way of conjoining one another. It seems to me that this care is present in some or other way in all the papers gathered in this volume. The authors have thus all contributed to the genesis of a new human being, even if they cannot anticipate or know what or who it will be.

However, an aspect, which plays a crucial role in the possible genesis of a new human being, is scarcely treated by the contributors, that of the importance of the structure of discourse, of logos, in the determination of our being. And yet this element is broached in many parts of *To Be Born*. Even the question of the linguistic status of the copula—to be—and of its logical relation to or substitution for the living origin of our being is considered. As long as the focus is not put on the articulation of our discourse and our logic with the real, especially the real that

we are—in particular as far as the use of ‘to be’, ‘being’ ‘is’ or ‘are’ etc. is concerned—we cannot really give birth to another human being. We have first to understand that we are trapped within an ontological circle which cuts us off from our living origin and conceives of presence in an artificially constructed way.

We were born from a conjunction between two, and two who were naturally different. If it intends to say the truth, the discourse, especially the one about being, must take into account this original real of our existence. Until then we remain subjected to a meaning which encloses us in a fictitious horizon within which we are transformed into products of an illusory conception, which paralyzes the dynamism and becoming of our body and of our mind. And any judgment, negation or denial can then be efficient in freeing us from a past metaphysical truth because they act at another level than that of our living being. Instead, they imprison us more and more in the labyrinth of a fictitious reality. Only the negation applied to our natural being can be effective: I am a woman, I am not a man, and I am not the conjunction who gave birth to me either. Thus we have first to acknowledge the existence of two beings, not to say of three, with their respective worlds, discourses and truths, and wonder about the way in which they can conjoin with one another. This will allow us to overstep the limits of the vicious circle and the dead end within which we are trapped and to endeavor to give birth to a new human being, beginning with our own.

December 2017

Part I

**A Different Way of Bringing Up and
Educating Children**



How to Lead a Child to Flower: Luce Irigaray's Philosophy of the Growth of Children

Jennifer Carter

A tree or a flower contain a wordless wisdom that can pass directly from them to a child. It is not only such wisdom that is conveyed in Luce Irigaray's *To Be Born*. The book's themes range from a perspective for a collaborative construction of a new way of living for the coming generations, to bridging the spiritual and cultural divide between men and women. But a major theme of the book concerns the way in which we, as human beings, may not only bring to fruition our potentialities as adults living and developing together, but also may be able to think about children and childhood, about what it means to grow as a child and throughout one's life, as well as how to be a carer for children. There are many original lessons to be learned in such a domain, made all the more dramatically urgent because such a thinking of the beginnings of human life, of the growth of children and adults, and especially of the relations between adults and children, has rarely been taken up by philosophers. And when it has been, it was usually for demonstrating a universal principle, teaching a moral, or illustrating another point.

J. Carter (✉)

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In the case of *To Be Born*, Irigaray has in mind something at once more distinct and more comprehensive than, to take an example, that which Rousseau aims at in his *Emile*. Whereas Rousseau seeks to demonstrate the conflict the (boy) child endures to emerge from nature into the social world, Irigaray's *To Be Born* traces the child's growth and the significance of its interactions with the other(s) as well as the peculiar qualities of its relation with itself.

The being of the child, which is one of the focuses of *To Be Born*, does not amount to some general and fixed model. Irigaray is as much concerned with the child him or herself as she is with the adult that he or she will become, and thus also with the material and spiritual situations that the child encounters or brings about. This situates her book in a really special place amongst other discussions on childhood occurring in philosophy. Another feature which differentiates *To Be Born* is the attention that Irigaray pays to the internal growth and feeling of the child, contrasting with the usual focus on the external growth and the manifestations of child as a mere organism.

In addition to an extensive meditation on what it is to be a child and what it means for a child to be growing, *To Be Born* imparts some universal lessons. One of them tackles what growing means for a human beyond the merely physical aspect. Indeed, while there are elements of growth that pertain particularly to a child, others relate to the special way of growing that corresponds to humanity as such. Similarly, while we can learn in *To Be Born* some specific lessons about the relations between adults and children, that is, between persons belonging to different generational stages, we can draw from it, too, specific lessons about relations between and among the sexes, and within and across generations.

The book is at once a demonstration of what sorts of radical insights can be gained when we turn our attention to a topic so familiar, and yet so philosophically unexplored to date, as children and childhood. But it is also an acknowledgement of how truly new in certain ways our thinking about the generations is, and consequently, how we ought to open ourselves to novelty in such a domain. *To Be Born* particularly invites us to pay attention to the singularity of each human being and their own

creativity, and to the necessity of a generative quality of thinking about creativity, since to be creative corresponds to being living, particularly a living human. We learn, moreover, that a child is responsible for its own growth, and that this growth amounts to a sort of transcending itself—a process in which it must continuously engage itself during its entire life. And finally what it is to relate between generation is, in fact, to actualize someone and something new. Thus we cannot really anticipate what the next epoch or the future phase of human development will be, either for the single child or for the whole generation. Yet this ought not to prevent us from thinking about what sorts of conditions might foster or stifle such a generative process. There are ways of thinking and ways of being in relation that can lead children to their flowering, but there are practices and habits of thought that end in leading astray their growth and being a drag on creativity. A major point in *To Be Born* is Irigaray's emphasis on the many self-giving births and rebirths that are undertaken by the child—and by all of us. Not only does the child initiate their birth-giving, but they must continue to be the initiator of their own re-birth and regeneration throughout their life. The child, not anyone else, is the one whose will to live allows it to be born: to pass from water to air, from weightlessness to gravity, from receiving sustenance from the mother's blood to feeding by itself. As Irigaray writes, "Even if it has been conceived by two and it began its human existence in the body of an other, [the child] is the one who, alone, decided to come into the universe of the living. [...] We were also the ones who gave birth to ourselves through our first breathing" (*To Be Born*, p. 1). The moment of birth presents a great danger for the child: it might not succeed in breathing by itself, and thus it might die. But coming into the world is also a way for the child to transcend itself by passing from a mode of being—being in the womb—to something altogether new. It is this act of self-transcendence—transcending by oneself one's present condition, one's present being, into something radically new—which truly characterizes the way of growing of a child, but more generally of the whole human life. In order to be a human being, we must be always creative; that is, we must not only live but also continuously pass from a stage or state of being to another, towards achieving our being.

The Child's Encounter with Living Beings

The child is not just passively delivered into a new state. He or she must actively will their being-living to happen even if they do not consciously know what they are doing. This is a first occasion to transcend themselves by themselves, but it also represents a paradigm of the series of self-transcending that must characterize the continuous growth of a human being. What is radical about this way of perceiving birth as a form of transcendence is the understanding that far from being a completely helpless little organism, the infant is already in charge of the most important and most necessary aspect of its existence: its life as a self-transcendence. Although these aspects may be foregrounded for the caregivers whose job it is to aid the little human in meeting its most basic needs, helplessness and dependence dramatically contrast with the act of courage the newborn achieves when passing from fetal life to autonomous life. Thus, parents and other carers find it easy to ignore the real struggle that the infant faces: not merely to survive but to transcend itself. "Few adults," Irigaray writes, "perceive the struggle, in a way the ontological struggle, which goes on within this little being..." (op. cit., p. 8). Adults choose instead to focus on the child's physical needs. They do this partly because it is simpler, and it is easier than contemplating the reality of the difficulties and joys that the infant experiences. But they do this also partly because our culture(s) and education systems do not emphasize, and certainly do not promote, the cultivation of such living forces, primarily and critically those related to breathing—but also to moving, and relating to the other(s), notably with respect for sexuate difference. Carers see the infant as a collection of vital needs, and they almost entirely ignore the efforts made by the newborn in trying to solve the 'enigmas' that it faces: for instance, the oscillations between daylight and darkness, noise and silence, scent and scentlessness, a world which both changes and remains the same (*idem*), enigmas which the baby eventually solves for him or herself.

Parents and carers are inclined to see the infant primarily as dependent on them and needy. They tend to treat the infant as if the satisfaction of its needs by the adults were its sole concern; they mostly ignore or forget the understanding of the infant as a living being, and thereby

they do not respect the “autonomy” that he or she gained in breathing by themselves (op. cit., p. 2). What parents and carers across cultures are already taking up the true challenge that the child faces: to be subjected to its culture, on the one hand, and in charge of it, on the other? The child finds him or herself emerging in a culture which, in most cases, subjects it to religious ideals, which traditionally are “supra sensible,” or to ideals that are merely abstract, and not appropriately suited for a natural growth and development. Irigaray writes, “being faithful to our own nature does not mean confining ourselves to that which our tradition calls our natural needs, but entails the cultivation of our natural belonging until its human achievement, including that of our relational attractions and our sublime aspirations” (op. cit., pp. 2–3). She is then speaking not only about the way contemporary Western cultures bring up children, but also about the philosophical approach to being a human. In part, the lack of focus on children is already symptomatic of a philosophical culture which favors metaphysical projects and abstract methodologies and languages. She writes about the traditional Western approach to subjectivity,

Instead of being really concerned with integrating the different stages of our becoming human, subjectivity has been constituted only from certain aspects: those capable of dominating natural growth through categories and principles which are imposed on it from the outside or from on high as modalities presumed suitable for human development. (op. cit., p. 15)

Irigaray already made clear to us that children as well as adults are subjected to forces that are more or less alien to, or at least are inconsistent with their development as natural living beings. But she takes a step further in her analysis, suggesting that a child “will be asked to submit its natural growth to meta-physical requirements already defined, the origin of which is not in its body [...]” (idem). What is the significance of this beyond naming the apparently inescapable effects of undergoing subjection to virtually any cultural institution, one of which having perhaps turned out to be a crushing machine? Asking the child to turn the motions of its growth over to the external pre-defined meta-physical requirements will, Irigaray writes, “paralyze its growth and tear

it between a motion of which it is the source as living being and other movements to which it is subjected and which transform it into a sort of *fabricated product*, the mechanical functioning of which is dependent on an energy external to it, at least in part” (idem, emphasis mine).

For Irigaray, the matter is not just one of institutional power relations as well as economic, technologic, or political forces appropriating the being of the child through their ordinary practical means—for instance, by subjecting children to advertising that transforms them into subjects of capitalism, or by habituating them to interacting mainly with little computers. There is no doubt that these sorts of subjections—to politics, to capitalism, to technology—do happen, and make living, growing, and relating to other human beings more difficult for children. However, it is not only the institutional structures that tend to distort children’s spiritual growth. It is also a lack of encountering living beings within their milieu. Irigaray writes, “Only living beings come into presence by themselves and offer the little child, who opens up to them, their own opening to its world” (op. cit., p. 21). Thus we must also be concerned by the fact that the child may not, or probably will not predominately encounter living beings, especially in nature, but rather an environment filled with fabricated products. These can never fulfill the aspirations of the child, or spark in it the creative desire that living beings can spark. As Irigaray writes,

Different appearances of life will fertilize one another, and the opening up of the child to the world will contribute towards its own blossoming as living—which cannot occur if the child is surrounded only by fabricated objects, the existence of which already amounts to human work and does not provide a living presence and energy in a will. (op. cit., p. 22)

The Child’s Own Longings

Instead of the child’s development corresponding with the cultivation of a natural belonging, it is subjected, at every level, to external purposes, be they institutional or metaphysical. The child finds itself subject to “categories and principles which are imposed on it from the outside or