

Abstract:

ARE CHILDHOOD AND ADULTHOOD DISAPPEARING IN OUR SOCIETIES?

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The presentation is a review of factors which cause changing roles of childhood, adulthood including parenthood in our European societies. The author will analyse our educational climate in light of thoughts of the philosophers: Immanuel Kant, Merleau-Ponty and Martin Buber. The author argues that children are becoming more and more objects and instruments of business affairs, working life, media, image technology, and even educational systems. The global drug criminality and sex business are the severest modes of misusing children. Time and space to be a child is shortening and childhood disappearing. We have a danger in our societies that education as a civilization process is disappearing and children's development as self-directed subjects is threatened. If education does not include moral message that a human being is a value as itself and the purpose of education is fulfilment of humanity we lose our cultural key values and basic concepts of democracy. The parents are confused in rapid societal changing processes. They feel themselves very often powerless because of too hard and demanding working life or because of unemployment, or they do not have the capacity to meet the power of media and youngsters' peer groups. The roles of school and homes, especially in changing family structures are unclear and the real danger in uncertain situations is that adults do not see any more their importance as educators. This means that also adulthood is disappearing. The presentation wants to emphasize that children need mature adults who accept that their role as educators is in its moral sense. This means that there is an active dialogical process also between parents and teachers.