

Mette
Political epiphanies

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It is difficult for me to recall a certain thing that changed my view of the world. I think more often it has happened over a period, gradually because of some people, I was inspired by or indirectly because of something I had read or seen in television. I cannot even remember exactly why I chose to be involved in the arts. Only that I started out with an interest in basic communication studies, which developed into philosophy and aesthetics and in some way or another ended up studying contemporary art at university. On one hand it is scary that major decisions like what you are spending your life on or what values you live by are made unconsciously. It makes everything very fragile. On the other hand it gives us an opportunity and freedom to continue to develop and explore as human beings.

There are however moments in my life that stand out and I know that certain experiences have been like milestones. First of all because I remember them - they stand clear in my mind and when I think back they seem almost to be in slow motion. One of these moments took place when I was about 15 years old. It was a special day at school - representatives of the four major parties in Danish politics were invited to give a talk each to us pupils. I was quite naive and had not before been interested in politics - not even watched the news. But I listened to all of them and went back to class. Here we were asked what party we would vote for - what representative had made most sense to us. When the party that I had decided to vote for was called out, I was the only person in the whole class who raised my hand. This was quite a shock to me. I had simply listened and made a logic decision, but it made me realize that my 'logic' was different from everyone else in the class. Of course my vote started a debate in the classroom and I could not answer very well when asked to explain why I had chosen this party. Only that I like their priorities and thought their arguments made sense.

This rather small incident might seem insignificant and something that happens every day when we meet people and have discussions. But this was actually the first time I realized that people I considered to be just 'like' me could interpret a situation or a speech very differently than me - that my 'logic' was not universal, but just one out of many. It made me feel very alone and vulnerable and not at all empowered as several people at the Body Politics course mentioned they had felt when they experienced a life-changing moment. On the other hand I from that day also became much more interested in other people's ideas and why they had them and out of this grew my interest for politics in general.