CIVITAS EDUCATIONIS.
EDUCATION, POLITICS AND CULTURE
Rivista semestrale

Ambiti di interesse e finalità
Civitas educationis. Education, Politics and Culture è una rivista internazionale peer-reviewed che promuove la riflessione e la discussione sul legame fra educazione e politica, intesa come dimensione fondamentale dell'esistenza umana.
Tale legame ha caratterizzato il pensiero e le pratiche educative occidentali sin dai tempi degli antichi greci, così come testimonia il nesso *paideia-polis*.
La rivista vuole essere un'agorà in cui sia possibile indagare questo nesso da diverse prospettive e attraverso contributi teorici e ricerche empiriche che focalizzino l'attenzione sulle seguenti aree tematiche:

Sistemi formativi e sistemi politici;
Educazione e diritti umani;
Educazione alla pace;
Educazione alla cittadinanza democratica;
Educazione e differenze;
Educazione e dialogo interreligioso;
Educazione e inclusione sociale;
Educazione, globalizzazione e democrazia;
Educazione e cultura digitale;
Educazione ed ecologia.

Questa rivista adotta una procedura di referaggio a doppio cieco.

Aims and scope
Civitas educationis. Education, Politics and Culture is an international peer-reviewed journal and aims at promoting reflection and discussion on the link between education and politics, as a fundamental dimension of human existence.
That link has been characterizing western educational thinking and practices since the time of the ancient Greeks with the bond between *paideia* and *polis*.
The journal intends to be an agora where it is possible to investigate this topic from different perspectives, with both theoretical contributions and empirical research, including within its scope topics such as:

Educational systems and political systems;
Education and human rights;
Peace education;
Education and citizenship;
Education and differences;
Education and interfaith dialogue;
Education and social inclusion;
Education, globalization and democracy;
Education and digital culture;
Education and ecology.

This journal uses double blind review.

Founder:
Elisa Frauenfelder †

Editor-in-chief:
Enricomaria Corbi

Editorial Advisory Board:
Pascal Perillo, Stefano Oliverio, Daniela Manno, Fabrizio Chello

Secretariat of Editorial Board:
Martina Ercolano, Anna Mancinelli

Coordinator of the Scientific Committee:
Margherita Musello, Fabrizio Manuel Sirignano

Scientific Committee:
Massimo Baldacci (Università degli Studi di Urbino "Carlo Bo"), Gert J.J. Biesta (Maynooth University), Franco Cambi (Università degli Studi di Firenze), Enricomaria Corbi (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa – Napoli), Michele Corsi (Università degli Studi di Macerata), Lucio d'Alessandro (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa – Napoli), Luigi d'Alonzo (Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore), Ornella De Sanctis (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa – Napoli), Franco Frabboni (Università di Bologna), Elisa Frauenfelder † (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa – Napoli), Janette Friedrich (Université de Genève), Jen Glaser (Hebrew University of Jerusalem), Larry Hickman (Southern Illinois University Carbondale), David Kennedy (Mont Claire University), Walter Omar Kohan (Universidade de Estado de Rio de Janeiro), Cosimo Laneve (Università di Bari), Umberto Margiotta (Università Ca' Foscari Venezia), Giuliano Minichiello (Università degli Studi di Salerno), Marco Eduardo Murueta (Università Nazionale Autonoma del Messico), Margherita Musello (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa – Napoli), Stefano Oliverio (Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II"), Pascal Perillo (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa – Napoli), Vincenzo Sarracino (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa – Napoli), Marie-Noëlle Schurmans (Université de Genève), Fabrizio Manuel Sirignano (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa – Napoli), Giancarla Sola (Università degli Studi di Genova), Maura Striano (Università degli Studi di Napoli "Federico II"), Natascia Villani (Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa – Napoli), Carla Xodo (Università degli Studi di Padova), Rupert Wegerif (University of Cambridge)

Web site: www.civitaseducationis.eu
e-mail: civitas.educationis@unisob.na.it

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
SUOR ORSOLA
BENINCASA
DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE
FORMATIVE, PSICOLOGICHE
E DELLA COMUNICAZIONE

care
Centro di Ateneo per la Ricerca Educativa
e per l'alta formazione degli insegnanti e degli educatori

Civitas educationis

EDUCATION, POLITICS AND CULTURE

Anno IX
Numero 2
Dicembre 2020

MIMESIS

SUOR ORSOLA
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Iscrizione al registro operatori della comunicazione R.O.C. n. 10757
Direttore responsabile: Arturo Lando

Pubblicazione semestrale: abbonamento annuale (due numeri): € 36,00

Per gli ordini e gli abbonamenti rivolgersi a:
ordini@mimesisedizioni.it
L'acquisto avviene per bonifico intestato a:
MIM Edizioni Srl, Via Monfalcone 17/19
20099 – Sesto San Giovanni (MI)
Unicredit Banca – Milano
IBAN: IT 59 B 02008 01634 000101289368
BIC/SWIFT: UNCRITM1234

Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa, via Suor Orsola 10, 80135 Napoli
Phone: +39 081 2522251; e-mail: civitas.educationis@unisob.na.it

MIMESIS EDIZIONI (Milano – Udine)
www.mimesisedizioni.it
mimesis@mimesisedizioni.it

Isbn: 9788857577166
Issn: 2280-6865

© 2020 – MIM EDIZIONI SRL
Via Monfalcone, 17/19 – 20099
Sesto San Giovanni (MI)
Phone: +39 02 24861657 / 24416383

Sono rigorosamente vietati la riproduzione, la traduzione, l'adattamento anche parziale o per estratti, per qualsiasi uso, o per qualunque mezzo effettuati, compresi la copia fotostatica, il microfilm, la memorizzazione elettronica, senza la preventiva autorizzazione scritta della casa editrice. Ogni abuso sarà perseguito a norma di legge.

Table of contents – Indice

EDITORIAL – EDITORIALE

Enricomaria Corbi
The Sound of the *Communitas* and the Fury of the Virus: Pedagogical Notes on Distancing 9
L'urlo per la *communitas* e il furore del virus: note pedagogiche sul distanziamento 13

SYMPOSIUM

Vasco d'Agnese
Time and Temporality in Education and Schooling: Introduction to the Symposium 19

Carl Anders Säfström
Time to Teach? 29

Joris Vlieghe, Piotr Zamojski
Education against Catastrophe. The Terror of the Future and Hope in the Now 43

Tyson E. Lewis
The Lunar Time of Study: A Rhythmanalysis of Education's Endarkenment 59

Anders Schinkel
Wonder: Temporality and Educational Value 73

Francesco Cappa, Ivano Gamelli
Il ritmo della trasformazione. Temporalità e ritmo nei processi e nelle pratiche formative 87

Vittoria Colla
"You should have done it earlier": The Morality of Time Management in Parent-child Homework Interactions 103

ESSAYS – SAGGI

Chiara Carletti
Complessità, educazione e cambiamento in tempo di pandemia 123

Francesca Dello Preite
Donne e leadership. Scenari trasformativi per una parità di genere nelle carriere professionali 135

Martina Ercolano
Genere e educazione. Percorsi di resilienza tra emancipazione e violenza 155

Pascal Perillo, Maria Romano
Lettere rilegate. Scritture dal carcere tra autobiografia e formazione 173

BOOK REVIEWS – RECENSIONI

Dalila Forni
Borruso F., *Infanzie. Percorsi storico-educativi fra immaginario e realtà*, Milano: FrancoAngeli, 2019, pp. 150 191

Abstracts 195

Education against Catastrophe

The Terror of the Future and Hope in the Now

Joris Vlieghe, Piotr Zamojski*

Abstract

In this article we primordially want to develop what it means to educate in a time of pending ecological catastrophe, i.e. when we have to educate within a particular temporal framework which prevents any hope for a better future. This brings us to investigate the interrelation between how we think about the meaning of education and how past, present and futurity have been experienced in what we discern as the Modern, the post-Shoa and the contemporary post-hope era. With the aid of the work of Bruno Latour, we advocate study practices that are fully devoted to the 'here and now' as an adequate answer to the challenge that we are presently confronted with.

Keywords: *ecological catastrophe; time and education; studying; hope; Adorno; Latour.*

The issue we deal with in this article concerns the interrelation between education and time, which we develop in a double direction. On the one hand, we want to draw attention to the historicity of education, i.e., the fact that depending on historical conditions, education is positioned against a different context, and hence it is differently grasped. With the advent of a new era, the Anthropocene, in which our historical conditions have changed fundamentally and overnight, we want to pose a question of how we can understand education within this new context. On the other hand, time plays a crucial role in the analysis we present here, as we will show that the notion of education is intimately connected with the way we relate to our past and our future. Education, at least since Modernity, is defined by orienting those involved (teachers, students, generations) in relation to the fact that we are the inheritors of a past, as well as precursors of a future yet to come. The problem is, however, that today – facing the already present and the upcoming consequences of the climate change – it is rather impossible to hold on to this Modernistic time-frame imaginary of progress any longer.

* Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium), University of Gdańsk (Poland).

In order to address this issue, we shall first give an account of the origin of the Modern temporal imaginary of education and what it essentially involves. Second, following Adorno, we will turn to the transformation of this way of framing by positioning education against a past catastrophe (i.e. the Shoah). We will argue that, although Adorno is the first to give a significant twist to the understanding of education in terms of progress, the position he develops is still within the confines of this Modern 'paradigm'. Third, in order to understand the impact of the advent of the Anthropocene as the current context for grasping education, we will build on Derrida's analysis of the meaning of a catastrophe to come. And finally, following Latour, we shall make an attempt to bring forth an affirmative stance towards education in this current context.

1. Towards the future

What needs to be stressed at the beginning of our argument is that the deep interwovenness between education and history is itself a historical phenomenon. This is, there was a time when education was not essentially tied to a sense of times coming and going and of being always situated in historical time. In his book *Forgotten Connections*, Klaus Mollenhauer (2013) makes exactly this point when he calls the era preceding Modernity the age of 'presentation' (as opposed to the age of 'representation', i.e. the time of Modernity). In the Medieval, agrarian, fideist and hierarchically organized society, the phenomenon education boiled down to a mere initiation in existing ways of living one's life in a thoughtless and non-systematic manner. Children lived and worked together with their parents and so they became gradually socialized into the habits, language, profession and class of their parents. This was meant to go on, and as such, if there is an issue of time at stake here, *time is fully defined in a cyclical way*. However, a sense of things evolving through time and over generations, the promise of a new or better future, was lacking.

According to Mollenhauer (Ibidem), all this alters radically in the short period around the transition from the 15th to the 16th Century in Europe. Important factors that explain this rash alteration are, amongst other things new *spatial* arrangements. For instance, instead of receiving one's education as an apprentice in the presence of parents (often, literally, on the fields or in a workshop), more and more children had to leave their homes and were sent to a special place, meant for learning and run by people who were specialized in teaching: the school. At the same time the world was no longer offered to the newcomers in a direct way; instead the relation to the world was, from now on, to be mediated by pedagogical materials, such as handbooks. Consequentially, at school the world got represented, which also came with the duty of the older generations to make a selection of which materials to offer and in which order. The most famous textbook from those days that offers such a 'complete' and well-ordered view of the

world, is Comenius's book *Orbis Sensualium Pictus* (1658), a handbook that contains 150 woodcuts, all accompanied by an index, and that claims to cover all relevant spheres of knowledge.

What we want to stress here most of all is that this transition also entails a radical shift in how – from this moment – on *time* is sensed, and how linear time has started to matter educationally. This is, *first*, because – for the first time – the new generation is allowed to experience itself as a *new* generation: because they receive their education isolated from their family background and in relation to a full picture of the world, it becomes conceivable that they break with the habits and ambitions of their parents, develop new interests, discover unforeseen aspects of reality, and start in original ways with the world (see Masschelein & Simons, 2013). As such, the cyclical view of time was broken and substituted with a profoundly historical sense of time: it becomes possible to regard existing ways of doing and of conceiving of the world as belonging to the past (that is really past and will not return, unless we explicitly wish so); likewise, it becomes possible to look at ourselves and the world as radically alterable: things can profoundly change. As the future is concerned, there is no necessity.

Interestingly this discovery of the fact that we are situated against a past that can be taken into new directions into the future, was interpreted in a specific way. So, *second*, since the dawn of Modernity the flux of time has been rendered as a particular story of hope and progress in which we linearly and steadily evolve towards a more desirable future, defined as prosperity for all. Again, this is clear from the work of Comenius, where we can find what could be called a default position thinking about education and time, a picture that informs much of our discussions, also today, about the meaning of education.

More precisely, in his introduction to *Pampaedia* Comenius (s.d.), again, gives a clear account of this modern account of education: if we aim to achieve universal happiness and prosperity, we need to teach all people to use the light of reason they are equipped with (but don't know yet how to use correctly). The counterpart of this, as often depicted by moralist painters, is a society of fools: a most violent, miserable, and painful surrounding to lead our lives in. The point being, however, that, foolishness is not a necessity – it is a condition that *can*, and therefore *must* be overcome by education. People can change for the better, because everyone is able to rely on sound judgment – people just need to be taught to do so. The adagium that captures this utterly optimistic view perfectly reads *Omnes Omnia Omnino*. This literally means that everyone (*omnes*) can be instructed to achieve all relevant knowledge (*omnia*) so that the brightest future is within reach, i.e. one that comes with the total development of our capacities (*omnino*).

This most lucid account – of what Comenius also calls *universal education* – can be found later on in a more sophisticated form in Kant's (1982) views on education, and also – especially – in his interventions in political philosophy (*What is enlightenment?*[Kant, 1970] and *Perpetual peace* [Kant, 1795]). Humans are born immature, but this is not our voca-

tion. Even from birth, we are already potentially reasonable creatures, and therefore we are able to use reason and live according to its rules. Whether or not we will achieve a prosperous future all depends on the effort we undertake as educators, on the laborious establishment of a *reading public*, a culture of Enlightenment, and hence on encouraging (young) people to put effort in learning to use the faculty of reason, and then to have courage and strength to always use it.

Where in early Modernity the possibility of a rupture with one's predetermined fate (i.e. being socialized into the ways of one's parents) became a goal to strive to, in Kant (1982) this idea gets a strong foothold, as it is now founded on the certainty of a universally shared capacity to reason. Hence, regardless of one's social background and the social expectations that go with it, everyone can become someone else – as long as we regard ourselves as autonomous subjects that are only subordinated to the law of our own making, the law of reason. There are no ontological barriers for anyone to achieve this. Once more, all depends on effort, i.e. the educational effort of learning to use one's reason well.

All this comes again with *a particular temporal imagery*: the past appears as a 'backward' period that we need to break away from in view of the much desired movement forward towards an ascertained brighter future to be accomplished when each and everyone will be taught the proper way, viz. when we all finally will learn to use our reason. Every sign to the contrary, e.g. when people respond irrationally, is *ipso facto* an additional 'proof' of this doctrine: their lack of Enlightenment, interpreted as being-stuck in parochial and 'backward' beliefs, demands even more educational effort. Inversely, this also means that we are constantly on our way towards an ideal we probably never fully will realize.

This story is at the very core of the progressive imagery in education: presently, we are not yet 'there'. The world now is still at a distance from the set ideal, but it feels like it only requires a bit more patience so that, when we will teach everyone to follow their reason, we will find ourselves in the best of all possible worlds, where we will all enjoy eternal peace in the kingdom of ends (*Reich der Zwecke*). Progress seems to function in the same way that the transcendental or regulative ideas in Kant's account of knowledge constitution do.[1] It could be said that our educational efforts imply and rest on the idea of Progress, which structures and orients upbringing, but here it regards a regulative idea as well. That is why empirical falsifications of this idea (we try and do our best, but so often always fail) do not discourage us: we simply cannot conceive of education without hoping for progress, it being a transcendental ground (an a priori condition of possibility).

1 These ideas, e.g. the notion that there is a unified world hold together by causal laws that apply without exception, make epistemologically valid judgments possible, but are themselves not a matter of knowledge, as we have no access to the world as such: these ideas give structure to everything we know and give us a much needed orientation, but they remain just ideas in the end.

2. Never again

However, it seems that since Kant's days this ground has sunk away under our feet. Despite the attraction that this imagery has had over Western imagination, to the extent that it is normally never questioned, much of the post-Second World War Educational Theory should be understood as a response to the serious crisis that the extermination camp atrocities caused to the almost self-evident character of this story. It is simply no longer reasonably acceptable to orient ourselves in terms of progress.

After all, only shortly after the end of the War the reading public of the West discovered the Shoah. This genocide was surely not the first one in history, and hence the indignation didn't concern so much the undeniable cruelty or scale of this atrocity. That the Holocaust became an inescapable point of reference in as good as all spheres of our lives (in art, music, poetry, the humanities, as well as in politics) for the decades to come stems from the fact that it precisely concerned well educated people who have created and designed these death factories. Auschwitz (being the symbolic name for this event) was not possible outside of Western civilisation, as Bauman (1989) claims. To make this event come true, people of the West used all their knowledge, all the technical means available, all the resources this 'civilisation' developed. And this mass mobilization of intellectual and cultural resources included the so highly acclaimed universities (with all their liberties, after the Humboldtian reform plan). Hence, the Shoah was not brought forth by uneducated savages, but precisely by civilised, cultivated, and reasonable citizens of one of the most developed countries then, with the greatest composers, philosophers and poets, and with the best and most advanced educational system.

In German educational theory this more or less issued two kinds of reaction. The first one entailed a complete loss of faith in education, as evidenced by the anti-authoritarian and even anti-pedagogical movement (Bott, 1971), holding education *as such* responsible for the irrational though organized outburst of cruelty. Only when the new generation is completely left to grow and develop itself *without* any interference by an older generation that desires to show them the way and to educate them, there is hope again for a truly humane future[2]. But this never became the dominant perspective. So, the more dominant position still endorsed education as a worthwhile human endeavour. Admitting that education can be designed and performed in a way that causes in people the readiness to take part in radical evil, it can nevertheless be practiced differently and actually prevent people from doing wrong. Hence the famous call by Adorno, who we regard as the most consequent defender of this second position:

2 If not we will only repeat again the sins of our fathers, and we will *forever* live in a world with violence and oppression. In fact, this comes down to accepting a pre-Modern, cyclical view on time (and education) again.

> The premier demand upon all education is that Auschwitz not happen again. It's priority before any other requirement is such that I believe I need not and should not justify it. […] Every debate about the ideals of education is trivial and inconsequential compared to this single ideal: never again Auschwitz. (2004a: 191)

Our point is not so much that Adorno's ideas (first delivered as a radio lecture) directly and vastly influenced educational debates, as that it was precisely this call, this new educational imperative, that captures with the greatest precision the radical reorientation of the modernist imaginary after the Shoah: *education should not be oriented towards the achievement of a better future, rather it should look back at the catastrophe it did not prevent from happening, even though it could have done so*. As such the way of conceiving the relation between education and temporality, which is the central issue in this article, undergoes a profound shift. What we want to show here is that the implications of such a shift are much far-reaching than Adorno surmises himself, as Adorno's pedagogical interventions come down to an at times very pedantic and moralistic approach of rendering the common man and woman conscious of their complicity in possible forms of systemic injustice, oppression and violence (e.g. by revealing to them their penchant for tribalism and consumerism). In the end, when Adorno offers concrete didactical advice, it even seems that he completely contradicts himself and gives in to the most instrumental account of education one can imagine, e.g. when claiming that the already enlightened inhabitants of the city need to be sent out to the country side as a kind of missionaries to enlighten the peasants that live there:

> I will go so far as to claim that one of the most important goals of education is the debarbarization of the countryside. […] I could imagine that something like mobile educational groups and convoys of volunteers could be formed, who would drive into the countryside and in discussions, courses, and supplementary instruction attempt to fill the most menacing gaps. (Ibid.: 196)

However, on a deeper level, something more important seems at stake, viz. that the reorientation of education from the (bright) future to the (catastrophic) past in fact comes with a completely new grasping of education. Things don't stay the way they were. To show this, we need to bring in conceptual tools Adorno did not provide himself. We believe that these can be retrieved from the philosophical vocabulary developed by Alain Badiou.

Central to Badiou's philosophy (2005) is the attempt to conceptualize the possibility of *radical newness* which, in the wake of post-structuralism, seems to have become utterly unthinkable (meaning that on an ontological plane every occurrence – according to post-structural thought – had to be understood in terms of a mere recycling, reshuffling, or displacement of pre-existing structures). Hence, Badiou turned to contemporary math-

ematics for conceptual tools, and more exactly to set theory. He discerns a deep analogy between the way in which mathematical objects such as numbers can be gathered and ordered in sets, and the way in which we compose our communal lives in societies. The point being that both can always be composed and ordered in utterly unpredictable ways – ad infinitum, without ever coming to a closure. Drawing from this, he develops a highly original philosophical discourse to which the *event* is the central notion. An event is something that happens, but that does not fit within the logic set by the way in which a particular society is given shape and ordered (the given state of things or status quo; or 'the situation and its state' – as Badiou calls it himself). An event radically unforeseeable: it regards the moment that genuine newness comes into existence. There is a time before and a time after, so to speak.

Now, an event either remains commonly unnoticed, or it concerns a horrifying ungraspable occurrence that yet cannot be ignored (e.g. in the case of a revolution). Hence, events aren't meaningful phenomena in and of themselves. They are in need of what Badiou (Ibidem) calls a *subject*: there must be someone or something (e.g. an institution or a movement) that takes up the task of pointing to this happening and as such qualifying it as an event. This is, showing that and why it concerns something of great meaning and giving it a name (e.g. "French Revolution" or "dodecaphonic music" – to mention the names of two exemplary events). An event thus requires fidelity: the consequences of this event need to be introduced into the particularities of our lives. What we do and how we give shape to our existence needs to be connected to the event, so that this present existence can be ordered differently. We must act in the full realization that things have profoundly changed as a result of the event happening. For instance, if we acknowledge that the emergence of twelve-tone music was really an event, then musicians need to stay faithful to this invention when composing, but also the listening audience when they try to make sense of these utterly new combinations of sounds and acknowledge that, in spite of its oddness, it is music too that can be judged as meaningful or beautiful (or not). This however does not mean that there exists one, already given response we should give to the event. To remain with the same example, fidelity to the invention of dodecaphony does *not necessarily* involve that one should stop composing or listening to conventional western music. The many ways in which we can be faithful to the event depends on our imagination and preferences. But nonetheless, once one has acknowledged an event as event, one cannot ignore it and one has to stay faithful to the newness it has introduced.

It might seem strange to refer to Badiou in the context of Adorno's ideas on education, not only because Badiou rarely touches upon the issue of the Shoah (he does not use it as an illustration of an event), but also because other important elements of his work are diametrically opposed to Adorno's philosophy. Whereas the latter (Adorno, 2004b) laid bare that genocide is the expression of the totalising rule of identity (i.e. the wish to

assimilate all existence so that it fits together and to eliminate what cannot fit) and therefore never stopped advocating for unresolvable heterogeneity, Badiou (2001) on the contrary has a rather negative attitude towards radical difference and hence doesn't shy away from claiming that society needs more 'sameness' (in the sense that difference is just what is given, whereas the living together of people in spite of their differences is the exception to the rule, and hence of the nature of the event). This notwithstanding, we argue that the framework developed by Badiou is quite helpful for more adequately grasping the precise meaning of Adorno's claims about what education after Auschwitz should all be about. To recall, the premier demand upon all educators is that Auschwitz will never happen again (Adorno, 2004a). The whole sense of education – its call and fundamental aim – is to be defined completely in relation to *this* past catastrophe. When we are seriously conscious of what Auschwitz stands for we cannot but relate everything we do as educators to this event. Even when we teach children how to solve mathematical equations, we must constantly be aware that what we do is never neutral, as it can develop in them an obedient attitude (making mistakes cannot be tolerated, the teacher knows better, etc.) which would make them prone to use their knowledge and skills for doing or partaking in the most horrific evil.

Auschwitz is the name for the unspeakable and the unthinkable, as Imre Kertész (2011: 77) reminds us when he writes "[t]he Holocoust is a value, because through immeasurable sufferings it has led to immeasurable knowledge, and thereby contains immeasurable moral reserves". According to Adorno, the Shoah is an ultimate point of reference, in relation to which our thoughts, actions, intentions, projects and practices, can be considered as either meaningful or not, justified or not, right or wrong. 'Not to let Auschwitz happen again' therefore involves full fidelity to the 'moral reserves' that the Shoah itself brings. This is, we must ask ourselves all the time whether what we are thinking, doing and desiring, even if we mean it well, does not contain the seed of a new genocide, a new Auschwitz to take place, or rather that it contributes to a society in which this event is unlikely to happen again. Or, in Badiou's terms: we constantly need to introduce the event in and connect its consequences to our own present.

To secure this last option, however, the past calamity has to be *studied*. In order to be able to stay faithful to its moral reserves, one has to engage with the immeasurable knowledge this event entails. And although the daily use of English would prompt us to say that we should 'learn' from that past catastrophe (as in 'learning a lesson') – it would be inappropriate to use the word learning, instead of studying, in this context (see Biesta, 2006). This is because there aren't any specific learning outcomes that could issue from studying the Shoah. Again, if the challenge in question only concerned learning, i.e. to impart the necessary knowledge and insight, and to alter behaviour, the we end up with an extremely instrumental account (to which, as we saw, Adorno himself succumbed when making concrete didactical suggestions).

In order to really study the catastrophic event that defines who we are today, what is required is not so much a matter of coming up with final answers, as it is a question of cultivating and taking a particular attitude towards the world and our self, a particular *hexis* that is shaped when studying. There is no well-defined set of knowledge to be obtained that would 'do the trick' and 'solve the problem'. Rather, as Kertész notes, there is an immeasurable knowledge to be discovered, and – as supported by what we previously said with Badiou – knowledge that is incommensurate to anything that we knew and know so far. The point is not to create what Badiou would call 'an encyclopaedia of the situation', an all-encompassing and final knowledge that offers the comfort of a total control over the situation. Instead what is at stake is what he calls a 'truth procedure'. We must be willing to take up fidelity to what we have experienced as an event. But, it can never be determined beforehand what this fidelity consists of in any positive way. The only characterization one can give is a negative one (see Adorno, 2004b): fidelity always aims at avoiding the Shoah happening again.

In conclusion, this post-Shoah way of conceiving education, as the result of a radical temporal reorientation (compared to the transcendental modernistic idea of education as progress), leaves us at first sight behind with little to hope for. What drives us as educators is the fidelity to a past catastrophic event, i.e. the unrelenting endeavour to not let it happen again, by studying it without any promise of regaining final and knowledgeful control over our lives. There is no end-product (i.e. a fixed and positive learning outcome) we confidently can expect to gain from education. Despite all this, we argue that this Adornian account in the end remains within particularly Modernist confines, in *that there is still a strong belief in education as a vector of change for the better*. There is the vague sense that we *can* do better – and effectively make Auschwitz never happen again – and this entails that we take seriously care about education (as opposed to the 'anti-pedagogy' movement that was popular in post-War Germany and which we briefly discussed above). For Adorno it is clear that most of our educational efforts are ill-conceived (and only contribute to *Halbbildung* [Adorno, 1998]). But, at the same time Adorno's educational creed is logically predicated upon the *possibility* of improvement thanks to education (and not thanks to any other cultural or societal force; see "All post-Auschwitz culture, including its urgent critique, is garbage" [Adorno, 2004b: 367]). Even here the spectre of *progress* seems to be roaming around. Or at least, this unreserved affirmation of the value of education seems to raise up a sprinkle of hope at the horizon.

3. The logic of terror

This implicit modernistic assumption seems to have completely and definitively withered away, because today we witness with great acuteness a completely new and since Modernity never experienced condition, viz. as

a result of the ever increasing impact of climate change, we live in a time that seems to be completely without any hope whatsoever. An inevitable catastrophe is our sole destiny. Unlike Auschwitz, ecological disaster is not a past, but a future catastrophe. Hence, it seems that in the age of the Anthropocene, we are forced to reorient education once more. And it seems reasonable to assume that our geasping of education is shifting substantially too.

So, what does it mean to acknowledge a future catastrophe as the fundamental point of reference for thinking about the meaning of education? In order to address this question, we first turn to Jacques Derrida's reflections on the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, so as to be able to analyse different possible responses we can give in view of sensing with great acuteness a coming apocalypse. He speaks in this regard about a "logic of terror". This might seem surprising at first, as it regards a completely different event (terrorism), and obviously 9/11 is a past event for sure. And yet, Derrida takes great care to define this tragedy as an event that – paradoxically – refers to the future through and through. This is clear from the following quote:

> Imagine that the Americans and, through them, the entire world, had been told: what has just happened, the spectacular destruction of two towers, the theatrical but invisible deaths of thousands of people in just a few second, is an awful thing, a terrible crime, a pain without measure, but it's all over, it won't happen again, there will never again be anything as awful as or more awful than that. I assume that mourning would have been possible in a relatively short period of time. Whether to our chagrin or our delight, things would have quite quickly returned to their normal course in ordinary history. One would have spoken of the work of mourning and turned the page, as is so often done, and done so much more easily when it comes to things that happen elsewhere, far from Europe and the Americas. But this is not at all what happened. There is traumatism with no possible work of mourning when the evil comes from the possibility to come of the worst, from the repetition to come – though worse. Traumatism is produced by the *future*, by the *to come*, by the threat of the worst *to come*, rather than by an aggression that is "over and done with". What happened, even though this has not been said with the requisite clarity – and for good reason – is that, for the future and for always, the threat that was indicated through these signs might be worse than any other. (Derrida, 2003: 97, italics in original)

What is crucial to note here is that such a deferral of the real meaning of the event is, according to Derrida's analysis, vital to the way in which terrorism affects our world.

> An event always inflicts a wound in the everyday course of history, in the ordinary repetition and anticipation of all experience. […] the wound remains open by our terror before the future and not only the past. […]

> It is the future that determines the unappropriability of the event, not the present or the past. Or at least, if it is the present or the past, it is only insofar as it bears on its body the terrible sign of what might or perhaps will take place, which will be *worse than anything that has ever taken place*. (Ibid.: 96-97, italics in original)

The very *logic of terror* is that events that happen now, or that recently happened, start to signal something worse still to come, in order to produce unbridled fear. This past sign is horrific by itself, but is also only announces something even more hideous we should be constantly reminded of and aware of. Importantly, unlike a past event, it is *impossible to be faithful* to a catastrophe to come. A future calamity of such proportions is something that paralyzes our reason and common sense, urges us to take a defensive position and prompts us to come up with a response as quickly as possible. But, as Derrida further notes:

> all these efforts to attenuate or neutralize the effect of the traumatism […] are but so many desperate attempts. And so many autoimmunitary movements. Which produce, invent, and feed the very monstrosity they claim to overcome. What will never let itself be forgotten is thus the perverse effect of the autoimmunitary itself. For we now know that repression in both its psychoanalytical sense and its political sense – whether it be through the police, the military, or the economy – ends up producing, reproducing, and regenerating the very thing it seeks to disarm. (Ibid.: 99)

Returning to our current predicament, a possible explanation is that climate change denial is the effect of this autoimmunisation that is constitutive of the logic of terror and that that is also a vital ingredient of the contemporary discourse on ecological disaster. We are constantly being pushed to panic and to believe that there is no time to waste: we have to act now, because the catastrophe is impending, and that what is awaiting will be – indeed – gruesome. Hence, if Derrida's analysis is correct, it is exactly because of the apocalyptic tone of the dominant discourse that an aggressive autoimmunitary response of resistance and denial results.

It is not our aim in this article to argue for or against Derrida's position. Instead, we think it is more interesting to ask about the meaning of reorienting education in view of a future catastrophe, and use some of Derrida's conceptual tools to do so. More exactly, we want to discuss, firstly, how what he calls a logic of terror brings forward particular *educational* responses to the contemporary crisis and, secondly, whether or not we can go beyond the logic of terror (in the last section).

As to the possible responses, within a logic of terror, i.e. when we have the utmost certainty that we are all doomed, we can – inspired by Derrida – distinguish three types: an escapist, masochist and alarmistic reaction. First, we e could look for ways to not face the threat, to escape from the

ultimate catastrophe. We can for instance set all our hopes on a future scientific discovery (e.g. new and endless resources of 'clean' energy) that will save the planet. This way of looking in terms of an escape forward actually dovetails with the Modernist idea of progress as discussed in the first part of this article. This would, on an educational level, demand that we put all our energy in training the new generation to obtain all the necessary knowledge and skill to come up with a final and scientifically sound answer to our worries. Similarly, but in an opposed direction, we could try to escape the real treat by issuing a conservative call to cherish what is still left from the old world. However, treasuring something that is dying in front of our eyes, instead of taking care of the present world, is nothing but turning our eyes away from catastrophe and finding a, escapist hideout in a curriculum that is fully oriented to preserving something good from the past.

Second, we can also emphasise the horror that is still to come, try to know as much as possible about it and depict it in its most ghastly details. This reaction could be termed masochistic, as we are then just revelling and gloating in the face of our own misery. But, this response – usually resulting from the best of intentions, and often accompanied by a form of self-accusation and beating ourselves – goes together with a kind of fatalism (as we can't do anything about it) or with a kind of laissez-faire attitude (we should let it happen, and when the human species is gone, the earth will thrive again). A third response consists of alarmism. This regards an anthropocentric reflex urging us to do whatever is in our power to secure what is still possible to save so as to preserve as much as we can from the world we know. And most of all: to preserve the existence of humankind itself. Very shortly put, the educational consequences of the second position involve a pedagogy of shaming and hence a moralization of education, whereas the third position comes with a total politicization of education: a policy aimed at human self-preservation will dictate everything we do as educators (see Furedi, 2010).

Any of these three possible responses seem to a certain extent reasonable to defend and at the same time exaggerated: when we give in to the lure of the logic of terror our capacities to invent a sound and coherent response to the ultimate threat is eventually paralyzed, either by denial of the true problem (and hence focusing on irrelevant or trivial matters) or by submitting to despair – and ceasing all hope that education might have any significant role to play.

4. Hopeness

To avoid such despair, a new orientation for education is required. From the argument we have been developing thus far, it should be clear that an appropriate answer cannot exist in returning to a Modernist approach (although it is surprising to see that in existing literature on education

for sustainable development [ESD] this *is* actually the default position[3]). A catastrophic event has suddenly and mercilessly smashed this dream of progress to pieces. To a large extent, this situation is not different from the one with which German post-War educational philosophy saw itself confronted. Hence, we turned to Adorno to show – with the aid of Badiou – that we can conceive of a profound faith in education without assuming a progressivist orientation towards a desired more enlightened future: it is possible to conceive of educational hope offered by the practice of studying an event that forces us to connect it to our own present lives, but without ever having any certainty or control over the outcome of our studious endeavours.

Nevertheless, it makes an enormous difference whether the horrific event is a past or a future one. We can clearly discern the signposts of the event of climate change, but it itself is still coming. Therefore, it would be senseless to call for studious practices that testify to a fidelity to the event. At the same time, if education actually wants to play a role of meaning, we should try to bypass the logic of terror and certainly leave aside any unrealistic, fatalistic or alarmistic attitude. What we suggest, following some clues developed in the recent work of Bruno Latour[4], is *to re-orient education, and more precisely to redefine education in terms of study practices that are fully concerned with the 'here and now'*. Or to put it with a play of words: turning the logic of terror into a terrestrial logic, a way of thinking that is entirely earth-bound (*terra*) and focused wholly on the present.

Latour's (2017) suggestion, in a nutshell, is that the existing parameters against the background of which we used to find orientation (i.e. the Modernist framework of progress we depicted above) have lost all meaning in the face of the 'intrusion of Gaia' (Stengers, 2015). We can no longer deny our impact as humans on the (by now disastrous) state of the world we live on, and neither can we deny that the world responds back on our doings, in a unsparing way. Whereas in Modernity, we could upheld the dream that humans lived their lives against the background of Nature, seen as a mere stage set on which we had to make our progressivist dreams come true, today we plainly experience that this stage set has become an actor (and more precisely a callous one) in a history of which we, humans, are no longer the sole protagonists. The only sound answer we can give to

3 The very term ESD itself indicates so, as educational initiatives should become instruments for development. Very precise goals (such as the famous UN sustainability development goals or SDGs) are set as crucial objectives to be achieved by the appropriate educational means. The relation between education and temporality involved in this way of looking remains Modernistic through and through, as it seems that imparting the necessary knowledge, skills and values, and fostering ecological or sustainability literacy in the new generation will bring about a more desirable future. The transcendental idea of Progress is still in the back here.

4 To be clear, Latour himself is far from consistent on this matter, as he would defend, form a pragmatic point of view, that a thoroughly alarmistic position, the most acute existential fear, would have much craved for motivating effects (see e.g. Latour, 2017, p. 73).

this new situation, Latour argues, is to reorient ourselves and find out a manner to live well together – in the most broad sense: with the earth and all its inhabitants (human and non-human). The underlying idea is that the Modernist account, which is in fact a fiction, has prevented us from *truly inhabiting* the earth: inhabitation implies that we strive for a common existence that is thriving for all beings that are involved – and exactly this is a priori excluded within a Modernist world-picture which opposes humankind and nature, the first understood as the sole lead character of history and as a ruthless exploiter, and the second as a mere stage for human history and as an inexhaustible resource (Latour, 2018).

In the age of the Anthropocene it has become blatantly clear that this world-picture is a fantasy, and a dangerous one. But, interestingly, Latour's message isn't merely a critical one – rubbing in our faces our complicity in the predicament we are in. Instead he actually welcomes the idea that with the Anthropocene a new history can begin, one in which we start to relate to ourselves, others and the world in such a way that a new sense of temporality becomes possible (Latour, 2017). But, for this to happen a reorientation is required: we need. a new set of coordinates so that we can find orientation again. No longer should we give shape to our doings in view of the impossible future of a universal and abundant prosperity as dreamt of by the Modernists. Instead, we should try to land, and live our lives with our two feet on the ground: "down to earth" (Latour, 2018). This is, we would better start caring about *a concrete earthly place*, here and now, so that we can try – on a small, but realistic and liveable scale – give rise to a thriving existence for ourselves and with its human and non-human inhabitants.

This might sound abstract, but what Latour has in mind (Ibidem*)* are existing initiatives called Critical Zone Observatories (CZO). This regard a kind of small-scale, bottom-up, collaborative initiatives of people (scientists and citizens alike) to investigate the local environment, i.e. to register precisely the present circumstances of this place, to document recent changes due to ecological changes, and to become aware of what one can do about it. Importantly, this work involves *a threefold studious dynamics* (see Schildermans et al., 2019), i.e. characteristics of activities that are through and through educational (even though Latour doesn't use this term[5]): first, CZO – studiers really have to spend a lot of time to research and map their surroundings – what is at stake is to really get to know one's place, and this involves arresting productive time and loosing time (as opposed to the Modernist idea that we should carefully invest our time in view of the maximization of outcomes). Second, as a result of their involvement, these studiers also get attached to the piece of earth they inhabit. No longer is it an indifferent stage set for their own business, but a place they

5 The reason for this being that Latour has a very poor and erroneous understanding of (formal) education, viz. drilling information into people's heads, or at best a pedantic activity aimed at converting people for the right cause by revealing to them the state of confusion and ignorance they were in before meeting their teacher.

become attentive for and can care for. Third, these collective investigations also engender a sense of community and of potentiality: *as a collective* of students, they might start to sense that there is something they *can* do so as to respond to the situation they are in. The point is to fully embrace, affirmatively, what we are able to do here and now.

Hence, Latour offers concrete suggestions of what it is we can do as educators in a day and age of pending catastrophe without giving in to complete despair. But, more importantly, Latour's suggestion gives us to think about how we can conceive anew of the relation between education and time – the central issue in this article. Whereas the orientation point of the Modernist educational project is the future, fuelling us with an optimism that holds true even in the face of negative experiences that at first sight contradict the dream of progress, and the orientation point of the Post-Shoah view on education is the past, demanding us in a more pessimistic vein to stay true a catastrophic event as the only way to meaningfully educate today, the educational account that we can draw from Latour is fully oriented towards the present, the here and now. If we want to remain hopeful and expect from education to make a difference for our lives in view of impending tragedy, it is important to study our present and local conditions. This will allow for an immanent sense of possibility, i.e. an experience of being able to change something (small as it is, and quite mediocre in terms of the modernist dream) that brings about hope. This hope, however, does not find its ground in the promise of a future still to come (or of a past to remember), but is fully an affirmative and experiential category that accompanies our studious endeavours here and now. This hope is therefore hope-in-the-now – *hopeness* (Vlieghe & Zamojski, 2019).

5. Studying

Hence, what we have argued for in this article is some kind of faithfulness, but not towards a past event or a future idea(l). It would be more exact to say that our faith lies with the meaningfulness of education itself – *that it is worthwhile to educate in spite of an impending catastrophe that has irreversibly smashed to pieces the dream of progress*. This testifies to a hope in the now and it comes with drawing attention to the value of *studying*, even and especially in our day and age. Latour can offer valuable guidance here, as what he suggests is that in order to start caring for our environment, so as to make the world inhabitable again and to gain a sense of potentiality, we have to involve in activities that are fully educational. What is required is not so much studying the past or relating to past things to pass them over intact into the future, but studying the here and now, and what is possible in it. This, of course, doesn't imply that we have to give up traditional educational forms and contents, but that we reorient education towards the present world. Studying the world, then, introduces hope in a world that seems utterly bereft of it.

References

Adorno, Th. (1998), "Einleitung zu einer Diskussion über die 'Theorie der Halbbildung'", in *Gesammelte Schriften, Band 8*, Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, pp. 574-577.

Adorno, Th. (2004a), *Critical Models. Interventions and Catchwords*, Transl. H. W. Pickford. New York: Columbia University Press.

Adorno, Th. (2004b), *Negative Dialectics*, Transl. E.B. Ashton. London-New York: Routledge.

Badiou, A. (2001), *Ethics. An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, Transl. P. Hallward. London-New York: Verso.

Badiou, A. (2005), *Being and Event*, London-New York: Continuum.

Bauman, Z. (1989), *Modernity and the Holocaust*, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Biesta, G.J.J. (2006), Beyond Learning: Democratic Education for a Human Future, Boulder (CO): Paradigm.

Bott, G. (1971), *Erziehung zum Ungehorsam. Antiautoritäre Kinderladen*, Druck Verlags Gesellschaft mbH, Darmstadt.

Derrida, J. (2003), "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides. A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida", in G. Borradori (eds.), *Philosophy in the Time of Terror*, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, pp. 85-136.

Furedi, F. (2010), *Wasted: Why Education Isn't Educating*, London: Continuum.

Kertész, I. (2011), *The Holocaust as a Culture*, Transl. Th. Cooper. London-New York-Calcutta: Seagull Books.

Kant, I. (1982), Ausgewählte Schriften zur Pädagogik und ihrer Begründung. Besorgt von Hans-Hermann Groothoff, Paderborn: Ferdinand Schöningh Verlag.

Kant, I., (1970), "An Answer to the Question: 'What is Enlightenment?'", in H.B. Nisbet, H.S. Reiss (ed.), *Kant Political Writings*, Transl. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, pp. 54-60.

Kant, I. (2003), *To Perpetual Peace. A philosophical sketch*, Transl. T. Humphrey. Indianapolis: Hacket Publishing.

Latour, B. (2017), *Facing Gaia. Eight Lectures on the New Climatic Regime*, (Catherine Porter, Trans.), Cambridge: Polity Press.

Latour, B. (2018), Down to earth: Politics in the new climatic regime, Cambridge: Polity Press.

Masschelein, J. & Simons, M. (2013a), *In Defence of the School. A Public Issue*, E-ducation Culture & Society Pub.: Leuven.

Mollenhauer, K. (2013), *Forgotten Connections: On Culture and Upbringing* (N. Friesen, Trans.), London: Routledge.

Schildermans, H., Simons, M. & Masschelein, J. (2019), "The adventure of study: thinking with artifices", in *Ethics and Education,* a Palestinian experimental university vol. 14, n. 2, pp. 184-197.

Stengers, I. (2015), *In catastrophic times. Resisting the coming barbarism* (A. Goffey, Trans.), London: Open Humanities Press.

Vlieghe, J. & Zamojski, P. (2019), Towards an Ontology of Teaching. Affirmation, thing-centerdness and love for the world, Cham: Springer.

Finito di stampare
nel mese di dicembre 2020
da Geca Industrie Grafiche – San Giuliano Milanese (MI)