Why Still Education?

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Edited by

Tamara Petrović Trifunović,
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INTRODUCTION

A QUESTION MARK OVER EDUCATION: INTRODUCTION INTO THE APORIAS OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL THEORY AND PRAXIS

TAMARA PETROVIĆ TRIFUNOVIĆ,
GAZELA PUDAR DRAŠKO
AND PREDRAG KRSTIĆ

Contributions for the international conference *Why Still Education?* held in Kovačica, Serbia, from 6th to 8th June 2014, served as a basis for this volume. The conference was conceived as an open forum for reflection on, and development of, educational strategies. The idea of the conference was to provide a space for the exchange of experiences and knowledge, and encourage the challenging of the existing educational practices.

The conference gathered researchers of education in the fields of philosophy, sociology, pedagogy, andragogy, psychology, political theory, anthropology, history, as well as experts in education management, but also educational practitioners: teachers, textbook authors, initiators of supplementary educational activities, representatives of alternative educational programs, etc. This diversity of disciplinary and research areas dictated the necessity of structuring the conference. It seemed most appropriate to divide it internally into three thematic domains, with each having its own dedicated panel.

Within the domain of the history and theories, purposes and effectiveness of education, problems of the institutionalisation of education and education policies, the participants reflected upon the issues of the status, scope and function of the educational enterprise and its gains and losses, the necessity and redundancy of educational operations, as well as the analyses of the character and types of education. The contributors paid

special attention to the institution of the school in light of the investments into its emancipatory potential and its already chronic crises: they questioned the organisation of class teaching and models of university; detected egalitarian and discriminatory dimensions of education; pointed out the dilemmas of compulsory, general and vocational education, the education of children, adult and life-long learning, universal and contextual education, imperialism and traditionalism of the educational contents, etc. The approaches to these issues included educational concepts from classical antiquity, the Middle Ages and the Modern period (*paideia*, *Bildung*, self-education), or followed the contemporary controversies surrounding the Bologna process, PISA test, requirements brought out during the students' protests, etc.

The title of the second thematic domain, "Education in Transition", was purposely ambiguous. On the one hand, it refers to the regional post-socialist context, primarily that of the successor states of Yugoslavia, but also of its neighbouring countries – Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Albania – that share a common political and educational legacy. The shift in the socialist educational paradigm brought a transition to something yet to be determined in name and content, because it is not clear if it conforms only to mercantile criteria, if it abstains from any ideology or rests upon a certain new ideological matrix. The case studies and comparative analyses of this transition were very plastic. On the other hand, education itself is inevitably "in transition" even if it is not politically conditioned: the post-industrial, information age transforms the idea and the role of education. New technologies question both the nature and value of "classical" knowledge, and a global perspective (or perspective of globalisation) seems to require different approaches, if not a total (re)construction of the social (sub)system of education. These motions served as an endless inspiration for a productive exchange.

The third thematic domain, "Teacher on the Stage", was devoted to the immediate educational action and issues which are purely didactic only on the surface level. However, the contributions in this domain also sought to problematise the educational "transfer" of knowledge and skills, and especially the role of the participants in this process. Special attention was given to the examination of the (un)comfortable position of a teacher as a "functionary of knowledge" who is able to generate (dis)satisfaction among the pupils/students, as well as to the innovative moments and methods in the teaching processes and alternative models of learning. Experimental workshops, the demonstration of new approaches and educational projects are here constantly interchanging with the theoretical elaborations of their foundations and effects.

The written contributions that we have received and that have passed our review process could also be divided into three groups: the first and broadest encompassed what is usually classified as philosophy of education; the second deals with a range of subjects that consider educational practices from the viewpoint of a basic form of educational activity: the effectiveness of certain educational curriculums for familiarizing students with new materials; the third area is reserved for recognizing and estimating the necessities and justifications of the particular properties and characters of certain educational contents as well as education in general.

Taking into account the priority of the issues, and questioning current educational strategies, it seemed most convenient to present the general question – why still education – as divided into three further, separate questions. Thus, the first part which problematizes the eternal question of the purpose of education was titled *Education for What?*; the second, which examines the most appropriate approaches and expected outcomes for the child-centred perspective, is called *Education for Whom?*; and the third part, which takes the national, gender and other subtle or self-explanatory characteristics of education and looks at them from the standpoint of discrimination, has the appropriate title: *Whose Education?*

The text by Predrag Krstić, which opens the first subject chapter, directly addresses the theme of the conference and this anthology. In his paper, Krstić confronts the modern educational optimism and its "self-evident affirmation of education". He finds that it is taken for granted today that education ought to be for the masses, that it ought to be enlightening, and that it is better than ignorance. This was not always held as true; in fact, a parallel tradition exists which questions the universality of education (Enlightenment) and the desirability of knowledge as such (the Book of Revelations, Montaigne, Rousseau, Shestov). The lack of thorough self-reflection subverts the potentials which the idea of education entails, the author concludes.

In his paper "Paolo Freire's Concept of Conscientization and Archetypal Reflectivity by Clifford Mayes", Janez Vodičar detects an additional insufficiency, that is, the lack of teaching authority in the modern school systems and the chronic crises indicated by the unsuccessful incorporation of current education into the life of modern society. His suggestion follows Freire's pedagogics and, especially, the latter's concept of conscientization, connected in an unusual way with Mayes's experiment that sought to enrich pedagogic processes (seemingly opposite to Jung's psychoanalysis), and rethinks the possibility of reforming not only education, but also, or even primarily, society. Such an

approach, the author believes, enables the development of a "model of pedagogic work which will help the youth, caught in a modern culture with its forced and shallow concepts, to critically engage with society".

In the contribution "Contexts of Understanding Therapeutic Education", Marjan Šimenc is concerned with another dimension of the impact of society on education. A thorough discussion of the therapeutic function of education is here subjected to its own kind of phenomenological and historical analysis, in order to recognise the pedagogical as well as political and cultural levels of its manifestations. Different contextualisations provide different approaches to the usually en bloc criticized therapeutic education, which in turn allows for a certain function of therapy framed by the "ethics of authenticity" in the education process.

Opening the "Education for Whom" block with her well-documented and illustrated essay "Inclusion and Standardisations in Education – Consequences for Teachers", Elisabeth Plate deals with the current contradictory tendencies, often painfully tested in contemporary schooling: "on the one side is movement towards inclusion, aiming to increase learning and participation for all children in education, and on the other side is increasing standardisation, market-orientated developments focusing on learning attainments and school performances according to nationally and internationally defined standards". The paper explores these antagonistic aims, as well as their impact on the roles of teachers in the form of the increased pressure to act as state functionaries rather than to participate in educational developments. The author further argues that the participatory role of teachers is the condition for the development of inclusion in education, and advocates its enlargement.

In their interesting study, Mehmet Mart, Ismail Karaoz and Zeynep Duran Karaoz explore the preschool teachers' attitudes and perceptions of teaching English as a foreign language in early child education in Turkey. The research employs a questionnaire given to 131 preschool teachers, and the results show that the preschool teachers mostly agree that English should be taught as a foreign language, and note that it is important to start at an early age. This could be a significant finding and contribute to a vivid debate on the proper age to start learning a foreign or second language.

Ljiljana Marković and Marko Božović also discuss the relationship between the domestic and the foreign, using the example of the classes in which Serbian pupils learn Japanese, and taking into account their "autonomy". A case study of its own kind, this contribution uses the recently published Japanese language and writing textbook as a "tool for the adoption of new didactics which transforms the principle of the

autonomy of learning into the teaching practice", which enables the work in classroom as well as guided self-study, using an apparatus that develops the awareness of the acquired knowledge and adopted language techniques in each of its 15 methodical units. Each unit enables the functional associative and mnemonic memorizing of the Japanese ideographic writing, is equipped with homework, quizzes and questionnaires, and includes solutions. The authors are confident that the textbook provides a solid basis for the adoption of new unfamiliar material using suitable modern methods.

Dijana Subotički Miletić's text opens the last part of the anthology, "Whose Education". She examines one specific case of the sustainability of Gender Studies at the University of Novi Sad. Presenting the development of the studies chronologically, she follows the path from women's activism in civil organizations, through NGO projects, to the initialization of academic education in the field of gender subjects. This case could be read as a characteristic narrative about gender studies in Serbia, especially in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina, but also in every transitional country in the Balkans.

The contribution of Aleksandra Ilić-Rajković, "The Classroom from Lovrak's Workshop (The Practice of the Activity School in Yugoslavia between the Two World Wars)", closes the thematic block and the book. This is a very valuable contribution to pedagogic approaches regardless of the origin of the country. Parallel to European and American projects of "progressive pedagogy" and the "new school", an authentic thought based on the educational principles of activity, freedom and creativity of students and the practice of these principles ruled supreme in Yugoslavia just after the First World War. The paper analyses Mate Lovrak's still relevant and inspirational practical interpretation of a new school concept through the elaboration of different questions related to the organization of the classroom as a living space and the development of the pupils' capabilities and skills of expression.

We do not foster the illusion that we are closer to definite answers to the main question or the questions in the thematic parts of this volume. That, however, was not our intention. The editors would consider it a success if their choice of papers would even slightly contribute to the questions being more clearly formulated, more thoroughly resolved, more figuratively presented, as we believe it would enable rational discourse about them. It seems that we could not, or even should not, expect to accomplish more with this endeavour. We hope that the readers share our view that what ultimately seems less is not in fact so little – quite the contrary.

PART I

EDUCATION FOR WHAT?

CHAPTER ONE

WHY STILL EDUCATION: RETROSPECTED AND INSPECTED

PREDRAG KRSTIĆ

This paper aims to question anew the supposedly self-evident affirmation of education, in its modern incarnation as well as its historical notion. The "naive" questions suggest that we have taken for granted that education ought to be for the masses, that it ought to be upbringing, and that it is better than ignorance. Drawing on the tradition that calls such an understanding of education into question, the author shows that the hidden costs of disregarding such reflection end up, camouflaged and smuggled, taxing the current debates regarding the generally accepted education strategies. The characteristic feeling of the currently accepted model of education being in chronic crisis is less a testament to an absence of alternative approaches than to a lack of thorough self-reflection.

Key words: education, school, Enlightenment, rearing, knowledge.

Introduction

Theodor Adorno considered a certain philosophical naivete, if not a sufficient, then a necessary condition for reflection. Far from simple-mindedness or a childlike consciousness, it is the ability to notice something immediate when considering things, regardless of the contextual "collective mechanisms" in which we are embedded. Adorno's examples are the grimaces of ordinarily nice people and their brutish behavior when chasing a seat in a train or bus. His suggestion is that if the philosopher cannot avoid such a situational construct, she can or she must "self-reflect" it (*Selbstbesinnung*), and not let it influence her judgment (Adorno 1973, 96-98; Adorno 1997b; Adorno 1997a, 459). I would venture to place education before just such naïve questioning, while

equally keeping an eye on the traditions of thought that came before and the current considerations of the matter at hand.[1]

It seems that such questioning above all must not lapse into the familiar self-evident affirmation of the concept of education, currently so pervasive. However, it should also not claim its undesirability in advance, or recommend a new character and status or prescribe alternative educational models. Well-tempered questions would have to be satisfied with showing the initial discursive costs of setting up an education as we know it. All too often, when not taken into account, these most basic questions crop up at various levels of the educational structure, shaping our possibilities as a series of alternatives between which we must choose: general or specialized, culturally determined or universal, standardized or deregulated, uniform or plural, privileged or accessible, elite or "open" education.[2] All the while, the idea of education itself remains unquestioned and never fully realized. Being prepared for a negative answer regarding the justification of the further existence (or even existence at all) of education, I would like to test the arguments against the ambitious investment, both real and symbolic, into education. In what is only superficially a paradox, at the same time, I remain convinced that I am thus more loyal to the concept of education than its apologists who do not include an internal imperative for self-interrogation. Invariably, the refusal to offer answers and the insistence that the recurrent questions have been

[1] Entitled "Three Naive Questions: Addressed to the Modern Educational Optimism", a shorter version of this paper was published in *Studies in Philosophy and Education*, March 2016, Volume 35, Issue 2, pp. 129-144.

[2] There are various ways in which the evident forgetting of the more fundamental questions can be reconstructed and formulated. According to Biesta, the foundation of modern education lies in the inevitable and problematic "link between education and human freedom," established by Kant (Biesta 2010a, 77; cf. Vanderstraeten & Biesta 2011, 10; Biesta 2006, 101-2). Birgit Schaffar also bases her observations on Kant's theory, noting that "one of the primary pedagogical paradoxes" is the clear "tension between a necessary educational influence and an impermissible restriction of the child's individual development" (Shaffar 2014, 6). This paradox has, ever since, proven to be a provoking thought for many education theoreticians (for example, Peters 1963; Winch 2002; Masshelein 1998). For an alternative to standardization or deregulation, that is, to the contradictory tendencies of modern societies undergoing transformation and "promoting both bureaucratic standardization of curriculum and standardized evaluation on the one hand, and postmodern diversification on the other" and the consequences thereof, see Waks 2006. For the history and various dimensions of understanding and justifying the necessity of general as opposed to specialized education during times which favored the latter, see Berlin 1975; Dearden 1980.

insufficiently and incompletely posed results in these naïve questions appearing heretical and untimely.

I. Wherefore Mass Education?

Education, as mass or as general as possible, compulsory and encompassing all children without exception, at least on the elementary level – this today appears as a marker of civilization, and if not already complete, something that ought to be striven for at all cost.[3] It is, at the very least, a desirable state of affairs, and is often the crucial evidence for the claim that, in this field if nowhere else, humanity's progress is possible and tangible. At the same time, the very meaning of the terms "humanity" and "progress" are ambiguous and subject to interpretation. The term "humanity" in itself encompasses the intrinsic paradox: on the one hand, it can signify "humanity as a moral disposition present in each individual human being" and, on the other, "humanity as a whole, or 'the human species'" (González 2011, 433). Similarly, progress can be measured and is measured in terms of the "gross domestic product", but also in terms of more abstract concepts such as "well-being", "sustainable development", etc. (Hall & Matthews 2008).

In any case, two hidden assumptions are at work here: that people are better for their education and that society is better the more numerous its educated members. Such reasoning amounts to an intellectualist prejudice, for there is neither logical justification for it nor does reality, to which it makes recourse, bear it out. One need only think of the image of the missionary who spares no means, or the evil and irresponsible scientists whose *Kulturkritik* and dystopias have replaced the image of the wise and

[3] It is still euphemistically referred to as "the right to education", although it is binding. As a so-called "social right", the right to education has, in the second half of the nineteenth century, been included in national normative instruments and, in the second half of the twentieth century, in the international declarations and conventions. The tensions and contradictions that have arisen as a consequence of its enactment – tensions between the state and the individual, the parent and the child, autonomy and belonging, inclusion and exclusion, sovereignty and authority – all point towards the incompleteness of the very concept of education (cf. Curren 2009; Bergström 2010). For the operational feasibility of achievement of the global goal of universal primary education and gender parity at all levels of education by this (2015) year, see Birdsall, Levine & Ibrahim 2005; Bruns, Mingat and Rakotomalala 2003. For the impact of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and, generally, the idea of universal primary education on education policy in Europe, see Lundy 2012; Burnett 2008.

benevolent master thinker's visions of a permanently happy society. This or that image is, certainly, largely a matter of the selected materials, which (may) construct the entire competitive history (cf. Oelkers 2004). Suffice here to say that education has far from always and everywhere automatically bettered society, that progress is not always to be found in its expansion, and that progress itself is not always desirable. These beliefs are not even held by the authors who are most often cited by the advocates of mandatory mass education.

The idea that a regular school system will result in better individuals for a happier society is often, mostly wrongly, tied to the Enlightenment. With the exception of Condorcet's steadfast faith in the limitless personal and social emancipation through the progress of humanity, projected and justified by a triumphalist historical perspective (Condorcet 1970, 40, 151), among the audacious French Enlightenment figures it was only Helvétius who unequivocally advocated the necessity of universal education. He optimistically ends his main oeuvre with an exclamation of trust in education's omnipotence: it could, as long as coincidence is removed entirely from the work of the lawgiver, "infinitely multiply the abilities and virtues" (Helvétius 1759, 331). The position that "[t]here is no man entirely destitute of knowledge" (Helvétius 1759, 319) will serve as the starting point of his posthumously published *A Treatise on Man*. The peoples of the world need to realize "the great truth" – that man is naught but the result of his upbringing, and to that end take charge to improve the science of education, "the very tool of man's greatness and happiness" (Helvétius 1791, 307).

Instead of rushing to do so, Helvétius' contemporaries, including the sympathetic Enlightenment confreres, subjected his educational utopia to merciless criticism. Voltaire particularly faulted his "egalitarian" conception of the equal (although diverse) giftedness of all people (Voltaire 1993a, 23; Voltaire 1993b, 247), whereas Diderot took the time to dispute sharply the "voluntaristic" faith in the limitless power of the environment to use an educational intervention in the formation of man (Diderot 1875-1877). But even before, and quite apart from responding to Helvétius, in the process of testing and tracing the limits of their project, the Enlightenment thinkers had rejected not only the possibility of universal schooling, but also challenged the vision according to which all ought to be educated. Holbach noticed that the "voice of reason" is "not calculated for the uninformed, neither is it suitable for the majority of mankind" (Holbach 2001, 151). Diderot griped to his "dear philosopher" colleague Hume: "Let us weep and wail over the lot of philosophy. We preach wisdom to the deaf, and we are still far indeed from the age of

reason" (Letter to Hume, March 17, 1769, quoted in Gay 1995, 20). In the so-called manifesto of the Enlightenment movement, *Preliminary Discourse to the Encyclopedia*, D'Alembert avers that "barbarism lasts ages and appears to be our essence; reason and good taste are ephemeral" (Alembert 1751, 33). La Mettrie writes that a wise man must have the courage to state the truth "for the benefit of the few who are willing and able to think", given that the rest are "voluntary slaves of prejudice" who "can no more attain truth than frogs can fly" (La Mettrie 1912, 85). And the most aristocratic of the Enlightenment thinkers, Voltaire, has no illusions regarding the desirability of the redemption of the hoi polloi from the darkness of ignorance and their inclusion into the ranks of the enlightened: "education is not for the riffraff of lackeys, cobblers and maids… rather for honest people!" (quoted in Pejović 1978, 45)

It thus seems much more truthful to say that, contrary to the accepted opinion, the Enlightenment thinkers had very little trust in the people and almost none in the people's capability of universal enlightenment from within. Less senseless, indeed, they considered the endeavor of enlightenment from "above", which they applied in word and deed. When asked "which is the only political order in which we can expect progress?", Kant, for example, answers unequivocally (in *The Conflict of the Faculties*): "not one in which things flow upwards, but from top to bottom."[4] When speaking of the possibility of social reform, a large majority of the late 18th century citizens of the Republic of Letters in the German states, in France and the rest of continental Europe placed their hopes, much like Kant, in "enlightened absolutism", the embodiment of which was the Prussian king Friedrich II, ever hospitable to the ideas and figures of the Enlightenment.[5]

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[4] And without skipping a beat, continues to deny the viability of the upward movement on the verticle: "To expect that rearing youth at home, and then in schools, from kindergarten to university, and reinforcing it with Sunday school, will lead to the spiritual and moral culture not only for the molding of good citizens, but also for the kind of goodness able to sustain and enlarge itself – this is a plan that does not instill much confidence in the possibility of its success." (Kant 1968a, 92)

[5] Such hopes often grew into crude obsequiousness. La Mettrie ends his texts "Anti-Sénèque" and "Système d'Épicure" with raptures to Friedrich II, and unreserved celebration of the freedom and progress of "his" Prussia (La Mettrie 1796a, 47-48; La Mettrie 1796b, 229). In "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?", Kant declares his, "the age of enlightenment or the era of Friedrich," and tells future generations to celebrate him (Kant 1968b, 40). These unqualified praises to a despot were, if it be any consolation, at least in part motivated by pragmatic reasons (Reed 1990, 70; cf. Stricklen 1971; Melton 1979).

Various theoretical and historical justifications could be given for the remarkable fact that the majority of the French *philosophes* and German *Aufklärer* were against universal education, refused to invest themselves in the concept that the enlightenment ought to spread through the nations, and, moreover, probably deepened the chasm between the educated and uneducated, the learned and "common man", the ruler and the people, considering education a necessary but insufficient condition for enlightenment.[6] A generous but inexhaustive explanation suggests that the marked hesitation of the Enlightenment figures towards mass education was not (so much) a visionary, reasoned and justified warning against the social costs of mandatory universal education (which would be justified once it was introduced after the French Revolution), as much as it was a knee-jerk reaction in the face of contemporary, above all material and faculty limitations, against which any attempt at a consistent accomplishment of such a goal must have seemed for all practical purposes impossible. In all European countries, education was and had to remain in the hands of the clergy. The alternative to monks as teachers was not secular teachers but non-monastic clergy. 18th century thought, according to this reading, could not imagine a society able to establish, let alone afford, any form of a secular system of public education; and with education in the hands of the clergy, it seemed beyond hope that the people would become enlightened (Beales 2005, 22-23).

The problem with this explanation, however, is precisely its generosity. Certainly an insight into the era's limitations, it is also a paternalistic justification of something it considers (following Helvétius) self-evident: that compulsory universal education is by definition desirable and coveted by anyone to whom it is presented as a possibility. But by smuggling in this assumption, benevolent criticism becomes self-criticism. Ultimately, Enlightenment figures deserve the basic respect of being interpreted as having thoughtfully considered – and then rejected – the idea of engineering total enlightenment. Their reasons for this rejection, however outmoded sounding, could still be valuable in calculating the gains and costs of such an endeavor, something that contemporary education in perpetual crisis persistently refuses to do. Enlightenment perhaps still means something other than training, and the Enlightenment idea of education is perhaps even today more instructive than that of current educational systems.

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[6] It seems that the pervasive tone in the famous Berlin Wednesday Society was one of the impossibility and limits of the enlightenment of the people. For a discussion on the subject, see Keller 1896, 75, 78, 81, 85, 86; cf. Hellmuth 1982, 322-3; Fiegert & Korte 2000; Thomas 1971.

II. Why Rearing?

More or less transparent or perfidious, and facilitated by whichever "agents", the "instrumentalization" of education is nowadays considered a topic inevitably and largely discussed within the theory of (mass) education (Higging 2011). It could be said that, in that sense, the eighteenth century was a breaking point (cf. Johnston 1991). The French Revolution considered general education a valuable instrument for achieving political ends, rendering it therefore as widespread as possible. For the Jacobin leaders, education became the decisive tool for rearing members with republican values, the first "weapon of mass destruction" in the name of political consolidation of the community and the implementation of patriotism.[7] Parallel with military duty, the Republic instituted general educational conscription as a guarantee of unity and safety of the *une et indivisible* nation and its state. The 1793 constitution and the laws issuing therefrom established a never before seen (but since then commonplace) space for the education of the people and ascribed a huge importance to it. Although the domination of the Church was removed, the reforms that were thus enabled were not at all as radical as they purported to be. As of 22nd March 1791, both school teachers and priests had to pledge an oath to the state. This changed the status of the teacher, but only so far as to turn "servants" into "clerks", that is, Church assistants into state functionaries. Rather than revolutionizing, by fulfilling the organizational ambition of every *catch-all party* the new regime inherited a pattern of rule as lordship. Just as it had attacked institutional forms of worship only to shortly thereafter establish new goddesses and

[7] During that time, there was no hiding or denying of the patriotic role of education. Regardless of the convincing historical evidence demonstrating the dangers posed by patriotism, and numerous theoretical oppositions to "patriotic schooling" caused by the evident conflict with the constitutive educational ideal of critical reason (Archard 1999, 163, 171), there are still ways to argue for the legitimacy of (usually transformed, reconfigured and limited) patriotism in education. Hence, it is often found that "patriotism can help to bind a liberal democracy together in pursuit of its ideals" (White 2001, 146), as opposed to nationalism, or "extreme patriotism which leads to hostility towards other countries, international tensions and conflicts." Furthermore, patriotism is often evaluated in terms of differing branches which are "morally acceptable types of patriotism" such as "moderate patriotism" (Nathanson), "constitutional patriotism" (Habermas), "republican patriotism" (Viroli) and "cosmopolitan patriotism" (Appiah), schools of thought which should or must be promoted in schools (Kodelja 2011, 127; see also the Special Issue of *Educational Philosophy and Theory* from 2009 (41(4)) "Patriotism and Citizenship Education").

relics, the new regime criticized Catholic teaching but kept its methods as an important form of social dogma. New communion took the form of old methods, taking place in schools through a subject that unabashedly proclaimed itself the counterpoint-imitation of the religious vision of the City of God, namely Civic Education or Civic Catechism (Becker 1932; Baker 1990, 4; Velicu 2010, 5, 12, 19, 35, 73, 89).

At the time when God was replaced by society or society took up the role of God, education needed to adapt. Where there was a "monotheistic", homogenous view of society, this adaptation did not prove to be a problem. But, due to the investment in the idea of a free citizen in a pluralist, non-coercive community, the liberal states' civic education was bound to be stained with permanent marks and the bad conscience of the paradox of doctrination "from above" – meant to put a stop to any kind of indoctrination and enable individual thinking and responsible action. In order to reproduce this kind of social order intergenerationally, allow for civic tolerance so that citizens can enjoy diverse conceptions of the good, create cohesion and loyalty for the state, and cultivate the disposition among citizens to accept and act on core liberal principles, it is admitted that some form of civic education is necessary. Its content, however, that should be able to reproduce the liberal state and allow citizens the freedom to enjoy their conceptions of the good, seems hopelessly problematic precisely with regard to the principle of the liberal state that it has no legitimate right to intrude into the individual's freedom by introducing a particular conception of the good (Wingo 1997, 277, 287; cf. Gutmann 1989; Galston 1991, 241-256; Callan 1997; Kennedy 1997; Dagger 1997). This controversy does not lose its strength when shifting from national to the rank of "global citizenship" (Nussbaum 2002; Boman, Gustavsson & Nussbaum 2002). Instead of being education in "liberal arts" that cultivates and disciplines the mind and is to be pursued as an end in itself, as in the classical humanist tradition and in contrast to a "mechanical" education whose purpose is to be practical or useful, to serve some other end (Newman 1982, 85; cf. Hirst 1965; Lvlie and Standish, 2002; Miller, 2007; Oakeshott 2000; Engel, 2007; McCabe, 2000), even "liberal" education remains a function of earthly society, as it once was of heavenly community.

There is, however, something even more important than the family feud of the pretenders to the government seat, who, in an attempt to establish their own values in perpetuity, squabbled over who will oversee education (see, for example, Dick & Watts 2008). It seems that the representation of cultivation and, therefore, the cultivator and cultivated (an agricultural metaphor and vegetative analogy), had already allowed for

the idea of a centralized educational approach, perhaps even education in general. In the struggle against, anthropocentrically speaking, the disordered and uncultivated world at large, the shift of humanity to agriculture was indeed, both symbolically and actually, what established civilization as we know it. Yet, speaking for the repressed nomadic culture – in addition to all the criticisms which it already offers to its counter-model on a variety of issues (for example, Deleuze 1977; Zerzan 2005) – are also the consequences of an education organized along the lines of farming.[8]

The Greek *paideia*, just like the French *formation* and the Serbian *obrazovanje*, is tied to the idea of giving shape. Whether a pot, a sculpture or a human, it is always about the skill to form something, as well as about the "normative image floating before the craftsman's eyes, the *idea* or

[8] The term "Diasporic Counter-Education", coined by Ilan Gur-Ze'ev (Gur-Ze'ev 2005, 15), cannot escape this analogy. "Diaspora" was initially a Greek term associated with the scattering of seeds (*sporaia*) as part of the planting process. "Negative Utopia", the aim of which was to revitalize the fallen, "domesticated" and "castrated" (Gur-Ze'ev 2005, 7) critical pedagogy and add Deleuze's reflections to the critical theory of the Frankfurt School, apprehensively celebrates the ontological state of nomadic homelessness in order to oppose those who would have us feel "at home" with the current order and settle for the facts as given to us. "Central to the aim of conceptual and historical analysis of diaspora in its various forms is the reality of oppressed, silenced and displaced populations. In modernity, the era of national governmentality, suffering and loss relate to ethnic or political exiles under the weight of hegemonic groups in modern national conflicts, but also to other kinds of exiles. They also relate to individual and deeper kinds of nomadism in the face of the Genesis or the downfall from the Garden of Eden or the beginning of human history or individual biography, self-consciousness, alienation and trauma; modern homelessness might manifest itself also in self-decided displacement and in the powers of globalizing capitalism and its power of suggestion and re-creation of the 'genuine autonomous self-constitutive individual' who, reduced to an efficient producer-consumer, 'freely' decides to live as a strong nomad in a globalized world. Diasporic philosophy and counter-education today should address these modern as well as postmodern forms of nomadism and exile and their history since the pre-historic forms of nomadism (Gur-Ze'ev 2008, 382). Hence, not even this kind of "new critical language in education" is in fact new: while there is a change in the emphasis and side in the agricultural enterprise, it retains the analogy of education as inseminated soil. "Agricultural metaphor is at the heart of all education," especially when the educational "soil is poor and the crops are not overly abundant" (Kahn 2008, 371; cf. Wexler 2008). For Deleuze's influence on the theory of education, see St. Pierre 2004 and the Special Issue of *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education* from 2012, 33(1): "Education and the politics of becoming".

typos." (Jaeger 1946, xiii) Acquiring a visage, a face, a gaze, is a figure inseparably coupled with following the norm for the formation and incarnation of the desired form. The analogy with the verb *plateio*, referring to rearing by supervision, becomes literal and simple: just as *agricultura* is the cultivating of land, thus man's education is *cultura animi*. In the agricultural analogy, to rear is to humanize.

It is with human nature as with vegetation. Just as successful agriculture requires good soil, a capable farmer and good seed, thus in instruction, human nature is the soil, the teacher the farmer, and the knowledge and rules acquired through words the seed. While offering a proverb in *The Education of Children* that assures us that all three elements are necessary for the success of the endeavor, Plutarch still prioritizes the role of the teacher. In expounding upon his famous "pedagogical trinity" – nature, learning, habit – he establishes directly, sweepingly and for any future pedagogy this agricultural metaphor that encompasses the entire educational endeavor (Plutarch 1927, 2b-c). Pedagogic agriculturalism uses a naturalistic discourse to legitimize a counter-natural anthropocentric lordship over nature, as well as boundless educational optimism. Just as the skilful farmer will emerge victorious and grow a "culture" under any conditions, so the skilled teacher can "ennoble" the rough nature of an individual through instruction. Whether a gentleman gardener or the running of an entire plantation, sowing, implanting, tilling, grafting, watering remain the landmarks of any pedagogical theory, as long as the image persists of the "human" amorphous blob inevitably waiting to be shaped, according to one "designated preference" or another (see, for example, Kant 1968c, 441, 445; Kant 1968d, 119-121).

Revolutionary or reformist, "restorational" or "instorational", for thousands of years the engineers of the West's public education have indefatigably followed the prescription of a single horticultural design based on farming. Despite the "progressive" and "critical" outbursts of anti-traditionalism or, in fact, along with those, the only real progress has been made in the extension of the soil of farming/teaching, which has, with the growth of public educational institutions and the discovery of the "social foundations of education," become the entire society, all citizens of a country equally, without differences or exceptions (Liedman 2002, especially 315, 217; Bingham 2009, 410-11; Vanderstraeten 2004, 196-200). Even in Saint-Just one hears echos of Plato: after being nourished at their mother's breast, children enter the youth civic institutions and

become the state's property for rearing.[9] The caring management of this or that "politeia" possesses the visionary knowledge of "humanity" and takes immaculate care to achieve a unique educational life-goal for those it governs: to render them good, or even simply human. Even when the conditions for such an endeavor are far off, the management always knows that this goal is best accomplished through the institute of compulsory schooling that teaches prescribed virtues (Cf. Plato 1997a, 644a-654b; Plato 1997b, 404d-412b, 564a) and, in this way, produces or reproduces the society (Petitat 1987). It appears as if the idea of education could not even be thought of separately from this campaign.[10]

Indeed. The botanical metaphor of rearing departs from the stage, at best, only at the muffled mention of the always potentially socially subversive tradition of conceiving of education as an end in itself.[11]

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[9] "Children belong to their mother, if she has breastfed them, until the age of five, and to the Republic from five until their death" (Sen-Žist 1987, 251).

[10] If the (main) goal of education is, in fact, humanization, then the means is "cultivation". This represents the limit of the noble tradition – from Seneca to Nussbaum (Seneca 2005; Nussbaum 1997) – which finds it inconceivable to think of education outside the "ideology" of humanism, at least in terms of the minimal requirements of human needs and ideals. Because of its simplicity and strength, education has become unthinkable outside the pattern of upbringing, nurturing according to an explicit and implicit but nevertheless already established model. Its purpose can be seen in seemingly drastically different or opposed concepts: "liberation" (Hegel 1978, 125), "total perfection" (Arnold 1925, 6), "initiation" into a world of understandings, imaginings, meanings, and beliefs, of the most fundamental and general, worthwhile and rational knowledge (Oakeshott 2000; Bailey 2010; Peters 1966), or acquiring moral virtue, freedom, personal autonomy, and general "human flourishing" (White 1982; White 2007). But it can be said that, regardless of the confusion that resulted in the very concept of education being "contested", it nevertheless involves "emancipation", "something like the promotion of critical (rational) open-mindedness" (Carr 2010, 100). There is, however, a parallel backdrop of doubt in the justifiability of any educational teleology, advocated in the modern educational theory by Richard Peters (Peters 1966; Peters 1973), who argued that the model of means to ends is not generally applicable to education; by Michael Oakeshott (Oakeshott 2000), who argues that education functions upon a model of communication and that this characteristic makes it aimless; and, finally, by Lawrence Stenhouse, who insists on the unpredictability of the outcomes of education as "induction into knowledge" (Stenhouse 1975; cf. Barnett 1988, and especialy Harđarson 2012). This contemporary controversy, however, has its modern "foreplay" as well.

[11] At first shy and hesitant, this shift, rather than change of meaning, of "education" takes place in the late 18th century. Announced by Herder, Humboldt and Goethe, it is advocated by Arnold and Mann, and practiced or thematized positively by

Moreover, it can be said that the botanical metaphor is intensifying. For the Greeks, and in a more pathetic way in monastic centers of learning and medieval universities, this was broadly a matter of "lineage" and gardening on a small scale. Despite each lineage's purport to universal professed truth, it was, in principle, possible to conceive and constitute many such educational flowerbeds. However, the epoch and practice of Diogenes, Epicure or Francis of Assisi were turned into distant memories by a global gardening movement, which gave rise to a host of hopes and disappointments, and plowed deep furrows the world over, marking the earth as far as property reached.

When the dust settles, we are left with the following. In method it becomes the meat industry image of education from Pink Floyd's *Another Brick in the Wall*. Ontologically, it is the image of the supervised larvae from which (adult) human beings hatch. *Matrix*, *X-Files* and other sci-fi projections have only carried the vegetative potential of the concept of human cultivation to its logical conclusion. In the absence of such technologies, we still have to pass through the expensive, extensive and never fully reliable processing through education. But the production intent, direction and degree of success of the matter are clear: cheaper and more reliable ready-made rearing, patronizingly referred to as upbringing.

Nietzsche, Dilthey, Gadamer, Adorno, Lyotard, Foucault, Delueze, etc. Since that time, in at least one of its dimensions the German *Bildung* is a departure from the pedagogical vision held by the Enlightenment figures. It becomes above all "self-cultivation", "self-education" (*Selbstbildung*), "education of the self" (*éducation de soi-même*) (cf. Bruford 1975; Koselleck 1985; Koselleck 2002, 198). It could be said that up to the age of Enlightenment, education was associated with the formation and shaping of the soul through the emulation of role models. Then until the end of the 18th century, Enlightenment figures associate it with "goal-oriented upbringing" that ought to produce a good citizen (cf. Vierhaus 1972, 509-512). At which point there begins an interest in removing both the encouraging and the ultimate element. The semantic turn of *Bildung* approaches an open-ended process and a growth that is indeterminate at the outset, whether in the individual, a people or, later, the nation (Dumont 1991, 219; Thompson 2005, 520, 522; for more historical details, see Vierhaus 1972, 511-16; Liedman 2002, 327-32; Oelkers 1999; Schneider 2012; Mortensen 2002; Dietrich & Müller 2000; Bollenbeck 1996; Meyer-Drawe 1999; for contemporary relevance of concept(ion) of *Bildung*, see Biesta 2002; Masschelein & Ricken 2003; Gruschka 2001; Lenzen & Luhmann 1997; Koller 2003; Koch, Marotzki & Schäfer 1997; Wimmer 2003; Reichenbach 2003; Dobrijević & Krstić 2013).

III. Why Education at All (And Not Ignorance)?

Perhaps this is the first question, which, since we forgot that we used to pose it, returns with a vengeance to demand its due. Ignorance retaliates from the very heart of an enforced ideology of education (for a lucid account, Liessmann 2006). In our progressive 'society of knowledge', the much maligned schooling, for which its apostles had hoped it would 'strengthen civic freedoms, banish particularisms and prevent wars', is no longer expected to form enlightened citizens, but rather professionals who achieve better results: "Ignorance is no longer a tort, and the acquisition of knowledge is a professional qualification that promises a better salary" (Lyotard 2003, 6).[12] The official norm of the new age has become not an autonomous and completely realized man, but a 'qualified operator', and the alienation induced through the apparatus of routinized general and monocline professional education has removed the last vestiges of its critical or emancipatory potential (cf. Peters 1966, 144, 164; Hirst and Peters 1970, 66; Hirst 1965, 127-8; White 1973, 10, 78; White 2010; Grafton & Jardine 1986, 164; Mercer 2001; Masschelein 2000). Through massive inflation, the project of public education has become a caricature of itself. The remnants of the "progressive" impulses of the idea of Enlightenment have acquired a reputation before the (court of the) totally administered society. Enlightenment itself, as a torpid axle and the most prominent representative of the new *ancien régime*, has fallen into a crisis of chronic but undeclared bankruptcy.[13]

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[12] It is an almost documentary statement, a "report on knowledge," which stands strong in the face of the specter of nihilism, free of the nostalgia towards absolute values. Lyotard's work, hence, "provides an appropriate response to the question of nihilism in educational philosophy" (Peters 2006, 303) only in this sense. Michael Peters, however, keeps a different sense in mind (for a more benevolent treatments of postmodernist educational nihilism, see Blake, Smeyers, Smith & Paul Standish 1998; 2000; cf. Levering 2001). When explaining nihilism in modern education, Bert Lambeir and Paul Smeyers choose to rely on Nietzsche and Foucault (Lambeir & Smeyers 2003a), while Ruth Irwin chooses Nietzsche and Heidegger (Irwin 2003). It appears, though, that Lyotard's nihilism corresponds most closely with the in-difference these authors describe, with the transcending of the imaginary categories that eliminates transcendence altogether (cf. Gur-Ze'ev 2003; Lambeir & Smeyers 2003b). On the other hand, it is perhaps only (Derrida's) deconstruction, if it can be considered to belong to postmodernism, that has, or may have, a non-nihilistic but rather affirmative standing (see Biesta 2009; Peters & Biesta 2009).

[13] Tired from constantly putting itself into question, tired of its reforms and their failures, the education conceived in the Enlightenment fashion still does not admit

A lexical camouflage of the ideal of education – turning the "totally" educated into "functionally" so – has allowed for its betrayal, all the while persisting in the call to education, according to which the only reasonable thing is the overthrow of the yoke of *a priori* shown up ignorance for the sake of knowledge, despite the fact that ignorance has had a parallel tradition of advocacy as long as that of (the yoke of) knowledge.[14] This is not only a question of Socrates' tactical dialectic of knowledge and ignorance, Nicolaus Cusanus' celebration of the awareness of the immensity of what has yet to be learned, Descartes' methodological imperative of not assuming anything – neither is it, from a more pedagogical point of view, the question of an ignorant philosopher or schoolmaster, Voltairesque or Rancieresque strategy of the initial or constitutive lack of knowledge that is, nevertheless, fulfilling the function of emancipation (Voltaire 2009; Ranciere 1991; cf. Bingham 2009; Biesta 2010b; Fischer 1996, 23-4; Ramaekers 2002) – all of which has already entered into the basic stance of the researcher eager to reach the truth. This is the question of denying that thirst, the refutation of the desirability of knowledge issuing from the insight into its destructiveness. Knowledge renders unhappy, weighs upon life, thrusts into depression, leads to the loss of a reliable standpoint and disorientation, while ignorance, in contrast, is blissful. "For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow" (Ecclesiastes 1: 18). Such is the clear and almost empirically based warning of the Old Testament that the heart – which "had great experience of wisdom and knowledge" and went beyond them all – must in the end admit that its knowledge and wisdom is a "vexation of spirit" (Ecclesiastes 1: 16-17).

The futility of knowledge has a counterpart in the modern register, warning of all those "existential" dangers of unleashed scientificing, for which the only useful remedy remains a return to ignorance, the renunciation of the (self-)devouring spiral of learning. In the third book of *In Defence of Raymond Sebond* from 1576, Montaigne shows the hollowness and groundlessness of knowledge that philosophers acquire painstakingly, and the uselessness of the contradictory learnings – really

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defeat, does not give up, but rather expects a possibility of an almost gnostic transformation (see, for example, Sidorkin 2011; Tyack 2003; Gill 2005; Tomlinson 1986).

[14] Already in Aristotle there is no longer any need to explain the advantage of knowledge over ignorance. Rather, it is declared that all men "by nature" desire to have it, and that it is "proverbially" better: "For all men begin, as we said, by wondering that things are as they are… [b]ut we must end in the contrary and, according to the proverb, the better state." (Aristotle 1984, 982 b11-19)

no more than "poetic speculations" – which they profess. It seems obvious to him that learning does not contribute either to health or happiness or the wellbeing of the philosopher; on the contrary, ignorance is many times over the wiser strategy, as long as the goal is reaching peace and contentment of the mind, to which the philosophers themselves aspire. True wisdom, which is folly capable of agitating better than the sharpest intellect, lies only in the complete acknowledgment of the "ignorance and weakness of the human reason," testifying ever anew to the "confused and uncertain science" (Montaigne 1959, 51). As opposed to divine revelation, what escapes our reason(ing) and our manufactured logical systems is knowledge of any certainty whatsoever. Begging nature to one day open its bosom and prepare our eyes for revelation, Montaigne cries out vowing:

> O God! What errors, what misconceptions we should find in our poor science! I am mistaken if science has grasped a single thing correctly; and I shall leave here ignorant of everything except my ignorance. (Montaigne 1959, 40)

The "wisdom of providence" has left us in a "happy state of ignorance," whereupon we took "efforts of our pride" to emerge from it, and have paid the price in the currency of "luxury, profligacy and slavery" - thus Rousseau, less than two centuries later. We were not put on this Earth to conduct "fruitless researches", but since we have now furrowed, the best we can do is use the consequences to judge the "emptiness and vanity" of human knowledge – and abandon it:

> Let men learn for once that nature would have preserved them from science, as a mother snatches a dangerous weapon from the hands of her child. Let them know that all the secrets she hides are so many evils from which she protects them, and that the very difficulty they find in acquiring knowledge is not the least of her bounty towards them. Men are perverse; but they would have been far worse, if they had had the misfortune to be born learned. (Rousseau 1923, 143)

Learnedness and talent have debased, repressed and rooted out virtue. The advancement of the arts and sciences has augmented "real happiness" not one jot, but has, to wit, corrupted morality. The myth of the advantages of the arts and sciences is the self-aggrandizement of writings "which reek of the corrupted manners of the present age." For these, "the ignorance and rusticity of our forefathers would have been incapable," and, instead of judging them, our sons will, "unless mankind should then be still more foolish than we," simply

> lift up their hands to Heaven and exclaim in bitterness of the heart: 'Almighty God! Thou who holdest in Thy hand the minds of men, deliver us from the fatal arts and sciences of our forefathers; give us back ignorance, innocence and poverty, which alone can make us happy and are precious in Thy sight' (Rousseau 1923, 150).

Yet it is not even necessary to find backing or take shelter behind an almighty god, nor is it essential to decide on the legitimacy of ignorance through an ancient or contemporary narrative, thus locating the wrong historical turn or a falling away from that path. Much more viable and advantageous is an "immanent" critique of education, judging it by "taking it at its word" and finding therein the seeds of ignorance, the blind spot at the very core of education, where knowledge upon which solemn vows are placed aggressively refuses to account for itself, teetering on the edge of the abyss of ignorance in which the everlasting questions about knowledge resound.[15] Although still in the register of the defence of faith, this knowing critique (of the "chains") of knowledge in the name of life, in the name of the "freedom of ignorance", "freedom from knowledge", is taken up by Lev Shestov. He exposes the falsity of the agricultural model of education, latterly in its organic gastro-analogy, through the figure of gluttony – comparing the stance of the philosopher with the homeostasis of hungry cattle, which would like to satiate itself with knowledge in order to enjoy the opposite: in "spiritual serenity and peace as the highest and most worthy goal of our existence" (Šestov 1996, 92; Šestov 1990, 173).

Conclusion and/for Discussion

The only thing worse, it turns out, than the acquisition of knowledge is the conviction of its possession. In order for any school platform with the ambition of surpassing mere training to survive in our time, it has to be able to reinterpret the general phenomenon of education from the

[15] The contemporary "radical" critiques of education – but not yet of knowledge – recommend different therapies from similar diagnoses. Apart from the instability of a formation whose reconstruction and deconstruction is increasingly called for, its very frequency and intensity witness the constitutive auto-reflective and self-undermining character of the critiques. For more on the status and reach of (self-) critical approaches and suggestions in theory of education, see Alhadeff-Jones 2010; Sidorkin 2011; Biesta 2001; Gore 1993; Popkewitz & Fendler 1999; McLaren 1998; Gur-Ze'ev 1998; Lather 1998; Biesta 1998a; Kohli 1998; Masschelein 1998; Olssen 2006; Marshall 1996; Ball 1990; Aronowitz & Giroux 1991; Heyting & Winch 2004; Ruhloff 2004; Borrelli 2004; Cuypers & Haji 2006.