

Education as Resisting the Coming Barbarism: A Post-critical perspective on Education, the School and Teaching in the Face of Social- and Environmental Catastrophe

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Abstract

This article addresses the call for education to engage with contemporary social and environmental challenges, whilst preserving its pedagogical integrity. By focusing on the genuinely educational core of the school and teaching we want to avoid falling in the trap of instrumentalizing education or functionalizing it in order to resolve societal problems, however, we will argue that its precisely these ‘essential characteristics’ of education and the school which might offer a response to the challenges we’re facing nonetheless. We intend to take up the matter of our current global predicament and frame it as an *educational problem*, drawing on several educational attitudes such as giving orientation, enabling agency and fostering a belief in – and responsibility for – the common world. In doing this we will argue for the correspondence between a logic of education and a logic of care for the world. We therefore end with a defense of the institution of the school and a more ‘traditional’ account of teaching against discourses which seek to frame it as outdated or inherently unsustainable, and we propose to emphasize the role it plays in fostering a renewed relation to the world. The purpose of this article, referring the title of a work by Isabelle Stengers, is a resistance to the oversimplification and impoverishment of our thinking (on education) and ways of (educational) life. Our account is therefore *post-critical* in the sense of that we intend to affirm the richness of an autotelic understanding of education, as well as its significance for finding ways to live more responsibly and sustainably.

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Introduction

In the face of escalating social and environmental challenges, education is often looked at as a possible means or even the prime agent to ‘fix’ these problems. This article seeks to navigate ways in which we can respond to such call without falling into the trap of instrumentalizing education for ‘political’ means or impose a functionality on it which is not properly educational. What is at stake is giving an account of education and the school which affirms its essential characteristics and procedures and to show how their intensification is conducive to a logic of care and responsibility for the world, which is necessary for a renewed and sustainable relationship to it. In doing this we will articulate several properly *educational attitudes* which *characterize education as such, the school and teaching* respectively in responding to the challenges facing us. These attitudes are: *to give orientation, to enable agency and to take responsibility for a common world.*

These attitudes will be derived as responses to the respective problem formulations of Bruno Latour, Isabelle Stengers and Donna Haraway with regards to current social and environmental concerns. These three authors, amongst others, will thus characterize our global predicament as well as lead us to a possible educational response. Although there are other educational frameworks which have responded to much the same issues and authors, for instance those drawing on pragmatism, we propose a different approach, which to our estimation stays closer to the nature of (school) education (for instance, see Schildermans, 2019; Savransky 2022; Ingold, 2017).

The outcome of this article is then to give a *post-critical* and substantial account of education, the school and teaching that seeks to affirm their proper meaning in the face of discourses which seek to discredit the school as fundamentally unsustainable and outdated as well as discourses which seek to instrumentalize the school. We propose to present the problems facing us as *educational problems* and in our affirmation of the efficacy of the school, we do not intent to put it in function of some external agenda. Rather, we are emphasizing the unique character of education and the school in *enabling* the coming generation to relate themselves anew to the world. In the following section we will first outline the problem to which we seek to respond and next we will deal extensively with how the school relates to this.

The bifurcation of nature and GAIA

According to Bruno Latour our current global predicament is a consequence of the irreversible destruction we ourselves have brought to the

world we inhabit through our post-enlightenment endeavors. Resulting from this, according to Latour, there is not enough liveable space left for everyone to live a decent life together, in unity with the non-human actors who also inhabit the earth. It follows that today's main social challenge is how to live well together on a damaged planet. The issues we encounter have reached such a level of complexity that it is no longer possible to have a clear view and understanding of the conditions we inevitably face; which reveals that traditional strategies in the fields of sciences, politics, but also education are no longer adequate to deal with these complex problems.

According to Latour, the whole question of 'how we relate to the world' is already a badly posed problem, one which assumes that Nature and Culture are at once distinct but impossible to separate from each other. Our progressive realization of the gravity of the ecological crisis however provokes calls such as that we 'ought to bring humans closer to nature' which short circuits our scheme that attempts to set nature/culture apart from each other, resulting in a panic attack (Latour, 2018, pp. 14-15). In other words, throughout modernity we have operated with a certain notion of a nature/culture divide, serving as a sort of 'metaphysical presupposition' which allocated certain characteristics to either side. As the inheritors of this modern framework of thinking our relation to nature, we are unable to find adequate orientation in collectively understanding the problems now facing us as the whole set-up is to polemical.

Latour therefore proposes the term '*world*' which is set against the term Nature/Culture, where Nature/Culture as a productive dichotomy is internal to '*world*'. This may at first seem like a bizarre solution to them problem, the specifics of which can't go to much into, but it comes down to seeing *the world* as consisting out of a plurality of forms of existence where the Nature/Culture dichotomy is only one way of structuring these existents (*Idib.*, pp. 36-8). To make this more concrete, and relevant to our agenda, it makes sense to briefly go into the way in which the Moderns have structured their existents and the consequences this has.

According to Latour, the Moderns have bifurcated reality into a subjective and an objective domain and relegated certain characteristics to the beings inhabiting either of the two terms. On the one hand, we have the human subjects with agency and on the other we have liveless matter which is devoid of any agency. Thus, we have *effectively* rendered anything belonging to the so-called 'natural world' as inherently materialistic and therefore lacking of any power to act, ultimately putting an enormous rift between 'the world out there' and 'our capacity to think and act' which disinvests matter from any so-called subjective qualities such as meaning and agency (Latour, 2008, pp. 36-37). To put the emphasis again on *effectively* relegating these

characteristics on these existents, we can understand this in a pragmatist sense. This bifurcation can be seen as an *operation* which has certain *effects* and Latour takes it upon himself to inquire into what the ideas and abstractions of the moderns do to the milieu in which they circulate. How they disqualify certain fundamental dimensions of experience and can devastate other modes of being (Debaise, 2022). By reducing reality to matter and imposing this idea on the way society is organized, we render suspect the various living attachments to territories and the various forms of life. In effect, the moderns have therefore lost the capacity to live on the earth by leaving no room to other existents besides ‘matter’ (Debaise, 2023).

It is because of our continuous impoverishing of ‘nature’ to lifeless matter that we have taken it to be nothing more than an external environment to which we relate. It is disinvested from having any intrinsic meaning or agency (i.e. it is us who create meaning) itself and taken to be nothing but a resource to us, a background to which we act. It is this position which resulted in the subsequent domination of nature as something which could be dominated in the first place, something which is unable to resist human endeavor. This scheme is now finding its limits and is being subverted by the ways in which we are coming to realize the implications of climate change. We have to admit that nature is itself a *force*, that the catastrophes that are happening are only understandable if we relegate a form of agency, a power to act to natural phenomena, making them into *actors* (Latour, 2017, pp. 68-70).

Isabelle Stengers, a philosopher of science very close to Latour, has called our current predicament the ‘intrusion of GAIA’. The figure of GAIA is taken from James Lovelock and Lynn Margulis, naming the dense assemblage of relations such as living beings, oceans, soil, climate, etc... GAIA, moreover, is its own regime of activity and sensitivity, the multiple entangled constitutive processes which are part of it have repercussions and affects on each other and hold things together (Stengers, 2015, pp. 43-5). Stengers proposes to see GAIA as a ‘forgotten form of transcendence’, an assemblage of forces which are indifferent to us, what it’s intrusion then means is that these forces now demand our attention. Our ways of engaging with the world from modernity on have reached a point where our social system can no longer immunize itself to the effects the natural world has on us. GAIA intrudes because the ‘stability’ we have imposed on our own social assemblages rested on keeping it out, an operation that in light of our discussion of Latour is untenable. But, more significantly, the prime agent pushing forward this relation and which now also immunizes us to respond appropriately is *capitalism*.

Capitalism is a 'mode of functioning' or 'a machine' which knows only it's own necessities and actors, constantly deterritorializing, capturing and redefining more and more dimensions of what makes up our reality. With regards to the intrusion of GAIA, it cannot do anything but identify it as a new field of opportunity (pp. 53-4). In a sense we could say that the capitalist system works autopoietically, it might translate what it receives from its environment into its own system, but does this only with the interest of its own reproduction in mind. According to Stengers, we have given our agency to act out of hands to globalized capitalism which mobilizes both nation states and individual behavior in inherently unsustainable directions. The processes of capitalism have colonized the ways in which we organized society and have aimed at capturing the 'capacities of thinking and resisting' and of giving direction to ourselves (Idib., p.55).

What we must do to respond to GAIA goes against and beyond what capitalism as a mechanism for coordination can do for us, yet it still works to subvert any attempts to properly recognize our current situation and construe more sustainable modes of living. What Stengers thus seems to say is that we have *lost agency ourselves*. According to Donna Haraway, neoliberalism with its emphasis on the independence of individuals to their environment incapacitates us to come to terms with what she calls a 'sympoetic way of living'. Sympoiesis (as opposed to autopoiesis) consists in becoming-with, being coordinated by the ability to respond (so called *response-ability*) to the changes in our constitutive environments. Following Hannah Arendt analysis of the Eichmann trial, she says that we have 'lost the ability to think'. We have become unable to make the world present to ourselves and have surrendered to an immaterial, inconsequential and self-centered idea of the world in which we are unable to recognize the effects of our involvement in it, both in terms of its consequences for us as well as the consequences we have on it (Haraway, 2016, p.36).

Before dealing with the question of what any of this has to do with education, we refer once more to Bruno Latour from whom we will develop three educational attitudes which can make explicit how we can take the former problem-formulations as educational challenges. According to Latour the political impasse of being able to deal with the issues facing us has to do with the ways we have lost the ability to live in the same world and the ways in which the political field is dichotomized between on the one hand the so-called progressive, modernizing and globalizing position and, on the other, the conservative, backward and local position (Latour, 2018, p.20). Such a dichotomization creates a false problem in which we cannot develop the adequate politics in order to re-orient ourselves. We therefore have to direct ourselves to a *terrestrial* point of reference in which we create the conditions

of thriving with other inhabitants (also the extra-human) in a sustainable way of living (*Idib.*, p.89).

It is from this that we want to articulate a first more explicit attitude which we will argue is inherently educational, namely that of *finding orientation*. What Latour calls for is looking for the possibilities of making the world present to us as something we are embedded in, something which we are involved in together with others with whom we share it. Finding orientation is then about *becoming aware* of the world in which we act (and which is the result of our acting). Intimately linked to this is also the *belief in a common world*, a second attitude. Referring to Haraway's analysis, we need to be able to make the world present to us as something which does not exist only for us and merely as a background for our individual acting. We have to make the world appear as something to which we all belong. A third attitude deals with the analysis of Stengers, namely that of enabling agency. This is a point which we will develop further, but for now it suffices to say that it is about securing the possibilities for us to become attached to the world in a way that empowers us to recognize our capacity *to build* a different future.

In the following we will argue how these three attitudes can be understood as the educational responses to the respective problem formulations. We will affirm a certain autotelic idea of education, the 'institution' or arrangement of the school and the practice of teaching as moments in which students can become subjects in relation to a world which is made meaningful to them. The core of the argument then consists in showing how education is fundamentally bound up with a logic of care and responsibility and that the specific effects of school education allow for students to find necessary orientation and agency in the world. What will become clear is that we do not, as opposed to other educational frameworks inspired by pragmatism, propose for the school to become the place where new ways of inhabiting the world can be formed. Rather, by pointing to education as the place in which the world can be made sensible as a collective enterprise to which we have a responsibility we mean to emphasize the role it plays in securing the possibilities of having an understanding of – orientation in – and agency in – the common world. Our discussion of education, the school and teaching therefore leads us to envisioning it in a sense of world-disclosure, enabling a capable subject to arise.

A post-critical response

The response that we will now outline and which is the main argument of this article is one grounded in a post-critical affirmation of school education.

Post-critique protests against a prevailing critical perspective in pedagogy which is wound up in ‘inherent critique of societal institutions focused of their dysfunctionality’. Rather, post-critique proposes a pedagogical approach which tries to ask again what education, upbringing, school, studying, ... essentially are, creating a space that enables these practices to happen anew and to defend these educational activities as having a value in themselves (Hodgson et al., 2017, p.17). Furthermore, what we will try to do with this view is that we don’t take the challenges facing us as reasons to subvert education, but as invitation to investigate what educational phenomena can mean in relation to these issues. It is looking at what we are essentially doing as educators and valuing it as autotelic activities as well as from a hermeneutical operation trying to look at how these activities can have meaning beyond a uniquely educational scope. Post-critique thus looks at the inherently pedagogical dimensions of educational life (such as cultivating the capacity to be attentive and concentrate) and puts them against a broader background of normative societal issues (such as the fragmenting of our attention span through digital media). In this way a post-critical perspective can deal with social issues in a decisively pedagogical manner. Anticipating on what will be developed in the next section, we will thus argue for the meaning that such practices have with regards to care and responsibility for a damaged planet in correspondence with their primary educational sense.

Education as such, a matter of orientation in the world

To start constructing our substantial account of education, we refer to Hannah Arendt’s definition of the essence of education outlined in her seminal text *The crisis in education* (Arendt, 1993). Arendt sees education as an existential process connected to the nature of the human condition that each generation must grow in the old world and prepare a new generation for a new world. Education for Arendt is essentially about the fact that the new generation ought to be introduced in the existing world, not solely in order for them to reproduce it, but also for them to introduce newness to it, to inherit the world and do something with it. One of the basic characteristics of existence is thus that with each generation newness is created as the rejuvenation of the old, inherited world.

This characterization has some important consequences for the meaning of educating and the relationship between education and politics. Education in this sense is *not* about simply imparting knowledge onto students, but is has a much more existential meaning in that it prepares them to partake in the world in which they are born. Students ought to be *formed*, shown *what is at stake* and what *matters*, they need the world to be disclosed to them in

all of its meaning in order for them to eventually take up a position in relation towards it. The crisis of education is precisely the fact that in her time (and we could argue that the same situation subsists) this task of education was abandoned in favor for a ‘child-centered’ approach. This implies that education no longer *dared* to present the new generation with the matters which mattered in the world, that it no longer sought to form the next generation in light of what we value as society and to bring them up to relate themselves to the world. Rather, the tendency was (and is) so that we focus solely on the needs the child. We would argue that to truly empower a child and the next generation, we ought not to reduce the task of educating to just ‘enabling the natural development process’, which is inherently individualizing, but it is precisely *initiating* them into the world of meaning and giving them the opportunity to bring newness to it (Vlieghe, 2024)

Education, in nature, is thus *world-centered* to put it in Gert Biesta’s terms. The world is where our existence takes place, where we become subjects and education is therefore about us pointing out *something* to *someone*. Education is then about turning students to the world enabling them to encounter the world to attend to it (Biesta, 2022)¹. Already we might see how such an emphasis on the world, the importance that there is only one world (and not an infinity of individual worlds in the minds of unique children), the coupling of the fate of the continuation of the world and education, and that education is given meaning by the fact that a new future is possible, is fruitful to think the relationship between education and sustainability. In activating the world through study materials through which students can become attached to the world we can allow them to see what is happening today and relate to it. Also, in Latour’s terms, for matters of fact about the world to make sense, we first need a background of a shared world to make them meaningful, which is where Arendt intends to go. In his words again, education then plays an enabling role in making ‘matters of concern’ appear (Swillens & Vlieghe, 2020).

¹ It is worth noting that both Latour’s call for a re-orientation towards the terrestrial and Biesta’s call for a re-orientation to the world both attempt to transcend stupefying distinctions between what is ‘progressive’ and ‘conservative’. For Latour the distinction between progressive and conservative was mapped onto the tendency towards globalization on the one hand, and an emphasis on territory on the other. This has led to the false problem in which any reference to the ‘local’ is automatically considered as backward and conservative. The reorientation to the ‘terrestrial’ is an attempt to overcome this dichotomy and affirm the significance and value of situated practices and meanings in understanding the ecological predicament we are in and responding adequately. For Biesta the opposition between student-centered and curriculum-centered approaches has similarly been framed in such a progressive-conservative distinction. World-centeredness offers a third way beyond and in between this false dichotomy.

The school, a matter of agency and belief in the common world

This logic is further developed and intensified in the account that Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons give of the school. Rather than following the often heard critique pertaining to the school as alienating students from the world and imparting outdated knowledge about it, they argue that the school allows for the world to be disclosed in the first place (Masschelein & Simons, 2012, p.30). School to them refers back to its ancient Greek root *Scholè*, meaning free time. Free time is the time which is free from social obligations, free from one's respective place in social structure, free from family, from economy, it is the time which does not have a destiny. It is the time which does not ask of us to be productive, it is a *suspended* time. (Masschelein, 2011). The aim the school then serves is to give equal opportunity for everyone to be brought into relation to the world as an end in itself. School is then the aesthetic arrangement which makes the concrete and material event of *Scholè* happen, when students are put in relation to something in the world (Masschelein, 2011).

Connecting school in its more material sense to a world-centered perspective, we can then take the school as the place, the concrete arrangement, in which an educator can bring the world inside a classroom. Where a certain *representation* of the world is presented and the students are made attentive to it and are disciplined through this attention to the object. The various pedagogical forms talked about then serve the purpose of enabling the world to appear in a distinct way which gestures its importance. The school in this sense becomes the arrangement *par excellence* which harbors a certain attentive and caring relationship to the world in that it is the only place in which the world is dealt with as such, where it is dealt with as something with value in itself.

Their 'defence of the school' is relevant to us in light of our previous problem formulation for a few reasons. On the one hand it echoes Arendt's earlier definition of the essence of education, but even more than that, Masschelein and Simons also point towards the specific *efficacy* of the school in materializing this essence. Given the fact that our societies have reached a complexity in which it can no longer be expected that the next generation is quasi-spontaneously exposed to what is meaningful in the world and enabled to be *formed* by it, we have to rely on structured *representations* of the world (Mollenhauer, 2014, pp. 53). The school then becomes a necessary technology through which adequate introduction to the world and their formation as individuals takes place. The productivity of the school then lies precisely in *not* just reproducing and extending the individual lifeworld of students, but to bracket it in order to activate a sense of formation

which consists in transcending their unique lifeworld in which they become ‘part’ of the world (Masschelein & Simons, 2012, pp. 32-33).

We can connect this not only to a belief in a common world or with finding orientation in it, but also to the matter of agency. As Ramsey McGlazer claims in his book *Old schools* (2023), the traditional schooling apparatus, rather than being an instrument of reproduction of hegemonic discourse or the production of docile bodies, is what enables students to take a *distance* from the way in which contemporary society (i.e. neoliberal capitalism) determines them (p. 11). It would be an illusion to think that, if we’re to just leave children to their own lifeworlds and to reduce school to just affirming these individual lifeworlds, those children would grow up to be self-determining individuals. In a way Kant, although not entirely unproblematically, already saw this. The aim of education for him is precisely to free the individual from themselves through discipline. Gert Biesta renders this idea in a more contemporary form by referring to the ‘task’ of education which in his understanding is the opening the possibilities for students to explore what it means to exist as *subjects*. Education should make the grown-up existence of another human being *in the world* possible. We can approach this ‘grown-upness’ in a twofold manner, both according to what we’ve been discussing. On one hand, it has to do with students acknowledging that they are not the center of the world, but to consider their existence as being *in the world*. Secondly grown-upness is about the ways in which ‘our desires receive a reality check’. It is through the introduction to the world and having to take accountability that we also learn to ‘interrupt’ our spontaneous desiring and resist our impulses (Biesta, 2017).

Whilst for Kant the individual had to be freed from themselves, this call for agency through education and in connection to the discussion of Stengers, has another, more contemporary relevance. Bernard Stiegler (2008) for example brings to awareness how technologies and the modern media industry captures the attention of the young generation (and the old) and in this way transfigures the usual processes of intergenerational transmission and formation. With the advent of social media and their algorithmization, the construction of highly individuated echo-chambers this call becomes even more pressing. There is a clear rise of technologically mediated operations which potentially result in the further individualization of the young generation in which they are continually put out of reach of more deliberate and normative representation of what our common world consists of and in which they are increasingly *affected* by social media discourses, regulated only by financial motivations. We thus might be dealing with a further intensification of what Gert Biesta, following Paul Robert, pointed out with

regards to going from an impulse economy to an impulse *society* in which our desires are continuously told to multiply (Biesta, 2022, p.100).

The call for agency is thus twofold in this case. On the one hand, we are losing the agency as a society to bring the young into a common world, an agency which is moreover being increasingly degraded through the neoliberalization of education. This trend reduces school to a instrument to introduce students only to higher education or the labour-market instead of being guided by more substantial educational values (Masschelein & Simons, 2006) And on the other hand, we are losing the capacity to enable the next generation to be formed in a sphere which is separated from capitalist logics. This latter risk is then connected to the agency of the future generation which will have to find ways to come together under the *belief in a common world* which is worth fighting for and which transcends the necessities of capitalism.

Teaching, a matter of responsibility for the world

Going from education in general, through the arrangement of the school, towards the *act of teaching*, we can identify a third genuinely educational sense to respond to our problem. The teacher is the person who in the act of teaching enables education to take place. The teacher brings together the world, in the form of *subject-matter*, and the next generation, actively forming the students in relation to this world. Teaching is predicated on a love for a subject matter, which grants to possibility of a genuine educational encounter. It is because of the dedication that a teacher has for a subject, which drives its expression in the presence of students that it becomes possible for a new generation to become attentive to and interested in something, giving them the chance to begin anew with it. Teaching is an *event* in which the moment in which a teacher falls in love with a subject matter and is transformed by it, is re-affirmed. It consists in the teacher performing their dedication to the matter and to bring it into presence to the students in a way to make this falling in love into a ‘communal experience’ (Vlieghe and Zamojski, 2019). When one teaches it moreover requires a sort of *erotic dynamic* in which you, as a teacher, want to draw a student into desiring something they did not before. As a teacher we want to make our love for something we find important resonate with others, for a sake in itself, but also for the sake of its protection (Vlieghe, 2024)

Education, moreover, is also bound up with responsibility, a responsibility grounded in the bond we as humans have with the world. Teaching affirms that there is good in the world and the present (it is thus, *post-critical*) and recognizes our power for responsible action in the sake of

a matter. What we can call ‘the logic of responsibility’ is the relation to the world that consist of attentiveness as well as care to what we deem intrinsically good in the world. The task and challenge of the teacher is then to *show* what is worth and in need of our attention and to which everyone in the room has the freedom to act (Vlieghe and Zamojski, 2019).

To draw on Latour again we can also see teaching in light of his notion of ‘matters of concern’. Teaching as an expressive act is about the way in which the teacher in the act of teaching discloses the subject matter and the attitude they do this through. What we argue is that in teaching a subject can be disclosed in such a way that it is not presented as something isolated, but as something truly *worldly*. That through being taught, students are confronted with things *of the world* and that through subtle gestures by a teacher it might become visible to students that what they are being taught is implied in a whole world of meaning which has determinate *effects* in the world. We propose to see teaching *in its nature* as a practice of world disclosure through the act of teaching specific subjects in which the interrelations between things can be made virtually present. As if in the dealing with each subject, the entire curriculum would be present.

Teaching in such a fashion intends to make clear that what is being taught and what the students are being introduced to is a common world, it is through the act of teaching that a teacher then might be able to *confer* on the students a *belief in a common world*. Moreover, it is by presenting the things in their relation to other things that they become *matter of concern* to the students, matter through which student might find *orientation* in the world. In a sense it reveals the relevance and importance of these subjects, it reveals their involvement with and impact on other things and thus the way in which they structure the world in which we partake. Moreover, students might be invited in this way to relate further to the subject. By making visible the object in the way in which it is present in other things students can become *sensitive* towards it. The common world doesn’t appear as some image we present to students, either as a totality or fragmented, but as something which has a *correlate in experience itself*.

Making things into matters of concern is also a way of activating the classroom as an instance in which we not only come together around something in common, but also a very strong experience of community as such. We become involved in the way that the common world is something we *actively* play a role in, in which we have (political) agency. We might see this in light of the notion of ‘pedagogical subjectivation’ as it appears in Simons and Masschelein. It being the ‘living through a strong experience of potentiality’ and experiencing that ‘I am able’, to experience the agency we have as creatures of ability precisely through the way in which school

disrupts the distribution of positions in the social order (and in the family) through the confrontation with study material in the face of which all are equal (Simons & Masschelein, 2010). What we mean to say is that through the educational encounter of being introduced to the world and enabled to relate to it collectively a form of agency is made possible. We are not yet in a political domain then, but we are dealing with a form of subjectivation which makes us politically capable in relation to the common world.

Conclusion: the educational question to ask

To conclude we want to return to Arendt's essence of education and discuss the two 'moments' which we think it consists of. On the one hand we have to introduction of the new generation into the world, something which is actualized in the act of education (through school and through teaching), and on the other hand we have the rejuvenation the next generation brings to this world through their own relating to it. In a sense what many educationalists dealing with the same issues as ours seem to want to do is actualize this second moment, to already involve students in the formation of new 'habits' and form a new relation to the world (Ingold 2017). Legitimate as it might be, the perspective we wanted to represent here limits itself more to the actualizing the first moment in a way which prepares for the second moment to truly take place. It is through a proper introduction to the world in a way in which students can *orient* themselves in it, in a way in which they *believe* there to be a common world and in a way in which they are enabled to relate themselves to it in unforeseen ways. We want to propose that the question we then ask in light of the problems facing us is not "what ought we to do in order to live better", but rather: 'what ought we to do to allow the next generation to live better'.

With this we do not mean to say that we should just leave it to the next generation to figure things out, but we want to direct our attention to the allowing for the conditions in which the next generation can be brought up in order to have a power to act themselves. Of course we also believe that students should be exposed more to other ways of relating to the world and engage with practices that can anticipate on a more sustainable way of living, but according to us this is not a component strictly proper to education. Affirming the *unique* role of education in light of our current predicaments consists of activating *worldly* proper sense and to see in what *worldly* efficacy consists of. What this perspective then could mean is a reformulated call for a 'defense of the school', both for *worldly* own sake and for the sake of the way in which it allows us to live better. This *post-critical* perspective means

that we recognize the ‘power’ of certain educational practices to make the world present and to form students in relation to it. What such a perspective can offer us with regards to broader themes such as climate change or social injustice (themes which are normally subsumed under critical pedagogy) is that this educational power can be mobilized in face of these issues. We see that educational practices which we thought to be outdated in fact carry meaning in them which corresponds to what is necessary to measure up to our challenges.

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