

# After Progress Perhaps Another Education is Possible: We Can Be Pagans for More Than One Day!

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## ABSTRACT

This paper attempts to bring together a series of ideas/concepts from the work of Isabelle Stengers, Didier Debaise, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Anna Tsing and others in order to apply them to the notion ‘after progress,’ which has some bearing on the theme of this special issue on degrowth. As Savransky and Lundy (2022) argue, ‘the notion of “progress” is arguably the defining idea of modernity’. Whilst this idea of progress has been the object of criticism, its prevalence is still pervasive. But what would living after progress or following a degrowth agenda look like, particularly within contexts of educational policy and practice? After progress perhaps another education is possible. The paper takes on board this suggestion, and rather than viewing education in schools and elsewhere in terms of its current concerns in the West with individual achievement, competition, and standards, we see it as promoting diversity, conviviality, working, thinking, agreeing and disagreeing in common.

**Keywords:** *divergence, scalability, pagan, ecogeneisis, agencements, dwelling-with*

*But we have a problem with scale. A rush of stories cannot be neatly summed up. Its scales do not nest neatly; they draw attention to interrupting geographies and tempos. These interruptions elicit more stories. (Anna Tsing, 2015, p. 37)*

*To set limits to speculation is treason to the future. (Whitehead, 1929, p. 76)*

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## Outliers

This paper attempts to bring together a series of ideas/concepts from the work of Isabelle Stengers, Didier Debaise, Jean-Francois Lyotard, Anna Tsing, and others, in order to apply them to the notion ‘after progress’, which has some bearing on the theme of this special issue on degrowth. After progress was the topic of a special monograph of *The Sociological Review* (2022, 70(2)) edited by Martin Savransky and Craig Lundy. They write:

The notion of ‘progress’ is arguably the defining idea of modernity: a civilisational imagery of a boundless, linear and upwards trajectory towards a future that, guided by reason and technology, will be ‘better’ than the present. It was this notion that placed techno-science at the heart of the modern political culture, and it was the global unevenness of ‘progress’ that imagined European imperialism as a civilising mission inflicted upon ‘backward’ others for their own sake. Whilst during the postcolonial era the modern idea of progress and its deleterious consequences on a global scale have deservedly been the object of fierce criticism, ‘progress’, its promises and its discontents still command global political imaginations, values and policies to this day. (Savransky & Lundy, 2022, p. 18)

The modernist, capitalist growth imperative derives from this promise of progress. Their quest is to explore the question of what thinking and living ‘after progress’ might mean, looking towards other modes of existence, political, social, ecological, and which would involve, I suggest, an emphasis upon conviviality, concern, care, and trust. Whilst in this paper I adopt the term ‘after progress’, the notion of degrowth is not to be dismissed with its concerns for environmental sustainability, social equity, social justice, and the unsustainability of global capitalist economic growth. Stengers (2015, p. 24) prefers the term ‘objectors to growth’ (*objecteurs de croissance*) after ‘conscientious objectors’ (*objecteurs de conscience*). Equally, the term ‘after’ in ‘after progress’ does not indicate linear sequencing, but to the contrary, exploring and experimenting with the possibility of plural modes of existence, negotiation, and divergence. What is important here is the point, taken from Felix Guattari (2013), that these conceptual terms constitute conceptual models, and that the complexities to which they all refer require a number of models, what Guattari calls a metamodelisation. The term ‘meta’ does not refer to a transcendent model, a model of all models, but, as Brian Massumi (2011, p. 103) points out, “‘Meta’ is to be understood here in its etymological sense of ‘among’”. The capacity to formulate questions and models amongst impending environmental, social, and psychic problematics may allow us to experiment with and generate different and divergent modes of existence, which allow us to make sense in common, and lead to collective interdependent lives that are worth living.

One domain of practice in many countries, subjected to the progressive agenda outlined above, and adopted by governments of contrasting political persuasions, driven

by exploitation, extractivism, competition, and profit, is education. Current educational policies in the West give precedence to individual achievement and competition, prioritising STEM subjects and, in some countries such as England, marginalising the arts (House of Lords, 2023, 2024; The Guardian, 2023; Ashton & Ashton, 2023). Yet, to take a cue from Isabelle Stengers (2018), perhaps another kind of education is possible, one which celebrates diversity, working and thinking, agreeing and disagreeing together. This is not a new idea. There have been educators or philosophers, such as John Dewey, Maxine Greene, Maria Montessori, bell hooks, John Holt, Paolo Freire, Ivan Illich, Alexander Sutherland Neill, and others, who in their different ways, argued for modes of education promoting creativity, exploration, social and civic responsibility, cooperation, developing individual potential and critical faculties.

It is not a new idea, but perhaps today it is more pressing that we try to implement 'another education' in the light of environmental, social, and political devastation. We might agree with Felix Guattari (2021) that the three ecologies: psychic, social, environmental, are each in modes of deep crisis. These include: the rise of far-right political movements and governments; the destruction and plunder of the earth on which we depend for life itself; the exponential rise of mental illness and states of morbidity; along with the confining of subjectivities to categorisations that service the needs of specific domains of practice/existence, and in doing so exclude or ignore others.

Rather than the notion of degrowth, this paper will adopt the notions: 'slowing down', after Stengers (2018), and 'dwelling-with'. These describe an approach to educational practices that allow working-with and staying-with the thisness, the haecceities, of practices that involve dispositions of negotiating, testing, and sensing, rather than judging practice according to established scalar metrics. The notion of scalability will be discussed below.

Expanding the idea of progress further than the desires of global capitalism, we might suggest, along with William James (1977, p. 25) and echoed recently by Isabelle Stengers and Didier Debaise (2022, pp. 403–404), that we have been duped by the very idea of progress in its pursuit of endless growth. They focus on the achievements of rational thought, which views 'other' modes of practice and thought to be inferior. They argue that progress, as defined by the 'moderns', can be characterised by the 'horror of becoming a dupe' (p. 403). It is progress grounded in the myth that the past is defined by 'false ideas, irrational attachments, subjective interpretations, unfounded beliefs' (p. 403), and that it is imperative to be free from such error. This imperative has produced immense processes of disqualification of knowledge that prompted Stengers (2015, p. 98) to state that 'we live in a veritable cemetery of destroyed practices and collective knowledges'.

Would it be unkind or even impertinent to suggest that, in the domain of education in schools or elsewhere, we have created such a graveyard, in the sense that many practices and modes of knowing, as well as their potentials, have been bypassed or unrecognised, which might have contributed to our world? Would this constitute a denial of some subjectivities, a kind of unconscious fascism? Do we tend to view education

in terms of changing and improving subjects, rather than welcoming their divergence and their gifts? Furthermore, which communities, groups or collectives, their modes of knowing, feeling, and valuing, have been neglected or dismissed, as we are incentivised by numerous lures for progress towards a global monoculture?

Stengers provides an account of progress in the domain of science that seems relevant to mention briefly. In her text, *Another Science Is Possible: A Manifesto for Slow Science* (2018), she argues that it is not the innovative aspect of science that is problematic, but its direct links to economic and industrial production, so that the demands of the economy override any other agendas. Hence her complaint relates to the ways in which scientific practices have been captured, exploited, and enlisted by industrial interests, such as pharmacology.

Stengers (2018, pp. 110–111) emphasises the anxiety felt by Whitehead in *Science and the Modern World* (1968, pp. 196–197) towards the method of training professionals, invented in the nineteenth century that ‘created minds in a groove’. Subsequent to this invention came the mating of professionalism with progress. Such training did not reduce the capabilities of professionals, such as scientists, but it did discourage asking wider questions, for example, critically evaluating the social effects of research, or pausing and reflecting upon such issues. She refers to this process as ‘becoming civilised’ (Stengers, 2018, pp. 100–101):

...civilisation being equated here with the ability of members of a particular collective to present themselves in a non-insulting way to members of other collectives, that is, in a way that enables a process of relation-making.

For Stengers, becoming civilised has a very specific meaning:

Presenting oneself in a civilised manner means presenting oneself in terms of one’s specific matter of concern, that is, admitting that others also have their matters of concern their own ways of having their world matter. (Stengers, 2018, p. 101)

Here ‘civilised’ does not relate to modes of practice and being that pertain to a hierarchical sense of value, where some practices (or people even) are deemed superior to or more acceptable, civilised, than others. This had been the case with imposing western values during colonial expansion, or imposing heteronormative values upon diverse gender practices, or the implicit structuring of experience according to binary thought. Nor does it involve the rejection of belief, common sense, or the insistence on factual knowledge and the ‘knowledge economy’. It does not downplay ‘other’ ways of comprehending situations, other modes of practice and their values, nor does it display a kind of epistemological arrogance.

To be civilised, on the contrary, is to take into account worlds of other practices and values. This would suggest, for example, that encounters or situations that involve others ‘be understood through the diverse matters of concern that connect with it, with no *a priori* differentiation between what really matters and what doesn’t’

(Stengers, 2018, p. 102). This would then demand cultivating a sense of imagination towards those 'other' matters of concern. It would mean approaching other practices without judging them according to established criteria, and rather avoiding the imposition of such universal criteria. Stengers is therefore offering a vision in which being civilised is a precondition for a kind of democracy: 'a society in which no single position can legitimate the silencing of others, who are supposed not to count' (2018, pp. 47, 75).

Fundamental to the above is a concern for slowing down in order to try to work with the growing complexity and interdependence of living together convivially. To avoid being duped by the idea of progress as manifested by the insatiable greed of global capital or the veneration of rational knowledge over other modes of knowing. To move beyond binary modes of thought in order to try to work with the increasing complexity of living together interdependently in all its complexity, vitality, difficulty, and challenge.

## **Professionalisation and scalability: A thinning down of experience**

We might now consider the professionalising of education and teacher education in England and elsewhere, and how this domain has been captured by forces of audit, measurement, assessment, standards, and competences, which prioritise and determine specific pedagogic identities and practices, methods of training, evaluation and assessment, to the exclusion of others. Have such professional measures, neglected, marginalised, discounted, silenced others, other values? Have they introduced and reinforced abstractions such as 'standards', that impose a uniform scalability according to criteria that prescribe practice? Or can they be receptive to 'other' unnoticed dimensions of practice, or to those that do not conform to expected modes of practice, that are divergent from such modes? According to Stengers the problem lies not with abstractions that we invent to inform comprehension, as Whitehead notes, for it is impossible to think without abstractions. No, the problem lies, as Stengers (2018, p. 111) puts it, in our 'ability to be vigilant about one's abstractions, to not be blindly led by them'. I will link the use of abstractions to scalability shortly.

How able, for example, is this increasing tendency in education towards professional standardisation and measurement to respond to the heterogeneity of neurodiversity? The imposition of audit cultures in education, as manifested in notions such as standards, competences, assessment, and the notion of progress they inhere, begs the question of what kind of world is being created. Also, is it one in which the increasing complexity of social becoming can be valued and supported? More provocatively, can we trust the state to provide an education system that acknowledges and makes difference and divergence important?

William James (1977) warned that measures that prioritise a particular view of existence, such as those demanded by global capitalism and its values, or those which prioritise rational knowledge and the knowledge economy, are modes of *thinning* the world. This thinning is not commensurate with the heterogeneity and increasing

complexity and interdependency of modes of existence and their evolving relations. Thus with the latter in mind, and valuing this complexity and pluralism in the domain of educational practices, we need to ask if our ways of conceiving and working with such complexity produce a thinning or a thickening of thought and practice. We require ideas, concepts, abstractions that attempt to be commensurate with complexity, and not thin it down. A typical process of conceptual thinning in educational sites might be the practice of assessment that views practice according to its criteria.

Such professionalisation in education brings to mind Anna Tsing's (2015) writing on scalability and its impact upon educational practices. Tsing (2015, p. 38) states that 'scalability ... is the ability of a project to change scales smoothly without any change in project frames'. It does not mean discussing things in terms of scale. Tsing provides the example of a research project: 'a scalable research project admits only data that already fit the research frame'. Data that diverges from the frame, and which might bring about beneficial change (or not) are ignored. This aligns with James's notion of thinning the world. However, this is not to suggest that scalable projects are bad and non-scalable ones good. Rather the important pragmatic issue involves how a particular project, let us say an educational project, can respond effectively and inclusively to the variety and divergence of those involved. If the scalability of such a project, the metrics or criteria that govern and thereby constitute the project, takes precedence, thereby excluding or marginalising certain participants, then it is likely to banish diversity that could bring transformation. Practices that are not subject to pre-established models, frameworks or criteria will develop modes of making sense, modes of discourse, through which practice is understood on a local level.

There is no doubt that in England, and elsewhere, educational practices in schools and other institutions have been subject to increasing levels of institutional scalability over the last few decades. The pressures of measurement and audit have themselves transformed how teaching and learning are now conceived. Such practices are constructed through frameworks of standards and competences that constitute teaching and learning, and which comprise what government and others view as progress in education.

The task of this paper is to slow down, and rather than viewing and conceiving educational practices through established scalar frameworks, to work with the thisness or the haecceities of actual practices, negotiating, testing, feeling, experimenting, responding, according to their divergence and difference. This would mean taking care of and having a concern for the other, whilst also taking care of and having a concern for the big Other, the symbolic order that constitutes educational and pedagogical discourse. These processes of taking care and concern (concern for a pedagogical event, a learning encounter) involve aesthetics and ethics, modes of sensing, and making sense. The aesthetics and ethics of the symbolic order, its modes of sensing and valuing, can be contrasted to the aesthetics and ethics of the *undergoing* of thisness that involves a sensing and a making-sense. Working with and dwelling with such undergoing, as described by Tim Ingold (2015, pp. 125–129), involves 'joining with the generative



movement' of practices, their immanent and endless processes of becoming. In the final section I will offer the notion of *ecogenesis* to describe such processes. This joining with involves engaging with an unpredictable unfolding of practice, rather than a 'retrospective attribution' of practice to established orders.

Scalability, according to established criteria and values, reduces complexity to the homogeneity of the frame. It actually thins the world in responding to the effects of thisness. In order to attend to the heterogeneity of divergence and difference we might try to slow down educational practices and attend to the struggle of thinking with abstractions, rather than following and obeying established abstractions (criteria), in order to develop dispositions towards the thisness and messiness of individual practices and their emerging values.

I will try to illustrate the difference between such scalar homogeneity and the heterogeneity of thisness in the domain of art education in the final section of this paper...where scalability conflicts with thisness, or where transcendence conflicts with immanence.

To sum up, it is not the fact that the professional training of scientists, teachers, or other specialists produces 'professionals' that is the problem. It is the fact that such training lacks balance, so that it fails to appreciate the singularities and haecceities of practices and their emergent values, and 'leaves them prey to the power of a set of abstractions promoting a particular value' (Stengers, 2018, p. 112). Hence Whitehead pleads for a slowing down in order to *think with* abstractions rather than to simply *obey* them. Such slowing down for the scientist, Stengers argues, would involve their professional concern for facts having to 'include the way these facts come to matter for other collectives' (2018, p. 84), and the kinds of questions, possibilities, and issues they would raise. In education, slowing down would mean that professional concerns would need to take into account the diverse pathways of learning and matters of concern that learners may take, and their emerging values, as well as those that teachers may take, rather than imposing pedagogical frameworks that promote particular, modes of questioning, subjectivities, practices, and values, whilst marginalising others.

But of course, it is much more than that when we consider that institutionalisation, and those practices recognised and valued within its borders, is historically affected and informed by forces such as colonialism, whiteness, gender, class, and binary abstractions. As such, the institution becomes a technology of reproduction of particular practices, individuals, values. These are important issues beyond the remit of this paper.

## **Paganism and divergence**

The idea of degrowth, which I affiliate with the notions of after progress and slowing down, suggests to me the need to be able to respond to increasing levels of complexity and interdependence, mirrored in environmental, social, and psychic ecologies, as explored by Felix Guattari. It suggests the need to slow down, in order to invent ways and manners of responding effectively to the challenges that we face, as well as those that emerge, and which we do not yet know.

We can acknowledge the deployment of institutional scalability that reduces complexity whilst promoting particular values, and then try to override such reduction through the challenge of thinking through abstractions, which aim to grapple with complexity, and thereby facilitate practices commensurate with it.

Think of the shift from approaching pedagogic work from the dominant position of neuro-typicality to our increasing awareness of the complexity of neurodiversity, and the demands on pedagogic practice that ensue, and where pedagogic practices are not so well defined. Equally, we can consider the contrast between institutionalised art education and the challenging forces of art's education or art's pedagogy. I will deal with this contrast in the final section. One way of approaching this increasing complexity is to adopt what Jean-Francois Lyotard called *paganism*, in his text with Jean-Loup Thebaud entitled *Just Gaming* (1985). This involves approaching encounters without imposing the scalability of established frameworks or criteria but, in contrast, 'staying with the trouble' (Haraway, 2016) by trying to respond to the thisness and divergence of practices, their matters of concern, their questions, their values.

The term *pagan* is derived from the Latin *pagus*, which denoted a space outside the city where the inhabitants were considered outsiders by the authorities of the city. In a religious sense, pagan refers to those religious or spiritual practices outside of the Christian, Jewish or Muslim faiths. It was often used in a derogatory sense close to the notion of 'heathen', whose own etymology refers to 'people of the heath', those who inhabit uncultivated land. In early Christian times the term pagan denoted those who practised polytheism. One contemporary idea of paganism, or neo-paganism, relates to the eco-paganism, ecofeminism and environmental justice work of Starhawk (1999), the American scholar and social activist, that constantly functions outside of, and is deeply critical of, the abuses of patriarchy, whiteness, environmental devastation and exploitation.

In general terms the *pagus* referred to a space outside the boundaries of established authority, and this is the meaning taken up by Lyotard in his use of pagan. It is also discussed by Atkinson and Baldacchino (2024) in relation to the theme of revisiting art's education. Extending this idea of the outside, we can imagine the notion of a multiplicity of practices that exist beyond our established modes of existence, in a *pagus* towards which, if we are disposed to understanding them, require a constant re-evaluation of ourselves and our worlds. We might draw a parallel to Ranciere's (2004) distinction between the distribution of the sensible through the police or institutional order, and those that are not counted and therefore remain outside, in the *pagus*. Taking this idea of the outside further, we can begin to explore the outside of established practices, such as those developed in education, for example art education. Who or which practices are left out or marginalised? But how do we approach such outside, how do we approach the *pagus*?

Lyotard advises us by defining paganism as 'the denomination of a situation in which one judges without criteria' (1985, p. 16), perhaps more appropriately we might state, 'without universal criteria'. He writes:



...when I speak of paganism, I am not using a concept. It is a name, neither better nor worse than others, for the denomination of a situation in which one judges *without criteria*. And one judges not only in matters of truth, but also in matters of beauty (of aesthetic efficacy) and in matters of justice, that is, of politics and ethics, and all without criteria. That's what I mean by paganism.

He draws upon Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), in which he developed a pragmatic theory of language games, pointing out the diversity and heterogeneity of their deployment to denote particular forms of life. Wittgenstein writes that the 'meaning of a word is its use in the language' (1953, p. 43), and that 'a language game denotes a particular form of life' (1953, p. 23). Lyotard suggests (1985, p. 62) that 'it is the artists that always establish the rules of a language game that did not exist before', and further (1985, p. 61) 'I think that pagans are artists, that is they can move from one game to another, and in each of these games (in the optimal situation) they try to figure out new moves. And even better they try to invent new games'. We can relate the multiplicity of language games to the divergence and difference of modes and manners of practice. So that in order to comprehend how a particular situation of practice matters, we need to try to approach each situation without imposing universal criteria, and so allow the situation to challenge us to invent appropriate and relevant dispositions and modes of thought. Isabelle Stengers writes:

Approaching a practice means approaching it as it diverges, that is, feeling its borders, experimenting with questions which practitioners may accept as relevant, even if they are not their own questions ... rather than posing questions that precipitate them mobilising and transforming the border into a defence against the outside. (2005, p. 184)

She makes a further point about valuing and respecting the singularity of practices, their haecceities, and not imposing frameworks of comparison that occlude or destroy such singularity and its potential.

Practice denotes any form of life that is bound to be destroyed by the imperative of comparison and the imposition of a standard ensuring equivalency, because what makes each practice exist is also what makes it diverge. (2011, p. 59)

Stengers invents the notion of an 'ecology of practices' (2005, p. 186) as a pragmatic tool that aims to create new 'practical identities' for practices, new possibilities for them to be present. The term *situation* is crucial. Lyotard emphasises situations that we encounter when we need to respond in his terms 'without criteria'. He is not concerned with objects or subjects per se, but with the singularity of a situation, its event. This may be a situation, for instance, arising in a pedagogical relation, or when encountering art objects or performances. We might then be faced with questions such as, what is happening here? How do I need to respond effectively? Do I need to tread carefully? Do I revert to established abstractions, rather than think with them?

Can I slow down and allow the situation to challenge me to think? Do I interpret according to settled interests? Such questions and others arising within the event of a situation, its haecceity, imply a series of tensional phases that relate to the ethics, aesthetics, and politics of a situation.

We might argue that there is no ‘fast education’, which seems to be the disposition that underpins current educational initiatives to improve standards and be competitive in the educational market. The current desire in England and elsewhere for objective, benchmarked evaluation and inspection (scalability) that drives educational assessment, including teaching and learning practices, and which thereby determines what constitutes a teacher or learner, might indicate that education is being diminished or dismembered.

We can relate this to Foucault’s discussion of education in his lectures on *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (2005, pp. 130–134), in which he contrasts *educare* with *educere*. *Educare* refers to education conceived as instruction and learning, what we might call a traditional educational process of the teacher passing on knowledge to a learner. Education understood as *educere* involves ‘offering a hand, extricating from, leading out of’ (p. 134). Thus, this idea of education implies a pedagogical practice not concerned with fixed routes towards pre-planned outcomes, but with a journey of becoming towards an *outside*, which is not pre-formulated. We might say that *educere* constitutes *educare*’s *pagus*. Whereas *educare* is subject to transcendent plans and procedures, *educere* relies upon the immanence of becoming, upon working-with and responding to a learner’s modes and manners of sensing and making sense, and what they may become capable of. This constitutes a speculative adventure more than a done deal. The pedagogic practice of ‘leading out of’ towards an, as yet, unformulated outside into new modes of becoming has some resonance with the notion of paganism that Lyotard describes... the notion of responding to encounters without universal criteria. Such responding and working-with suggests a practice of inventing new moves in the pedagogical game, or even new games as new events, situations, or occasions of practice are encountered.

Such pagan dispositions towards events and encounters in pedagogical work, that relax the imposition of pre-determined criteria (fixed scalability), in order to respond commensurately to divergence and difference, suggests that we need to ‘slow down’, and not be too hasty in our use of established abstractions, which frame practice according to established frameworks of understanding. Such slowing down and dwelling with may be required to respond empathetically to each learner’s process of ‘undergoing’ (Ingold) a learning encounter, its aesthesis and poiesis (meaning: making, formation). I will attempt to illustrate these points in the next section by contrasting the difference between art education and art’s education or art’s pedagogy.

## Ecogenesis and dwelling-with

This final section attempts to conceive another idea of education, in contrast to current educational imperatives driven by progress, as conceived by what we might call

the monism (Savransky, 2021, p. 5) of capitalist economics and its processes of social subjection and machinic enslavement (Lazzarato, 2014, p. 12) to pre-planned modes of conduct and achievement. Such assemblages of education thereby interpellate subjects according to specified identities (social subjection). However, more stealthily, they generate desires and attitudes, an infrastructure of affects demanded and controlled by the assemblage (machinic enslavement). In contrast, the section will align education with what we might call an ecological aesthetics (sensing), of undergoing, speculation, adventure, uncertainty, and pluralism. It is not education exclusively for an already known or predictable world, though this is important, but also crucially, an education, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1994), for a new earth and a new people. It constitutes what might be called a *plural ecogenesis*, in the sense that it is an educational assemblage that does not succumb to the dictates of progress exploiting environments and populations, and homogenising difference. Rather it slows down or stands-by (Savransky, 2021, p. 271), so as to invent and embrace different modes of sensing and making-sense. Savransky (2021, p. 277) comments that the French term *agencement*, which is used by Deleuze and Guattari, and which is translated into English as assemblage, involves the French ‘*agencer* which means to lay out, to arrange, to piece together’. Savransky also reminds us ‘that “agency” or “intention” is a function of the assemblage itself – of the multiple connections that have succeeded in being established and through which it has come into being’. That an assemblage has agency itself means that slowing down and dwelling-with do not imply taking up a position to choose how to act, as if one were facing a moral issue, but rather to become open to challenges, to what might disrupt, and to share a concern for ‘other’ possibilities that might emerge, so as to perceive other values and relations, other modes of sensing and functioning for collective flourishing.

One mode of such ecogenesis, or what Savransky (2021, p. 277) calls ‘ecological agencements’, occurs in aesthetic practices such as visual art, which through the shock of sensation can generate new sensibilities and modes of thinking. Deleuze and Guattari view such practices as being able to generate a new earth and a new people, that is to say their untimely rupturing of established territories and subjectivities can create new virtual-actual vectors. The people and the earth are not able to be known in advance, as within the world of established vectors of capitalist production, or in many current educational practices. In art practices, such people and earths are not known in advance, they have to be created in the act of creation that lies, like the pagan, in the pagus, beyond the worlds and conventions of the city. In this other space, on a different earth, glimpses of other modes of becoming may appear.

The earth, not the subject, constitutes the ecogenetic site for the production of perceptions. We can to some extent view this earth, in contrast to the phenomenological world, as a pagus, an ecogenetic force that deterritorialises through the shock of sensation to our established horizons of meaning. Earth is therefore to be viewed as an ungrounding of thought, and remodelling of subjectivity, which unfolds through forces that cannot be recognised in the horizon of meaning we refer to as our world.

Earth constitutes those forces beyond our horizons of meaning that constitute our world. What kind of education follows from this?

Can we imagine education in this other space? What might be education's *pagus*, its outside of the dictates of progress and subjectivities as perpetuated by the city? These questions can be approached within a specific educational context, through the problematic or the paradox of art education. A paradox is exposed in the contrast between art education and art's education or art's pedagogy (Baldacchino, 2019). This paradox concerns practices of institutionalised art education, in which practices and subjectivities are frequently geared to established modes of practice and subjectivities, through which the former are recognised and valued. In contrast, art as a practice outside the institution often takes us beyond established orders and values of practice and sensibility, and in doing so, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, calls forth a people to come that are not constrained by existing notions of practice and subjectivity. The force of art is often speculative and disobedient to such notions, and their existing horizons of sensing and meaning.

Whereas art education tends to be understood in phenomenological terms, in which a subject perceives, feels, senses, or experiences the world, the force of art takes us beyond this phenomenological world, and exposes us to new modes of sensing and becoming beyond the human (Roberts et al., 2022, p. 147). It can, as Claire Colebrook (2019, p. 16) argues, shock us out of existing habits that constitute our current horizons of meaning, to the extent that we find ourselves 'outside' with no sense or meaning.

Simon O'Sullivan (2006, p. 47) argues that perception considered in phenomenological terms binds the subject to a particular spatio-temporal register, in which 'we see only what we have already seen', whereas art creates encounters, in which those who experience them may gain access to experiences outside established habits, to aspects of the universe that we are typically estranged from (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 50). We might contrast the notion of a human phenomenological 'world', referring to established orders, to the idea of the deterritorialising forces of 'earth' that precede and exceed a subject's phenomenological world. Aesthetic practices and their shock to sensation leading to new modes of sensing and making sense can expose us to such deterritorialising forces, and are perhaps required for tackling the problems of living together in our current epoch.

Does the contrast between a phenomenological world of art education that presupposes 'a subject who experiences', and the non-phenomenological forces, affects, and percepts of art, which demand a slowing down and dwelling-with to appreciate, have relevance for another education?

Does the contrast between a phenomenological underpinning of art education and the non-phenomenological forces of art, its non-human affects and percepts, help us appreciate the paradox of art education? Can this contrast augment its practice, in the sense of acknowledging that the diversity and divergence of student practices will always exceed the boundaries of art education? It is crucial to accept that each practice is an agencement, an ecogenesis, of human and non-human relations, which

will exceed notions of standardisation and competence, and their respective subjectivities as established by current modes of art education. Such agencements within the contexts of educational practices are to be viewed as zones and vectors of divergence (Savransky, 2024, p. 6), in contrast to the monification of education according to current agendas, geared to the production of a world that we now know to be failing.

The diversity and divergence of the *undergoing* of practices in education that can exist beyond, and which are likely to be ignored or marginalised by institutional framings (I am thinking of children's drawing practices as one instance) merits the notion of ecogenesis, a process of social and individual agencements always being created. Such processes, in their undergoing, their diverse becoming, demand a slowing down, a staying-with or a dwelling-with, in order to cater to this diversity. This would not be viewed in terms of degrowth, but as a plural ecogenesis.

Such agencements demand dwelling-with and welcoming divergence, staying-with divergence and its dissensual dispositions that arise in the interstices or the margins of established orders, in their pagus. For they may suggest possibilities for sensing, thinking, and acting otherwise, which lead to modes of living-with others, human and non-human, that are convivial and caring. To set limitations to speculating on educational futures, in the words of Alfred North Whitehead, is 'treason to the future'.

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