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PAIDEUTIKA

Notebooks on Education and Culture

Editorial	5
<i>Pedagogical transformations in contemporary world. Perspectives of Philosophy of Education in Italy (1)</i>	
Editors: Elena Madrussan, Mino Conte	
Giuseppe Annacontini – Alessandro Vaccarelli, <i>Growing up on the edge of fading: The prospects of a Pedagogy of Emergency</i>	11
Elsa Maria Bruni, <i>The Philosophy of Education and the Educational Challenge of Complexity</i>	29
Letizia Caronia, <i>The evidence-based cargo-cult and the de-moralization of (educational) decision-making: A critical reflection</i>	41
Enza Colicchi, <i>Filosofia dell'educazione e teoria pedagogica</i>	55
Mino Conte, <i>Digitalize and Disappear: Anachronisms on Dematerialization and Education</i>	67
Rita Fadda, <i>Rethinking the Human Condition In the Present: Chances for a Humanistic Alternative to Technics' Dehumanization</i>	79
Elena Madrussan, <i>The eloquent education of sensitive experience. On the implicit in the experience of everyday life</i>	93
Pietro Maltese, <i>A Gramsci Renaissance?</i>	107
Emanuela Mancino, <i>That "not yet" of the present. Educating to meaning</i>	123
Raffaele Mantegazza, <i>This is the end: considerations on death and/in education</i>	137
Stefano Oliverio, <i>Italian Philosophy of Education and the End(s) of the Constructivist Koine</i>	145

Gilberto Scaramuzzo, <i>Word and mimesis: the poetic dimension of word and human expression</i>	161
Flavia Stara, <i>Making Thinking Fertile</i>	173
Maura Striano, <i>The Reception of Dewey's thought in Italy: the Case of Democracy and Education</i>	181
Mario Gennari, <i>Confessioni di un borghese e Memorie di un antisemita</i>	189
<i>A PHILOSOPHER, TODAY</i>	209
Section edited by Fulvio Papi	
<i>BOOK REVIEWS</i>	211
Zygmunt Bauman, <i>A tutto campo. L'amore, il destino, la memoria e altre umanità – Conversazioni con Peter Haffner</i> (by Gianmarco Pincirolì)	211
Romano Alquati, <i>Sulla riproduzione della capacità attiva vivente. L'industrializzazione della soggettività</i> (by Pietro Maltese)	214
Augustin Mutuale, Guy Berger, <i>S'engager dans la recherche en sciences humaines et sociales. Le champ de l'éducation</i> (by Alberto Anelli)	216
Benvenaga Luca, Rinaldi Cyrus (Eds.), <i>Devianza, conflitti e media. La scuola di Birmingham</i> (by Irene Papa)	220
Elsa M. Bruni, <i>Ispirarsi alla paideia. I modelli classici della formazione</i> (by Gianluca Giachery)	223
Franco Cambi, <i>Scuola e cittadinanza. Per una formazione etico-politica</i> (by Cristina Gatti)	226
<i>Readings from France</i>	
Maylis de Kerangal, <i>Canoës</i> (by Marta Baravalle)	229

Editoriale

A partire da tradizioni consolidate o da chiavi di lettura più recenti, comunque capaci d'intrecciare prospettive nazionali e internazionali, le Filosofie dell'Educazione in Italia descrivono uno scenario culturalmente eterogeneo per approcci e per orizzonti. Tale ricchezza interpretativa è oggi chiamata a cogliere le trasformazioni, reali o presunte, da attuare o a cui resistere, che abitano il nostro tempo.

Paideutika dedica questo numero e il prossimo al panorama filosofico-educativo italiano e alle priorità che i diversi approcci individuano come imprescindibili in prospettiva progettuale, tentando così di costruire una mappa minima di questioni da affrontare nel tempo a venire. Ciò che accomuna le diverse voci, ci pare, è l'impegno intellettuale a cogliere quei nuclei tematici essenziali che rischiano di rimanere, per vari motivi, assenti o latenti nelle pieghe della complessità e della problematicità in cui oggi l'educazione è chiamata ad agire. Talvolta, infatti, ad essere denunciati sono i sintomi di un cambiamento ancora non pienamente colto – talvolta anche oscurato – tanto nelle intenzioni che regolano i destini dell'umano quanto nell'immanenza dei processi che ne caratterizzano lo statuto. Se la sorveglianza critica dei processi di governo e di condizionamento è compito dell'educare, allora l'analisi rigorosa e disincantata delle trasformazioni del contemporaneo è compito delle filosofie dell'educazione.

Setacciare i problemi individuando quelli più significativi, metterne a fuoco i costrutti fondativi o gli orizzonti impliciti, descrivere prospettive di studio e ricerca considerate decisive per affrontare le trasformazioni del contemporaneo ci sono parse un modo – tra i tanti possibili – per rendere ragione di un quadro d'insieme composito, che non si esaurisce certo nei due numeri della Rivista e che – tantomeno – esaurisce i nuclei tematici emersi, ma che, tuttavia, abbozza un'immagine e avvia un confronto.

Così facendo, infatti, i due fascicoli intercettano un'ulteriore esigenza: quella di far emergere la voce di una parte rilevante di studi pedagogici – quelli filosofico-educativi, appunto – in declino da molto tempo oramai. Tale voce, per sua natura inattuale, reclama una sua periodica e mai conclusiva ri-attualizzazione.

Sono trascorsi quarantasei anni da quando Giovanni Maria Bertin curava un capitale numero di “Scuola e città” dedicato a “La filosofia dell'educazione, oggi”. Chiamati a raccolta, i filosofi dell'educazione italiani rispondevano, con i loro contributi, a interrogativi precisi sulla collocazione della disciplina nel rinnovato quadro epistemologico delle Scienze dell'educazione, contestualmente alla liberalizzazione dei *curricula* universitari. Ma, com'è evidente, in quell'occasione emergeva un ulteriore aspetto cruciale. Quello di giustificare l'utilità o l'astrattezza degli studi filosofico-educativi, lavorando sulla loro capacità di rispondere alle esigenze pratico-poietiche di educatori e insegnanti o sulla loro azione di leva critica rispetto alle prassi.

Da allora a oggi la filosofia dell'educazione italiana ha vissuto oscillazioni di importanza, interesse e prestigio, in un quadro epistemologico sostanzialmente immutato. Solo che la situazione odierna impone preoccupazioni non più derogabili sul senso stesso dell'educazione e sulle sue stesse condizioni di possibilità, sul suo ruolo e sulle sue funzioni sociali. A queste, crediamo, non possono rispondere appieno le (altre?) scienze dell'educazione, se private non solo e non tanto delle teorie pedagogiche, quanto dell'incedere incalzante e interrogante di approcci filosofici plurali e del loro reciproco confrontarsi.

La composizione in 'scuole di pensiero' che costituiva lo scenario ricco della seconda metà degli anni Settanta in Italia era anche determinata dall'esigenza di emancipare la pedagogia dalla filosofia – e ciò non è accaduto in altri Paesi europei. Ma quella situazione è oggi molto cambiata anche a prescindere da quei processi. A restare cogente è però l'esigenza sociale e culturale di pensare alle strutture irriducibili dell'educare e del formare, con la legittimazione che le viene dall'urgenza di comprendere il proprio tempo. Ed è in questo rinnovato scenario che i filosofi dell'educazione sono chiamati a cimentarsi.

Elena Madrussan e Mino Conte

A partire da questo numero Paideutika aggiunge alla consueta pubblicazione cartacea la versione online open access, che sostituisce la pubblicazione digitale con embargo a 18 mesi. Confidando, con ciò, di rendere più agevole ai Lettori e agli Autori la fruizione dei contenuti.

Editorial

Starting from established traditions or more recent interpretations, however capable of intertwining national and international perspectives, the Philosophies of Education in Italy describe a scenario which is culturally heterogeneous in terms of approaches and horizons. Today such interpretative richness is asked to grasp the changes, real or presumed, to be implemented or to be resisted, that inhabit our time.

Paideutika dedicates this issue and the next one to the Italian overview regarding the philosophy of education and to the priorities that, in terms of pedagogical project, are fundamental for the different approaches, thus trying to build a minimum map of issues to be addressed in the future. What connects the different voices is, in our opinion, the intellectual commitment to identify the essential thematic focus that risks remaining, for many reasons, absent or latent within the complexity and problematicity in which education is called to act today. Sometimes, in fact, what is denounced regards the symptoms of a change that is not yet fully understood – sometimes even obscured – both in the intentions that lead human destinies and in the immanence of the processes that characterize its statute. Whether the critical monitoring of the processes of government and conditioning is up to education, then the rigorous and disenchanting analysis of contemporary transformations is a task of the philosophies of education.

Sifting through the problems by identifying the most significant ones, focusing on its foundational constructs or implicit horizons, describing study and research perspectives that are considered decisive for dealing with contemporary transformations seemed to us a way – among the many possible – to give reason for a composite overall picture, which surely cannot be completed in the two issues of the Journal and that – even less – cannot exhaust the thematic focal points emerged, but which however sketches an image and starts a debate.

In doing so, in fact, the two issues intercept a further need: bringing out the voice of a relevant part of pedagogical studies – those related to philosophy of education, as a matter of fact – in decline for a long time now. Such a voice, by its nature outdated, claims its periodic and never conclusive re-actualization.

Forty-six years have passed since Giovanni Maria Bertin edited a capital issue of “Scuola e città” [“School and city”] dedicated to “The philosophy of education, today”. Gathered together, the Italian philosophers of education responded, through their own contributions, to precise questions about the collocation of the discipline in the renovated epistemological picture of the educational Sciences, in concomitance with the liberalization of the academic *curricula*. But, as it is evident, a further crucial aspect emerged on that occasion. That of justifying the usefulness or abstractness of the philosophic-educational studies, by working on their ability to respond to the practical-poietic needs of educators and teachers or on their action of critical leverage with respect to practices.

Since then, the Italian philosophy of education has passed through fluctuations of importance, interest and prestige, in an epistemological picture that has substantially remained unchanged. However, the actual situation imposes no longer suspendable concerns about the very meaning of education and its very conditions of possibility, its own role and social functions. To these, we believe, the (other?) sciences of education cannot fully respond, if deprived not only and not so much of pedagogical theories, as of the pressing and questioning advance of plural philosophic approaches and their reciprocal confrontation.

The composition in ‘Schools of Thought’ which characterized the rich scenario of the second half of the seventies in Italy was also determined by the need to emancipate pedagogy from philosophy – and this did not happen in other European countries. But that situation has changed a lot today, also regardless of those processes. What remains cogent, however, is the social and cultural need to think about the inflexible structures of education and formation, with the legitimacy that comes from the urgency of understanding one’s own time. And it is in this renewed scenario that the philosophers of education are called to measure themselves.

Elena Madrussan and Mino Conte

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**Pedagogical transformations in contemporary world.
Perspectives of Philosophy of Education in Italy (1)**
(a cura di Elena Madrussan e Mino Conte)

Growing up on the edge of fading

The prospects of a Pedagogy of Emergency

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Life itself is a challenge of emergency and, therefore it fits together with every pedagogical and educative intention aimed at the development of utopian ideals pursued by emancipatory, empowered and democratic care. However, the Pedagogy of Emergency defines a specific field of reflection and action that does not arise simply in the dictation of this perspective but focuses on the logics and teleologies that arise as a problem when emergency is linked to catastrophe.

Thus, the paper intends to present the source of the Pedagogy of emergency and then focus on some central categories useful to define its theories and practices.

Keywords: Pedagogy, Emergency, Catastrophe, Human development, Life design.

Crescere ai margini della dissolvenza. Le prospettive di una pedagogia dell'emergenza

La vita stessa è una sfida emergenziale e, pertanto, ben si accorda con ogni intenzione pedagogica ed educativa orientata allo sviluppo di ideali utopici perseguiti da una cura emancipativa, autorizzata e democratica. Tuttavia, la pedagogia dell'emergenza definisce uno specifico campo di riflessione e di azione che non emerge semplicemente dal dettato di questa prospettiva, ma si focalizza sulle logiche e teleologie che sorgono come problema quando l'emergenza è legata alla catastrofe.

Il contributo intende dunque presentare l'origine della Pedagogia dell'emergenza per poi soffermarsi su alcune categorie centrali utili a definirne teorie e pratiche.

Parole-chiave: pedagogia, emergenza, catastrofe, sviluppo umano, progetto vitale.

The otherness of catastrophe and the pedagogy of risk

Catastrophe, for those who in recent times have grown up with the *end of history* myth, is a reality which is distant, *other*: it always unfolds somewhere else or in a different point in time or it always occurs at the expense of communities with which you don't identify. In ancient times and especially in the Middle Ages, the *otherness* of the great upheavals (at the hand of nature and history itself) did not take shape and meaning from the "distance" in time and space or from the feeling of estrangement from one's own peculiar human experience, but rather from otherworldly forces that practiced, for example, their warning or punishment functions in reaction to human actions later to be revealed as sinful precisely through said forces. History did not finish, as Fukuyama announced (1996) in the aftermath of the Cold War, with his hopeful, optimistic but also ethnocentric (and not politically neutral) vision of a world that now would be characterised, from his point of view, starting from the growth of the economy and technology, by liberal-capitalistic democracies and by the Western lifestyle.

If faraway wars and new conflicts in the world's most critical areas aren't enough to arouse the need and the urgency to feel *inside history* (as a subject and as a society), facts and events, like the Twin Towers attack on September 11th 2001 or the more recent attacks in the heart of Europe should remind us that History has not finished and it's quite useless – or, better yet, it becomes dangerous for the human subject – to pretend that life flows in a scene whose evolution can be marked solely by linearity and predictability. The *end of history* in this sense becomes a mere erroneous and disorienting *perception of the end of history*, in which – amidst anxieties and fears that start slithering regardless – we only place the answers regarding safety, perhaps not sufficient to frame and "solve" all the complexities of the contemporary moment in history.

If history has not finished, not even technical rationality, heir of the *solid* conceptions of modernity (Bauman, 2003), can guarantee that sense of *certainty* that actually characterises it. The certainties that modernity brought to its culture and its social and technological transformations and that, at a later stage, consumer culture has translated into an idea of existence completely oriented towards the fruition of prosperity, to the *here and now*, to a development only sought in an economical sense, can no longer be the human subjects' answer to their time and their social, political, geographical space.

For Latouche (2007), catastrophes play an ultimately educational role: in this sense the *Pedagogy of catastrophe* is linked directly to a need for world re-enchantment, as if to say a necessity to find meanings, perspectives and values that restore the possibility of an alternative life plan for humanity, that in the economic and environmental fields translates to the *de-growth* perspective or one that, for others, could be more realistically comprehensible as the *sustainable development* perspective.

The concept of catastrophe leads us to a complex, multidimensional reality, in which not only do the material and visible factors (the endured damage/damages, the event and its impact on a system, in the immediacy with which it occurs) emerge, but also the horizons of its general or specific meaning, the conceptualising of what has taken place, the picking of sides, whether it be in the field of ethics, politics, society and last but not least, education. The catastrophe, therefore, also alludes to immaterial dimensions and comes into contact with other equally complex concepts, like the ones of *risk* and *emergency*.

Ancient and medieval culture did not have a general abstract concept for those phenomena that these days fall under the heading of catastrophe, although it has etymological origins in Ancient Greek, which employed the term in dramaturgical language, to indicate the solution for the ordeal, the coup de théâtre, the turning point in the disentangling of a story (Tagliapietra, 2016). A vital meaning, this, that widened only after the scope of the modern conception of *catastrophe* did, when it presents itself as a dynamic "figure" in which the event (the breaking point, the point of no return, the *coup de théâtre*) changes the course of things, laying the foundations for the quest for new balance and new future scenarios.

We're in late modernity when, with the Lisbon earthquake of 1755, "catastrophe" begins to be introduced also in the semantic sphere that we know today, so as to mean the fraying of the state of things, but also an immediate

shift of direction, radical and irreversible subversion (Tagliapietra, 2004). Thus, “catastrophe describes the collapse of an order, its ruin, and thematises the causes of that order’s downfall along with the intellectual pursuit of a new order, a new continuity” (Tagliapietra, 2016, p. 17).

The French mathematician René Thom, conceiver of contemporary catastrophe theory, identifies catastrophe as “the ‘leap’ from one state to another or from one path to another. Catastrophe, therefore, doesn’t mean the utter end, but a mutation of form, perhaps a re-adapting” (Woodcock, Davis, 1982, p. 47).

The Lisbon earthquake sparks the observations of intellectuals as elevated as Rousseau, Kant, Voltaire, and lays the foundations of a new conception and notion of catastrophe, also coming as a prelude to what nowadays we know as “risk culture”. If in the Middle Ages *Disaster* (from *disastrum*, adverse stars) announces divine wrath, now catastrophe can announce the idea of change and transformation, under a lay and secular lens, through which the theme of potential human responsibilities begins to be framed within terms of technical rationality and, in a Weberian sense, of a rational action with a precise aim.

Rousseau answers Voltaire, about Divine Providence, and says it plays no role in determining catastrophes and that Nature had not gathered twenty thousand six/seven-storey buildings in that place: if that big city’s inhabitants had been distributed more equally on the land and housed in less imposing buildings, the earthquake would have been less violent. After all, don’t earthquakes also occur in deserts? If they’re not talked about it’s because they don’t cause any damage to cities (Tagliapietra, 2004, p. 23).

The concept of catastrophe, in its potential of new notion of the events that radically change the course of life as individuals and as a collective, needs to be read, nowadays, in a rational and scientific key, alongside the concept of risk, which has emerged also as an interpretation of sociality viewed in its entirety. We live, as said in many places, in *risk society*.

Luhmann (1991) believes that the term *risk* has risen in modernity to the detriment of concepts like fate and danger, through the recognition of a new logic and semantic reality, adjacent to the idea of probability and previsional calculation. Risk, claims Beck (2000), is not synonymous with catastrophe, but alludes to its anticipation, the way in which it presents itself, therefore an evaluation based on chance and possibility, as well as likelihood, of its translation into fact.

In the second half of the twentieth century, in agreement with Giddens (1994), *engineered risks* established themselves, bound not only to the devastating forces of natural phenomena but also to the manipulation and alteration of ecosystems, environmental, territorial and political balance (ecological/geological risks, nuclear proliferation, the spread of new diseases and international terrorism).

Risk production, management and distribution has thus become a strongly defining trait of contemporary societies. When talking about risks we inevitably are also talking about education and prevention. New cognitive and social skills are required in a somewhat latent fashion to face risks and uncertainties, and with Morin (2000) the pedagogic need to prepare for this unstable world and to expect the unexpected, as well as educate on how to deal with unforeseen events, appears (p. 61).

The weakening of the deterministic concepts of history, the analysis of the century's great unexpected events that are now behind us, the character of the human adventure itself, must invite us, claims Morin, to arrange mind and knowledge to expect the unexpected to then be able tackle it, as Euripides had already written in ancient times: "What men expect is not brought to pass, but a god finds a way to achieve the unexpected" (Morin, 2001, p. 14). Educating on uncertainty thus means acquiring new cognitive and mental powers that allow the psychological management of human limits, human error and the actual implementation of knowledge, strategies and behaviours, but also new values, to expend in emergency situations, following a more or less broad scale (from local to global) in relation to phenomena or events of different types (natural and environmental catastrophes, political and economical crises etc.): from the establishment of an active and operational ecological sensibility to the education to foster solidarity, from the awareness that grants us the chance to be active citizens to the knowledge of the causes and management protocols of catastrophic situations.

Pedagogy, critique, militance

In a general sense, pedagogy considers itself a theoretical/practical science (Baldacci, Colicchi, 2016; Riva, 2011; Colicchi, 1995; 2011) which, being rational and historically located, completes and achieves its mandate at the moment when, by means of an educational design aimed at the putting into

practice of a critical-reflexive rationality (Contini, Demozzi, Fabbri, Tolomelli, 2014) that is translated into intervention, it acts to improve social reality and the capacity of individuals to act efficaciously within it (Bertin, 1968).

In this way, pedagogy acts by influencing, in the medium-long term, both the subject and the lived context, the representative (auto and hetero) assumptions that impede the processes of disalienation, by intervening on the critical-interpretative capacities, calibrating behaviours and devices in relation to inclusive principles, promoting the possibility of generating new symbols and social meanings (Castoriadis, 2007), functionings (Sen, 2000) and, thus, aspirations (Appadurai, 2004) and capabilities (Nussbaum, 2001). From this perspective, the act of pedagogical research takes on meaning as the practice of a militance that implies historic commitment and a practical approach but that demands of pedagogues an awareness of their own identity as subjects who “appear with all that this term brings with it of inadequacy, limitation, and egocentricity, but also of all that it implies of will, conscience, of research and investigation, not only with the uncertainty, contradiction, bewilderment towards the cosmos and the loss of a privileged point of view, but also, and at the same time, with the awareness of its cultural roots and social *hic et nunc*” (Morin, 1983, p. 103).

Educational action, seen like this, cannot be considered separately from what educators and pedagogues “are” and “do” and that is worth even more in the case of *Pedagogy of emergency*, for which militance means, above all recognition of the difference between the given and the desired, between the current situation and a possible one, the real and the utopic, where all the second terms of these alternatives point to the quest for more efficacious strategies (content, methodologies, languages etc.) to support a humanisation of *sapiens*, reclaiming an autonomy for pedagogy that is defined in the characteristic construction of an ever-more interwoven network of relations between subjects, knowledge and contexts (Pinto Minerva, 2013) which provides structure to an educational action which unites the future and the past. Thus, pedagogical militance means mediation and systemic coordination, never indifference and otherness towards the sense and the overall and previsional value of every instance and position set-up from which stems the importance of recognising the material and historical features. Every context presents an extremely dynamic profile in which so many variables are reciprocally interlinked and influence the final overall result. And emergency is one of these contexts that nowadays is just as important as ever to investigate and thematize.

The *Pedagogy of Emergency* refers, therefore, to circumstances of crisis accompanied by a transformational stretch. Unwanted and unasked for, the crisis in this case imposes itself as a state and a situation which destructures everything we can consider everyday and routine, thus touching on both the interior dimension (image and representation of the self) and the exterior one (relations with the world) of women and men, forcing them to face an unexpected adaptive and evolutionary task. The pedagogy of emergency, therefore, means a very specific field of educational practice characterised by the pre-eminent importance of some basic constructs (some of which we will put forward here in an open and always reassessible way) that we consider useful in identifying a state or situation in which the sense of educational practice is defined in a specific way, implying and raising questions around just as many specific options and possibilities of intervention that are methodologically oriented, linguistically aware, and ideologically prepared. (Annacontini, Dato, 2020; Gennari, 2019).

So we proceed to the analysis of the term “emergency” compared specifically to “catastrophe” and to other similar terms, and of the construct of “exception”, by turning to sources that often are not native to or do not have a direct reference to the field of education but which certainly have, in themselves, as useful critical potential for pedagogy as educational studies and the education of humans for humans.

Emergency is a framework (in the sense of a fundamental dynamic) that over time we have come to consider a characteristic inherent to the complex systems that make crisis the auroral moment of their reorganising motion, that, incidentally, lives alongside it as a continuous transformation (von Hayek, 2011; Balandier, 1991; von Bertalanffy, 1983; and, in the pedagogical sphere, *inter alia*, Fabbri, 2019, 2020; Contini, 2009; Traverso, 2019; Ulivieri, 2019; Annacontini, 2008).

It is understood that, in the case under consideration in this paper, the crisis we refer to, while presenting a basic dynamic analogous to the above definition, is lacking in most of its positive characteristics, being far from desirable, hoped for, deliberate, or implying a transformation that takes place following on from the passage through one or more specific “markers” that take on the *traumatic* features of catastrophe.

As we have already mentioned, catastrophe refers, in Greek etymology, to the action of the upsetting that overturns everything “from top to bottom”, very optimistically related to the image of the action that a plough car-

ried out in the bringing to the surface of whatever was to be found under the hard and consolidated top surface of the soil, thus making it possible to renew the soil and increase its fertility. However, that very same movement from top to bottom has been more frequently understood in terms of “the fallout of events” and, by extension, the turning point that leads to the conclusion of a drama (Tagliapietra, 2016). More generally it is the unexpected that relativises, to the point of annulling human finalism and every chance of control. The linearity of temporal unravelling clashes with the discontinuity of the moment with unpredictable and irreversible effects (Prigogine, Stengers 1999; Prigogine, 1997) on what everyone has processed in terms of symbolic, imaginative and planning capital. As Thom put it, a real “phenomenological discontinuity” (Thom, 2008, p. 16).

The destructuring event introduces itself into the (material) state and (existential) situation of emergency as a time-space specific of transformation of subjects and contexts and, therefore, is of clear pedagogical interest. If, indeed, crisis has its peak of concentration in catastrophe, the latter is a moment, the zero point of an emergency that could be very long, and extended over time (Longo, 2020). It is difficult, therefore, to think of the usefulness and practicality of a pedagogy of catastrophe, while, on the other hand, it would appear legitimate to think of a pedagogy of emergency:

we could say that an earthquake, tsunami or a bombing never finish with the diastrous event itself, or in the immediate response that the organisations involved in the emergency try to provide, but continue to be *earthquake, tsunami or bombing* for months and years, in their effects on the material and intangible dimensions of the territories hit and the communities involved (Vaccarelli, 2017, p. 346).

Emergency is, therefore, that “unravelling of time” that originates from an “event time”, the explorative response, disturbing and lacking in a clear framework, born of an “uncontrollable arbitrariness” and of the “irrefutable violence” of the catastrophe. The time of catastrophe as *Kairos*; the time of emergency as *Chronos* (D’Addelfio, 2018). The differences of temporality that exist between these two moments imply two specific logics of the actions that accompany the evolution that leads from the catastrophe to the emergency, one first one of timely “containment” and a second one of “change/adapting” over a longer period. Emergency is the process of recon-

struction through actions of personal, community and social reorganisation, and for the emergency; the destructuring event is the *incipit* and “new story” contained within an *ex novo* re-constructive working dynamic of social and organisational systems in the face of the most disquieting effects of human limits concerning calculating rationality.

That makes the emergency a “prospect” and not a simple “contingency” that can, in theory, open up to innovation, even when the post-catastrophe resembles a path of sudden deregulation both personal and collective, that, at least in the most worrying and bleak of descriptions, takes the shape of greater intrapersonal exposure and vulnerability (autonomy, personality, subjective ethicality) and also in the interpersonal sphere (weakening of social ties, diminished sense of responsibility, loss of social capital). What Jaspers (cit. in Cuzzolaro, Frighi, 1991) wrote on this subject is still of great relevance today:

acute emotional experiences can lead to some very strange manifestations in the most violent movements of the soul, in the desperate mortal anguish we can sometimes observe a total loss of all the proper sentiments and reactions. There is an odd apathy, a type of chaining oneself to the site of the event, together with a callous, objective observation, that in a certain way solemnly registers the events. This has been observed most clearly in those who have survived fires and earthquakes. They appear indifferent to everything. Sometimes these states are difficult to distinguish from great self-control in a difficult situation. This stiffening in the face of pain is described outwardly as a subjective tranquillity (*ivi*, p. 64).

It is evident, even from this preliminary reconstruction, how necessary it is, in a situation of emergency, to proceed while maintaining close contact, as far as possible, between all pedagogical reasoning and the concrete nature of the subjective reactions and the field of intervention.

Exception, dizziness, anxiety

The need to keep close to the reality in which the educational problem emerges acts as a natural reducer of the problematics connected with the various forms the emergency can assume. The variables that come into play in such a situation are, indeed, myriad and sometimes even contrasting,

forcing the “pedagogue in emergency” to train a plural gaze on the situation and accompany it with a no less complex work of evaluation, synthesis and operative decision-making regarding the responses to be made in the field. All this because the monitoring of the effects of the educational action is indispensable, if we take into account that, in an emergency, single and collective lives can often give birth to inter- and transgenerational imaginational nuclei that could be handed down - not without risk – within the families, cultural communities and societies involved (Pergola, 2011). And a context which is already undermined by the arrival of a catastrophe cannot afford to risk underestimating the social cost connected to the weakening of the ties of reciprocity and those that every society enjoys and that constitute that experience of cooperation with which to tackle the emergency “together” (the community as a whole). Strengthening this sense of reliance (Morin, 2005) is part of the educational action that, in an emergency, reactivates education communities, educational counselling services, long term support programmes, etc., thus enabling them to strengthen, or, if needs be, re-describe the territory, by organising hubs and spaces for gatherings, meetings, reading, studying, play, assistance, therapy and solidarity. Opportunities to reconstruct history by means of stories that, however, “to be an efficient instrument, must be of quality: narratives that are able to offer and stimulate a constructive and not a simplistic perspective on the world” (Zizioli, 2017, p. 458). The careful re-planning of socio-educational infrastructures (both institutional and informal) is, therefore, an important step in the facilitating, on a personal and social level, positive dynamics which enable lives in an emergency as well as new social ties.

The crisis situations that come under the category of state of emergency are part of a conversation that presents dynamics and logics beyond what might be characteristic of life as it is normally represented and lived out. Life “in an emergency” becomes different from the moment of entering another state, with consequences that radically compromise visions, ethics, behaviour and values that were previously recognised as reliable (regardless of the opinion that one might have of them). There is, we may say, a type of “withdrawal” from normality (which remains desired but suspended) that aims at a more efficacious functioning *in due time*. Emergency is, therefore, actually a historical condition that requires a new constructive duty of a relationship to be applied to a more or less unknown context (especially in an initial emergency) in the face of which one feels the need to act in an attempt to “frame

the situation without a framework”, exponentially increasing both quantitatively and qualitatively the tasks inherent to the adaptive/evolutive duty laid down in the depths of the memory of the human species.

Opening up to the future is, however, a substantial condition of humankind, but in an emergency it becomes particularly incumbent and the “dizziness” is perhaps one of the most appropriate emotional nuances when identifying the situation of emergency above all if, by following the etymological reconstruction of Heidegger, as well as the evident reference to a situation of suspension of the capacity to interpret, react and respond to events, we consider the more hidden, but no less important sense in this case, of withdrawal (from a world), total absorption, (from the lack of a world) (Heidegger, 1999) that renders it impossible to have experiences and to act in an authentic way. In this way, the dizziness binds to the experience of simply “enduring” on the part of subjects in emergency (Sofsky, 1998) both externally – in the body, in property, in rights, in relationships – and internally – unleashing “interior forces that knock them to the ground” –. The violence of the catastrophe terrifies, but, above all, paves the way for the possibility that the unpredictable could occur again, and with that, it fuels fear as a “restriction of the field of perception” and “the crushing of the individual’s temporality to the present” (Longo, 2020, p. 27). The problem of defuturisation becomes evident, as an exasperation and anticipation of the condition of constitutional finitude of mankind that, however, normally tends to be removed, thanks also to the human capacity to plan and build personal, cultural and social narrative infrastructures that create a stable and safe *habitat* for one’s life. The onslaught of the violence and the proximity to the experience of finitude, as an anticipation of death in the catastrophe, renews this emotion more radically and the dilemma it places us in is the choice between the above-mentioned dizziness or “reflections on human, and one’s own condition of fragility” (Longo, 2020, p. 29).

This presents one of the educational aims that are part of a *Pedagogy of Emergency* that, naturally, in its implementation, has to maintain a stable rapport with the resources (or rather, with the stories and the traditions) of the people and the territories in which it has to work. In this the work of Nussbaum (2009) and its “implication of judgement” in demonstrating emotion is a prospect we need to consider when interpreting educational action in situations of emergency, and is bound to specific *conditions, circumstances, form, function and finality* (Annacontini, 2019). Thus, the implementation

of strategies to lead dizziness and fear back into a conversation aimed at expressing a judgement, but this implicates the promotion of opportunities for reflection, verbalisation, and linguistic and expressive production about the catastrophe in such a way as to refer to an “object” to manipulate mentally, both cognitively and emotionally. If, like McNelly, we consider how an emergency can be characterised by a “state triggered by an external threat, whose function is that of activating forms of defence” that we can link back to “anxiety”, it is not difficult to understand how this will be the main sentiment (because we would not be dealing with emotion, at least not of the primary type, anymore) that the emergency educator has to tackle, welcoming the possibility of an infinite declination of the phenomenon while trying, nonetheless, to overcome the compression into the moment that the catastrophe has generated.

The Pedagogy of Emergency and its sources

Pedagogy, unlike other sciences like psychology, for instance, which has built up a corpus of knowledge and practice with epistemological status that is widely recognised, has not reflected greatly on the meaning of *emergency*, even though its history and the history of education have been distinguished by important moments and protagonists that have laid the groundwork for the construction of an idea of *Pedagogy of Emergency* (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013).

Although it was Rousseau who opened up the prospect of an analysis of catastrophe to modern, rational thought, forerunner of the idea of *risk*, in the contemporary age we find important traces marked by an idea of pedagogic intervention in emergency that is, on one hand, strategic and functional when considering situations one by one, ethically aimed at the axiological limits of education and, therefore, towards the goal and the value of humankind and humanisation, as well as towards the need for a social transformation. Very briefly, we can mention some of the foundations of the idea of *pedagogy of emergency*:

- Maria Montessori and the application of her Method with the orphans of the Reggio Calabria and Messina earthquake of 1908 and with refugee children during the First World War (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013);
- the spread of the Montessori nursery schools in the areas hit by the big earthquakes in the “Liberal age” (Reggio Calabria and Messina in 1908,

but also Avezzano in 1915, where the figure of Don Luigi Orione distinguished himself) (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013);

- the Montessori idea, that never became concrete, but was prophetic and a forerunner to the ideas behind international organisations in the defence of children of *Croce bianca dei bambini*, an organisation that was intended to give a response not only to natural catastrophes, but also to those provoked by history, and, therefore, by war (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013);
- the contributions that, within, or on the margins of the Shoah (which in Hebrew, in fact, means just that, catastrophe), come from the figures of: Janus Korczak, with his work with the orphans in the Warsaw Ghetto; Reuven Feuerstein, whose method based on the idea of structural cognitive modifiability draws its origins from the experience with survivors of Nazi concentration camps; Boris Cyrulnik, a neuro-psychiatrist who was very interested in the question of education, and who luckily avoided deportation, later becoming recognised at an international level as one of the greatest scholars of human resilience (Vaccarelli, 2016);
- the work of Danilo Dolci in the aftermath of the earthquake in Belice in 1968 and his activities aimed at stirring resistance, participation from the rank and file of society, and human and economic development in a territory already affected by socio-economic factors (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013);
- the foundation and the growth on an international scale of so many organisations for the safeguarding and protection of children that operate in situations of crisis and emergency on a global scale (Unicef, Save the Children etc.), and that have contributed to setting up intervention protocols infused by the principles of human rights and the rights of minors (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013).

The term *emergency* needs some clarification regarding the use made of it frequently in the pedagogical lexicon, when reference is made, for example, to educational emergencies connected to processes of social change, social emergencies of various kinds, or pressing needs in the educational field. This use refers to a mix of meanings intended to underline particular situational data relative to emerging phenomena that require strategies to be applied in the short and medium term. However, considering also what other sciences include in the concept of emergency, we can limit our attention to a much more specific meaning, that includes the idea of *catastrophe* along with that of *risk*. In that direction, the system responses must have, indispensably, the

properties of promptness, speed, and immediate action on the occurrence of an event. With the concept of *emergency* we mean therefore to underline the reactive character of a system by means of the application of a more or less efficient procedure that is aimed at re-establishing a state of equilibrium. The term “emergency” implies in its etymology (from the Latin *ex-mergere*, come out of the water, spring up, stand out, rise) both the event in itself (sudden and often unexpected, disastrous and catastrophic), and the capacity of the system to hold, and its ability to re-boot, in the short term, the conditions of safety, and in the medium term, the conditions to achieve a new equilibrium (Isidori, Vaccarelli, 2013).

In this sense, pedagogy can present itself as a key science for a system in crisis on at least three fronts: 1) that of prevention and also education about risk, about the acquisition of knowledge and approaches that are not only related to the implementation of behavioural procedures, but which raise issues of a greater reach and touch on environmental, territorial, political and ethical questions; 2) that of the management of the emergency: on one hand the lived psychic experiences that require a therapy of an educational nature (educating for resilience, replanning existence, reformulating the traumatic experience through educational techniques etc.), and on the other the social and territorial questions (reorganising of the schools and educational services while avoiding social exclusion and the fragmenting of society and of social relationships, educating towards social resilience in the presence of any possible political or economic speculative pressures, etc); 3) that of the management of the post-emergency that often runs the risk of taking on the role of making the emergency phase chronic. Dealing with education within a community struck by a catastrophe (whether it be natural, environmental, due to disease or war) means getting involved in the sense of the perspective of the community itself, of working on social identity and at the same time on the plan of resistance, of a “change of scene” which does not mean taking anything away, rather an improvement in terms of values. Reflecting on the possibility of individuating an epistemological statute, we could say that the pedagogy of emergency might put itself forward as: reflective, in probing or digging deep in categories like risk, uncertainty, the sense of the precariousness of existence, trauma, stress, resilience, and resistance, etc.); explorative, since it tackles, also by means of field research, emerging phenomena and their implications for individuals, educational and community institutions; critical and transformational, operating to raise awareness and involve social

actors in the management (democratic, participational and from the ranks) of the search for solutions that involve the replanning of the territory and the rebuilding of the community and social fabric; operative and methodological, since it studies and applies models aiming at primary and secondary prevention, it defines the actions and the best educational practice; oriented towards openness between disciplines, since it establishes interdisciplinary relationships (above all with the psychology of emergency and social sciences) and intradisciplinary ones (social and intercultural pedagogy, adult education, etc.) so as to better define concepts, methods and research and intervention instruments (Isidori, Vaccarelli 2013). It needs, therefore, disciplinary perspectives and fields of experience, that in this direction must be referred to the Deweyan idea of source (Dewey, 1973).

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The Philosophy of Education and the Educational Challenge of Complexity

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The essay aims to delve deep into the authentic, albeit not always explicit, dimension of the philosophy of education in relation to contemporary cultural and educational issues and urgencies. Consistent with the claim that the philosophy of education plays a meta-reflective role on the foundations of pedagogical knowledge, the article emphasises the centrality of the philosophy of education in tackling the real problems that arise when thinking or doing education, the empirical spaces of educational planning, the possible and desirable implementations of the concept of *paideia*, and the tension between this, the places of *educere*, and the teaching profession.

Keywords: Complexity, *Paideia*, Reflexivity, Educational Planning, Educational Institutions.

La filosofia dell’educazione e la sfida educativa della complessità

Il presente contributo intende esplorare la più autentica – sebbene non sempre esplicita – dimensione della filosofia dell’educazione in relazione alle attuali e urgenti questioni culturali e educative. Secondo un approccio che guarda alla filosofia dell’educazione nel ruolo meta-riflessivo sui fondamenti del sapere pedagogico, il saggio afferma la centralità della filosofia dell’educazione nell’affrontare i concreti problemi che emergono nel pensare e nel praticare l’educazione, gli spazi materiali della progettazione educativa, la possibilità – ivi auspicata – di comprendervi il concetto di *paideia* e la tensione tra questa, i luoghi dell’*educere* e la professione insegnante.

Parole-chiave: complessità, paideia, riflessività, progettazione educativa, istituzioni educative.

On the engineering drift in educational research

The title of this essay refers to the need to consider the philosophy of education as a cognitive “domain” closely intertwined with the phenomena and educational needs that have marked the current historical period, which is characterized by traits that can hardly be interpreted through the existing system of logic.

This premise therefore entails a firm stance and, at the same time, a clear methodological choice. In other words, this assumption places intelligence and the exercise of critical, questioning, doubtful thought as sources of formation and understanding of an unprecedented human condition, and of the complex current historical period. Indeed, it is such complexity – understood as a web of increasingly convoluted interconnections – that has radically and structurally overturned the ways and forms, identities and destinies, of Man and the Planet¹. Complexity therefore demands forms of thought that allow for deciphering, connecting, making sense, and exercising constant criticism.

It is clear that this premise generates consequences above all in the field of education, and questions pedagogy. In particular, it triggers a chain of reflections dealing with the issue of the scientific legitimation of knowledge-action in education, i.e., its claim to be acknowledged as a “science”. In parallel, it relates to the discourse on rationality (predictive vs. interpretative; Galilean-Newtonian vs. critical-reflexive; technical-instrumental vs. doubtful rationality), which, in turn, involves the issue of values, the dialectic between objectivity and subjectivity, between rationality and irrationality, the tension between education-formation-instruction, between theoretical practice and training actions, as well as the criticism against educational institutions and their role.

These are all real issues – tangible and undeniable ones, if you like – but, in practice, they are being blurred by new ideologies, new patterns of reduc-

¹ See, among many others, the seminal works by Rosnay (1978) and Waldrop (1992). For a general review of recent works, see Gandolfi (2008); Florita (2016); Ceruti (2018); Grassi, Temporelli (2018).

tionism that feed and are fed by impersonal, bourgeois rationality (conformist pedagogy) as well as by ordered and ordering educational intentionality (pedagogy of the essence, didacticism, pedagogism). In other words, the complexity and heterogeneity of the educational experience are constrained within syllabi that are planned and controllable through rationalistic intentionality, which is merely bound to what is material, to what is visible, to the will of regulating behaviours, normalising excesses, and denying differences.

In this scenario, three intertwined preconceptions can be identified about the philosophy of education, which characterize the present age, influence the scientific debate and, even more, educational planning.

1) The philosophy of education is detached from practical, small-scale, everyday problems and, moreover, it does not play a central role in elaborating effective educational strategies;

2) the philosophy of education is neutralised by the engineering anxiety to professionalise and specialise education, thus passively updating it on the basis of the cultural, social and economic trends of the moment;

3) the philosophy of education, wrongly identified with the “theoretical” aspect *tout court*, is degraded as a form of weak thought within pedagogy, detached from the old osmotic relationship with philosophy (unlike in the fertile times of *Paideia* and *Bildung*); it is viewed with suspicion by philosophers themselves, who have dissolved the relationship of contamination between philosophy and pedagogical-related aspects, thus incorporating them *de facto* within philosophy.

First of all, the three preconceptions recall the dilemmas about the structure of pedagogical knowledge. In other words, they raise questions about the presuppositions of the Western educational and cultural canon, which emerged above all at a time when the great political and social changes disavowed Cartesian-style scientific paradigms, with their operations aimed at educational standardisation as an instrument for selecting and reproducing the best form of man in a definite geometric space (the *polis*, the *Res publica*, the City, the State, the Nation). It is this rationalistic, technical-logical schematisation that has regulated both pedagogical theory and educational-didactic practice. And it is the rationalising exasperation – especially at the turn of the two world wars – that paralysed the spirit of the great projects aiming to identify the best form of education and the best form of society.

Secondly, the preconceptions about the philosophy of education summarised above indicate that something is missing, which also implies an urgent need to fill this void: the search for a reason, a narration, to be understood as a “tendency to”, a “motivation towards”, something that “moves within”, a type of *curiositas*. This is what lacks in today’s pedagogical discourse and in the field of education and teaching practices.

Once again, the criticism refers to the categorical foundations of pedagogical gnoseology which trigger, and it could not be otherwise, a short-circuit between the proclamations (about change, transformation, evaluation of multidimensionality, overcoming the parcelling out of science) offered by the pedagogical science itself and the educational actions that are developed on the theoretical level around anachronistic hermeneutical paradigms, and on the practical level around the disillusionment with the results expected through a certain intentionality.

The course of the philosophy of education: between pedagogy and philosophy

It is undeniable that most people – even a wide circle of scholars who examine educational actions and processes – find it perplexing to mention “philosophy” and, in particular, the “philosophy of education” in relation to the real, urgent problems of everyday life. From a practical point of view, moreover, the “philosophy of education” is regarded more as a sort of mannerism and as a self-referential exercise of some specialists rather than as a valuable, if not indispensable, interpretive key to think, plan, and act towards a transformation, a new construction, and a change. For some the philosophy of education is even an anachronistic, abstract subject, so much so that a quick review of the most recent publications is sufficient to denounce a real marginalization of the philosophical perspective in educational and didactic research. Pedagogy and didactics are mostly anxious to propose recipes that can be used when needed and to introduce didactic practices and pedagogical theories that are periodically modernised in the light of socio-cultural imperatives, fashions and the most fascinating current codifications.

In this perspective, the tendency to analyse educational phenomena “scientifically” is related to a distorted process whereby rigid epistemic itineraries are regarded as unquestionable; they end up being retrospective and reproductive epistemic itineraries. Still in the wake of technicism and the

efficiency-focused view of education, examining educational phenomena “scientifically” means invoking rationality-based syllabi, aimed at setting models for educational and training processes, with the false claim of controlling them and with the deleterious effect of depriving them of their vital essence, namely their generative and transformative nature. These epistemic itineraries can be seen, for example, in the real places of education and take shape in the general obsession with defining the perimeter of educational actions, simplifying learning processes, rationalising teaching processes, over-bureaucratising evaluation, and making educational activities utilitarian².

These can be considered signs of the separation between educational-formation experience and existential experience. They show the ruinous current state of education, of the inadequate structure of educational agencies, which implement a partial and illusory idea of education and fail to support the formative and existential growth of young people³.

Suffice to think about the way in which disciplines are conceived in the present-day school organisation: they are self-referential subjects, unrelated from each-other; therefore, the student perceives them as totally abstract subjects and approaches them by necessarily resorting to passive memorisation. The knowledge approach is limiting not only for the student, but also for the teacher. In fact, if teachers cannot count on solid pedagogical competences (reflective and meta-reflective ones), it is difficult for them to establish formative connections between the discipline they teach and real cultural issues, thus failing to activate the motivational drive that boosts the learning and education processes.

On the one hand, these are tangible effects. On the other, the causes must be sought in the image, identikit and function of a pedagogical science that has lost its identity, which had been clearly delineated in the 1980s. It has missed the chance and lost its potential to keep the balance between the meta-theoretical coordinates (ideology-science-utopia) – and to ensure their continuous interplay – as they preside over the theoretical investigation and the educational practices⁴.

Dewey had already identified the problem in the logical-formal premises of educational theorisations; he criticised the methods of theoretical pro-

² See Bruni (2020), pp. 161-169.

³ See, in particular, Chomsky (2000); Mottana (2011); Morin (2014); Bonetta (2016).

⁴ See Cambi (1986); Granese (1986); Sola (2015).

ceeding in the field of pedagogy, which found their epistemological foundation in their connection with the foundationalist approach and with the modern-positivist paradigm of the “strong” sciences⁵.

At the end of the nineteenth century, moreover, under the impulse of positivism, a type of observation and analysis began to be promoted so that even educational phenomena came under the scientific lens. These phenomena were therefore investigated on the basis of “experimental reasoning”, through laboratory methods, certainly in a new perspective compared to the previous, more literary and more philosophical approaches, by recognizing the centrality of the developmental and motivational processes – which was revolutionary at the time and whereby that period was named the era of the “discovery of the child”. Let us consider, for example, Wundt’s laboratory research in Leipzig, the pedagogy influenced by Decroly and Claparède’s theories as well as the experimental pedagogy by Simon and Binet first, and Mialaret and Buyse later on.

The attempt to think and study education and formation with a scientific approach arose from the emergence of practical problems and situations typical of formalized courses of study, made available to, and attended by, a large number of citizens who otherwise would have been excluded from school education. In those years, therefore, new problems and new ways of investigating aspects of education generated the attitude to mingle research and action hypotheses: in particular, elements directly derived from the context and real situations of the time were added to the well-known and consolidated theoretical framework. The aim of putting “theory into practice” – a phrase used by many at the beginning of the twentieth century – gave rise to research studies specifically focused on the teaching and learning processes. It is clear – and it is significant for the present discussion – that the then arising sciences of education and their disciplinary sub-fields started to analyse processes, aspects, phenomena, and educational actions in a specialized way, but at the same time they had to face the impossibility to define their field of study precisely, i.e., to limit the scope of their research. Such studies could only go beyond the scope of investigation: the specific approaches of the new educational sciences went further, crossed their borders, went beyond the limits of their own field.

The course of the philosophy of education in Italy is part of this complex history of issues and themes concerning pedagogy and philosophy at the

⁵ See, amongst other works, Dewey (1938).

same time⁶. The twentieth century started with the commitment for scholars in both fields to rethink the epistemic status of the two subjects as well as the terms and conditions characterizing their relationship, which had undoubtedly been “natural” and physiological for long periods, but problematic and uncertain in the cultural climate of that time. The way to redevelop the alliance between pedagogy and philosophy – which is as much old as debated⁷ – appears to be a necessary horizon for theorization and practice, both at the macro level (on the level of general issues concerning educational research) and at the micro level (on the frontier of emerging historical-experiential themes).

This entangled history has had to deal not only with a framework of reflections and theorizations strongly imbued with myths, ideologies, rigid approaches, but also with the bonds of a type of scientificity and rationality that have been thoroughly aligned with the univocal Newtonian view. It had also to face the ambition to conceive educational practice in a critical way, by freeing it from the obsessive pursuit of predictability and assured results. As a consequence, the philosophy of education had to better redefine the relationship between pedagogy and philosophy. It followed a process that closely involved the history of scientific pedagogy and, more deeply, the controversy about pedagogical epistemology (status, categories, language, rationality, models), in the difference and sometimes in the divergence between cultural and scientific positions. This process was carried out with the aim of overcoming the prevailing neo-idealism of the twentieth-century, increasingly perceived by many as an anachronistic constraint limiting the necessary new interpretations and implementations of education practice.

Future Perspectives

Different approaches and theories have marked the history of pedagogy over the last century, in relation to its image and functions. The different approaches share the idea of pedagogy as a science that goes through an ongoing self-construction process, that is to say, pedagogy as knowledge of education which exists and works only thanks to continuous critical analysis based

⁶ For an overview of the topic, see, in particular, Cives (1978).

⁷ See Granese (2015, pp. 9-49).

on three elements, i.e., subject, culture, and society. As analytic knowledge, it works to unveil the complexity of experience and of doing science in order to deconstruct and reformulate the fundamental categories of its discourse, interpret the node education-formation-training, and look at individual and social transformations in a projective way.

In particular, it was the hermeneutic-deconstructive approach, through its criticism of the manifestation of the logocentrism of the Western educational paradigm, that paved the way in the eighties for a reconsideration of the regulatory requirements of the pedagogical knowledge with the objective of determining its fundamental structures “by way of negation”. In pedagogy, deconstruction – meant as a philosophical-educational method – has aimed at reorienting the meaning of education-pedagogy towards a more realistic and authentic interpretation of the human formation process, intercepting not only its formal, observable aspects, but also its more hidden elements related to non-rational logics⁸.

The deconstructive turn involved the relationship between pedagogy and educational sciences and, in particular, on the level of ontology, it concerned the *proprium* of the object education-formation-training in its several dimensions (from the empirical one to planning, from verification-falsification to possible prefiguration) and in the relationship between *theorein* and *praxis*⁹.

This implied – from Dewey’s lesson up to Bateson’s and then to Morin’s and in Italy to Ceruti’s pedagogy – the reinterpretation of pedagogy in a historical sense (from the Socratic model to today) and in a phenomenological sense (in relation to the new frontiers opened up by post-modernity). This new interpretation started from the transdisciplinary basis of pedagogy and from a deeper analysis of epistemological “neo-paradigms”, so as to intercept and understand the interconnections within the material and human reality and the most authentic human needs (Laporta, 1996; Bonetta, 2017).

The role played by the philosophy of education, therefore, is a pivotal one by virtue of its double anchoring, both with the fields of theoretical research in education, and with the cognitive practice of *educere* and forming individuals. In this regard, the philosophy of education is more than specific

⁸ See Mariani (2008).

⁹ On the consolidation of pedagogy in its own epistemic structure, see in particular the contributions ranging from Evandro Agazzi to Carmela Metelli di Lallo, from Franco Cambi to Raffaele Laporta, from Alberto Granese to Eliana Frauenfelder, from Bertin to Bertolini, from Banfi to Spadafora.

knowledge, since it crosses and goes beyond – both in theory and in practice – the vast and complex field of pedagogy, regarded as science of education, as “an archipelago and a crossroad of knowledge, hence multifaceted, tensional and polycentric” (Cambi, 2000, p. 3). It lies both on the level of description and analysis, and on that of the awareness of the practical possibility of a theoretical and theorized expectancy. In any case, the philosophy of education is “something” necessary, even indispensable when investigating educational problems that change over time and space. It is the drive whereby models for thinking and interpreting are chosen, whereby practices are reconsidered and analysed. Thus, it contributes, in the field of educational research, to the progressive replacement of the positivistic notion of rationality with a more appropriate perspective that takes into consideration the authentic nature of human rationality and therefore of the cognitive and practical activities of human beings (from learning to teaching, from adaptation to transformation)¹⁰.

Nowadays the philosophy of education represents much more than the possibility of affirming a pedagogical concept in line with the current complexity: concretely, it is functional to an educational project that may go beyond the limited boundaries of a system that is almost completely school-centred, still based on narrow-minded approaches to thinking, learning, teaching, and educating that are unsuitable to grasp the most essential nature of man. Indeed, although school and institutional agencies are important, well-established actors, unintentional educational experiences also occur in many environments and diverse contexts of everyday life; albeit informal, such experiences play a significant role in the formation of individuals and radically affect people’s lives¹¹.

In the light of these considerations, the dualism between knowledge and the environment should be overcome, and a more realistic interplay should be established between codified knowledge – typical of formal disciplinary areas – and informal knowledge, arising from the daily experience in the living environment and acquired from the subject through a spontaneous learning process.

In other words, the philosophy of education is the main way for a necessary and desired pedagogical revolution aimed at interconnecting – also

¹⁰ See, in particular, Granese (2008).

¹¹ For further reading, see Durst (2010).

in view of a better understanding of human nature– the multiple contexts in which and through which civilization acquires global dimensions. On the other hand, the formation of man passes through the cohesion of a variety of languages and a new, more articulated encyclopaedia of knowledge. Thus, transformative dynamics – which act in the real world and, above all, respond to ways of thinking and living conceived as exercises of constant research – need to be taken into due consideration. Far from considering the issue of formation as a pure discussion about the acquisition of specific skills, packages of knowledge deemed necessary, but going «beyond a taming education», the profound need of this age and of contemporary human beings is thus interpreted through the redefinition of an all-encompassing intellectual education.

This idea of education, which aims to develop complex critical skills and needs the support of a new, radically transformed pedagogy, becomes the solution to ensure the practice of debate, openness, decentralization, discussion, deep critical analysis against homogeneity, as well as the search for multifarious hypotheses to build and experiment with new, different approaches¹².

¹² See Cambi (2006); Mortari (2008); Madrussan (2017); Bruni (2021).

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The evidence-based cargo-cult and the de-moralization of (educational) decision-making: A critical reflection

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After decades of epistemological warnings on the social construction of science, we are witnessing a (renewed) paradigmatic consensus on empiricism in (social) sciences and shared trust in evidence-based practices and decision-making. As recent debates on the adoption of pandemic-related norms illustrate, science is invoked to justify policies as if good, justifiable governance should be a value-free, non-discretionary corollary of scientific knowledge. Drawing on the recent debate on evidence and normative authority in social sciences, this paper brings the focus back to the poetics and politics of scientific knowledge and shows how it needs to hide its quota of arbitrariness to work as a solid base for justifiable decisions and sustain policy makers' de-moralization of their own decision-making.

Keywords: Knowledge, Decision-Making, Evidence-Based Policies, Morality, Science.

Il “culto del cargo” delle evidence-based practices e la de-moralizzazione della decisione (educativa).

Malgrado decenni di serrata riflessione epistemologica sulla costruzione sociale della conoscenza scientifica e il tributo che essa paga alle circostanze della sua produzione, si assiste ad un rinnovato consenso sulla necessità di fondare le decisioni (politiche, educative) sulle cosiddette evidenze empiriche. Come ha mostrato il recente dibattito sull'adozione di norme sociali durante la pandemia, la scienza è invocata quale presidio di certezze che giustificano la decisione politica, come se la buona decisione fosse e do-

vesse essere una pratica libera da valore, una sorta di corollario pragmatico e non discrezionale dell'enunciato scientifico. L'articolo intende riflettere sui rischi impliciti in questa de-moralizzazione della decisione: dalla delega all'esperto alla neutralizzazione della propria responsabilità nel (im/pro)porre fini e mezzi.

Parole-chiave: conoscenza, processi decisionali, evidenze empiriche, etica, scienza.

Scientific world vs. life world: An untenable distinction

It is commonly assumed that the best policies and practices are those that rely on information and knowledge of the phenomenon the policies are about. The more accurate, complete and reliable the information and knowledge are, the more tailored the decisions supposedly are to the features of the phenomenon and will be relevant. Our confidence in the empirical knowledge of reality has a long history within the western world-view and – starting from Enlightenment rationalism – trust on scientific knowledge as the best basis for decision-making has become increasingly commonsensical. This trust lies at the core of a widespread practice in governance: stakeholders, decision makers, and administrators routinely ask for research; however, not just any kind of research. They mostly ask for research that has clear implications for policy and practice. This basically means a generalized or generalizable knowledge *of* reality that can be used as a solid premise to legitimize a plan of action *for* reality. The relationship culturally established between scientific knowledge and policy-making gives primacy to knowledge over praxis, to science over any other source of information (i. e. personal wishes or opinions, guidelines from the supernatural world, witchcraft, ancestors' traditions, elders' wisdom but also passions, impressions and emotions) and guarantee the inner rationality although not necessarily the success of the action. Regardless of the epistemological queries about the relationships between the world depicted by science and the lived world (see Rabinow, Sullivan, 1987; Steier, 1991), aside from optimism or pessimism as how scientific knowledge may effectively impact on practices (see Fiske, Shweder, 1986; Nevo, Slonim-Nevo, 2011), scientific accounts of reality are still considered the strongest and most reliable background

knowledge, providing resources to understand and to perform in appropriate manners.

The implied link between knowledge *of* reality and action *for* reality is a logical one: practice (i. e. policies, protocols, guidelines) is accounted for as a logical consequence of a premise (i. e. scientific data and statements). We call this procedure evidence-based decision-making or evidence-based policies. The trust of scientific discourse as providing evidence for how things are or will be under certain controlled circumstances is based on a major unstated assumption: the ontological rupture between the Life-World (i. e. what science is about) and the Science-World, between everyday discourse, social representations and practices and scientific discourse, representations, and practices. These two realms are supposed/assumed/believed as being organized according to different and independent logic, methods and vocabularies. It is precisely this ontological difference/independence that supposedly guarantees the objectivity of scientific discourse: once constructed according to the methods and rhetoric governing the world of science, scientific discourse can represent the world as it is or as it will be under certain controlled circumstances.

In the second half of the 20th century and particularly since Husserl's warning on the Life-world origin of science (Husserl, 1954/1970), many scholars underscored the fuzzy boundaries between mundane methods and scientific methods and between everyday practices and scientific practices (see Lynch, 1992; Pickering, 1995). Social and philosophical studies of science showed how and to what extent scientific "facts" are established not only according to epistemic values (on epistemic and non-epistemic values in science see Longino, 1990; 2002; Douglas, 2007; 2009; Carrier, 2013) and agreed-upon scientific methods; they are also oriented by non-epistemic values and are the product of mundane practices other than "the scientific method" (see Knorr-Cetina, 1983; 1999). Despite this epistemological stance, the opposite line of thought prevailed during the 20th century: at least since Cochran's (1972) plea for evidence-based medicine, the idea of a de-subjectivized, neutral, objective science became definitely accepted as the one defining what science is and ought to be to be a base for policies and practices. The issue I want to reflect upon is not whether science is, should or could be a value-free enterprise producing objective findings, but what the premises and consequences are of considering it the only legitimate basis for policies and practices. Drawing on a previous work

(Caronia *et al*, 2019)¹, in this essay I will sketch the main premise of the recent turn toward evidence-based decision-making: the need to format scientific findings in ways that conceal its mundane origin. I argue that this format nourishes our need of certainty and is functional to cultivating our sense of being in control of a predictable world. In the discussion, I advance that the main consequence of this turn is the systematic de-moralization of our decisions as if they were nothing more than corollaries, logical consequences of evidence-formatted scientific knowledge. I conclude by raising concerns as to what seems to be a relinquishing of human-agency-driven action and related responsibility, in favour of a back-projected “evidence” agency, a “distributed responsibility” ideal, and a defensive model of decision-making.

The search for evidence-based knowledge: A long-standing cargo-cult in social science

Although many fields of study tend to produce what Bourdieu called “the naturalization of its own arbitrariness” (Bourdieu, 1977, p.164), some of them are particularly committed and expected to produce “evidences” for implementing social policies and practices: health care, education, psychology and nursing are, understandably, among them. The question, of course, concerns what is considered to be evidence. A hierarchy of evidences (and therefore a hierarchy of the different research methods producing them) has already been established and slowly migrated from evidence-based decision-making in medicine (Cochrane, 1972; Evidence-Based Medicine Working Group, 1992) to evidence-based policies and practices in education and other applied sciences (for a plea in favor of evidence-based education see among others Slavin, 2002, 2004; for a critical stance see Howe, 2004). Basically, this approach (for some even a paradigm) establishes that decisions should be based on evidence, evidence originated from empirical research, and the best evidences are those from randomized controlled trials or analogous scientific research designs giving epistemological primacy to quantitative-experimental studies. Although the evidence-based approach has been deeply criticized even within medical

¹ While recycling some considerations of this previously published work, the present essay pushes the theoretical analysis a step further toward some still unresolved dilemmas.

studies (for an overview of the criticisms to evidence-based medicine see Cohen, Starvi, Hersh, 2004), it still has a strong appeal. As Olson (2004) pointed out, this appeal may easily be understood by considering the optimism and hope generated by this view of science as well as the ignorance of a very simple and irritating fact: the research design used for medical randomized clinical trials is not applicable in most social science research. The analogy between evidence-based practice and decision-making in medicine and evidence-based policies and practices in fields such as education, psychology, or nursing is therefore as hope-creating as it is misleading. There is no way to reach the perfect double-blind condition that allegedly would guarantee the evidential quality of results. First, the *ceteris paribus* basic principle of evidence-based medicine or practices (i. e. setting analogous and uniform treatment conditions) is inapplicable for most social science research: although sampling is widely considered a tool for transforming individuals into interchangeable occurrences of the same type for all practical purposes, in most cases (e. g. education, nursing or psychological intervention) people react differently to the “same” stimulus. Any single action, word and even a well-known and iterated practice can result in a new or diverse treatment (Erikson, Gutierrez, 2002; Olson, 2004). Second, participants are quite aware of the processes they are going through (i. e. not blind as to the independent variable, were they part of the control/placebo group or of the experimental/treated group). Third, the tools the researchers use (their spoken language in interviews, their written language in questionnaires, the experimental setting, their presence, recording devices, analytical categories and coding systems) do not fit an objective, manufactured fixed formula such as a “the ingredient of the aspirin” (Olson, 2004, p. 24). Rather, they are semiotic artifacts endowed with meaning, theoretical stances and epistemic values, non-neutral cultural tools submitted to scrutiny and sense making by the recipients of the research practices (Caronia, 2014; 2019). These unavoidable features of social science research (vs. natural science research) have been pointed out by philosophers since the 19th century and constantly underscored by scholars in methodology and by epistemologists: the individual variance, the reflexivity and indexicality of the research practices, the linguistic and cultural roots of methods are not biases that can and must be eliminated or controlled; they are the inner features of social science research (see Gergen, 2003; Gergen, 2015) and challenge any (newly celebrated) evidence-based approach. Despite the above-mentioned long-standing tradition of criticism, the hope generated by evidence-based

medicine rapidly spread into social science domains, producing the quest for the so-called evidence-based practice. As Rabinow and Sullivan (1987) pointed out three decades ago, the search for the method able to guarantee objective scientific knowledge of the social world is our contemporary cargo-cult: something we wish and wait for every day as if one day it would come. This myth nourishes our faith in scientific knowledge as a mirror of a predictable and controllable world and, therefore frames scientific knowledge as the perfect basis for educational or even political decisions. A consequence of this renewed form of scientism in everyday life is the celebration of the “expert” whose competence and reputation is not based on “virtues” such as wisdom, long-term experience, practical and experiential knowledge, clinical sense or professional vision, but on “scientific knowledge”: the expert is the one who has privileged or exclusive access to scientific knowledge, the one who knows and provides “evidence”, i.e. the objective bases for decision-making. Nothing more than the recent health crisis has displayed our public faith in the “expert”, its being systematically convoked and invoked as a new oracle, the “subject supposed to know” how things are going and, moreover, will go. The voice of science, embodied in the expert, “animates” decision-making that appears and should appear as nothing less and nothing more than the operationalization of the expert’s voice. Policy makers and decision makers should listen to this voice and translate it in practical terms as if good, justifiable governance should be a value-free, non-discretionary corollary of scientific knowledge. Not surprisingly, the subsequent step of such a path from “evidence to action” is the increasingly delivered “guidelines” or protocols, i. e. textual inscriptions of operator-free praxis that should appear as if it were the local corollary of scientific evidence, and not the outcome of ethical, political or even local (educational) arguments. Ideologies, values, moral horizons, cultural models, situated wisdom and whatever criteria other than “scientific evidence” has no right to be invoked as a drive, at least *de iure*. Indeed, and interestingly enough, these non-epistemic dimensions are *de facto* embedded in the (educational) research practices that produce the “evidence” used to justify policies. As mentioned above, non-epistemic values lead scientific research far more than we expect or even wish (for a recent study on how non epistemic values unofficially guided research and practices concerning Ebola virus vaccine, see Varghese, 2021). How is it that they work as “unseen but operating” dimensions? And, why should they remain concealed?

In the next section I advance a possible answer to both questions.

The de-moralization of knowledge and the celebration of scientific expertise

I advance that the celebration of evidence and evidence-based expert knowledge implies and is based on what I would call its *de-moralization*. By this notion, I want to point to the main function of a set of practices aimed at de-subjectivizing scientific knowledge and concealing the plethora of non-epistemic decisions that punctuate (social science) research. For reasons of space, I only mention the main overall strategies without empirically illustrating none of them (but see Caronia, *et al.*, 2019). The first strategy I want to highlight is the ordinary absence of any analysis of the tracks of the mundane roots of “evidence” and findings reported by a study, i. e. their unavoidable and unbreakable bond with the Life-World. Unless sociologists of knowledge or philosophers of science inspect and scrutinize laboratories, methodological practices and published works, this root remains not analysed. It goes without saying that the absence of analysis becomes absence *tout court*. Another common practice concerns the neutralization of what Bourdieu called the “inherent arbitrariness” of scientific knowledge (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 164). There are more than a few techniques to package knowledge as “evidence”, i. e. an objective mirror of a piece of reality. These techniques often correspond to the use of the canonical vocabulary and genres to publish and edit scientific findings (see Caronia, 2014). Consider, for instance, the systematic avoidance of any mark of enunciation indexing the “human” origin of findings as if they were the pure product of methodological techniques: the third person perspective, the use of impersonal constructs and the historical present tense contribute in concealing deixis, i. e. any reference to the time, space and person that constitute the Life-World origin of findings. Another example of these techniques of “evidentialization” is the systematic avoidance of evidential marks indexing the level of (un)certainly of findings. Caution is expressed in notes or in separate paragraphs such as the (in)famous “limits of the study” section of most papers, but the main body of the text rarely displays evidential markers such as “could be” or “we think” formula. I advance that if “evidence” stands for “the best mirror of how reality is or will be under controlled circumstance we can have at this moment and until proven otherwise”, this meaning is more a *textual effect* than an intrinsic characteristic of knowledge. The textual origin of “evidentiality” is far from being a secondary issue or a detail for epistemologically obsessed scholars: as far as I

know, there is no way to disseminate and make use of scientific knowledge other than entextualizing it.

The second question I would try to answer is very simple, why do we adopt this textual arrangement of scientific knowledge? I suggest that by adopting an objectifying textual format, by legitimizing only textual genres that neutralize and therefore naturalize the quota of arbitrariness inherent to scientific knowledge, (social) scientists protect themselves from what they fear the most: merging facts and values, knowledge and opinion, objective descriptions and subjective assessment. Once produced as evidence through, what semioticians call a “débrayage actantiel” (see “débrayage” in Greimas, Courtés, 1979), knowledge is ready to be used to found and orient decisions that, in turn, will appear value-free, pure logical consequences or operational corollaries of epistemic premises: decision makers (e.g., politicians, teachers, principals) back-project their agency on such *de-moralized knowledge*.

There is nothing really new in the contemporary use of science as a legitimated fig leaf for decisions that are (or even should be) founded on and oriented by non-epistemic values. If – to a certain extent – this fig-leaf use can be relatively understandable for decisions concerning decision-making about what molecule is best suited to fight what disease (evidence-based medicine), it is less understandable when it concerns decision-making in education. Perhaps more than other sites of human sociality, education can and should exhibit the moral character of its aims and methods without concealing it behind “evidence”. Do we need scientific evidence to decide that it is good and right to include cognitive disabled children in ordinary classroom? If so, which kind of evidence will “prove” that this choice is better than its contrary? How to found moral normativity in empirical evidence? Moreover, why should we? Why do we fear displaying the systems of values that orient our decisions and conceal them under the ‘evidence-based education’ mantra²?

In the next and conclusive section, I suggest a possible answer to these questions and raise some concerns as to the consequences of contemporary pressure for scientific evidence-driven decision-making.

² For a recent outstanding philosophical appraisal of the risks implied in dismissing “value” as a motive, a driver and a scope in its own, see De Monticelli, 2021.

Realism, new scientism and the risk of abdicating human-agency based responsibility

I advance that the shift toward the neutralization and naturalization of the moral horizons inscribed in evidence-based educational decision-making is aligned with the contemporary third wave in social studies of science (Collins, Evans, 2007), a “realistic” turn made relevant by the disturbing outcomes of the second de-constructionist wave in (social) science studies. As Collins and Evans (2007) suggested by quoting the *Qohéleth*, there is a time to destroy and a time to build. After the *destruens* critical thinking that – in the second half of the 20th century – allowed us to become aware of the rhetorical devices and practical tricks through which we construct the “objectivity of scientific findings” and the “neutrality” of methodological procedures, we need to rebuild our confidence in science. The realistic turn, i.e., the so-called third wave in the social studies of science (*ibidem*), has firmly imposed itself since the beginning of the 21st century and it is the contemporary answer to our renewed quest of a predictable world and culture- and operator-free knowledge of this world. After decades of skeptical thinking and critical suspicion toward “misplaced concreteness”, we can accept this new oscillation of the epistemological pendulum toward the realistic pole as a way to gain a balanced view: if facts are theory-loaded and there is no observer-independent knowledge of the world, this does not necessarily imply that anything goes. On the contrary, this awareness of the possible gap between the observed world and the world as it is out there forces us to stay vigilant toward what is assumed as an adequate representation of how things are or will be under certain circumstances. The problem with educational sciences is that they have never been really shaken up by the deconstructionist second wave of social studies of science. Ignoring theoretical warnings against any objectivistic faith (see among others Bertolini, 1988; Caronia, 1997; Mortari, 2007; Iori, 1988; Iori *et alii.*, 2010), they remained firmly anchored to a naïf empiricist epistemic culture. The consequence of not having been shaken by the second wave of the social studies of science is a first-degree trust in “evidence-based” practices and decision-making, i.e., the belief that – under certain methodological conditions – it would be possible to produce ideology-free, and moral-independent knowledge. To summarize contemporary faith in and pressure for evidence-based education, I would say that deciding and acting on this allegedly mere epistemic basis is deemed

preferable to deciding on explicitly displayed moral criteria or ideological stances. The disturbing question once again, is why: why would a (demoralized) scientific proof be a better basis for (educational) decision-making than a value-oriented one?

I do not have a conclusive answer to this question but concerns that could nourish our reflective thinking and future theoretical research in education: does this renewed pressure to found (educational) decisions on scientific “evidence” have to do with a problem in assuming the specific responsibility implied in taking and deploying a first-person perspective? Are we as a collectivity pursuing a defensive stance when justifying (educational) decisions on evidence-based protocols of action? Are we relinquishing human-agency based responsibility in favour of a back-projected science-agency and a “distributed responsibility” ideal?

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Filosofia dell'educazione e teoria pedagogica

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L'autrice sottopone ad analisi critica il modello pedagogico della "scienza dell'educazione", modello attualmente adottato da pressoché tutti i pedagogisti e basato sulla tesi che spetta alla filosofia dell'educazione individuare i valori e gli scopi educativi e ne evidenzia le difficoltà e le incongruenze. Soprattutto, quel modello non è in grado di far fronte al pluralismo assiologico che caratterizza le società democratiche e multiculturali contemporanee. Dato che non consente di redigere un catalogo di finalità condivise da cui muovere per mettere a punto e organizzare interventi e progetti istituzionali (pubblici) di educazione. Una volta che si riconosca che questa è la "grande" questione che la ricerca pedagogica è tenuta ad affrontare oggi, è necessario prevedere, in via prioritaria, un'operazione di revisione e di "ricostruzione epistemologica" della pedagogia.

Parole-chiave: scienze dell'educazione, filosofia dell'educazione, ricostruzione epistemologica, pluralismo assiologico.

Philosophy of Education and Pedagogical Theory

The author submits to critical analysis the model of the "science of education", based on the thesis that it is up to the philosophy of education to identify the values and educational purposes, and highlights the difficulties and inconsistencies. Above all, that model is not able to cope with the axiological pluralism that characterizes today's democratic and multicultural societies. Given that it does not allow to draw up a catalog of shared purposes from which to move to develop and organize interventions and

institutional (public) projects of education. Once it is recognized that this is the 'great' question that pedagogical research is required to address today, it is necessary to provide, as a priority, for an operation of revision and 'epistemological reconstruction' of pedagogy.

Keywords: Science of Education, Philosophy of Education, Epistemological Reconstruction, Axiological Pluralism.

Premessa

Si può scrivere e discutere di "filosofia dell'educazione" (d'ora in poi F. E.) senza tracciarne, *in limine*, una definizione articolata e compiuta? Dove una tale definizione richiederebbe che, della F. E., venissero indicati sia lo specifico ambito di studio – l'oggetto o gli oggetti di sua esclusiva competenza –, sia i compiti che le sono peculiari – le finalità che essa si riserva e che persegue –, sia il paradigma epistemologico di riferimento – il modello (o i modelli), gli apparati concettuali, le procedure logiche e le metodologie euristiche che essa adotta e utilizza. Richiederebbe, inoltre, che se ne indicassero i maggiori *auctores* e che se ne stabilisse l'appartenenza 'disciplinare', nel senso che si dovrebbe chiarire se la F. E. costituisce una branca della filosofia (come la filosofia della scienza, la filosofia del linguaggio ecc.), oppure della pedagogia. E, in quest'ultimo caso, si dovrebbe precisare se essa rappresenti una delle "scienze dell'educazione" che, a parere di molti pedagogisti, affiancano o addirittura sostituiscono la pedagogia come disciplina unitaria. Ma, soprattutto, la definizione in discorso richiederebbe che, della F. E., si specificasse e illustrasse il rapporto che intrattiene con la teorizzazione pedagogica, ovvero il ruolo che svolge all'interno di tale teorizzazione.

Senonché, sebbene la propensione a disporre, a organizzare e a ordinare l'ampia e variegata mole degli studi pedagogici convertendola in un sistema strutturato e coerente di settori – di 'compartimenti' - distinti e circoscritti sia diffusa tra i pedagogisti, personalmente sono convinta che operazioni siffatte inevitabilmente falsino e travisino lo spirito e l'operari effettivi dell'attività di ricerca in quanto tale¹. Al punto dal rivelarsi degli 'artifici' intellettuali

¹ Rinvio, a questo proposito a Colicchi (2018) e a Baldacci, Colicchi (2018, Eds., pp. 17-24).

finalizzati a istituire e a fissare un ordine sostanzialmente fittizio e ‘immaginario’ - oltre che, inevitabilmente, arbitrario. E che possano, pertanto, venire giustificate solo da ragioni e intenti propriamente “didattici”, vale a dire considerando e tematizzando la pedagogia come una disciplina-da-insegnare.

È per questo motivo che avvio le mie considerazioni rinunciando a definire la F. E. e limitandomi a indicare le aree di problematicità pedagogica che, esplicitamente o anche implicitamente, ad essa vengono oggi comunemente assegnate. La mia idea, infatti, è che si possa giustificatamente parlare e proficuamente discutere di F. E. richiamando i problemi che, attualmente, alimentano quell’ambito di ricerca che viene chiamato “filosofia dell’educazione”: vale a dire ne stabiliscono le finalità euristiche e, di conseguenza, la ragion d’essere.

I due problemi della filosofia dell’educazione

Si può cominciare col rilevare che sono due i problemi principali e i (relativi) compiti euristici che, a tutt’oggi, vengono attribuiti alla F. E. Uno è quello di definire *l’educazione* e, in particolare, di determinarne *i valori*. L’altro è quello – cosiddetto “epistemologico” – di definire (o di ri-definire) *lo statuto di scientificità della pedagogia*².

Il problema della definizione dell’educazione e dei suoi valori

L’esame della letteratura mostra che il primo problema viene posto in forma assoluta o relativa. In un caso si assegna alla F. E. il compito di rispondere alla domanda “che cos’è l’educazione?”; nell’altro caso di dare risposta all’interrogativo “che cosa deve intendersi, nel tempo presente, per educazione?”.

Nel primo caso si sostiene che compete alla F. E., per usare le parole di Alberto Granese, di “pensare l’educazione» assumendola come “categoria intelligibile e momento ‘trascendentale’” (Granese, 1990, pp. 35-36). Dove, allora, non solo il pensiero filosofico dell’educazione viene nettamente distinto e separato dalle ricerche pedagogiche finalizzate a “pensare

² La “filosofia dell’educazione”, scrive Franco Cambi, “oggi verte intorno ai problemi axiologico-normativi e intorno a quelli fondativi-epistemologici” (Cambi, 1986, p. 82).

all'educazione" – cioè a dire a organizzare le pratiche educative (*ibidem*)³ – ma viene, altresì, presupposta l'esistenza (la 'datità') di un mondo dell'educazione 'autentico', oggettivo, di per sé definito e conchiuso, e si assegna alla F. E. la funzione, secondaria e successiva, di conoscenza e di descrizione di questo mondo e delle sue 'leggi'⁴. E poiché non si può assegnare un (qualche) significato al concetto di "educazione" senza precisare i criteri di valore che lo definiscono⁵, la conoscenza della educazione viene a comprendere, anche, la determinazione dei *valori* che la informano e che, pertanto, *devono* governare e guidare le pratiche educative: ai quali le azioni educative devono, per essere 'educative', necessariamente conformarsi⁶. Di qui l'attribuzione alla F.E. del compito prioritario di individuare i valori dell'educazione - ovvero sia di fissare il "dover essere" dell'educazione stessa - e di *dedurre* da tali valori i fini e gli obiettivi più particolari che l'azione educativa deve perseguire.

Nel secondo caso si prende atto – esplicitamente o solo implicitamente - che le concezioni dell'educazione variano nel tempo, nello spazio e a seconda delle *Weltanschauungen* che, di volta in volta, intervengono a modellarle; e che, inevitabilmente, variano anche i criteri di valore educativo. Ma, nonostante ciò, ancora si assegna alla F. E. *in generale*, oppure a *una determinata* F. E., il compito di individuare e di validare i valori e i fini che le pratiche educative *devono* perseguire e tentare di realizzare: ancora si attribuisce alla F. E. una funzione squisitamente normativa⁷. E, ancora, la determinazione dei

³ Le espressioni "pensare l'educazione" e "pensare all'educazione" ricorrono spesso negli scritti di Granese. Ricordo che *Pensare l'educazione* è anche il titolo di un volume di Daniele Iorio (2002).

⁴ Si pensi, ad esempio, alla "scienza dell'educazione" fenomenologicamente fondata di Piero Bertolini.

⁵ Come ha chiarito Richard Peters, è peculiare alla nozione di educazione "la sua inseparabilità dai giudizi di valore". Infatti, "quando si parla di 'educazione' è essenziale conoscere a *quali* criteri di valutazione ci si riferisce, in modo da render chiaro l'aspetto sotto il quale un determinato processo o stato mentale è oggetto di apprezzamento positivo" (1967/1971, pp. 4-5).

⁶ Così, Bertolini indica gli "autentici valori" dell'educazione in quelle che denomina "direzioni intenzionali originarie" dell'esperienza educativa, cui assegna il ruolo di "dover essere pedagogico" (Bertolini, 1988, p. 159). Analogamente i pedagogisti che si ispirano al personalismo assumono come primo valore dell'educazione la "persona umana" (Giuseppe Flores d'Arcais parla della persona come "primum" dell'educazione); Raffaele Laporta conferisce il titolo di "assoluto pedagogico" al valore della "libertà".

⁷ La "filosofia dell'educazione", scrive Cambi, "verte sui valori e sui fini" e svolge una

valori e dei fini viene distinta, separata e anteposta rispetto alla individuazione delle azioni educative (dei *mezzi*).

Ebbene. La tesi secondo cui alla F. E. (o a una certa F. E.) debbano essere affidate, in ordine, a) l'individuazione e la validazione dei valori dell'educazione, b) la determinazione, per via deduttiva, dei fini e degli obiettivi della pratica educativa e c) la prescrizione di tali fini e obiettivi: tale tesi è, a tutt'oggi, pressoché unanimemente condivisa dai pedagogisti. Così come è pressoché unanimemente condivisa la tesi ulteriore – 'complementare' alla prima - secondo cui all'indagine di natura filosofica concernente i fini/valori debba seguire una ricerca di natura empirica, finalizzata a reperire, sperimentare e mettere a punto i mezzi idonei e necessari a realizzare i valori/fini precedentemente fissati.

Il modello della scienza dell'educazione

Le due tesi sono alla base del modello della "scienza dell'educazione", che si afferma, si diffonde e si consolida in pedagogia nella seconda metà del secolo scorso e che trova il proprio antecedente nella pedagogia di Herbart. Questi infatti, opponendosi alla tesi idealistica che collocava e rinveniva in un'unica entità metafisica sia le leggi costitutive dell'essere e del conoscere sia quelle del valutare e dell'agire, distingue nettamente il sapere teoretico dal sapere pratico: la scienza dell'essere (*constatativa* del reale) dalla "scienza

funzione propriamente *normativa*, in quanto "riguarda i Modelli da realizzare" (Cambi, 1986, p. 85). Va, a questo proposito, detto che la F. E. cui, di volta in volta, si fa riferimento presenta caratteristiche diverse. Ad es. Cambi affida ad una "filosofia dell'educazione" che vuole connotata in senso "critico" il compito di stabilire "i fini-valori, i modelli globali riguardanti l'uomo, la società e la cultura che si articolano partendo da una *Weltanschauung*, cioè da una scelta axiologica, la quale si compie attraverso la dialettica (storica e argomentativa) dei punti-di-vista" (*ivi*, p. 82). Brezinka, dal canto suo, a fronte della pluralità e inconciliabilità degli ideali educativi presenti nella società, attribuisce a una "filosofia normativa valutativa dell'educazione", la funzione di assicurare agli educatori "orientamenti normativi" precisi e univoci (Brezinka, 1978/1980, p. 239). Ma, rilevando l'incapacità di tale filosofia di dimostrare la "fondatezza" e la "validità delle norme" prodotte, delega all'"autorità" dello stato "la decisione" di imporre tali norme (*ivi*, pp. 242, 284). A loro volta gli studiosi del Gruppo di Trento ricavano dalla "specificità dottrina dei valori (assiologia) [...] riguardante il dover essere dell'uomo" propria del personalismo cristiano i "*fini e valori ultimi*" a cui riferire l'immagine di uomo che si vuole realizzare" attraverso l'azione educativa (Galvan, 2001, pp. 43-5).

dell'estimazione o dei valori" (*normativa*). E, come è noto, giunge, per questa via, a delineare una "scienza pedagogica" costruita sulla base dell'etica e della psicologia; la prima deputata a fissare *i fini* e la seconda rivolta a reperire *i mezzi* dell'educazione, cioè a dire a stabilire quali azioni devono essere messe in atto per educare. Sancisce, in tal modo, la fine della concezione unitaria del sapere pedagogico, che era stato, fin lì, tutto di competenza dell'indagine filosofica.

Il modello della "scienza dell'educazione" si caratterizza quindi per il dualismo che istituisce tra i fini e i mezzi dell'educazione. Dualismo cui fa corrispondere una dicotomia di natura *epistemologica*. Infatti, una volta constatato che, a differenza dei mezzi, i valori/fini educativi non sono verificabili mediante procedure di tipo scientifico, per determinarli si fa ricorso a procedure di tipo *filosofico*.

Valori/fini e mezzi vengono, in altri termini, giudicati oggetti di pertinenza di forme diverse di sapere, dimodoché la ricerca e la teorizzazione pedagogica vengono scisse in due parti distinte ed eterogenee: l'una di competenza della ricerca filosofica, l'altra di competenza della ricerca empirica⁸. Così che viene fissata una "divisione dei compiti" tra i pedagogisti: tra i filosofi dell'educazione (o 'pedagogisti teoretici') e 'pedagogisti empirici'⁹.

Questa la struttura logica che il modello in discorso assegna alla teoria pedagogica:

- 1) essendo stata accertata, per via filosofica, la verità o la validità del valore V ;
- 2) l'educazione deve realizzare V ;
- 3) per realizzare V , si devono raggiungere i fini $f1, f2, f3...$;
- 4) essendo stato accertato, per via empirica, che per realizzare $f1, f2, f3...$, si devono utilizzare i mezzi $m1, m2, m3...$ – ovverossia mettere in atto le azioni $a1, a2, a3$ –;
- 5) per educare si deve fare $a1, a2, a3$.

⁸ La pedagogia, scrive Cambi, presenta una "oscillazione-complementarità [...] tra scienza e filosofia, tra descrivere e valutare, dati come due momenti imprescindibili del suo modo di fare teoria, in quanto ogni modello elaborato in qualsiasi settore della disciplina coinvolge un intero progetto sull'uomo, sulla sua identità, sui suoi compiti e sul suo "destino", che è materia della filosofia definire e fondare" (Cambi, 1986, p. 69).

⁹ Di tale "divisione dei compiti" parlano esplicitamente sia Wolfgang Brezinka (1978/1980, p. 16) sia Massimo Baldacci (2001, p. 32).

Senonché non sono di non poco conto le critiche cui il modello della “scienza dell’educazione” si trova esposto. E neppure sono di poco conto le difficoltà cui esso va incontro, che ne compromettono la capacità di dirigere le pratiche educative. Critiche e difficoltà che appaiono riconducibili, per un verso, alla sua collocazione entro il paradigma razionalistico classico¹⁰ – da cui il modello in discorso trae sia le procedure euristiche per determinare i valori/fini educativi, sia il proprio impianto teoreticistico, impersonale e normativo – e, per altro verso, alla separazione, che esso stabilisce, tra la determinazione dei fini e l’individuazione dei mezzi.

Si consideri.

In primo luogo, con il modello della “scienza dell’educazione” viene riaffermata l’eteronomia delle teorie pedagogiche: viene sancita e perpetuata la loro subordinazione a quella filosofia al cui interno la pedagogia, più di due millenni e mezzo fa, era nata e si era sviluppata e da cui le altre discipline umane si sono venute, nel tempo, affrancando¹¹.

In secondo luogo viene attribuita alla filosofia, per dirla con Dewey, “una scorta privata di conoscenza o di metodi per ottenere la verità” o “un privato accesso al bene”, quasi fosse “depositaria di [una] mosaica o paolina autorità di rivelazione” (1929/1973, p. 291).

In terzo luogo vengono trasferiti in ambito pedagogico i contrasti e i conflitti esistenti tra le diverse dottrine filosofiche e tra i valori da queste sostenuti¹². Del resto, anche quando la determinazione dei valori e dei fini dell’educazione viene affidata ad una qualche forma di “filosofia critica”, si omette di considerare che nessun procedimento razionale – confronto, dialogo, argomentazione – può indurre soggetti e gruppi portatori di credenze assiologiche differenti a modificare i propri valori per convergere su uno o più

¹⁰ Per una esposizione sintetica del paradigma razionalistico e delle sue caratteristiche rinvio a Colicchi (2021, pp. 66-70).

¹¹ “Assunto il discorso sull’educazione come *pars intermedia* tra due tipi di discipline, istituzionalizzati come logicamente separati ed eterogenei, l’uno enunciativo (oppure descrittivo-esplicativo) che [...] dovrebbe riportare all’“essere” (oppure alla situazione esistenziale), l’altro prescrittivo-valutativo, attinente al “dover-essere” e al regno dei fini e dei valori, la pedagogia risulta una disciplina eteronoma a doppio verso, e logicamente apolide” (Metelli di Lallo, 1966, p. 679).

¹² Dai “caratteri di totalità di ogni filosofia” discende l’“intolleranza” di ciascuna “nei confronti di ogni altra [...]”. Se si scelgono i valori proposti da una filosofia, si respingono inevitabilmente tutti quelli, diversi, proposti dalle altre” (Laporta, 1979, p. 26).

valori comuni¹³. Dato che nessuna credenza-di-valore può venire presentata o giustificata come ‘evidente verità’ e, dunque, imporsi *erga omnes*.

In quarto luogo, le operazioni di deduzione di fini o obiettivi particolari da valori generali che sono state tentate risultano, inevitabilmente, inficcate da un alto grado di discrezionalità, se non di vero e proprio arbitrio. Non solo infatti i valori generali di volta in volta postulati (quali ad es. “libertà”, “giustizia”, “persona”, “essere umano”) sono, come tutti i concetti di valore, passibili di interpretazioni diverse¹⁴, ma, poiché ogni inferenza deduttiva ha esclusivo carattere *analitico*, mediante un procedimento deduttivo si può trarre da un concetto soltanto l’informazione che è in esso già contenuta, ovverossia è stata in esso *previamente riposta*.

Ma, soprattutto, il modello in discorso ignora che “l’educazione come tale non ha scopi”: che “solo persone, come i genitori, i maestri ecc. hanno degli scopi, non un’idea astratta come l’educazione” (Dewey, 1916/1984, p. 137). Ignora, cioè, che gli scopi educativi – come tutti gli scopi – sono sempre *posti e perseguiti da qualcuno*, dato che ad agire è sempre *un soggetto determinato*, il quale agisce sulla base delle proprie credenze-di-valore. Omette di considerare, allora, che nessuna conoscenza (filosofica o d’altro genere) può produrre motivazioni e azioni: che è un’illusione ritenere – sulla scia dell’intellettualismo pratico socratico-platonico – che una qualche forma di sapere possa determinare o sollecitare un qualche comportamento¹⁵.

¹³ Infatti, come rilevano Perelman e Olbrechts-Tyteca, “ciò che conferisce al dialogo come genere filosofico [...] una portata eminente” è “l’adesione di un personaggio il quale, chiunque egli sia, non può che inchinarsi dinanzi all’*evidenza della verità*” (Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958/1989, p. 39. Il corsivo è mio). Che è, poi, quanto dimostrano chiaramente i dialoghi platonici. Per l’interpretazione del valore come “credenza” rinvio a Colicchi (2021, pp. 244-252).

¹⁴ “La pretesa dell’accordo universale” su “quelli che sono senz’altro considerati valori universali o assoluti [...] sembra risultare soltanto dalla loro genericità; non si possono considerare valevoli per un uditorio universale, che a condizione di non specificarne il contenuto. Non appena tentiamo di precisarli, troviamo solo l’adesione di uditori particolari. [...] Quanto più sono vaghi, dunque, questi valori si presentano come universali [...]. Quanto più sono precisi, tanto più si presentano semplicemente come conformi alle aspirazioni di alcuni gruppi particolari” (Perelman, Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1958/1989, p. 81).

¹⁵ Cosicché “l’attribuire a una costruzione dottrinale [...] il compito di far volere un fine, che non sia già, per sé o per qualche suo effetto, voluto, o di rendere esecutivo un precetto, è qualcosa di non meno assurdo che pretendere dalla meccanica che generi un movimento” (Juvalta, 1991, p. 9).

Di più. Omette di considerare che ogni azione si svolge sempre in una determinata situazione: situazione all'interno della quale il soggetto-agente *precisa sia i fini che si propone di raggiungere, sia i mezzi effettivamente utilizzabili e li connette tra loro*¹⁶.

In breve: il modello della “scienza dell'educazione” non tiene conto di quella che è la logica effettiva dell'agire umano intenzionale – efficacemente descritta dall'Aristotele delle *Etiche* e in numerosissimi luoghi dell'opera deweyana, oltre che negli studi più recenti sull'azione –, così che considera e affronta il problema della definizione dei valori/fini dell'educazione come se fosse un problema di natura teoretica e, per di più, “*un problema a sé stante*” (Dewey, 1939/1963, p. 5)¹⁷. Cioè a dire si propone di dirigere le pratiche educative facendo ricorso alla concezione intellettualistica e impersonale dell'azione, tutta basata sulla subordinazione del pratico al conoscitivo. La concezione che, non riconoscendo che le azioni umane (e, quindi, anche le azioni educative) dispongono di una *propria* forma di razionalità (pratica), gestita e ‘amministrata’ da un soggetto-che-vuole-e-agisce-in-situazione, attribuisce alla razionalità teoretica la facoltà e il compito di governare e di disciplinare quelle azioni *dall'alto e dall'esterno*.

A tutto ciò si aggiunge il fatto che la “divisione dei compiti” tra pedagogisti-filosofi e pedagogisti empirici, prevista dal modello in discorso, nella realtà della ricerca non è stata attuata. Mentre gli studi sui fini/valori educativi sono in continua crescita, mancano indagini relative all'individuazione, sperimentazione e messa a punto dei mezzi idonei – delle azioni utili – a perseguire i valori/fini di volta in volta affermati¹⁸. Così che la scienza dell'educazione si presenta, a tutt'oggi, come *un progetto incompiuto*: è rimasta allo stadio di mero modello euristico.

Ma ciò che – io credo – più merita attenzione è che il modello della “scienza dell'educazione” non si mostra in grado di fare fronte al crescente plura-

¹⁶ In educazione, ammonisce Dewey, se non vogliamo agire irragionevolmente, bisogna “smetterla col comune dualismo di mezzi e fini” (Dewey, 1922/1958, p. 41).

¹⁷ Il corsivo è mio.

¹⁸ Brezinka lamenta “un trattamento della pedagogia prevalentemente speculativo”, limitato “a costruzioni moral-filosofiche dei compiti e dei fini educativi [...] con minimi contenuti d'informazione e di riferimenti alla realtà” e l'assenza di qualsiasi “interesse verso una conoscenza dei mezzi” (Brezinka, 2003/2011, p. 137). Massimo Baldacci, a sua volta, annota: “Nel discorso pedagogico resta [...] prevalente la componente del *dover essere* su quella del *come fare*, e ciò rende la sua efficacia alquanto limitata rispetto ai concreti problemi della pratica educativa” (Baldacci, 2007, p. 17).

lismo assiologico che connota le odierne società democratiche (popperianamente ‘aperte’) e multiculturali¹⁹. Con il delegare alla speculazione filosofica la determinazione dei valori dell’educazione non consente di individuare una costellazione di finalità educative che possano risultare condivisibili all’interno di una società – quale è la nostra – divisa da credenze-di-valore contrastanti e, di per sé, inconciliabili. Non permette di stilare un catalogo di finalità dal quale muovere per mettere a punto e organizzare interventi e progetti istituzionali (pubblici) di educazione.

Ebbene. Una volta che si riconosca – come io ritengo si debba riconoscere – che sia questa la ‘grande’ questione – la grande sfida – che la ricerca pedagogica è tenuta, oggi, ad affrontare, si rende necessario provvedere, prioritariamente, ad una operazione di revisione e di ‘ricostruzione epistemologica’ della pedagogia. Se, in altri termini, si vuole tentare di dare risposta (una risposta concreta e ‘realistica’, non velleitaria) alla questione del progettare/fare-educazione nel tempo e nei luoghi del pluralismo valoriale – pluralismo che, si badi, è anche relatività valoriale²⁰ – si rende indispensabile un rinnovato e (soprattutto) spregiudicato impegno, da parte dei pedagogisti, nella elaborazione di nuovi modelli di indagine e di teorizzazione.

Si tratta, infatti, di rinunciare all’assunto che si diano, da qualche parte, un oggetto-educazione o uno o più valori educativi ‘veri’ o ‘validi’ accessibili alla conoscenza filosofica; così come si tratta di accantonare l’idea che la filosofia (puranche in ‘versione’ critica) sia in grado di individuare i valori che le pratiche educative *devono* realizzare o perseguire. Ma, prima ancora,

¹⁹ “La cultura politica di una società democratica” annota John Rawls “è sempre contraddistinta da una molteplicità di dottrine religiose, filosofiche e morali opposte e inconciliabili” e questo è dovuto al fatto che “istituzioni libere tendono a generare un’ampia varietà di dottrine e opinioni, com’è prevedibile data la varietà degli interessi degli uomini e la loro tendenza ad adottare punti di vista limitati”. Infatti, come aveva già inteso Kant, ogni ordine statico e definitivo prospettato in nome di un’idea univoca della verità, si rivela antinomico rispetto alle istanze della libertà umana, dato che la convergenza su un’unica dottrina può essere realizzata e mantenuta esclusivamente attraverso un uso oppressivo del potere (Rawls, 1993/1994, pp. 23, 48).

²⁰ Ha scritto Stuart Hampshire: “la diversità delle concezioni del bene è una diversità irriducibile” non soltanto “perché non sono state fornite ragioni sufficienti, né mai potranno essere fornite, per considerare un fine, come la felicità generale e l’esercizio della ragione, l’unico fine supremo; ma anche perché la capacità di elaborare peculiarità di stile e di immaginazione, e di formarsi specifiche concezioni del bene, è la capacità saliente e distintiva degli esseri umani tra gli altri animali. Questa è la loro natura, così come è parte della loro natura parlare una grande varietà di linguaggi naturali” (1989/1995, p. 118).

si tratta, per la teorizzazione pedagogica, di abbandonare definitivamente il paradigma razionalistico – e, con questo, il postulato della subordinazione dell'azione alla conoscenza – e di riconoscere di essere obbligata ad *un regime epistemologico di tipo pratico*.

È a questa condizione, io credo, che la ricerca epistemologica in pedagogia – o, se si preferisce, la filosofia dell'educazione impegnata nell'indagine epistemologica – potrà dare i suoi frutti.

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Digitalize and Disappear

Anachronisms on Dematerialization and Education

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The essay, reconsidering the philosophy of education as a discipline at the crossroads between philosophy and pedagogy, assumes a critical-theoretical approach, developing the “anachrony” as a critical tool. Then the essay focuses on the digitalization processes, examining the transformations of space and time in social life and educational work. New forms of scarcity seem to arise from the de-materialization and de-bodyness of educational settings. The anthropological emptying of the “here”, the accelerated over-determination of the “exterior”, the “present-remote” of school-life, open a new set of educational problems caused by the compression of spaces through time.

Keywords: Philosophy of Education, Critical Theory, Digitalization, Education, Space-Time.

Digitalizzare e sparire. Anacronismi su dematerializzazione e formazione

Il saggio, riconsidera la filosofia dell'educazione come disciplina cerniera tra filosofia e pedagogia. In seguito, assumendo la prospettiva della teoria critica ed impiegando lo strumento critico dell'anacronismo, mette a tema i processi di digitalizzazione della vita sociale e della formazione esaminando le trasformazioni dello spazio-tempo nel lavoro educativo. Nuove forme di penuria sembrano prendere forma dalla dematerializzazione e de-corporeizzazione delle relazioni educative e didattiche. Lo svuotamento antropologico del “qui”, la sovradeterminazione accelerata dell'esteriore, la vita scolastica coniugabile in “presente remoto”, aprono un fronte proble-

matico inedito come effetto della compressione dello spazio attraverso il tempo.

Parole-chiave: filosofia dell'educazione, teoria critica, digitalizzazione, formazione, spazio-tempo.

*The contemporaneity of the Essay
is the contemporaneity of the anachronism*

TW Adorno, *The Essay as Form*

The philosophy of education

We do not intend here to arrive at the delineation of a clear and distinct disciplinary boundary, capable of establishing the *proprium* of a field of study called the philosophy of education. The notion of “philosophy of education” is always philosophically situated, and it goes without saying that there is not only one given philosophy. It is difficult to think of *a* philosophy of education. A phenomenological-existentialist philosopher of education (and pedagogist¹) will have a different conception of this sphere of thought than a colleague with a neo-Thomist or Problematicist approach. And likewise those who derive their inspiration from Dewey will undertake such a line of research from yet another perspective. In some of the cases mentioned we will find overlapping concerns, and in others unbridgeable distances.

Our modest proposal rather leads us to note, as Exhibit A, the existence recognized and accredited, with particular emphasis in the Anglo-Saxon world and in European educational research, of a so-called research network, and of journals explicitly dedicated to it.

Now, if the existence of such an object – in this case the philosophy of education – does not reveal its essence, it is also true that, regardless of the tradition of thought to which individual scholars refer, this theoretical and speculative presence in the field of pedagogical knowledge reveals a common implication, usually tacit but which seems to be shared: the presence of an inevitable and differently interpreted relationship between philosophy and

¹ Given his habitat in the field of pedagogical knowledge, via the object complement, the philosopher of education is at the same time a pedagogist, just as the philosopher of law is at the same time a jurist.

pedagogy, between philosophy and education, between presuppositions of a philosophical order of different origin and pedagogical discourse in its own distinctive arborescence. Without this link of implication involving the restoration of the hegemonic forms (of the philosophical over the pedagogical) that have characterized a large stretch of the history of Western thought², or new subsumptions of the theoretical-practical axis of pedagogy within the conceptual ordinates of a broader philosophical horizon, however differently postulated.

The philosophy of education is understood by us, specifically using a tributary approach to the tradition of critical thought, as an examination of the philosophical presuppositions of the pedagogical discourse, and of the already socially pre-formed educational practice, understood in their root meanings. It is also conceived as a critical review of the fundamentals of current pedagogical discourse. Assumptions and fundamentals that, without the permanent work of retro-illumination, would risk remaining in the shadows, and of determining long-range effects and consequences, along the entire span of the pedagogical-educational “mechanism”, without being revised in the light of day, reconsidered, or even *thought tout court*. This omission would have significant costs. Entire anthropological and ethical concepts, for example, would operate undisturbed in the most meandering hiding places of educational practice without any critical scrutiny, ending up being assumed without adequate awareness, or, worse, being understood as “natural” and lacking alternatives. Entire socio-economic-political concepts would act equally undisturbed, without the slightest problematization, depositing themselves, without any critical filter, into words and things concerning schooling, learning, education. And in the same way, entire epistemological frameworks, gnoseological options, methodological and didactic choices, if not critically examined, would hegemonize the pedagogical-educational discursive order, as if they were mere facts of nature, rather than historically determined products (for which the order of things could have been different – and can be), and mere contingency formulas. The philosophy of edu-

² The writer however, does not believe it has ever been a real hegemony understood in the sense of an intentionally coercive sovereign domination of one instance over another, but rather of a relationship, that between philosophy and pedagogy, which is necessary and not forced, historically evident and not potential, inscribed in the very things of the two knowledges. The first philosophers founded schools, and then academies and high schools (*lyceum*).

cation therefore proposes, in the conception of it we present here, to break every form of undisputed hetero-normalization of the pedagogical and its semantic field, always exposed – historically – to expropriation, capture, colonization, by the “extra-pedagogical reality”, the contents of which vary according to the historical epochs and the power that conditions each.³ Not to ennoble oneself as a discipline-sentinel, or as an unlikely defensive bulwark that no one has summoned, but rather as an independent critical factor that monitors the conditions of possibility of the pedagogist, in whose service one finds oneself, without claiming in any way to determine them. This critical function accompanied by a task of conceptual construction, of a general nature, relating to educational action, in the sense of the permanent rethinking of the governing categories of pedagogical discourse, starting with them and looking beyond them. This is not for the purpose of distilling the eternal from the transient, nor to build an axiomatic lacking presupposition.

A Critical Perspective for the Philosophy of Education

When we speak here of a “critical perspective”, we mainly refer to a very specific tradition of thought, namely “the critical theory of society” in the terms in which it was able to take shape and consolidate itself among the first generation of “The Frankfurt School”⁴. The introductory delineation, which we carried out elsewhere⁵, of a “critical theory of education and society” was located in the wake of this tradition, which in turn it critically examined *so as to not completely betray it*.

The prospect of a “critical philosophy of education” alludes to a very precise *modus operandi* which follows some lines of thought summarized below in a non-exhaustive way, merely as a guidepost: a) it does not hypostasize its objects of study (school, education, etc.), isolating them from “extra-pedagogical” factors that determine a large, or in any case a significant part of their form and contents. Problems related to learning, so to speak, are never

³ Herbart had already seen this clearly, inviting Pedagogy, already in 1806, (please see *General Pedagogy deduced from the purpose of education*), to reflect more “on its own ideas” by cultivating more of “its own independent thinking”. In this way it would not run the risk of being treated as foreign power treat a remote country of conquest.

⁴ For a systematic discussion, see Schmidt, Rusconi (1972).

⁵ Please refer to Conte (2016), in particular pages 39-92.

solely problems related to learning that can be solved with an updated teaching methods or with rhetoric about innovative technology; b) it traces every moment or fragment of educational praxis broadly speaking back to the hegemonic rationality that informs it as a factor that is neither marginal nor totally determining, in order to arrive at a critical and not naïve, nor guilty by omission, understanding of the constituent elements of that praxis that is already in existence, preordained and functioning; c) it opposes any philosophy of education that merely justifies that which exists, and for which “it is so and it cannot be otherwise” or is presumptively non-evaluative of the current order of socio-political and pedagogical discourse; d) it therefore sustains a pedagogy of self-mastering consciousness and self-awareness, rather than a pedagogy of renouncing adaptation that capitulates to the power of the existing, producing a “self-preservation without a subject” (Adorno, 2010, p. 41).

Notes on the Notion of “Anachronism”

The notion of anachronism is understood by us to be a critical tool. We do not emphasize the negative side of the term, its common sense, which refers to a condition of inadequacy and disharmony with regard to the present time: to be out of one’s time, to have become antiquated, dated, in disuse, and for which the only alternative would consist in an undifferentiated synchronism. On the contrary, we see in anachronism a critical potential and a productive posture. The intentional lack of synchronization with one’s own time alludes to a non-adhesion, to a non-correspondence to it, to a point of resistance. To value in one’s own time a counter-time capable of rendering visible all of the fractures, the blind spots, the contradictions, the abstractions of the system’s administrative chronology. Being ahead of one’s time (*prochronism*) or behind the times (*parachronism*) of the disembodied real, do not constitute missing negative or insufficient forms of life. They are so only in the judgment of those who think to accord every movement of the real, and therefore also of the educational real, to a single, pre-established time. Different non-linear temporal trajectories, capable of establishing different points of orientation and reorientation, can co-exist, creating discontinuous events (Foucault, 2004). If the spirit, writes Adorno, “does what is socially right only when it does not dissolve in undifferentiated identity with society, the time of anachronism has come” (Adorno, 2010, p. 51). The “au-

onomous movement of the object can be followed only by those who do not participate completely” (Adorno, 2018, p. 15).

Digitalization of education, a new anthropology of scarcity

The state of emergency due to the pandemic shock has unexpectedly accelerated a process already underway: the digitalization of education. Moreover, the digitalization of interpersonal relationships, as well as the dematerialization and disembodiment of individualized-socialized living, were already in the process of expansion and progressive normalization on a global scale. The culture of the so-called postmodern had already “gathered up all the orientations that had presumed to resolve Being in Language”, dissolving and resolving reality “in a network of communicative networks” (Finelli, 2018, p. 174). Therefore, the “symbolic-communicative” has increasingly ended up mediating and covering every material reality (*ibidem*). Everyday experience appears to be ever increasingly constructed on the horizontal communicative-linguistic dimension. To the emptying of the verticality-interiority correspond the “overdetermination of the exterior” (*ivi*, p. 175) and the “superficialization of the experiential” (*ivi*, p. 176). The emptying of the concrete carried out by the abstract, understood in absolutist terms as an economic-financial abstraction, and the totalizing investment in the superficial, constitute powerful vectors of indeterminacy and of absence in oneself and in relation to others with which to account, even (and not only) in thinking of the young.

The dematerialization of education, induced by its digitalization, is part of this broader de-signifying framework⁶. If it has become possible to do almost everything without being there, education included, we hold that this condition cannot be assumed by seconding “the logic of technological inevitability” and simply taking note of the technological conforming of learning and

⁶ Therefore, the very “meaning” or “having meaning” for oneself and for others, ends up no longer constituting something relevant. The questions “what does this mean for me?”, “What sense does this have for me and for others?” lose relevance as they are dysfunctional with respect to mere proceeding. The relevant questions seem to be the following: “How do I solve this problem?”, “How do I successfully and efficiently intervene in this situation?”. The meaning-sense concerns the “verticality-interiority”, the “how efficient” instead, concerns the external horizontality. Emptying the first dimension by emphasizing the second has many consequences on the formation of a conscience capable of judgment.

of existence, declaring it in itself progressive. Every technological advance is two-faced, as for example Gehlen (1987, pp. 120-130) had already intuited as an anthropologist, and perhaps as had already Michelstaedter (1982, pp. 158-159) as philologist and thinker *sui generis*. Gain and loss go hand in hand in the same instant. And it is usually the gains, often and undoubtedly formidable, that obscure the losses, the new scarcities. If everything, or almost everything, can take place now, in the time of the synchronization of activities mediated by ubiquitous technological devices, this now produces the emptying of the here. So the others somehow appear, but without being there. The screen is only the simulacrum of a place. The others are there even though they are not there. If space is the place of bodies, the prevalence of time (of a synchronic connection without material contacts) produces the disembodiment of education and of learning. The lesson text separates itself from bodies and from places, and dematerializes. The pre-text is given by the fact that space needs time in order to be crossed so as to reach places. Space has become an obstacle, and this is a paradox in the time of easy travel. "The capitalist landscape is made up not only of subways, railways and highways, but of individuals who, while being transported from one job to another, continue to work with their laptops on their lap, or to answer their last email with their smartphone" (Tomba, Vertova, 2014, pp. 7-8). The Marxian intuition of "capital's destruction of space through time" (Marx, 1974, p. 161) returns to interrogate us. Education and training (which today we qualify as "neoliberal") must speed themselves up, in the sense that the times must be ever shortened that are needed to reach the designated places, places which are no longer necessary in their materiality, and ever more rapid and ubiquitous must be the times of their fungibility and acquisition. Nothing seems quicker, more efficient, within reach, "hands on" in the proper sense of the expression, than a "remote" education, which does not imply any time whatsoever to cross the space necessary to reach the venerable institutions, and can be used at other times, and in any other place at one's discretion. It takes only a moment to reach the non-place. Education thus becomes indifferent to time and space. Time of life, of work, of travel, are no longer clear and distinct. The absorbing porosity of the single time of productive synchronicity seems to subsume every particular time. And so there is the chance and the "hands on" opportunity to work in non-working time. To be able to carry out several things simultaneously, or with minimal time lag, incrementally increasing the productivity of the day, its mere performance. Will fixed

places of learning become less and less necessary in the time of permanent synchronic/asynchronous digital connection? And the students, the teachers, where will they be?

Scarcity of oneself and of others

The anthropological emptying of the concrete by the technologically mediated symbolic-communicative abstract leads us to consider the subjective side of scarcity. Lack, scarcity, also concern the self and the other. Being absent from oneself and from others, even in the continuous communication of oneself with others, and vice-versa, determines a new form of impoverishment. Which no longer concerns only the material side of subsistence, which still scandalously concerns non-marginal segments of the population, but calls into question the awareness of oneself and of the other-than-self. If the present, the *now* of events *does not take place*. *If the others don't take place*, if daily operations are traceable to non-places of occurrence, the self loses the verticality of its consistency, its own specific *weight*. "The digital order" writes Han, "causes a progressive disappearance of the body of the world" (Han, 2017, p. 57), which no longer seems to offer resistance and therefore neither fatigue nor opposition. *Everything is at your fingertips*. Yet the world of smart smarts, carries a secret penalty. Everything that claims to be easy, every facilitation, should be looked at with a critical eye, such as free social media. The disappearance of the negative behind the spectacular positivity of instantaneous and ubiquitous hyper-communication mutilates the formation of an essential element: learning to "look the negative in the eye, lingering close to it" strengthens the spirit, enlivens it, makes it present to self. The loss of gravitas renders indistinguishable work and play, character building and free time. The uncritical consensus regarding surfaces of high and fast performativity, inexorably gains ground on the sense, of the self, of others, of the world. Character traits such as firmness, determination and stability, conditions of thinking and doubting, give way to the voids of inconstancy, incoherence, uncertainty, fertile and facile ground for any and every manipulation and regressive construction of consent. The "remote present" within this floating scenario, establishes an ambiguous trajectory of temporality. If the past can also be close, the present when it becomes remote as experienced by distant human beings, loses consistency and becomes the flow of a

scarcity, which puts on stage abundance, contacts, friends, *followers*, digital resources of any kind. A scarcity not perceived as such. The remote present is a distant present that, while it happens isolates, while it includes excludes, while it draws near distances. It certainly works like time linked to performances, to exchanges of information, to the rapid handling of administrative issues. But that which only works, and fortunately works as in the case of emergencies, is not sufficient in itself to establish the verticality of sense and meaning when the practices that are supposed to be educational come into play. The remote present is a demotivating and impoverishing time for education and learning. The most prudent and pedagogically well-intentioned solicitations, even if they play well in the short term, can hardly manage over time to stem discouragement and disinterest. The so-called “distant education”, consequently, should be understood to be only for emergencies and as a last resort, for the sole purpose of protecting public health when this is necessary for incontrovertible epidemiological reasons.⁷ And the same holds true for all other forms of hyper-mediated teaching.

In the last novel by Guido Morselli, *Dissapatio H.G.*, the protagonist, after deciding to take his own life by drowning himself in a pond at the bottom of a cave, in the end changes his mind and returns to the surface. Retracing his steps, he gradually realizes that humanity itself has evaporated, has disappeared. Everything has remained intact; objects seem to have become close and unreachable at the same time. He sees, in his return journey, a bus crushed against a wall: “There were no occupants in there, not even the driver, when the bus broke down. Before, it was automobile accidents that took life: but now it was the taking of life (its withdrawal, its vanishing) that caused the automobile accident” (Morselli, 1977, p. 13). The “dissipation” of humanity, not intended in a moral sense, refers here to a physical dispersion, to an incomprehensible “exodus”, to which the “excepted” tries to find an answer by scrolling through the pages. The resignation of humanity, perhaps “angelicized *en masse*”, or perhaps a sort of death-reward through a collective tourist emigration...these are hypotheses that become obsessive thoughts. Is assisting the disappearance of humanity a curse or a privilege? Where did they go? Why did they go?

⁷ More generally, education technologies should always be considered a means, and never as an end. And, understood in their non-neutrality, as “preliminary didactic decisions”, which, by incorporating precise intended uses, predetermine, and preformat teaching practices before the judgment of the teacher.

The situation-limit imagined by Morselli is the extreme and literary figuration of a human condition that has emptied itself, inexplicably. A complete and total social desertification. The machines remain functioning: “The electronic systems continue to function, or at least they are able to function, whether or not there are operators and users” (*ivi*, p.73). The situation that concerns us, on the contrary, and by contrast, digitally duplicates social reality without apparently touching its materiality, but subtracting relevance and centrality to being together in physical places from the production of meaning. In the novel, the “excepted” protagonist has *all* the space, and *all* the time at his sudden disposal: the curse of a privilege. The anthropological emptying delivers the concrete and the abstract to its progressive consumption and return to the state of nature: “The Market of Markets will change in the countryside” (*ivi*, p.154). The others literally aren’t there anymore. In our case, already saying “our” is revealing, the others are all there, and simultaneously, in the *now* without *here* of ubiquitous communication. Their disappearance is only on the level of space and of places, in turn intact and where they should be, but no longer a necessary condition of life, work, school, relationships. The abstract empties the concrete of meaning. The potential omnipresence generates a new form of absence and disappearance towards oneself and others, well-masked by the portable screens.

Carefully avoiding the traps of romantic renunciation, thought that seeks to think education does not yield to the temptation of placing itself at the service of the renunciatory and anti-pedagogical “there is nothing to be done”. On the contrary. Faced with the ideology that “resounds from the mechanism of a praxis that cannot be escaped”, educational praxis included, what is non-ideological “is the thought that does not allow itself to be traced back to operational terms and instead simply tries to help the thing itself to find those words that the dominant language would otherwise choke in the mouth.” (Adorno, 2018, p.15).

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Rethinking the Human Condition in the Present

Chances for a Humanistic Alternative to Technics' Dehumanization

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There is a question, the most radical one, that inquires philosophy of education today. It's a question about the contemporary human being, about his condition, about the sense and nonsense of his living and existing. The human being of our age, though, lives in a globalized world, mastered by technics and economical reason, as well as functionalism conveyed by the latter. The human being himself has been transformed into a function - a human who, in accordance to the neoliberal thought, finds in personal advantage, profit and consumption, their sole interests, in a world tending to cancel the differences and raise homogenisation and conformism. A world that condemns the human being to exercise a function and not merely to exist; all of these factors submerge the human in a whirl of senselessness and make him oblivious of himself.

These dehumanization processes, however, bring the need of an increase of awareness on the part of philosophy of education into play. Something which can only originate from a thought mirroring the complexity of reality, a critic, reflexive and meta-reflexive thought, also mirroring the responsibility of still commit to the human being and take the chance of a humanistic alternative, something that can only result from a formation able to move beyond the dominating technical thought and towards an education that forms by thinking and thinks by forming.

Keywords: Dehumanization, Complexity, Technics, Formation, Critical Reflexiveness.

Ripensare la condizione umana nel presente. Possibilità per un'alternativa umanistica alla disumanizzazione della tecnica

C'è una domanda, la più radicale, che interroga oggi la filosofia dell'educazione. Si tratta della domanda sull'uomo nella contemporaneità, sulla sua condizione, sul senso e non senso del suo vivere e del suo esistere. Ma l'uomo d'oggi vive in un mondo globalizzato, dominato dalla tecnica e dalla ragione economica, dal funzionalismo che essa veicola e che ha trasformato l'uomo stesso in funzione, un uomo che il pensiero neoliberale vuole interessato solo al tornaconto individuale al guadagno e al consumo, un mondo che tende ad annullare le differenze e crea omologazione e conformismo, che chiede all'uomo di funzionare e non di esistere, fattori tutti che lo rendono dimentico di sé stesso e immerso nel vortice dell'assenza di senso. Ma questi processi di disumanizzazione chiamano proprio la filosofia dell'educazione ad una presa di consapevolezza, che può venire solo da un pensiero che rispecchi la complessità della realtà, che sia critico, riflessivo e meta-riflessivo e alla responsabilità di scommettere ancora sull'uomo, sui margini per un'alternativa umanistica che può venire solo da una formazione che sia in grado di andare oltre il pensiero tecnico dominante e verso un'educazione che pensando forma e formando pensa.

Parole-chiave: disumanizzazione, complessità, tecnica, formazione, riflessività critica.

There is a question, the most radical one, that inquires, generally, philosophy today – if we assume that in philosophy's reflection the people's spirit and the problems that upset their lives are mirrored– and it inquires, in particular, philosophy of education. It is the question about the contemporary human being, about his condition, about the sense and nonsense of his living and his existing, about whether he does or he does not belong to the essence of *humanitas*, that can't be separated from the essence of *Bildung*, seen as the propensity and care for “accomplishing what somehow someone already is”¹, which implies the capacity of thinking, of acting, of designing and designing oneself autonomously, of belonging to a productive and not merely repro-

¹ This is our free interpretation of what the Author states in the *incipit*, in Heidegger (1987, p. 267), which, although, corresponds to what he claims in other writings on *Bildung*.

ductive way, to a world, a society, a culture, a tradition, and in the same time, of belonging to oneself.

The contemporary human being, although, lives in a globalized world, dominated by the technics and the economical reason, that underlies and maintains it, by the functionalism generated by it and that changed the human himself into function, inhibiting a critically oriented thought and action. A human who, in accordance to the neoliberal thought, finds in personal advantage, profit and consumption, his sole interests and whose rule is the maximization of the individuals' egoistic interest. If we consider, furthermore, that the market has become the only ruler of public life, artificially producing needs and making a consumer out of the man, up to the point that he ends up consuming himself, in the furious race to possess objects, the only ones supposed to stabilize his identity, since they don't set relational issues, a race towards gaining and success, towards competition, as sole relational form, all of these factors make the human oblivious of himself and submerge him in a whirl of senselessness.

If all what has been mentioned has, unavoidably, strongly contributed in activating dehumanization processes, in removing the differences, due to a worrying trend for homologation and conformism, if we are faced with an epochal change that has caused the crisis of all historical forms of humanism, yet it could be claimed that the question could be posed in terms of how to give a meaning to a new, if particular, humanism.

But supposing that it could make sense to speak, today, of a new humanism, beyond the trans- and the post-humanisms, then, it should be necessary to humbly ask oneself what is human, the human's authentic essence, his original condition, his potentialities and also his boundaries, his conditionings, weaknesses and fragilities. Only this way it is possible to inquire about the contemporary human and to understand if, after what stated in the *incipit* of this writing upon the ongoing dehumanization processes, there are chances for a humanistic alternative, essentially consisting of ensuring that the human be not an instrument of technics anymore but be able to coexist with critical sense with it and to "colonize" it through his thought and his knowledge, through education, returning the human to himself, to his original condition. A condition in which he changes depending on reality, on the world that surrounds him, on the education he receives, but in which, in the meantime, he maintains the original characters complying with his essence.

There is no doubt that a typical feature of the human is his existing, that is to say his being aware of himself and the world that surrounds him; and another is his original fragility, bound, above all, to his finitude and the consciousness of his caducity, but also to this being unaccomplished, that brings him to live his life in search of his own form; a form that is given and built as well, mainly because of his thrownness, a condition he is called to transcend through the care and the project.

As we already saw, givenness and construction are expressed by Heidegger in reference to *Bildung*.

“We are – as Pareyson will claim – personal executions of a common to every human universality” (Pareyson, 1960, p. 269).

But to say that we are “personal executions of a common universality” means to claim that everyone of us interprets in a unique and singular way something that is ontologically given, namely, the universal form of *humanitas*. Being an unaccomplished, uncompleted form, but originally belonging to the human person and giving oneself a form during all his lifespan, in touch with the other human being and with the world, represent two aspects of what is to be considered the original destination of the human being. As already said, however, the human is into the path of his life and into the process of his formation, fully exposed to the risk of losing himself in the thousand ways of Kierkegaard’s “terrible” (Kierkegaard, 1953, pp. 138-139), i. e., of failing the existence, of living without existing, of experiencing pain and fear of death; and this is the tragic, the negative trait that belongs to the human, since it is part of life, but it doesn’t find room in the world created by the contemporary human, who has removed and deleted it, in the name of the conviction that everything is possible, that there are no boundaries but only borders; the human in his authenticity, is, on the contrary, consciousness, not only of his life’s but also of his knowledge’s boundary, he is option for the possible, never for the certain. But if the human is at the highest exposed and fragile, even since he is unaccomplished, neotenic, indigent, “creature of the need”, he needs cares and the chance to fulfil himself as authentically human, on the basis of his very own possibilities², he depends precisely on the Care, as ontologically understood and grounding the concrete, human care activities and relationships.

² The reference to the ontological nature of the care points evidently out to Heidegger and can be found in Heidegger (1969, p. 289).

Concerning fragility as main human feature, Gehlen will speak about “biological deficiency” (Gehlen, 1983, p. 167), while Lévinas will state that “the human, from tip to toe, all the way to the bone marrows, is vulnerability” (Lévinas, 1985, p. 127).

Hard not to think of what is, maybe not by chance, one of the most well-known Pascal’s *Thoughts*, in which the human is compared to a cane, “the nature’s most fragile, a vapor, a drop of water are enough to kill him, but his nobility and superiority, upon the universe that can squash him, lays in the fact that he thinks and he knows he has to die” (Pascal, 1967, pp. 160-163).

Pascal suggests here that the thinking and continuous questioning the sense of life is part of the human’s essence, his original feature, starting from the awareness, that is solely human, of the death. But there are endless ways of thinking and it needs to be questioned which might be the highest form of it and might be characterizing the human being at the most.

Agreed upon the fact that the methodical and calculating science’s way of thinking is certainly dominating today, it needs to be questioned whether there are or aren’t other forms of thinking that are complementary or alternative to it. Certainly, as Heidegger states, the thought in his highest form can’t be aimed at the useful and at the application, it can’t be reduced to technical thought, that serves the doing and the producing, a way of thinking that mostly fits the science and that sometimes has brought philosophy (and also philosophy of education) to justify their presence assuming science-status, but this means, adds Heidegger, “the abandon of the thinking’s very essence” (Heidegger, 1987, p. 268).

The thought that intends to seek the truth stays in its essence when it is in the critics, that unmethodical *modus*, i. e. not appeased by the appliance of an a priori established method, but rather unquiet, and therefore characterized by an unexhausted questioning, that does not elude the radical questions that will never find secure answers, a thought that is doubt and skepticism, that is look on reality in seek of a truth and a meaning that doesn’t tend to simplify or to “specialize”, or fragment, but to seize reality in its irreducible complexity, being, therefore, reflective and meditative, more than calculating-scientific thinking.

To think is not, how it is usually believed today, to know, if superficially, many things, especially through the help of the powerful informatic means, that, indeed, inform but don’t trigger the thinking; the truth isn’t accessible

to the ones who know many things, but to them, instead, who are able to make a good use of the thought. As Heraclitus polemically said: “Knowing many things does not teach to have intelligence” (Fragment 40).

In fact, right at the beginning of the third millennium, the human shows an exceptional intellectual blindness, inherited from the XX century culture, that, with its amazing technical-scientific progresses has, although, conveyed – through the reductionist method, that teaches to decontextualize, disjoint and disarticulate the knowledges, up until the drift of hyper-specialism – an extraordinary insensitiveness towards global and complex issues.

So writes Edgar Morin:

The XX century has lived under the domination of a rationality that has pretended to be the sole rationality, but that has wasted the understanding, the reflexion and the long-term view. Its insufficiency in facing the heaviest problems, has represented one of the most serious issues for humanity (Morin, 2001, p. 46).

A. Gorz, on his part, denounces that the mathematical formalization ends up making of the thought itself a technique. He points out on the common roots of the economical rationality and the way of thinking that he defines “cognitive-instrumental reason” and that is based upon the logical-formal thought.

The deepening of this connection would be bringing us too far, but it is important to highlight, for its implications for the human, that the mathematical formalization of the thought, codified in technical procedures, prevents him from every chance of returning reflectively on himself and isolates him from the knowledges that are provided by the living experience.

The technicalization, the reification, the monetarizing of the relationships have their cultural anchoring in this technics of thinking, in which the operations work without the involvement of the subject and the subjects, who, being absent, neither are accountable. That way can take shape our cold civilization, whose cold, functional, calculated, formalized relationships estrange the living individuals from the reified world that is, nonetheless, their product; a civilization in which a terrific technical inventiveness goes along with a degradation of the art of living, of communication ability and of spontaneity (Gorz, 1992, p. 140).

This calculating thinking culminates in visualizing the human himself, his brain, his mind, on the basis of the machine's model, up until the appearing of this thinking machine that is the computer and, from there on, all informatic, technological systems that the technics has produced, and that have undoubtedly brought advantages but have also, actually, substituted the free and non-calculating thought and have ended up becoming a real world for the contemporary human, have created a virtual reality exchanging it for the authentical one, inhibiting the relationships between humans again through virtual relationships, depriving the man of the authentical experiences that originate from the real and lived life to substitute them with fake experiences, all inside the virtual reality.

The mind, having become able to think like a machine, recognizes itself in a machine, that works alike, unaware of the fact that, in the truth, the machine doesn't work like the mind, but only like the mind that has learned to work as a machine (*ivi*, p. 139).

The human brain is more and more often compared to a Turing Machine, able to process an enormous quantity of data and to "draw conclusions" starting from the use of algorithms and of the embodied program, namely the *software*. But the human brain is something else and it can never be thought of, not even from the biological and scientific perspective, as a simple "external memory", independent from the body that hosts it; the brain has been sculptured, along with the body, by life, by our history, by the joys and the pain that have made us become what we are and it can never be thought of as a simple elaborator of informations, as complex and important they might be, on the contrary, the excess of codified data, lacking of direct experience and the disconnection of brain and body are creating a veritable distance between the human and the world and the man and himself³.

It is easy to identify in the ruling on part of the economical reason an aspect of the broader domination of the technics. And with the term "technics" it is not just to be intended the universe of the means (the technologies) that as a whole compose the technical device, but also and especially so, the rationality that presides to their use in terms of functionality and efficiency.

³ Upon the topic of the human compared to the machine and the thinking that can't be detached from the body, from the living body, can be seen Benasayag (2015, *passim*).

Technics arose with these features not as an expression of the human “spirit”, but as a “remedy” to his biological shortage.

Quoting A. Gehlen and other big exponents of the occidental thought, U. Galimberti dares to claim that, in a certain way, technics represents the “essence of the human” (Galimberti, 1999, p. 34), since he was born incomplete, weak, lacking under the instinctual point of view, compared to the animal, he can live only thanks to his action, which rapidly achieves those technical procedures that supply to the human instinctual weakness and become, as a matter of fact, his way to build himself a world (*ivi*, p. 35).

But the technics, appeared as a device for the survival of the human and as an instrument of progress and of superiority towards the animal, is no more, today, something we can make use of, we inhabit it and it is impossible to walk away from it. Since we inhabit a world that is technically organized in each of its parts, technics is not an object of our choice anymore, but it is our surrounding, in which goals and means, aims and conceptions, behaviours, thoughts, actions and passions, even dreams and desires are technically articulated and need technics to express themselves. Through its means (technologies), through its rationality, based upon the concepts of functionalism, efficiency and performance, technics represents the unescapable destination of our occidental world.

What happened, although, to the human in a universe of means that has nothing else ahead but the enhancement and strengthening of its equipment?

There where the world of life – writes again Galimberti – is entirely generated and made possible by the technical setup, the human becomes an executive of said setup and his identity resolves itself in its functionality; it is, therefore, possible to say that in the era of technics the human is by-himself inasmuch as he is functional to his other self that is technics” (*ivi*, p. 41).

Arisen as a condition of the human existence, thus as an expression of its anthropological nature, today, because of the dimensions it has achieved and because of the autonomy it has gained, technics expresses the abstraction and the combination of human conceptions and actions at such a high level of artificiality, that no human group, as specialized as it might be, and maybe precisely because of its specialization, is able to control it in its entirety. In

a similar context, to be reduced to an executive of the technics means, so, for the human, to be “elsewhere” in regard to the home he has historically known, it means to be far from himself.

The technics has constituted, for centuries, a means to realize certain goals, but since it has increased in its quantity to the point of becoming available for the realization of each and every aim, then, it is not the aim anymore, that conditions the representation, the research, the acquiring of technical instruments, but it will be the increased availability of the technical means that will spread the range of each and every aim; therefore, the technics turns from instrument into aim, not because it proposes itself something, but because every goal and aim that the humans propose themselves can't be achieved but through the mediation of technics.

Another characteristic feature of our society and our world, that affects also pedagogic research and its repercussions on the school field, is the assuming of a performance-oriented perspective, which, as Benasayag warns, is, nowadays, often aimed at nothing but the performance itself, in other words, one should be performative for the performance (*ibidem*), without a wider horizon, without a sense, without a structure, without other aims, and this distorted efficiency, this functionalism that harms the existence, is a typical feature of the technics' era.

“The society's proposal to the youth, is to *function*. Not to exist but to function, namely, to be performative” (Benasayag, 2019b, p. 25).

The imperative of always having to function, of always having to be performative, keeps the contemporary human from showing his own fragility, it keeps him, therefore, from being authentically himself, in his integrity of body and mind. Who is fragile as, for example, the old people, has to be pushed aside, as not being performative anymore and the same can be said for any kind of fragility, with the consequences that can easily be figured out.

It must be said that school and university, through the introduction of continuous evaluation and self-evaluation processes, that are carried out exclusively on a quantity and not on a quality basis, since this is the condition for being considered objective and scientific, take towards this direction.

The competence-based pedagogy, in order to be able to evaluate through measuring, removes from school everything that is real culture, everything that is creativity (there is no more writing of essays – not easily measurable – but there's measuring of language competencies), a school that doesn't form for life, that doesn't teach critical attitude, doesn't transmit culture, but that

in-forms, in which the passion for the taught contents transmitted to the students is lacking, while only this kind of passion would be able to join and “infect” them, a school that does not pay attention to the specificity and uniqueness of every individual and doesn’t promote his development, doesn’t permit to show fragilities, since they decrease productivity, that doesn’t educate the/to emotions that are the womb of knowledges and, often, leaves room to the, sometimes violent, impulses that are dominating in the anonymousness of the social media, that should have been, indeed, translated into emotions and educated as such.

“You will be educated – writes furthermore Benasayag – when you will have learned to suffocate the personal inclinations and affinities, to erase everything that could disturb or stop the fluidity that is requested in the job market, when you will be, that is to say, well disintegrated (2019a, pp. 15-16).

Flexibility, plasticity, adaptability, are the new mantra against every slightly more complex thought: everyone is requested, since childhood, to evolve into a hyperplastic un-form.

And this happens even in the very places that should guide the formation processes of individuals in the age of development, when stronger is the struggle of the self-seeking in a world that continuously brings them far from themselves and of a search of a, yet not stable nor fix, identity; when youth pose themselves radical questions upon the sense and nonsense of their way of being in the world, upon their being born and dying, upon the pain and the suffering, upon friendship and love, where they should live experiences and searches that aren’t reducible to a mere data collection. A walk of life is something very different than a curriculum that lists the activities in which an individual is performative.

The domination of technics is, therefore, an epochal turn and if it turns out to be impossible to dominate it or to not depend on it, nothing else remains to the human but the hope and also the engagement of becoming aware of it, of thinking of it with “another” thought but the technical one, a complex thought, not specialized or shattered, a thought that doesn’t blind, as the science’s one, but does penetrate, as Zambrano (1996, p. 75) suggests, in order to avoid that the technics happen without his knowing, that it act without his knowing, making, like this, meaningless his own existing.

If, then, the look is set upon the world built up by the informatic technologies, it can’t be overlooked that it is an unavoidable reality, from the moment that the internet has become the plot of our existences. If we consider

the digital natives, that were born after the appearing of internet, it is hard not to see how their constant use of the social networks influences inexorably and in increasingly stronger wise their way of life, of relating to the others, to look at, build and understand the world, to seek the meaning they believe they find in their world of connections, of continuous stimuli, of virtual relationships, characterized by the speed with which these are established and vanish; the meaning is given by the number of the visualizations they obtain, existing only as they appear on the social media.

But the bewildered looks of the youth at school need a sense, a simple sense of living, but too often school is not able to offer it to them, intent as it is on developing foredetermined programs and on judging and evaluating their performances. So, they will renounce walking the hard path of school and are set to remain in lonely search of a meaning all inside the amount of the social media's incitements, developing such a dependence on them that the frustration generated by the upbreaking of these incitements, will cause in them an anguished void.

The continuous use of the new technologies does, thus, profoundly affect the cognitive attitudes and of every other life's expression of the new generations. It concerns individuals that live in constant connection. They face a screen every day, from which they observe and build the world in a different way: through the screen they appear, express themselves, communicate and, therefore, establish social and affective virtual relationships. How could all this not affect their essential way of being? Television, games, tablet, computer screens, in front of which young and old humans spend increasing time, build up an irresistible force that mesmerizes them and that puts them in an almost hypnotic, neither pleasant nor unpleasant, simply absent, status.

To return to the opening question about the human condition today and also about the meaningful- or meaninglessness of a new humanism, it has to be said that very few, in the panorama in dark colours that we have tried to depict, can be seen, today, that allows us to see the signs of a humanistic alternative, that might make us hope for something opposing all the dehumanization processes that are involved in this scenario and, nonetheless, there's not much use of a way of thinking that disregards it, that isn't aware of it and that, simply, gives in to an integralist and technophobic temptation, opposing certainties and views of the human and the world that pursue impossible returns to the past, to a long-lost time; rather, there must be found ways to

live with this condition and to seek openings for the human, for a new and different sense-giving.

This is why philosophy of education can't assume merely renunciatory attitudes, on the contrary, it has to face with even more strength the task of questioning about the human, about his destiny and, aware of the epochal and global processes of dehumanization, of finding the courage to denounce these at every level and, nonetheless, still commit to the human being, not abandoning him to himself, to the inevitable lost of meaning he would be subjugated to without the (cultural, emotional, ethic, existential) mediation of a pedagogic care relationship, aimed at making it possible, for him, to return to belonging to himself, to being free for his most own possibilities, to choosing and to choosing himself, to existing and not to functioning. The ones, namely, who are hit, distorted, pushed into the whirl of the general process of under-humanization coming from utilitarianism, businessification, from the imperative of being performative, are first of all the places entrusted to formation at every level, from school to university, with the drifts that have been denounced above; but it is for this very reason that, if ever some glimmer can be seen, to bring back the human to himself, to give him back his original features, to be "human and not non-human", it is precisely offered by a radical rethinking of the formation and education of the new generations, only a society that invests in formation, but a formation that makes aware of the traps of technical rationality, can nurture the hope of a future that is not determined by technics but by the human, who, despite the fact that he can't avoid depending on the technics' world, he can at least decide the way to inhabit it, in order not to be determined by technics but to become an active and not merely a reproductive part of it and to return being the place and the origin of the sense, despite a reality that deprived him of that same sense.

This, and only this, can be understood, today, as a new humanism; investing in a good formation. So, the role of pedagogy becomes crucial, a pedagogy of the human, of a human that "form himself thinking and think in forming himself"⁴, and it should be taken the challenge of the engagement, the capacity, the responsibility of the ones that are teaching and educating, at every level, of promoting the critical thought and not the efficiency, not only a linear, logical and formal thought, but one able to comprehend also

⁴ We pick this thought from Sola (2008, p. 11).

the incongruence, the exception, the deviation, the complexity of life, giving back room to emotions, transmitting to the new generations the passion for knowledge as only weapon against letting themselves devour by the virtual world that so overwhelmingly fascinates them but that also tends to expropriate and move them away from themselves. School, university, as formational places are, moreover, the only realities where there can still be seen openings for returning the human to himself, but it is necessary to be aware of the responsibility of that task and the awareness is once again given only by the thinking that philosophy of education cultivates and that is called to transmit to the ones educating and forming at every level, a critical and radical thinking, able to transcend the obvious, the shared, the stable frames and perspectives and that are shown as natural, in order to change perspective, to walk towards the other and the elsewhere, towards new horizons and “possible worlds” (Bateson, 1976, *passim*)⁵, which implies an education to think the complexity of reality, outside and beyond the technical thought.

⁵ The reference is on Bateson (1976, *passim*).

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The eloquent education of sensitive experience. On the implicit in the experience of everyday life

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Following the pedagogical-critical tradition which considers the relations between education and existence as the primary matrix of educational comprehension and analysis, this paper aims to explore the implicit meanings of daily life as “cultural objects” to be decoded. Indeed, such cultural objects and their significant lived experience transversally inhabit the formal, non-formal and informal contexts of education, characterizing the constitution of individual personality in a manner that is decisive yet too often lacking in awareness.

In particular, the point is that the processes of subjectivation take shape from the nexus between closeness to and distance from the world, settling within the sensitive experience of everyday life. Therefore, finding the implicit educational meaning and causing it to emerge becomes not only one of most urgent ethical and pedagogical needs, but also one of the interpretative keys of the experience of our times, since it allows us to uncouple the polarizations educator/learner, intentional/unintentional education, subject/world, recovering the paradigm of relationship as a constitutive element of lived experience.

Keywords: lived experience, everyday life, sensitive experience, reciprocal relation, existence.

L'educazione eloquente dell'esperienza sensibile. Sull'implicito nell'esperienza del quotidiano

Nel solco di una tradizione pedagogico-critica che individua nel rapporto tra educazione ed esistenza la matrice irrinunciabile di comprensione e

d'analisi educative, il contributo propone l'esplorazione dei significati impliciti della quotidianità in quanto "oggetti culturali" da decifrare. Infatti, tali oggetti culturali e il loro vissuto significativo abitano trasversalmente in contesti formali, non-formali e informali dell'educazione connotando in maniera decisiva, ma troppo spesso inconsapevole, la costituzione della personalità individuale.

In particolare, l'idea è che i processi di soggettivazione prendano corpo a partire dal nesso che descrive prossimità e distanze con il mondo, annidandosi nell'esperienza sensibile del quotidiano. Sicché, scovare e far emergere l'implicito educativo diventa non solo una delle esigenze etico-pedagogiche più urgenti, ma anche una delle chiavi interpretative dell'esperienza del nostro tempo, poiché consente di sfuggire alla polarizzazione educatore/educando, educazione intenzionale/educazione inintenzionale, soggetto/mondo, recuperando il paradigma della relazione come costitutivo dell'esperienza vissuta.

Parole chiave: esperienza vissuta, quotidianità, esperienza sensibile, relazione reciproca, esistenza.

The rediscovered existence

One of the most pedagogically relevant socio-cultural effects of the unprecedented times we are living in seems to be the rediscovery of what is missing and what is worth¹. The search for the meaning of existence, the exploitation of the embodied relationships, the recapture of the direct relations self-world, the re-appropriation of beauty as a fundamental need, emerge from the silent astonishment of reality to question humans. Thus, while the irruption of the unexpected has subjugated the interpretative paradigms of reality to a new order of sense (the claim of a definitively disoriented humanity?), the indecency that has followed it has subordinated humans to its own arrogance (the end of self-determination? Or of freedom?)².

¹ Furio Semerari (Ed., 2017) had already worked in this direction, anticipating a trend which has since been decisively amplified by the pandemic.

² We will not take into account here the many interpretations that were immediately produced about the effects of the pandemic on the human and on education. The risk, in fact, would be to attempt hasty conclusions that, once again, leave no room for actual

In this overview it is interesting to note the return to elements that are surely not new to pedagogical studies. After having long-constituted the great trajectories of the approaches of the philosophy of education, with the end of the last century and with their sedimentation in the current discursiveness, the concepts of existence, intersubjectivity, corporeality, perception, have found their scope of meaning obscured. The same has occurred in the philosophy of education. Overwhelmed by the urgency of specific answers to immediate needs, prescribed by an imperative of performativity that has marked the decline of the 'projectual' instances open to the possible (Merlini, 2009), the missing (structure of existence), the essential (condition of intersubjectivity) and the search for meaning may now be emancipated from the condition of implicit paradigms of education and of educational thinking.

Although a large part of the studies of the philosophy of education, guided by different approaches or ethical perspectives³, have been committed to decoding contemporaneity for at least half a century in order to coordinate contexts and situations to the meanings of education, the issue of the implicit meanings, crossing both the thematic fields and the interpretative approaches, does not seem to have been raised with the necessary recursiveness and forcefulness. Let us be clear: a long path has been walked in the explication, deconstruction and emersion of the dogmatic and latent meanings of

occurrence and the necessary critical distance - even temporal - that is essential to a real understanding. The urgency of dictating new perspectives, new paradigms, reacting to the unknown, seems, in fact, to be more often an attempt to exorcise - if not to exploit - a crisis without equal in recent history. Rather, here we are attempting the path of a radical awareness of the irreversibility of an event that, while leaving no room for any form of acquiescent fatalism or concerned caution, intends to proceed with constant determination in understanding.

³ The picture of the Italian philosophies of education, from the last century to today, appears definitely varied and dynamic. If in the second half of the last century they were predominantly identifiable by 'approaches' or 'schools' (from Angelo Broccoli's Marxism (1974) to Alberto Granese's hermeneutics (1975) to the empiricism of Raffaele Laporta (1996), from Giovanni Maria Bertin's problematicism (1968) to the phenomenological pedagogy of Piero Bertolini (1988)), by the end of the century and the beginning of the new millennium, it is rather the problems that appear to be prevailing (education as a criticism of education by Antonio Erbetta; education as a cure and risk by Rita Fadda; Eidos of education starting from the model of German *Bildung* by Mario Gennari; autobiography as Care of the Self by Duccio Demetrio; art as a pedagogical instrument by Marco Dallari or as a countereducational action by Paolo Mottana; emotional life as a key to education by Vanna Iori; the ecology of the mind by Luigina Mortari; metatheory and the device of the pedagogical discourse by Franco Cambi).

the educational praxis and ideas, also monitoring the symbolic reconfigurations of the educational agencies and of the theoretical paradigms of reference (Massa, 1986; Mariani, 1997, 2000, 2008; Erbetta, Ed. 2010; Cappa, Ed., 2009; Giachery, 2015).

Such a context, however, has displayed a disquieting process of normalization of the critical-pedagogical perspectives⁴, which only currently can the philosophies of education discuss and contextualize again. This in the attempt to regain the broad horizon of its own heuristic calling, in the field of the necessary articulations between subject and history, possibility and necessity, immanence and transcendence. Therefore, it seems urgent to set existence again at the core of reflective attention, so as to arrange the main themes emerging *within* a complex pattern of components and to consign, contextually, the *telos* of education to its own cultural and social role. Indeed, thanks to the extent of the horizon of the philosophy of education, it is possible to grasp those shades of meaning which connect and tie submerged aspects of individual existence, which however intertwine in the immanence of existence representing the explicit ethical connotations of one's own participation in life.

In fact, since the beginning of the century, the weakening of the philosophies of life has implied the loss of continuity in the discussion of the ques-

⁴ Consider the recursiveness with which a 'critical' approach not better defined is proposed within the scientific debate. That is, an approach that, unlike the analyses quoted, aimed at bringing out the deforming implicit of current education, assumes the radical criticism to the dominant thought – whether its origin be from Frankfurt or deconstructive or post-structuralist – as an obvious and unavoidable variant, therefore, actually, harmless. As Rita Fadda writes, it is a matter of “emerging from the generic (no one would ever admit to practicing an uncritical thought), from an idea of critical pedagogy declined in the most disparate ways, from a polysemy of the term ‘criticism’ that, from richness and meaningfulness, becomes confusion and absence of any and every element of regulation, of theoretical discipline, of reference to guiding principles that orient and filter” (Fadda, 2009, p. 17). In this sense, from the beginning of the nineties of the twentieth century, Antonio Erbetta defined the need for pedagogy itself to be a “criticism of pedagogy”, to assume upon itself, consciously and explicitly, the antinomy that connotes it as the science of description and as the science of prescription, without stumbling on either the limit of a false neutrality of data or on that of ideology (Erbetta, 1994). In other words, what saves education from being regulation and what saves pedagogy from being ideology is, according to Erbetta, their respective placement on the self-critical horizon that, with Nietzsche and Rilke, Banfi, Simmel and Husserl, Merleau-Ponty and Sartre, means *staying* in the “places of crisis” that constitute that same antinomy in order to seek, right there and not in an abstract elsewhere, an authentic direction that unites education and existence (Erbetta, 1998).

tion of the subject, either considering its persistence obvious, although fragmentary, as the background of the question, or leaning towards an explicit anti-subjectivism. Such a condition, then, seems to have made the subject itself transparent, indistinct and, ultimately, disembodied. Absent even from that 'reality plan' so dear to empiricists/realists, the embodied subject seems to have learned how to live far away both from the meticulous codifications of its own already-being and from the ontologies of its 'real being'.

Ultimately, what appears as the implicit of education is, today, its existential horizons, just as the relationship between education and existence seems so compelling as to be reciprocal. On the one hand, there is existence as the condition and as the destiny of the subject, that is to say as what circumscribes the possibilities and limits of everyone within an order which is not only ontological-temporal (Heidegger, 1927/1976) but which is also the achievement of a peculiar form of relationship between subject and world (Paci, 1957). On the other hand, there is education as "the keystone of existence" (Erбетта, 1998, p. 44), because "by distancing itself from the immediacy of the world, it introduces an order of things, a plausible horizon of meaning" (*ivi*, p. 26).

Is it, then, a matter of returning (regressing?) to the philosophies of existence?

It is rather a matter of rethinking existence starting from the forms through which significant expressiveness is rooted in daily life, since this is the exact place where the dialectic request between determination and indeterminacy manifests itself as culture.

In other words, if it remains certainly true, as Spranger claimed, that "life educates", to the extent that it decides the inexorable circumstances of each life, hence giving shape to it, it is also true that the awareness of such a process, along with the possibility of governing it and giving it direction, pertains to the action of distancing from mere life performed by education (*ibidem*). It is, then, a matter of critical education that does not intend to forge, smooth, correct, leaving to the subject it educates the duty or the accident to notice its implicit action. On the contrary, the education which releases the subjective intelligence, showing it the implicit meanings, that is providing it with those instruments necessary for the recognition of the dialectic between subjective will and desires, on the one hand, and, on the other, social, cultural and educational conformation.

Education, lived experience and everyday life

Erlebnis is not only one of the key-words definitively introduced into the philosophic language by Husserl's phenomenology – which, in the wake originally left by Dilthey, determined its centrality as a structure of knowledge –, but it is above all an expression which has now entered the pedagogical language even beyond its original meanings, to interpret the most subjective component of experience, mainly consisting of perceptions, emotions and meanings that are not necessarily determined by circumstances.

In truth, the phenomenological-existential sense of the word includes a component which is far more relevant than the simple use of the subjective 'point of view'. Such meaning, in fact, calls into question the concurrence of two conditions: the immediate intuition that allows such experience to 'emerge' from the indistinct flow of current experiences (*Erlebnisstrom*) and the elaboration of its meaning with respect to existence as a whole. Therefore, nothing extemporaneous or punctiform, but, on the contrary, a plexus of relationships where subject and world relate to each other.

It is thanks to this perspective that existence and lived experience become an agency: to exist. That pedagogical existing that Piero Bertolini had identified as a founding perspective of phenomenological Pedagogy at the end of the eighties (Bertolini, 1988, n.e. 2021). That lived experience which Antonio Erbetta had interpreted as the very key of education, and of a pedagogy that was markedly phenomenological-*existential* (Erbetta, 1992, 1994, Ed. 2001, 2005/2011). It is the "education as lived experience of man as culture" that no longer makes, here, the subject a "naked life", but rather an agent of culture who *can* – within his own margins of freedom – redeem himself from a non-proper existence, through the forms of culture that history makes available to him and which he himself is capable of regenerating.

Therefore, with respect to the sense of the lived experience, it is not a matter of making a philological clarification, which might, however, be necessary in reopening some long-standing hermeneutic questions. It is instead a matter of intervening on a potential educational drift. Because, in the face of the radical disorientation caused by the pandemic and its dreadful breaking of habits which *really* make the future an exhausting uncertainty, the risk that is looming is that the paradigm of existence emerges as a clumsy temptation to find an escape path from a present which is too demanding and suffocating. Almost as if claiming the need for existence may actually mean oppos-

ing the full-time of the world with one's own feeling of life, the full-time of the world. Or again, almost as if the suspended or missed or involuntary life which corresponds to the real daily life could be evaded by escaping into the idealized, desired life of elsewhere.

On the other hand, from the perspective of existence, any aspect of taking shape becomes an aim of pedagogical reflectiveness: from the minute experiences of daily life to the more complex and demanding questions, but always with an eye on the relationships that are inscribed in their reciprocity.

After all, just as the anthropo-psycho-social implicit of the pre-ordered meaning of the daily minuteness has been analyzed as a space of critical legitimacy of an ordinariness that is far from being obvious but which, even so, remains separate from a tension to project (De Certeau, 1990/2012; Goffman, 1959/1969, Žižek, 2014), this critical relevance also needs to be reaffirmed and reinterpreted in the pedagogical field in light of the 'great implicit' of becoming.

According to this interpretation, not only can the lived experience of everyday life regain the meaning of a more explicit perspective (and less rhetorical than the simple optimistic appeal to the future), but above all it can claim its ethical-critical industriousness. Firstly, because if lived experience is, according to Enzo Paci, the heart of relationships between subjects, events, different temporal vectors, then it is also the expression of an intersection of meanings which, as the complex knot, irreducibly builds subjectivity to the singularity of its aspects (Paci, 1957, 1963, 1973; Madrussan, 2005). Secondly, because this knot is not simply the result of the subjective modification of meanings already determined and assumed as such *by* the world. But – far more ambitiously – it is the attempt to give sense to the relation self-world through the constant reconsideration of those meanings. This second-level distancing work requires an ethical-educational awareness for which the philosophic component of knowledge is not sufficient, but where the educational component of philosophic thinking is necessary so as to shape oneself *towards* a possibility to be concretely achieved. It is in such a complex (the intersections of relationships) and stratified context (the levels of cultural analysis between subject and world) that the selective structures of interpretation of the individual experience (for instance: school-related or even didactic *or else* educational) prevent showing those relations of sense that are, in effect, connected to each other – and lived as such – on the existential level.

A possible cultural graft between anthropo-social and philosophic-educational perspectives can be achieved, as we have tried to show elsewhere (Madrusan, 2020), by intersecting the phenomenological-existential perspective and Cultural Studies, especially those of the origins, in which a lived experience was prevalent and was still narratively full of implicit meanings to be revealed (Hoggart, 1957/2009; Williams, 1961/1968; Thompson, 1963/1980). It is no coincidence that, in Cultural Studies, the role of education is socio-culturally characterized by the ability to inspire *agency*. That is, as an action of transformation of the meanings induced by the producers of experiential consumption.

Actually, phenomenological-existential pedagogy definitely acts as disclosure of the implicit structures of knowing to generate conscious knowledge. For their part, Cultural Studies operate by disclosing the ideological and intentionally shaping the connotation of the meaning transmitted in daily life. Both perspectives are characterized by the fact that they are methods of reversing the sense and of exposing the deceptions of the unreflective life. Where they differ at least theoretically is on the levels of elaboration of purpose: the former operates on the *Erlebnis* as the experience of a bodily-intellectual knowledge that is potentially capable of transcending itself; the latter operate on the *lived experience* as a precipitate of a cultural sediment of the human that resists the manipulation of the sense. In both perspectives, not by chance, education can become the decisive space of awareness and emancipation.

Now, such a correlation regarding the possible transcendence of meanings avoids the risk of epistemic opposition between determinist and subjective perspectives, keeping them rather in a reciprocal dynamic tension. This is not all: this theoretical graft returns its anti-reductionist pertinence to existence, where, in particular, the lived experience recovers the organic dimension of rational exercise and of sensitive perception. In the lived experience, in fact, and within the flow of existence, feeling and knowing, tasting and doing, sensing and realizing, perceiving and building the concept are not part of an event (*eventus*), but rather the occurrence of the event (*evenio*).

It is in this field, then, that the lived experience returns to be the occasion of a reflexive distancing which does not cease to tell of the world while talking of the subject. And it does so again by pinpointing the most fruitful ethical support in the aesthetic connotation of *feeling*. If not the least contaminated, at least the most open to the possible.

The eloquent education of the significant aesthetic

It is precisely the experiences of everyday life that are open to a significant educational and formative potential. This can be related, originally, to the experience of an existential limit-situation – as in the case of old and new marginalities (Calvetto, 2013, 2020; Giachery, 2010, 2019) –, one's own feeling of the world and of interpersonal relationships (Erbetta, Ed., 2004; Massara, 2009; Madrussan, 2017; Pincirolì, 2018), the minute existential gestures that create unnoticed sedimentations of sense on which it is possible to act following an unveiling direction (Erbetta, 2001; Madrussan, 2003, 2008, 2009, Ed. 2018, 2021).

The point is that, although the subjectivity described by the contemporary world is incomplete, fragmentary, disenchanted and lacking, it nevertheless continues to experience a *sensitive* tension towards the things of the world. Such resonance of the sensitive experience is interpreted – from Merleau-Ponty (1945/1972; Lisciani-Petrini, 2002; Carbone, 2004) to the most radical Rancière (2000/2016) – as a mode of relationship. It actually and always describes a process of subjectivation and, simultaneously, of ethical-political construction. Thus, the analysis of the sensitive experience does not aim to define an aesthetic theory or a theory of art – not even a political or pedagogical theory – but it aims to show the dynamic *how* of that relation. However the examination of such modalities of relation from a point of view of the philosophy of education cannot disregard the cogency of the processes of formation/deformation acted on and by the subject, whether he is educator or student. The balance of the ethical-pedagogical view with respect to the dynamisms underway prevents the underestimation of the different components at stake – individual and social, micro and macro-cultural –, but above all it implies subjectivity as the ultimate term – with respect to the existential project – *and* as situated configuration – here and now – of the educational agency.

The context in which such a relation takes shape is the extended daily life, intended not so much as time of repetition of the identical insignificant ordinary, but rather as a field of involuntary (but not inert) knowledge, useful for a double pedagogical analysis. On the one hand, the opportunity to discover one's own feeling and the significant re-action of the subject in the making lurks in the “unbeknown” (Certeau, 1975/1977) which animates and colour the experience of daily life. On the other hand, it is right

in those colourings woven by taste, by the representation of the possible, by the desire of the impossible and by the exercise of imagination that the lived experience should reconnect with the overall texture of existence. An existence which is contextually perceived as the common condition and as characteristic of the self.

The relationship with a literary text, the listening to a piece of music, the relation with images – photographic, cinematographic, figurative art –, the habit of a certain self-representation related to the elaboration of one's own public figure, the configuration of a certain worldview through instruments of cultural appropriation and use, the exercise of one's own imagination with the symbolic aid of metaphors and allegories, the tension towards the poetic and oneiric, are just some of the principal examples of how, while escaping from the descriptive predictability of social determinism, a large part of what marks the subjective *proprium* cannot be traced back to the narrow mesh of coded knowledge.

It is not coincidental that the sensitive lived experience is transversal to the conventionally circumscribed fields of formal, non-formal and informal education, since it rather matches existence. With regard to existence, education appears as the (re)construction of the web of meanings and, with that, it becomes *eloquent*, to the extent that it does not allow the ordering rationality of the real summarize itself. Its significance, in fact, lies precisely in *knowing how to express* the recognition of the self in the forms of the unexpected and of the ineffable.

Here there are possibilities of sense in action, which everyone can easily feel as their own, but that just as easily can be reduced to superfluous object or, even worse, to temporary escape. The fact that the aesthetic experience has been so long nourished by the exclusive dominion of the artistic canons and of the ideal is, perhaps, what has made it paradoxically unexpressive for many people, as well as ideologically represented as the sole dominion of the bourgeois classes. And, presumably, its unwillingness to be reduced within paradigms of measurability and empiric factuality is also what has made it one of the great implicit meanings of education. Subtext to the text of the description, of the reflection, of the analysis, perception is the result of the pathic meeting between subject and world. In fact, this is the place where bond, affection, the need for ulteriority or, vice versa, distance, hostility, indifference to certain embodied experiences are nourished or consumed. But it is precisely these that request, then, to be included in the widest scenario of

history, of the material and cultural given conditions and of the formative/deforming effects they induce.

It is, then, up to those who educate and think of education to notice a fruitful 'text' of the self-developing in the sensitive lived experience, making its significance explicit and taking into consideration the heterogeneity of the "cultural objects" of daily life – literature, music, figurative art, cinema, etc. – which are suitable for interpretation both as ties of relations and as chances of knowledge and awareness. Because, if it is true that existence, in its dynamism between continuity and discontinuity, begs to be understood as a complex of relationships, it is also true that such comprehension is possible only through education.

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A Gramsci Renaissance?

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In this article, some recent pedagogical studies about Gramsci's philosophy of praxis will be analyzed. Starting from these studies, the author argues for the possibility of reading the contemporaneity through Gramscian lens. In particular, he puts forward the hypothesis of using category of passive revolution to decipher the neoliberal reforms of the (Italian) school system.

Keywords: Marxism, Gramsci, Pedagogy, Passive Revolution, Hegemony.

Un ritorno a Gramsci?

Dopo avere per sommi capi ricostruito le fasi dell'apogeo e del declino del gramscismo in pedagogia, il testo sonda l'ipotesi dell'emergenza, negli ultimi decenni, di una sorta di Gramsci renaissance. In tal senso, sono approfonditi alcuni studi relativamente recenti sull'intellettuale sardo e trattati alcuni possibili usi pedagogici delle categorie gramsciane funzionali a decifrare criticamente la contemporaneità contrassegnata dall'egemonia del neoliberalismo.

Parole-chiave: marxismo, Gramsci, pedagogia, rivoluzione passiva, egemonia.

Introduction

This contribution attempts a synthetic reconstruction of the events within Italian pedagogic Marxism (the line stemming from Gramsci in particular) bringing out the crisis of the 1980s, which went hand in hand with the claim by neoliberalism of its regime of truth. This was a time when Gramsci seemed almost disappear from scientific debate, only then to reappear in the decades that followed on. This renewed interest in Gramsci is not manifested only in the ways of a return to a *classic*, but appears, further, to be oriented towards identifying instruments for deciphering the present, to shed doubt on the order of the current hegemonic discourse, to rethink a model of the subject that, beginning from the *Notebooks*, is defined as an “inventory” (Gramsci 1975: Q11I§12, p. 1376; *SPN* p. 324)¹ of the social relations of which that subject is “at the hub” and is able to “create [its] personality” and to modify that personality, thereby to “modify the *ensemble* of these relations” (Gramsci 1975: Q10II§54, p. 1345; *SPN*, p. 352). It is superfluous to recall the importance, for neoliberal governmentality of the production of subjectivity that internalizes the *competitive resources* of an undertaking. Hence the education sector is central to the task, and not by chance is involved in a permanent reformism, understandable as part of the neoliberal project: “to demultiply the model [...] of supply and demand, the investment-profit model, in order to make it into a model of social relations and of existence itself, a form of relation of the individual with him/herself” (Foucault, 2005, p. 196), in other words an atmosphere that this latter ends up (must end up) by breathing – moreover, as Deleuze wrote, “the undertaking is a soul, a gas” (Deleuze, 2000, p. 236).

¹ We use accepted abbreviations – notebook and paragraph number of the *Prison Notebooks* followed by page number of the Gerratana (1975) critical edition of the *Quaderni* del carcere, Turin, Einaudi. Standard English translations are used where possible: *SPN* is used to designate *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith, London, Lawrence and Wishart and New York, International Publishers, 1971 and subsequent reprints (available on line with the same page numbers as the paper edition); *PN* (*Prison Notebooks*) is the projected integral translation by the late Joseph A. Buttigieg of the Gerratana edition, 3 Vols, New York, Columbia University Press, 1992, 1996 and 2007 respectively; *FSPN* is *Further Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, ed. and trans. D. Boothman, London, Lawrence and Wishart and Minneapolis, Minnesota University Press, 1995, repr. New Delhi, Aakar Books, 2014. *LfP* is Frank Rosengarten’s edition (trans. R. Rosenthal) of the *Letters from Prison*, New York, Columbia University Press.

Having said this, it perhaps goes to extremes to argue that the Gramsci Renaissance that one can see in very different parts of the world, and in disparate disciplinary fields (from international relations to *Cultural Studies*), has fully involved the pedagogic discourse in Italy. At the same time, it is beyond doubt that the studies we deal with here – which by no means exhaust the range of recent research around Gramsci's reflections on the school and education² – are relaunching the possibility of a more widespread use of his writings. Such a use may take on board acquisitions connected with the work of the *National Edition of Gramsci's Writings* (currently underway).

High point and fall

In Italy pedagogic Marxism has for the most part been configured as the attempt to draw out models and perspectives from the pages of Gramsci which, at the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 70s, came up with important results (Urbani, 1967; Manacorda, 1970; Broccoli, 1972). These however appear dated in some ways due both to the historico-political transformations that have intervened – here one may think of Mario Manacorda's hermeneutic organic relation to the strategy of the PCI – and to the development of philological-critical approaches following on the publication of Gerratana's 1975 *Critical Edition* of the Notebooks. This was followed by the "archeological" work done on them by Gianni Francioni, beginning with his *Officina Gramsciana* (*Gramsci's Workshop*), a source of the *National Edition*, and it is not unimportant to recall the trenchant judgment passed by Broccoli on the Gerratana edition, ungenerously defined as "unreadable" (Broccoli, 1984, p. 35). In the pedagogic sphere the last noteworthy publication of the 1970s on Gramsci is the monograph by Dario Ragazzini (1976), which came out at a stage when, on the one hand, Gramsci studies in Italy – not only in the area of pedagogy – were at a height while, on the other, they were heading into a phase of deep gloom. After the international conference at Florence in 1977 (Ferri, 1979) and the debate that took place in the pages of *Mondoperaio* in 1976, regarding the compatibility between hegemony, democracy and pluralism and the (encumbering) nature of the intellectual

² To name just a few, see Pagano, 2013; Benedetti-Coccoli, 2018; Santarone, 2019; Ausilio, 2019; Saragnese, 2019.

legacy of Gramsci (and of Lenin) for Enrico Berlinguer's Italian Communist Party, interest in Gramsci waned drastically. It is not that praiseworthy studies on him were suddenly lacking, rather that he stopped being an "essential place of meeting and conflict for whoever wanted to measure [...] up to the burning questions of political theory and culture" (Liguori, 2012, p. 273), and likewise ceased to be the author of reference for reasoning on the school, education and training. Moreover, at this same level there began to be a change in the very definition of the epistemic framework of the *factors comprising the pedagogic discourse*, with the progressive marginalization of the politico-ideological *vector* (Cambi, 1986) of this self-same *discourse*.

In the 1980s the state of the pedagogic discourse on Gramsci was not, then, the healthiest. Certainly, it must not be forgotten that there were the precious monographs of Monasta who, taking as reference the Gerratana edition, criticized the way in which the prison writings had been put into circulation in Italian culture, and sought to restore a more authentic Gramsci (1985). It cannot however be said that this position gained significant acceptance, since in this phase the habit still continued of using the Platone-Togliatti edition (six volumes, thematic in their choice of material, published between 1948 and 1951).

A relational theory of personality

The end of the 1980s would appear to sanction the death of Gramscianism in pedagogy, so much so that in 1994, Franco Cambi published – against the stream – a text which invited his public to reflect on the legacy of Marxism in pedagogy, without intentions of liquidationism. Faced with the unhappy outcome of "actually existing socialism" and of the less than rare examples of dogmatic rigidity, this heritage in Cambi's view ought to have been placed "outside Marxism in the strict sense" (1994, p. ix). And, among the classics of this tradition, Gramsci would be the easiest to recover due to the compatibility (and affinity) of his theoretical practice with the mechanism of democracy. And on account of this Cambi invited his audience to:

re-read Gramsci as author of a refoundation of Marxism within contemporary society [...] and that in it he reactivates the perspectives of a transformation in an emancipatory sense, redefining the very confines

of the keywords of Marxism [...] and of its overall strategy, making it pass from revolution (as a tearing away, as a gesture) to education having its basis in a socio-political and cultural pedagogy [...]. It is certain that readings of a historicist Gramsci or [...] of Gramsci as a pupil [...] of Lenin can no longer be held: the centre of gravity of the thought of the *Prison Notebooks* lies outside these 'isms' (*ivi*, pp. 32-33).

Without going into detail into Cambi's considerations, the presence of scholars who have taken up the challenge of a renewal of interest in Gramsci has to be brought to the fore. On this question, in 2002 Ragazzini proposed an organic reflection on the possibility of tracing, amongst the pleats of the prison writings, a theory of personality (or at least a programme of research on the subject). Its characteristics would be found in the socio-relational depiction of the human – for Gramsci man is the “process of his actions” (Q11§54, p. 1344; *SPN* p. 351) and “the child's consciousness [...] reflects the sector of civil society in which the child participates” (Q12§2, p. 1542: *SPN* p. 35) – in the idea according to which “the formation of man” would depend on “a multiple aggregation [...] of agents and of events that are intentional and also go beyond the intentional” (Ragazzini, 2002, p. 21), in the presence of the dialectic “inside the subjects themselves as aspects of their histories and their social relations” (*ivi*, p. 9). In Ragazzini's view, “two lines of thematic and theoretical attention” are to be found in the *Notebooks*: one relates to “social macro-problems” and the other to “individual micro-problems” (*ivi*, p. 15), the two being connected by the ‘precipitation of social phenomena in single occurrences’ and by the ‘accumulation’ of those “single phenomena in social occurrences” (*ivi*, p. 19). This movement would explain the choice made by the prisoner to make use of the same categories to deal with intra-psychic phenomena, i.e., to shed light on questions of a political nature. If one thinks of the concept of historical bloc, which in one paragraph becomes the cypher for man himself: “Man is to be conceived as an historical bloc of [...] subjective elements and of mass and objective or material elements with which the individual is in an active relationship² (Q10§48, p. 1338: *SPN*, p. 360). To further illuminate this research programme, Ragazzini dedicates space to the lemma *molecular* – a frequently occurring term in the *Notebooks* – bringing out a relational semantic characteristic, standing for processes which through the accumulation of modifications overflow their context” (from the individual to the social and/or the social to the individual) “and produce effects”

that are often to be observed after the processes themselves (Ragazzini, 2002, pp. 36-37).

As well as their descriptive dimension, according to Ragazzini there is even to be found in Gramsci a perspective-project, shown in the habit of depicting the personality by means of Marxist categories originally directed towards defining the sense and strategic horizon of historical materialism. In particular, the idea of this latter (reformulated by Gramsci during his imprisonment as the philosophy of praxis) is differentiated from other ideological systems by the fact of being conscious of contradictions, of being aware of representing one of their “elements” (Q10II§62, p.1487: *SPN* pp. 404-5) and of being involved in their resolution. It is translated into the hypothesis that the subject itself is contradictory and that to construct a personality means acquiring an awareness of the diachronic and synchronic tensions that intersect it. And all this comes on top of Gramsci’s evocation of a person who installs with the environment around and therefore with others “active and conscious” relations (Q10II§54, p. 1345: *SPN* p. 352), a clear “relocation [...] within the thematic of the individual” of “Marx’s gloss on the necessity of a philosophy that changes the world” (Ragazzini, 2002, pp. 44-5). The tension in this perspective would, in conclusion, find plastic representation in a letter to his partner, Julia (Jul’ka), in which in the course of discussing the education of their two sons he calls to mind the figure of a modern Leonardo who has “became a mass-man collective man while nevertheless maintaining his strong personality and originality as an individual” (Gramsci, 2020, p. 824; *LfP*, Vol. II, p. 195).

Ragazzini’s book, quoted and the object of discussion even outside the field of pedagogy, has ended up by becoming the jumping-off point for further studies. One may think of the work of Chiara Meta who, not neglecting the category of the molecular (Meta, 2021, p. 156), underlines the presence of an “original theory of the personality not without its pedagogic values” (Meta, 2019a, p. 7), insisting on the importance in Gramsci of sources stemming from pragmatism through the “refusal” therein of a “classical metaphysics and of a philosophical existentialism of Cartesian origins” (Meta, 2019b, p. 688).

Among other things, it should be recalled that the themes of personality and of molecular transformations today appear central. One of the main politico-pedagogic questions regards indeed the neoliberal processes of subjectivation, in other words the manufacture of *competent* producers able to learn

how to learn, and possessing requisites, not closely linked to a specific area of work. This might explain the spread of didactic politics centered on expertise and ever more interested in soft skills, namely the production of personality.

Towards a Pedagogic Use of Gramsci

In his 2017 book on Gramsci, *Oltre la subaltermit  (Beyond Subalternity)*, Massimo Baldacci proposes reading Gramsci's point of view as immanent to the development of the philosophy of praxis. In other words, he sees "Gramsci's pedagogy as the inner side of the philosophy of praxis, or as this entire philosophy conceived from the perspective of this pedagogic side" (Baldacci, 2017, p. 9), the particularity of which lies in placing itself in antithesis as compared with common sense. Through an intellectual and moral reform, the modification of common sense, while starting off from the self-same common sense, by attempting at "innovating and making 'critical' an already existing activity" (Q11 12, p. 1383: *SPN* p. 383) and – as one may read in this same paragraph of the *Notebooks* – developing its rational elements, would not constitute a "pedagogic correlate deduced from a philosophical position", but a "need [...] intrinsic to this position, which is as pedagogic as it is philosophical, according to a relationship of mutual translatability (rather than of a one-way deducibility)" (Baldacci, 2017, p. 170). Relying on the idea of *translatability* as analyzed in Section V of *Notebook 11*, Baldacci arrives in fact at relativizing the hypothesis (not infrequent in the literature), of Gramsci's subsumption of pedagogy to politics, consequently making the former subaltern to the latter, and clarifying how in the *Notebooks* the pedagogic is given as "translation of the philosophy of praxis" in relation to the consideration of education on a level with "a form of praxis" related to the "real transformation of the subject" (Baldacci, 2017, p. 181). This reading is not so much functional to obtaining a mere exegetic gain, as to a pedagogic use of Gramsci's writings, aimed at orienting oneself in the present and confronting a number of fundamental theoretical nodes such as the theory-praxis nexus. It is not by chance that in a publication of 2016 Baldacci: a) sees praxis as an "active relationship with reality" having "a nature of full immanence" (Baldacci 2016a, p. 49) and it is immanence more than materialism that connotes Gramsci's Marxism; b) that for defining it he sets off from a quotation from the second Wittgenstein, whose reflections, according to the proposed

and widely debated reconstruction by among others Sen (2003) could be connected with the reflections at that same time by Gramsci, through the mediation of Sraffa; c) that as his “selected locus” (Baldacci, 2016a, p. 47) Gramsci chooses the *Theses on Feuerbach*, the main source for his reform of historical materialism; d) that he calls social reality “objectivized praxis” (*ivi*, p. 50) along the lines of Gramsci’s translation of the Theses in Notebook 7, where *umwählende Praxis* is rendered with the expression “overthrowing of praxis”³ (Gramsci, 1975, p. 2356; Gramsci 2007b, p. 744), allowing it to be understood that reality is the praxis which education overturns by adopting a dialectically antithetic position. No less Gramscian, so to speak, seems Baldacci’s intervention in 2020, in which he explains how his detailed engagement with the preparation of his volume on Gramsci had led him to revise the positions expressed in his *Trattato di pedagogia generale* (Baldacci, 2012), appropriate for deciphering the relation between theoretical research and empirical research, but not for rendering precise the theory-practice nexus. Hence the formulation of a complementary perspective, alternative to and in debt to the positions developed by Wittgenstein in the *Philosophical Investigations*, in the awareness however of the absence in them of the “political dimension” of language, meaning the absence of the fact that the “form of life in which the interweaving between linguistic praxis and social praxis is rooted” is “traversed by [...] dynamics of power” (Baldacci, 2020, note 14, p. 38), by struggles for hegemony.

Baldacci has moreover made use of the concepts of the philosophy of praxis in order to problematize the dominant narratives regarding the structuring of the educational system. Thus, to describe the general framework in which they take place (have taken place), he has – certainly – had recourse to readings such as those of Boltanski and Chiapello or Dardot and Laval, clarifying however how these readings have to find their “systematization and validity within the concept of hegemony, adopting which” their “unilateral nature” would be overcome (Baldacci, 2017, p. 256). Hegemony would, then,

³ On the basis of Engels’ version of the *Theses on Feuerbach*, in Italian Gramsci uses ‘rovesciamento della praxis’, literally the ‘overthrow of praxis’, with slight variants in the standard English translations of the passages where the phrase occurs in the *Notebooks* (cf. Q8§182, Q10II§33, Q10II§41^{xii}, Q11§14: cf. *PN* Vol. III, p. 744; *FSPN*, pp. 395, 430; *SPN*, p. 437 respectively). Marx’s original version, which speaks instead of ‘revolutionary praxis’, was first published in German and Russian by the Institute of Marxism-Leninism in 1924, when Gramsci had already left Moscow [trans. note].

constitute one of the keys for deciphering the contemporary situation. From this stems the proposal to consider neoliberalism in the terms of a “hegemonic form” that “incorporates a ‘pedagogic’ project of the transformation of man” (*ivi*, p. 258), exactly as happened with Fordism which, in Gramscian fashion, did not constitute just a new mode of production of goods, but even of life: “an anthropological mutation” (Orsomarso, 2007, p. 239).

Baldacci’s volume on Gramsci concludes with the evocation of a possible encounter between him and Dewey, functional to working out educational practices directed to the assertion of a radical model of democracy. Even before 2017, reflecting in particular on the meeting between the philosophy of praxis and United States pragmatism – so as to extract a “methodological lesson” (Baldacci, 2013, p. 61) at the same time as bearing in mind the differences between these two intellectuals on the subject of conformation (Baldacci, 2014, pp. 33-34) – Baldacci had developed an *idea of the school* as incubator not only of human capital but also of “human development” (2016b), intended therefore to form both the producer and the citizen, and had developed a critique of the *corporative drift* of the educational system setting off from the (Gramscian) concept of hegemonic apparatus (Baldacci, 2014, p. 126; 2015). This theme, namely the Gramsci-Dewey relationship – which is actually not a new one but has been dealt with by Siciliani de Cumis (1978), Semeraro (2008), Martinez (2014), Meta (2010; 2019c) – does not seem to have exhausted its potentialities, even if we take a number of more recent studies into consideration. These authors, working on Gramscian sources have provided original genealogies, as in the case of research by Giuliano Guzzone, who has shown how the recourse in the *Notebooks* to the “locution ‘instrumental value’” is linked to the reading of an article of Guido De Ruggiero’s on Dewey, published in *La Critica* in September 1931 (Guzzone, 2019).

Neoliberalism as a Hegemonic Form

Finally, it is not without its use to devote a few words to possible lines of research that begin from Gramsci in order to understand the current situation and interpret neoliberalism.

Observing affairs through a Gramscian lens, one can now say with Baldacci that neoliberalism becomes decipherable as a *hegemonic and ideological*

form which, through *apparatuses* that sediment and root it in *common sense*, contribute to forging the enterprise as subject for ever (and exclusively) engaged in accumulating and attributing value to its own human capital. This *form* may (perhaps) be interpreted by bringing in the concept of *passive revolution* – a “*heuristic formula*” that in Gramsci functions “as an organizational perspective” (Thomas, 2021, p. 163). This could fulfil the same role for those who intend to put under a critical magnifying glass the current tools of the government of the social sphere and the reformist processes that have attacked the educational system by injecting into it the axioms of *New Public Management*, axioms which not only do not attenuate control over the protagonists in education, but multiply them (above all not just in bureaucratic terms), increasing a policing activity “in the wide sense” (Gramsci, 1975, Q13§27, p. 1620; *SPN*, p. 221) only to be immediately in contradiction with the “rhetoric [...] regarding the top-down management” (Fisher, 2017, p. 88) of (public and private) institutions. In a text dating to May 1932 contained in the Third Series of the *Notes on Philosophy* Gramsci asks whether fascism should not be considered “the form of ‘passive revolution’ specific to the 20th century” as liberalism was “the form of ‘passive revolution’ specific to the 19th century” (Gramsci, 1975, Q8§236, p. 1089; *PN*, Vol. III, p. 378). And might it be plausible to see in neoliberalism the passive revolution of the present era – without glossing over the fact that we are dealing with a passive revolution without any of the characteristics of the nineteenth-century one (which “accompan[ied] the bourgeoisie to power without a Jacobin Terror”)? And plausible to see it without a number of the characteristics of the nineteenth-century passive revolution (created in Europe to “stop another class from taking power”) through the limited nature of “its attempts to include and innovate” (Frosini, 2019, pp. 46–48) and through the scantiness of its “relatively ‘progressive’ content” (Gramsci, 1975, Q14§23, p. 1681; *SPN* p, 223)? Again in the paragraph just cited from the Third Series of the *Notes on Philosophy* Gramsci suggests juxtaposing the passive revolution question to “what, in political terms, one might call ‘war of position’” (Gramsci, 1975, Q8§236, p. 1089; *PN*, Vol. III, p. 378). This invites one to think of a possible “active revolution” (Francioni, 1984, p. 215) in the form of a *war of position* that aims at deconstructing the compactness of the enemy troops, of conquering their trenches, of occupying the “fortresses” of civil society (Gramsci, 1975, Q7§16, p. 866; *PN* Vol. III, p. 168 and, alternatively, *SPN*, p. 238). Not, in point of fact, a “low-intensity struggle” (Frosini, 2016, p.

142) but a “siege” that is a “reciprocal one” (Gramsci, 1975, Q6§138, p. 802; *PN* Vol. III, p. 109 and, alternatively *SPN*, p. 239) which sometimes requires totalitarian solutions (not in the sense given the word by Hannah Arendt). Moreover the granitic quality of neoliberalism (as every other *hegemonic form*) depends on the capacity to disarticulate competing hegemonic articulations through the attempt, always a reversible one given the “impossibility of any closure of the social” (Laclau-Mouffe, 1985, p. 136), to suture this latter: in other words to “politically ‘totalize’ the social space” (Frosini, 2016, p. 139), and to guarantee in the long term the “‘impossibility’ of internal disintegration” (Gramsci, 1975, Q6§138, p. 802; *PN* Vol. III, p. 109 and, alternatively *SPN*, p. 239) of the front that for the moment is dominant. To this end, and as happens to any *hegemonic form*, neoliberalism furnishes itself with *référentiels* (or cognitive-normative frameworks) that are functional to instituting a “space of sense that allows one to ‘see the world’”, ordering and orienting that vision (and the actions correlated with it) “in a certain direction” (Vaira, 2011, p. 68), and often adopts formulas that explain the existent as the unavoidable result of the flow of historicity. And in this sense what Gramsci states (Gramsci, 1975, Q15§36, p. 1790; *FSPN* pp. 380-82) regarding one of Croce’s end-notes to an article of 1933 (*The World is Moving Towards ...*) – taken to task in Notebook 15 but capable of being assimilated – can equally be said as regards Margaret Thatcher’s claim that “There is no alternative”: here Croce is taken as the ideologue of passive revolution. We are dealing in both cases with rhetorical formulas having the role of *empty signifiers*, of *nodal points* that arrest the flow of differences and partially “fix the meaning of a signifying chain” (Laclau-Mouffe, 1985, p. 112), that organize discursiveness by contributing to the assertion of an ideology, understood in Gramsci’s terms as a *conception of the world* and not (or not only) as a *false consciousness*. Indeed, in giving an original reading of the 1859 *Preface* Gramsci attributes to Marx the idea that “men acquire consciousness of their tasks on the terrain of ideology” (Gramsci, 2017, p. 68) thereby detaching himself from the “epistemological difference in level between bring and consciousness” (Frosini, 2010, p. 178) proposed in the *Preface*.

In conclusion: the “material structure of ideology” (Gramsci, 2017, p. 490) – a “transitory and provisional formulation” (Francioni, 1984, p. 179, note 64) substituted during the course of the prison writings by the expression *hegemonic apparatus* and by similar formulas – would be one of the dimensions in which the *war of position* is condensed, and thus the formulation

should be considered a battle ground. The reason for which the discourse on education and the keywords through which the object of enquiry and of pedagogic project is determined would be assumed as the concept-subjects appropriate at the same time to *mobilize* and *control* the singularities (and therefore the collectivity). This in Frosini's view would be the "modern functioning" of the post-Jacobin "hegemonic dialectic" mapped out in the *Notebooks* (Frosini, 2016, p. 133), and would constitute the expressions of historicity (and of its contradictions), not politically neutral propositions. We would, then, be dealing with the relativization and problematization of their assumption of scientificity. One of the contributions that a point of view prompted by the philosophy of praxis can offer to contemporary reflections in education lies in this: that of bringing back the lexis used by the formative protagonists, as much as by intellectuals specialized in the theoretical practices of the language of pedagogy, to the horizon of the sense of struggle and hegemonic activities.

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That “not yet” of the present

Educating to meaning

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The rhetoric of an education that has lost its way and is confined to the margins of epistemology now faces the need to move away from (solely) inquiring into the forms and specificities of its own questions. The dimension of the unexpected, the necessary revisiting of our representation of the future, and scenarios that appear to have no future prospects, have brought questions of meaning urgently back to the fore. To seek purely theoretical answers or shut down questions is to risk missing out on the bright light of inquiry, as well as on the poetic significance of an event that “signals and awaits us” (Deleuze, 1973, p. 134).

The figure of exile, which distances us from the known and the obvious and allows us to rename, to act, to endow shape and direction, may offer, together with the act of poetry, a way to access meaning (Nancy, 2017). Which, if it is to be forward-looking, requires an education that is nourished by a sensitive logos, an education that is not detached from the world. And hope.

A philosophy of education that is attentive to aesthetic experience – viewed as a “breach of insignificance” (Bertin, 1974, p. 217) drawing us into a language with the power to “retell and re-found the world” (Cambi, 2010, p. 137) – concerns itself with situations underpinned by anxieties surrounding prophecies and the paralysis of history and narrative, and seeks to generate experiences that enable poetic space to become poetic through the speaking of words that are “laden with intent” (Zambrano, 2004, p. 29).

Keywords: exile, poetic, hope, dis-birth, meaning.

Quel “non ancora” del presente. Educare alla significanza

Le retoriche di un'educazione dispersa e confinata ai margini dell'epistemologia sono poste ora di fronte alla necessità di allontanarsi dall'interrogare (solo) le forme e le specificità delle proprie domande. La dimensione dell'imprevisto, il necessario ripensamento della rappresentazione del futuro e gli scenari che paiono privi di orizzonti hanno riportato le questioni di senso a farsi urgenti. Il rischio di rispondere per vie esclusivamente teoriche o di chiudere le domande è di perdere quel carattere di bagliore del ricercare, nonché la significatività poetica di un evento che “ci fa segno e ci attende” (Deleuze, 1973, p. 134).

La figura dell'esilio, che ci allontana dal noto e dall'ovvio e ci permette di rinominare, di agire, di dar forma e direzione può essere, insieme al gesto poetico, una via di accesso al senso (Nancy, 2017) che, per divenire progetto, ha necessità di un'educazione che sia nutrita da un logos sensibile, da un'educazione che non sia priva di mondo. E di speranza.

Una filosofia dell'educazione attenta all'esperienza estetica, considerata come “rottura dell'insignificanza” (Bertin, 1974, p. 217) e come vissuto che ci lega ad un linguaggio capace di “ridire e rifondare il mondo” (Cambi, 2010, p. 137), è portata a confrontarsi con situazioni che rivelano ansie di profezie, paralisi della storia e della narrazione e a costruire esperienze che consentano allo spazio poetico di divenire poetico, parlando parole “cariche di intenzione” (Zambrano, 2004, p. 29).

Parole-chiave: esilio, poetico, speranza, dis-nascere, senso.

*If all time is eternally present
all time is unredeemable.*

T. S. Eliot

We shall start from an image, a painting by Paul Klee that Walter Benjamin wished to keep by his side and with which he was somewhat obsessed. It is the image of an angel, the *Angelus Novus*, painted in 1920: a stylized, almost childish, figure of angel whose arms/wings are held upwards, almost as though to surrender to something unexpected, frightening, or at any rate surprising. Benjamin purchased the oil and watercolour piece in 1921. Except for a short period when he left it at the home of a friend, the painting was to remain with him to the end of his life.

The philosopher himself described it as follows:

A Klee painting named *Angelus Novus* shows an angel looking as though he is about to move away from something he is fixedly contemplating. His eyes are staring, his mouth is open, his wings are spread. This is how one pictures the angel of history. His face is turned toward the past. Where we perceive a chain of events, he sees one single catastrophe which keeps piling wreckage upon wreckage and hurls it in front of his feet. The angel would like to stay, awaken the dead, and make whole what has been smashed. But a storm is blowing from Paradise; it has got caught in his wings with such violence that the angel can no longer close them. The storm irresistibly propels him into the future to which his back is turned, while the pile of debris before him grows skyward. This storm is what we call progress (Benjamin, 1969, p. 249).

Benjamin's remarks offer us a sort of misunderstanding of time, a view of it that inverts its flow. The angel removes his gaze from the future. If there is to be a solution, some prospect of salvation, it seems that his attention must be directed towards the past. There, the cause of the storm may be glimpsed; it may be sensed. Benjamin evokes a form of redemption: the past (be it remote or recent) draws attention to our perception of time, inviting us to redeem ourselves by moving towards the future.

Benjamin argues, in his *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, that there is a secret understanding between past generations and the present one: "Our coming was expected on earth. Like every generation that precedes us, we have been endowed with a weak Messianic power to which the past has a claim" (Benjamin, 1940, p. 74). However, it is not our object here to address the theological connotations of redemption, but rather to point up the value of the gifts and legacies consigned to us by the past, demanding a form of recovery for those who have not succeeded in living their own histories to the full.

Let us take this notion and relate it to a vision that we might surmise to have had some influence on the thinking of Benjamin, whose past heritage included Jewish mysticism: in this domain of thought, angels are believed to never praise a second time and are "new" precisely because they are reborn in order to praise and while praising. What must give us pause, in this regard, is the *upset* appearance of the angel figure. This unexpected aspect, in conjunction with the ephemeral character of angelic beings, yields a sort of questioning surprise. From an angel representing history, we might expect to discern a lasting message. Yet, here we glimpse, via the images evoked by Benjamin's words, the wholly fragmented nature of rupture and of interruption.

The redemption referred to by the philosopher is not to be understood solely in the Messianic sense, but also in the operative sense. Indeed, the term appears to be bound up with recovery; that is to say, a way of attributing meaning, of realizing acts of memory that witness to the senseless and the thought-provoking, via the shattering of the golden image of a mythical time that is implicit in official history. An image that only considers “hard facts”, thereby excluding the possibilities that the mere facts left no room for. Benjamin inverts such a perspective on time: the present bears witness to and redeems the past. The gaze with which the Angelus invites us to contemplate time is thus an ethical gaze, a gaze that attends to the seemingly unimportant, to the fragments. Thus does Benjamin attempt to counteract the mindless consumption of the modern world: by reminding us that we have lost our ancestral capacity to contemplate, to retain a state of *upset*.

According to Bauman, the angel turned and history changed direction even more radically. While Benjamin sees the past as a source of admonishment, Bauman theorizes that we are frightened of the future. The sociologist of liquidity even coined the term *retrotopia*, to describe backward-looking perspectives: in this scenario, the angel looks towards the future with fear, while a lack of confidence in progress makes it look to the past with nostalgia. The future is no longer seen to be situated in the domain of happiness, but rather reveals itself to be a source of fear, terror, uncertainty, and the inability to make plans (Bauman, 2017).

Our own vision of the future has been evolving at an uneven pace, especially since the public health emergency due to COVID-19/Sars-CoV-2 induced us all (under a regime of *panpatia*¹) to cling to the present and cast uncertain glances towards the future. The disruption caused by a sudden period of unforeseen and crushing life experience has upset the continuity of time; the ongoing state of tension and the failure to solve the public health issue continue to fuel a sense of misfortune: on moving everyday practices away from the places where they previously played out, the unexpected causes differences to fluctuate, subjecting them continuously to a threshold regime, under which we find ourselves constantly before, and in contemplation of, the dual dimensions of before and now, inside and outside, progression and interruption. Both time and space find occasion for reflection in the narrative that is produced.

¹ Cfr. Mancino (2020), p. 35.

Some have theorized (even before the advent of Covid-19) that, while the past is a phantom that lends itself to representation, the figure of the future remains elusive. A sociologist of the everyday, Paolo Jedlowski, even suggests that it is possible to have a memory of the future, a memory of how we imagined the future (Jedlowski, 2017). Increasingly, especially for young people, with their fears, and widespread tendency to suffer isolation, mortification, and even depression and suicide, the future that is remembered is a future that once seemed rich with possibilities, an open space. The image of the future is increasingly marked by despair. Such desperation is heightened by its incapacity to narrate itself. To the extent that it cannot be narrated at all.

Byung-Chul Han suggests that the name of the contemporary crisis is not *acceleration*, but rather a *temporal dispersion* (Han, 2017). This is caused, amongst other factors, by a sort of absolutization of *active life* that is sustained by imperatives connected with work, productivity, and neoliberalism. In light of this, Benjamin's notion of recovery takes on, in the pedagogical reading proposed here, the meaning of an urgent need to revitalize the contemplative life, to reaffirm the ethical and aesthetic need that characterizes formative processes in education.

Writing in an earlier period, Bertin situated the tension inherent in education – given the complexity and crises inherent in the historical present – within a framework that we might define as wisdom. In *Educare alla ragione* and *L'inattuale* (1977, 1995), his proposal to educate reason, in the midst of social conflict (in the late 1960s) and class struggles, remains a powerful idea in the face of the collapse of ideologies, of the so-called great narratives, and the shift to “weak thought”. The contemplative life – insofar as it is dedicated to beauty, slowness, thoughtful reflexivity, critical attention and problematizing thinking, capable of asking questions, of challenging conformism, of questioning complacent or automatic, performative and obedient responses to the calls of a neoliberal culture that permeates not only pedagogical action, but even pedagogical thought – has and can retain the power, at this historical juncture, to stimulate an alternative perspective on pedagogy's homage to an efficient productive system that is imposed by asking subjects to adapt to “their times”; a homage that overlooks the risk of capitulating to a “technicalism that is directed by others and is far removed from what might be considered its own purpose, that is to say, to form human beings to truly fulfil their human nature” (Tramma, 2015, p. 25).

In the face of a disruption of our sense of time, of a crisis that alternates between forms of *heterochronia* and forms of *uchronia*, Bertin invites us to reconsider the pedagogical as a space of *utopia*: a call, that is to say, to critical, reflective, and above all self-reflective rigour, which reminds us that crises are not ontological, but depend on human circumstances and interactions and that therefore pedagogy must *ontologically become a pedagogy of crisis*, in terms of generating spaces where problematic situations may be contemplated with perplexity, ambivalence, doubts, and uncertainty. And in terms of guiding this process in the direction of reason.

For pedagogical thinking is necessarily utopian thinking, but in the terms proposed by Salvatore Veca, of a reasonable utopia, one that remains faithful to the exploration of the possible (Veca, 2002). It is from the category of the possible that Bertin's thinking (Bertin, 1977, 1995; Contini, 2005; Contini, Fabbri, 2014) points to the perspective of existential planning. Such an approach, while taking contingent factors into account, is not confounded by or caught up in the meshes of the present, and is able to move toward a future that is certainly characterized by risk, but above all by our commitment to and engagement with it.

Benjamin's gaze from the perspective of the Angelus Novus risks the paradox and immobility of a movement that comes to a halt if one thinks about history or thinks about the future, a sort of dialectic "at a standstill". And so the gaze of pedagogical commitment is called to restore to this dialectic its restlessness, a restlessness that encompasses subjectivity and circumstances, together with contexts, the world (disquiet) that frightens and worries us, knowledge, and restless knowledge, as also observed by Elena Madrussan (2017).

The restlessness that permeates present time and the thinking and practices involved in educating and transforming (if we believe, following Massa, that the fulfilment of educational action is an introspective process that acts on openings, hurts, transformations, and risk, in that the value and the meaning undergirding educational experience is the possibility to revisit, analyse, explore, and interpret experience in an intentional way – Massa, 1991; 1975; Bertin, Contini, 2004) is not just an interpretative category, but rather becomes a form of intervention: a *manoeuvre*, as Madrussan defines it, from the French word *manoeuvre*, which comprehends both the gesture itself and its substantial meaning of an action performed with one's hands. (Madrussan, 2017) And this intervention, in a suggestive manner, effects a rotation, an inversion of one's movement and one's gaze.

Intervening with one's own work, displacing, implies operative, material engagement. The inversion becomes a new posture of gaze (Mancino, 2014), a dwelling on the gaze itself (Mancino, 2020b). The displacement produces a true change of locus, generating a dynamic that is simultaneously one of decentring, disorientation (with respect to place, given forms, roles), and centring, of concentration towards an inner space that seems to have freed itself from both the cult of action centred on output and the cult of action that celebrates the subject.

Indeed, Bertin had long since spoken of Utopia as a necessary and fertile thoughtfulness that is required to think alternatively, to move. And he identified this situating wisdom as the existential task of the educator: a figure who is able to find the wisdom to inhabit time and situations and contexts, but with an attitude of hope.

Let us therefore make our own of this dual dimension of inhabiting time and manoeuvring our own ethical position as an aesthetic movement of our gaze, which turns its attention to *a recovery* that is freed from the bonds of instant production and roams the space of the *aesthetics of the mind* (as defined by Bachelard, 1972), thereby restoring wonder at the ordinary, renewing our capacity to look with astonishment and admiration, and allowing ourselves to break free from a priori meanings.

This act of torsion, which has us learn from our own gaze, moves us towards epiphanies of meaning, responds to our leanings towards utopia and our pedagogical commitment to prefiguring new models of humanity, calling subjects back to a configuration of the future as the construction of their existence in the world, tending in the opposite direction to conformism.

Let us consider that such a dynamic – which responds to the loss of time and meaning with an “otherwise” of significance, with meanings that can barely be discerned, but which do not fall to the level of nonsense – speaks to the need and necessity to work in a kind of border territory, where educational tension is composed of images, words, and poetic universes with the power to both guard and reveal that which is already there. But which needs to be expected.

Educating also implies meeting the other in an unexpected region: it means finding oneself responding to an aesthetic call that powerfully challenges and leads into spaces of experience composed of traces, vestiges, and quests for futures that are not ‘progress’, but rather generative space.

A fertile concept for experiencing this path is offered to us by the notion of *dis-birth*, linked to the experience/category of *exile*, both of which terms from the thinking of Maria Zambrano.

The twisting manoeuvre, the turning towards the gesture of redemption, of taking back, of feeling again, is a first step: that of detaching or separating oneself. In this sense, the gesture of redemption moves in the direction of helping us to grasp that which eludes us, that which eludes the logic of measurement and performance, and the logic of educating oneself or others while keeping at bay that which is difficult to perceive, because it is subtle, sensitive, delicate, and apparently lacking in current relevance.

Hence the need to recover questions. Hence the invitation to engage in a difficult behaviour, expressed by a little used and, indeed, often devalued verb: *linger*. To *linger* is not just to hesitate or to have doubts. It is not just the gesture of those who do not know how to act. *Lingering* is a wise verb, the verb of those who know how to take the appropriate amount of time so as to act more thoroughly, to allow more room for thought, even for doubt. In Latin, *indutiae* means *truce*. The time of *truce* is the time required to lead one's thoughts and resources to safety.

The first phase of exile as disorientation, as loss of meaning, becomes for Maria Zambrano a figure of thought and feeling. This philosopher was herself forced to undergo the condition of uprootedness. She initially suffered, but then she voluntarily took this uprooting upon herself, indeed she claimed it as her own, almost blessing it and attributing it with an ontological quality. The unknown homeland and the non-place, which from suffering is transformed into a vital condition, become – in the words of Maria Zambrano – auroral nudity, a denuded humanity.

The loss of meaning, as well as the loss of direction of time, re-evoke and call on the dimension of exile as expropriation, as a condition whereby that which is our own, our familiar surroundings and interior is denied or obfuscated.

Zambrano's experience of *destierro*, of exile entails the possibility to be uprooted and undone, followed by the act of *being dis-born* and *being re-born*. The origins towards which to return to become a source of questioning; to go into exile is to be born of oneself, to project oneself further afield, into the possibilities of the "not yet". Once the impossible homeland has been lost, all possible homelands remain open to us.

For Maria Zambrano, this is the golden place of philosophy and, thus, the gold place of poetry, for poetry means to hear things in their nascent state.

This pathos of incompleteness, this intercepting of what Jankélévitch defined as ‘almost nothing’ (2011), a sort of particle of a nascent, primitive nature, draws our attention – our quest for what appears to be in hiding, denying itself, and remaining ineffable – to an active circling of reason and the logos of the senses, to an elusive something that is almost not there, which indeed does not exist “but is at work” (Jankélévitch, 2019, p. 346)

Exile reconfigures *being* as essence, drawing it far away from *being* as remaining in a static position, and situating it as a poetic subject that is capable of new beginnings, new dawns, and new sunrises.

Poetry knows how to go about not shutting down questions and conserves, always and afresh, its own inaugural nature, its own possibility of saying once again, of rekindling the bright glow of inquiry, as well as the poetic significance of an event that “*signals and awaits us*” (Deleuze, 1973). Through exile, which is also the exile of meaning, grows an irresistible attachment to the perceptible poetics of things, to their being – for Maria Zambrano – details of fullness, parts that explode the senses towards the most ordinary, inadvertent, dusty phenomena of existence, the most everyday of everyday life, together with a sort of rejection of the ambition to know their whole, finite meaning.

Through this gaze, the act – dear to the Spanish philosopher – of redemption takes place. This is the ransom of an intimacy that is already, as Levinas would have it, intimacy with someone, or intimate attention (Levinas, 2016, p. 158). Intimate attention and recovery meet in the welcoming, taking care of, and first and foremost the making authentic of one’s way of being in the world, of thinking, of feeling, of laying claiming to one’s own poetics, and one’s own words: “thinking has an internal dynamic that takes place, so to speak, within the subject itself. If thinking does not sweep the house clean from the inside, it is not thinking, it will simply be a logical clarification which repeats that which what has already been thought on the outside” (Zambrano, 1990, p.73).

To attend to our inner selves, in contact with the things that speak of us, to recover them and ourselves, is to dialogue with the invisible and give it voice. Hence, recovery features taking (*capture*), turning back (*re*) and drawing out of (*ex*): It is a going back to take; it stands for a retrospective gesture that realizes an expression, an escape. It is about freeing what has been left behind or hidden. It can also be a time left behind or an unspoken time. Recovery corresponds to an act of memory, of recollection. But also of planning for the future.

Intimate interiority, gathering the things of time and self, clothes, words, images is an autobiographical gesture (Mancino, 2020) of memory, of recovery, and of active, forward-looking poetry. It is, in fact, “a search for something lost and indispensable, something that needs to be looked at again” (Zambrano, 1997, p. 71).

The gaze that is renewed in *recovery* is not mere commemoration, but relies on a more perceptible quality of thought, which endows the restless look toward the Angelus Novus, with an unprecedented quality, a new possibility: “life and life experience are not dealt with by thinking about them (...) but by suffering them”, Maria Zambrano (2008, p. 97) tells us.

“If we can understand, if in some way we have access to a threshold of meaning, this happens poetically” says Nancy (2017); when every stable foundation of sense, of time gives way, the future loses its known structure.

The everyday, now proven – by the sudden disruption of our perceptions by a worldwide phenomenon – to be necessary, also reveals how much we need stability and continuity, how functional this need actually is.

We find it useful to rely on patterns, prophecies, anticipations of homogeneous worlds and scenarios. But we can learn to revitalize this same sense of time, this same feeling, via moments, gestures, actions, words, misunderstandings, and glimpses that belong less to the space of time understood as *kronos* and more to the space of *kairos*, which allows for epiphanies of meaning.

The fleeting, nascent moment – a moment that is produced via a kind of consensus or sharing that nonetheless grants freedom to the sensibility of the other, thereby establishing a distance and the possibility for the agreement to be betrayed – generates a moment that is not only poetic, but pedagogical, fostering a going beyond, in the direction of reasonable utopias.

Now, poetry opposes our prosaic tendencies as readers, and “leads inner experience toward a “place” where all reality (and we in it) is reaffirmed *ab imis*, in primitive form, is fused with a language that re-tells and re-founds the world” (Cambi, 2010, p. 137). Re-telling and re-founding, when revisited from a poetic perspective, not only trace the flow of time, but actually cut across it, opening up an escape route, a fissure, a new space in time. Roland Barthes, in commenting on writing, drew on a powerfully intense word that is extremely physical, tactile, and gestural. As a “work” that is inscribed in doing, in the *poiein*, the (poetic) word is a *fissuring*: it divides, cleaves, interrupts. And it does not only do this with a material (such as the flat or

concrete matter of a sheet, clay, a wall, leather...). It does so by swinging between that which is compact and that which requires air, between that which is welded and that which is broken (Barthes, 1973, p. 37).

And it is in this fissure that we glimpse not answers, not solutions, but *mystery*; it is into this fissure that we lean to carry out our work of *recovery*. This must be our starting point, following Simone Weil, who wrote of the need for “inevitable humility when one is not sure of oneself for the future”, arguing that in this situation “two things are irreducible to rationalism: time and beauty. It is from here that that we must begin” (Weil, 1993, p. 65)

Recovery then is a work that speaks of loyalty, that resonates with return. It is the encounter with the other because it is a practice of attention, contemplation, and listening. For, as Simone Weil teaches us, it is the contemplative who recovers the other.

Recovery, which leans forward to listen to the voice of things, acquires the semblance of the redemption of our gaze, as suggested by Rilke. For the great poet, contemplating things does not rescue the subject from transience, but rather within transience. It is by means of such a dynamic, both within and against temporal dispersion, through the search for meaning alluded to by Bertin, that a hermeneutics of desire can become possible. Mystery looks out at us from the fissure in things and invites us to “do something” with what we see.

Returning now to the angel, this figure has been the object of questions and questionings (from Bodei to Cacciari), apparently bearing witness to mystery insofar as itself mysterious, while expressing, in its own way, the invisible, being itself invisible. His turned position allows us to educate ourselves in that secret con-sent [feeling with] to the imperceptible that reveals the possible, including and above all where there is detachment, rupture, or a departure from the gaze that we would expect to have (be it turned towards the past or the future).

The *angelus*, for our purposes here, is the bearer of a pedagogical attitude that we might define as hermeneutical. Almost as though it is mimicking a sort of hermeneutics of unexpected movement and, as Cacciari might put it, of contrary movement: the very movement that guides and leads us out of the literal interpretation, not from the idea to the thing or from the sign to what it represents, but rather from the thing to the invisible (Cacciari, 1922).

And to come back to Maria Zambrano, as mentioned above, “life and the lived experience of time are not dealt with by thinking (...) but by suffering”

(Zambrano, 2008, p. 97). Thus, *pathos* is directed at a memory that is neither distorted by the past nor reliant on the future, but rather strikes a dynamic balance between staying in place and remaining living, vital. This allows us to hold on to our own lives, especially our past lives, together with the past lives of others, via elements with the power to reawaken native feeling, that intimate and dark depth of intimate attention, of closeness, of feeling alive together with the things that bring us to life.

And, by means of the aesthetic universe, with its perceptible images, and poetry in particular – as a suspended word that questions, a tension directed toward otherness, a tension that points up alternative, unexpected paths towards the unsayable and invisible – education can become an angelic instrument, that is to say, an instrument with the power to announce and initiate the difficult task of reassigning meaning, of transcending the expected or pre-given reading, measurable performance, and our usual gaze (Mancino, 2014, 2020b). Indeed, education may be phenomenologically conceptualized (Bertolini, 1988) as our lived experience of ourselves and of the world, which is not intended to be understood but above all to be acted upon, transformed, narrated, and shown.

Hope is rekindled in the fragment, in the announcement that shifts our gaze from the metaphysics of universal being to historical, concrete, material, and poetic ontologies of being. In the “not yet” of the present – which is the entire space of education, the entire space of poetic becoming where it is possible to speak words that do not seek the certain boundaries of a given meaning, but are “laden with intent” (Zambrano, 2004, p. 29) – it may be possible to perceive even more strongly the material consistence of doing, the craftsmanship of a pedagogical operativity (namely, *recovery* as the act of bringing home that which is authentic and our own) that lends substance to a philosophy of education as a life practice that is both thought and perceived.

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This Is The End

Considerations on death and/in education

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An educational act must not only come to an end but its effectiveness receives light from the very conclusion of it. A thought of the end brings with it a certain idea of death, and allows us to think of an education that can be “terminated” to use a Freudian term. Contemporary pedagogical thinking needs a reflection on the theme of the end as a necessary space to think of oneself as precarious and mortal in a precarious and mortal universe.

Keywords: Death, End, Creature, Freedom, Cosmology

Questa è la fine. Considerazioni sulla morte e/ne l'educazione

Un'azione educativa non solo deve arrivare a un suo termine, ma la sua efficacia emerge dalla sua stessa conclusione. Il pensiero della fine reca con sé una certa idea della morte, e ci permette di pensare a un'educazione che, per dirla con un termine freudiano, possa essere “terminata”. Il pensiero pedagogico contemporaneo abbisogna di una riflessione sul tema della fine come spazio necessario per pensare se stessi come esseri precari e finiti, in un universo altrettanto precario e finito.

Parole-chiave: morte, fine, creatura, libertà, cosmologia.

To die today is not an easy task. Death has been removed from human view; our consciousness must not be disturbed by the thought of it; the ri-

tuals accompanying it are increasingly private and ever less social in nature; in Covid times they have been reduced to the minimum, in some cases to zero. During the pandemic people died in solitude, and death was further pushed away from the stage of human life. We die in hospital or in a hospice, out of the sight of other people, and above all, out of the sight of children. Death is the new pornographic subject of our times. We do not speak of it; we do not joke about it; and we do not see it, except in virtual form on television or the Internet.

What is worse: we do not educate to death. There are very few educational projects on this item, and in Italy they are less than in other countries. Death is not a pedagogical subject, also if it is of course an unavoidable step in every man's and woman's life. We help our sons and daughters to grow up, to become men and women, to grow old (sometimes – because old age is another taboo in our society, maybe because we consider it so close to death) but we let them alone in the unpredictable moment in which they say goodbye to their lives.

At the dying bed of human beings in clinics and hospitals, the ancient rites, knowledge, and practices that traditionally accompanied humankind through separation, loss and bereavement are fast disappearing; and with them an educational process is vanishing.

Education to death precedes and establishes education to life because life acquires its meaning only against the background of death. Ignoring death in educational projects and processes means educating non-living or non-human beings. Escape from death as an educational theme paradoxically means finding it in the hearts and minds of people who will grow up as immortals but in reality will be wounded, dead inside, due to the absence of a shared discourse on the destiny that awaits them.

Death does not leave empty spaces: in the void of education, it insinuates itself as an uncontrolled and uncontrollable reality. If education does not get used to the work of mourning and the gaze fixed on death, this is reduced to its naked materiality. And it loses all reference to the human, which is in its essence a continuous confrontation with death and dying.

This void in education comes from a change in the idea and the representation of death, let us say of its definition. Evidence of death has shifted – moving initially from the lungs to the heart, and more recently from the

heart to the brain – and this has deprived the layperson (whether a friend, child, or relative) of the capacity to attend to the one who is dying; placing a mirror over the dying person's mouth to verify if he or she is still breathing is certainly a less reliable diagnostic tool than an electroencephalogram, but it requires the direct bodily involvement of those present (and this task was often carried out by a child), and makes death into something more intimate and homely.

When the evidence of death (and therefore the site of life) emigrated from the lungs to the heart, verification became a technical procedure – an ECG must be carried out by a medical professional – and this was when it came to be the norm to die in hospital. Even if the declaration of death was left to the technicians, the fact that it was the heart, with all its symbolic significance, that was at the center of attention allowed a mediation between greater diagnostic reliability and popular, cultural and educational sensitivity. The person who died was always thought of as someone who “exhaled the last breath” but the heartbeat, ascertainable and symbolically connoted, still gave an aura of dignity and humanity to dying.

Since then, the Harvard criteria for establishing brain death have prompted not only a multitude of ethical dilemmas, but also a cultural question. If the death of a human being is confirmed to us by the measurement of a current by a technician (who may not even know the deceased person), how can we grasp and cope with this experience at the human level and above all how can we differentiate between death and the breakdown of a machine? The discussions on partial and total death, on the difference between a permanent vegetative state and a locked-down syndrome, on the ethics of the explant of the beating heart, have always been reduced to a group of experts, doctors, philosophers or bioethicists, and have removed the theme of death (and of life and its quality) from the audience of ordinary people; all the more reason death was even less discussed with boys and children.

We are lacking in words, and above all in rituals, for speaking about and celebrating death. Our mourning is no longer publicly exhibited; our funeral parlours are impersonal and unadorned with religious symbols or other signs of cultural belonging; in many cities of Italy our funeral processions no longer cross the streets of towns and cities: all of this hides and cancels out death,

perhaps to feed the illusion that it is within our power to keep death away from us. Two generations ago, children lived surrounded by death, whether it was the death of farm animals or that of neighbours and the elderly that gave rise to celebrations shared by the whole community. Of course, it is not a question of regretting past times: it is true that death was often presented to children without screens, with all the naked violence with which it manifests itself every day. The discovery of childhood, its specificity and its need for protection had to lead to the elaboration of rites and to find different words for speaking of death: but certainly not to silence.

Another fundamental theme that seems removed from the educational debate – or left in the hands of religious fundamentalists – is that of the after-death. Cultures and religions have tried not only to imagine and believe in a life after death but have made it the cornerstone of entire pedagogies that addressed the living not only with a consolatory intent but also offering a background of meaning for the life of people

In ancient times, the dead were buried on the far side of a river so that their souls could not make their way back to the land of the living; today's river is our silence, our inability and our unwillingness to talk about death. But death remains with us in any case, as a phantom, as a ghosts, as a desire to annihilate, kill, as a temptation to commit suicide, in horror films or nightmares, in mass killings and individual murders. The great comeback of the repressed has meant that the twentieth century, the century of genocides, the century which used the most scientific methods to send tens of millions of human beings to their deaths, was also the century which least reflected on death. The science that created machines of death was unable to produce words and rituals for coping with the experience of death. And the doctors at the front in World War I were confronted with a death for which they lacked words even more than they lacked medicines; they saw the disproportion between the unleashing of the forces of death and "the tiny, fragile, human body" (Walter Benjamin).

How do people die in hospitals today? How do healthcare professionals deal with their own concept and representation of death, when they are called on to certify the decease of a patient? To what extent do young doctors think about death when they enter a ward, and to what extent do they think of it in emotional as well as rational terms? What is the last act of a doctor or

nurse on leaving the bedside of a deceased person? What words and gestures do healthcare professionals use to communicate the death of a patient to relatives? Do they take into account that family's particular faith, representations of the afterlife, beliefs concerning the great mystery of death? All these questions should be the object of scientific, international, and intercultural research.

Medicine fights for life; perhaps it should fight for a good death. Perhaps it should stop viewing death as the enemy, but rather consider that at least one type of death – that which is written into our DNA, that which will lead us to quietly pass away in our beds when “old and sated with life” as the Old Testament puts it – is the goal towards which the doctor should accompany us. Death is the end of a process, or rather it is itself a process that leads to a change. Caring for a human being should mean helping him or her to attain this “Type A” sort of death, which is inscribed in the body as its natural end, while avoiding as far as possible all “Type B” deaths, that is to say, all the events (diseases, accidents, suicides) that interrupt the natural life course of the human animal. A medical science that fights “Type B” deaths with the goal of helping us to reach the “Type A” one represents a truly human approach to medicine, because it does not situate death outside the boundaries of the human. Such an approach takes seriously the syllogism which states that Socrates must be a man because he is mortal, thereby introducing death into the realm of the human. If man is mortal, curing an illness means accompanying him towards a natural death. And when the illness is not curable? What rituals, words and gestures do we have to accompany a person towards a “Type B” death without experiencing this as a failure? It's time to stop saying “There is nothing more we can do”).

But how are we defining death here? Who establishes the time of death? Is it sufficient, in light of the Harvard criteria, for this to be decided clinically? And what about those belief systems that view death as a process and not as an event, understanding it not merely as something that can be dated on a medical report but as something which has a life of its own (the life of the process of death), so that a loved one may never actually die in our consciousness or in our memory? When a Pope dies, the Roman Catholic Church still implements the *conclamatio*, an ancient pagan rite which consists of calling the deceased person's name out loud three times, before announcing the death. Clearly this is done after a doctor has signed a death certificate, with a precise date and time of decease. But in the interval between the signing of the death

certificate and the *conclamatio*, there is all the human space needed to speak about and celebrate the death as a human process.

Freud, in one of his last works, claimed that death is the rule and life the exception; the disturbance to homeostasis caused by birth cannot hold out forever against the tendency of all systems to return to a state of rest; a stone thrown into the pond must give way to the waters which must recover their initial state of calm. Death both precedes and follows life, and it is this which makes life so extraordinary: a disturbance of equilibrium that might never have happened and that must go on in all its exceptionality before equilibrium reasserts itself. Religions can help us, with their rituals rather than with their beliefs about life after death, to avoid relegating this nothingness to silence. By attributing meaning to the nothingness before and after death, they move us away from an egotistical vision of death; because while *for me* it is true that death is the end of everything, this does not hold true *for the world*. And while it is true that my consciousness may have finished its journey, my body will go on to nourish plants, to dissolve into water, to become a cloud of vapour in the sky. The nothingness after death is not a dead nothingness: it is a nothingness that bears new life, which will not be mine but which without my life would not have been possible. Accepting death, my death, fighting for it to be a "Type A" death; knowing that my death is not the end of the world but the end of "my" world; knowing that life is an exception that enriches the monotony of nothingness: is it possible that medical science and education can have nothing to say about all of this?

It could be answered that education does not enter into questions of faith; that education is a technique or even a technology and has nothing to do with questions of meaning; that educating in death and reflection on the after-death is the task of catechesis. Apart from the fact that catechesis - at least in the Catholic sphere - has ultimately gone to this task, it is precisely the space of secularism instead in a place dedicated to a non-fundamentalist and non-confessional reflection on these issues. Or does secularism really believe that by not talking about the beliefs about death these vanish, disappear from the horizon? To make way for what? To a cold, meaningless death from which everything flees?

A medicine that secretly raves about unlikely prospects of immortality, or hides behind euphemisms to avoid mentioning death; an education that does not want to deal with death because it always thinks that someone else

does: they both forget that “in the beginning there was death”. And so this kind of medicine and the silence of education are contributing to the fact that, today, to die seems to be the most difficult thing of all.

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Italian Philosophy of Education and the End(s) of the Constructivist Koine

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In the last few years, educational philosophy and theory, the world over, has been increasingly foregrounding a criticism of what we may call – with a nod to Gianni Vattimo – “the constructivist koine,” which has been dominating the educational discourse over the last four decades. After outlining the reasons for this questioning of a well-established paradigm, this paper will focus on the specific and autonomous way in which Italian philosophy of education has engaged with this critique of constructivism. This will be accomplished by entering into a dialogue with the coeval attack, in the Italian philosophical debate, on hermeneutics and with the related vindication of a “new realist” stance.

Keywords: (New) Realism, passibility, constructivism, hermeneutics, learnification.

La filosofia dell'educazione italiana e la/il fine della Koiné Costruttivista

Negli ultimi anni, la filosofia dell'educazione e la teoria pedagogica, in tutto il mondo, è andata alimentando una critica di ciò che potremmo nominare – riprendendo un'espressione di Gianni Vattimo – la “koiné costruttivista”, che negli ultimi quarant'anni è stata dominante nel discorso pedagogico. Dopo aver illustrato le ragioni della contestazione di questo paradigma consolidato, il contributo si focalizzerà sulle modalità specifiche e autonome in cui la filosofia dell'educazione italiana ha intrapreso questo percorso di critica al costruttivismo. A tale scopo sarà impostato un dialogo con l'attacco contemporaneo all'ermeneutica, all'interno del

dibattito filosofico italiano, e con l'annessa rivendicazione di una prospettiva di "nuovo realismo".

Parole-chiave: nuovo realismo, passibility, costruttivismo, ermeneutica, learnification.

Introduction

Over the last two decades educational philosophy and theory, on the international level, has repeatedly addressed the theme of what has been variously dubbed as "the discourse of learning" (Masschelein, 2001), the "logic of learning" (Bingham, 2016) or "learnification" (Biesta, 2006, 2010), that is "the transformation of the vocabulary used to talk about education into one of 'learning' and 'learners'" (Biesta, 2010, p. 18). Despite differences of accent, there has been a shared concern, namely that the predominance of the language of learning, on the one hand, impoverishes our understanding of what education is about (see also Lewis, 2019) and, on the other, that it is accomplice with the neoliberal view, which has been reshaping educational practices the world over. From this perspective, contrasting the supremacy of the vocabulary of learning and unearthing/reactivating/inventing other possible vocabularies have represented a most significant trend of (a part of) philosophy of education. This has had the aim of making sense of education in genuinely educational terms, thereby shunning an instrumentalist and individualistic concept of it.

At the beginning, this kind of endeavour did not bring with it a clear confrontation with constructivism, understood as a pedagogical koine of the last four decades (Corbi & Oliverio, 2013), viz. a horizon taken for granted and considered as ultimately indisputable since it has seemed to unfetter learners from the most backward instructional practices and to fully recognize their cognitive potential. To be sure, contestations against constructivism have not been absent in the international debate: to pick up only one relevant instance, in the French philosophy of education the critique of the substitution of individualization for anticipation (Gauchet, 2010) has been a way of challenging some of the main tenets of the constructivist view¹. However, as

¹ In the German world, the still vital tradition of *Pädagogik* and *Bildung* may have rep-

far as the opponents of the discourse of learning are concerned, in the first decade of this century they did not take constructivism explicitly to task.

Italian educational philosophy and theory (at least in the reconstruction here proposed)² may present some specificities in comparison with the picture outlined thus far. While the issue of learnification has found only belated resonances in the Italian context³, the critical engagement with constructivism has been very timely (e.g. Corbi, 2005, 2010). Moreover, in this diverging from the French context, such an engagement has not been framed (exclusively) in terms of the simple re-evaluation of more classic pedagogies but rather it has often re-oriented pedagogical devices (like Dewey's) which were part and parcel of the constructivist 'canon' or it has drawn upon the resources of the thought of complexity of Edgar Morin (see for instance Fabri, 2015). Additionally, the question of constructivism has been situated within a problematic constellation in which pivotal have been the misgivings about postmodern relativism and a vindication of an educationally robust view of democracy, thereby finding points of tangency with some of the concerns of the critics of the vocabulary of learning (who, however, have operated along different argumentative trajectories). And, finally, the contestations

resented a sort of bulwark against the discourse of learning and the related constructivist koine. The same obtains in the Scandinavian educational debate where the struggle against learnification has also drawn upon motifs coming from existentialism (see Saeverot, 2013). Highlighting these lines of resistance does not entail gainsaying that the discourse of learning, which is at the very core of what has been nicely dubbed GERM – Global Educational Reform Movement (Sahlberg, 2016) –, has had a relevant impact also in these cultural-educational areas.

² This parenthetical clause may work as a valid caveat for the whole paper: I will be unable to engage exhaustively with the wealth of insights and Italian authors who have contributed to the debate on realism-constructivism. I will beat one possible track, in order to pin down *some* specificities of contemporary Italian educational philosophy, but I am aware that many other tracks – also within the same area – are possible.

³ I cannot expatiate on the reasons for this belated thematization. Elsewhere (Oliveiro, in press), through an examination of some documents of the Ministry of Education, I have argued that, on the one hand, the thrust of learnification, while clearly detectable also in Italian institutional documents and scientific literature since the 2000s, may have been 'contained' at the beginning by the counter-thrust of other theoretical matrices; and, on the other, that it has, however, progressively gained momentum on account of the impact of GERM. Indeed, also in Italian policies there has been a "vector of change [...] linked with international pressures (for instance on the part of the EU) and the increasingly wider comparison of performances and of educational policies produced by international organisms like OECD" (Ciarini & Giancola, 2016, p. 64. My translation).

to (the excesses of) constructivism have often appealed to a realist vocabulary, which has not been common (to say the least) in other cultural contexts.

In the remainder of this paper, I will outline the Italian engagement with constructivism against the international backdrop: in particular, in § 1 I will examine how since the 2010s explicit reservations about constructivism have progressively emerged on the international level and I will indicate their principal features, often presenting clear differences in comparison with the contemporary Italian take on it; and, in § 2, I will zoom in on the Italian scene and show how Italian philosophy of education has fashioned its criticisms of constructivism by encountering and appropriating also a debate developing at the purely philosophical level and opposing hermeneutics and New Realism.

Beyond the constructivist metaphor and the hermeneutical gesture

We owe to Wolff-Michael Roth (2011) some of the most accurate, theoretically vigorous and wide-ranging arguments against constructivism. What makes his work extremely significant is that, on the one hand, he does not confine himself to critical remarks on specific or even scattered aspects but he tackles the very matrix of the constructivist mindset (or, as he puts it, its key metaphor about knowing); and, on the other, his philosophical engagement is not disconnected from an attention to the limitations of the constructivist pedagogies within the classroom. Due to constraints of space, I will pinpoint only a couple of elements of his endeavour: the priority of life to theoretical reason and a specific view of the position of the subject in reference to ideas and thoughts. Regarding the former, he notes:

Theoretical reason is not the source of knowing and learning but a power that selects among the thoughts and ideas that emerge within the mind. This mind, as Bakhtin suggests [...], needs to be understood from within life. When we approach it from within cognition, then the cognitive act comes to be controlled by its immanent laws, as if it were only for itself. It is a kind of mind that no longer resides in the world, the kind of mind that Immanuel Kant and following him the present-day constructivists describe (Roth, 2011, p. vii).

Concerning the latter, Roth emphasizes that “[w]e are not only the *subjects* of ideas and thoughts but also, and primarily so, *subject(ed)* to ideas and

thoughts, which suddenly come to and surprise us rather than are intended by us" (*Ibidem*). This is the crux of his attack on the constructivist metaphor, which pivots on the ideas of intentionality and the agency of the epistemic subject, thereby obliterating the backdrop of 'passibility' from which they emerge:

In the phenomenological literature, it is recognized that the objectivity of the object and the subjectivity of the subject are of one and the same *flesh*, that is, of the capacity to be affected. The flesh makes auto-affection possible, and auto-affection lies precisely at the origin of any intentionality, because only an auto-affected flesh immanently (without mediation by the [conscious] mind) knows that it can move and intend to be further affected in encounters with the world. [...] That is, affectedness is associated with *radical passivity*, a passivity that has nothing to do with the intentional withdrawal from engagement, itself an active process and result of a decision (*Ivi*, p. 17).

This implies that "[p]assivity is the originary [sic] experience, which not only enables agency but also accompanies it" (*Ivi*, p. 19. See also Oliverio, 2019a).

Without following further the elaborate reflections of Roth, we can distil three points of his argumentative device. First, the critique of the constructivist metaphor is primarily addressed to its intellectualist matrix or, to adapt a vocabulary typical of Italian New Realism (see below § 2), to the dissolution of ontology into epistemology and of experience into knowledge (however, characteristically the emphasis of Roth is *not* on 'reality' or ontology *stricto sensu* but rather on life and existence). Secondly, this leads to an educational re-evaluation of non-cognitive (sensuous, perceptive, 'pathetic' and emotional) dimensions of experience as fundamental in order for intentional knowing to come into 'operation', in a significant accordance with some tenets of the Italian debate both philosophical (Ferraris, 1997, 2001) and educational (Contini, Fabbri, & Manuzzi, 2006; Oliverio, 2008), despite some undeniable distinctions, which cannot be here explored in detail. And, finally, Roth is adamant in contesting constructivism with regard to its adequacy for accounting for the learning of the radically new: if knowledge is the incessant re-weaving of our conceptual frames to make sense of our coping with the world, can we be really *exposed* to what is foreign and strange and, therefore, 'other'? Is not its foreignness, thus, foreclosed from the very beginning? In this sense, constructivism would provide a view of knowledge which, while

viable (to embrace its parlance) in explaining (perhaps) *some* learning experiences, is dramatically unfit when we come to that kind of learning which is most interesting, namely the learning of the unexpectedly and radically new.

A similar concern motivates also Gert Biesta's critical engagement with constructivism, which can be seen as a more recent and in-depth elaboration of his longstanding confrontation with learnification. In particular, this has led Biesta to a rediscovery of teaching: "[I]f teaching is to have a meaning *beyond* the facilitation of learning, [...] [i]t has to be understood as something that comes from the *outside* and brings something *radically new*" (Biesta, 2014, p. 52). What the student experiences when *taught* (and not merely learning from somebody) is not only something literally 'ex-orbitant' and 'exceeding' her mind, insofar as it is not her construction, but also, and more importantly, something that 'resists'. Indeed, it is "an encounter with something that offers *resistance* (and we could even say that it is an encounter with the very experience of resistance)" (Biesta, 2012, p. 42).

Such a line of criticism of constructivism had already been developed in the Italian debate, both in educational theory in terms of the "experience of the limit" (Corbi, 2010) and in philosophy, with New Realists speaking of the experience of an "attrition" (Ferraris, 2012). However, once again, it is significant that what in the international debate, which I have been briefly outlining, is presented exclusively in ultimately *existential* terms has received, in Italy, also an *ontological* spin and has drawn upon a *realist* vocabulary.

Biesta reads the constructivist view of learning in terms of a hermeneutical gesture:

I wish to suggest that one strong tendency in contemporary conceptions of learning is to see learning as an act of comprehension – that is, as an act of sense-making, of gaining knowledge and understanding about the world "out there" (which can either be the natural world or the social world). We can think of the underlying "gesture" of this as a hermeneutical gesture where the world appears to me as something I try to bring to my understanding (Biesta, 2017, p. 30).

To this hermeneutical stance he opposes his 'Lévinasian' understanding of the subject as the one who is addressed by, subjected to and, thereby, singled out by the appeal of the other (whether human or non-human). Thus, while not completely overlapping with Roth's positions, we have to do with an analogous pattern of argumentation in which passibility trumps agency

and vulnerability to the emergence of the sense is prioritized in comparison with knowledge as *sense-making*.

The dismissal of hermeneutics has been one of the main springs of the new realist philosophical discourse in Italy (Ferraris, 1998). However, according to an already encountered attitude, this has resulted less in an “existential-ethical” outcome (like Biesta’s) than in a reclaiming of the rights of perception as a non-interpretive act (Ferraris, 1997; see also Oliverio, 2008), ultimately relying upon a recovery of the significance of ontology.

While this anti-hermeneutical thrust has been outspoken in the philosophical controversies, the Italian philosophical-educational debate has, instead, tended to mitigate, if not sidestep, it, also when entering into a dialogue with the perspectives of New Realism. This may originate from the role that hermeneutics – in an acceptance not restricted to a philosophical school and, moreover, taken in a critical-dialectical inflection – and, more generally, a “comprehending approach” (Chello, 2017) have had both in the profiling of the educational discourse at a (meta)theoretical level (Cambi, 1986) and in reference to the praxis:

[Hermeneutics] can, thus, legitimately appear today as a guiding paradigm for thinking of/doing educational theory [*pedagogia*] and education/formative self-cultivation [*formazione*] and it is perhaps able to reorganize in a *more critical and organic* (at the same time more flexible and integrated) way the domain of the educational knowing/acting (Cambi, 2005, p. 97. My translation).

References to Italian educational philosophy – and to its specificities – have already been interspersed in the outline of the international debate on the limitations of constructivism. In the next section, I will dwell in more detail upon the ways in which the engagement with constructivism has unfolded in Italy.

Italian educational philosophy in between realism and constructivism/postmodernism

Biesta (2006, pp. 17-18) has listed four trends contributing to the phenomenon of learnification: the constructivist theories of learning, postmod-

ernism, the explosion of adult learning and the erosion of the welfare state. I cannot linger over an examination of these in their interaction but I am interested in highlighting one point: while Biesta does not discuss the connection between constructivism and postmodernism, in the Italian context the questioning of constructivism has been entwined with a reflection on the legacy of postmodernism both in the typically philosophical (Ferraris, 2012) and in the philosophical-educational debate (Corbi & Oliverio, 2013a, 2013b; Fabbri, 2015).

However, an important difference should be pinpointed: while New Realism came to a fundamental rejection of postmodernism, in the philosophical-educational camp the positions have been more nuanced, when not conciliatory. In other words, while the Italian New Realists have clearly shaped their recovery of realism as a form of staunch anti-postmodernism, Italian educational philosophy and theory has undertaken a more accurate sieving of what could be still vital in postmodern thought⁴ and what needs to be abandoned.

In the philosophical camp the equivalence between constructivism and postmodernism is at the very core of the conceptual device of the most representative champion of New Realism, Maurizio Ferraris, who without ambiguity, speaks of “postmodern constructionism” (Ferraris, 2011, p. 2), understanding it as the idea that

all reality is socially constructed, as [...] the friends of interpretation affirm, who, precisely on that basis, can state that hermeneutics (namely interpretation) is a universal and omnipresent phenomenon. In other words, the target of the realist is constructionism and not some sort of Berkeleyan idealism (*Ivi*, p. 1. My translation)⁵.

Some comments are appropriate. To begin with, Ferraris lumps together a radical, postmodern view of hermeneutics, construed as the emphasis on all-pervading interpretation, and constructionism and he argues that we should appeal to a realist stance, in order to avoid their unwelcome, when not counter-intuitive, outcomes. Thereby, he redescribes the traditional philosophical

⁴ As Colicchi (2013) highlighted, postmodern thought should not be considered as a unified whole but a galaxy of philosophical attitudes to be painstakingly distinguished.

⁵ I cannot expatiate here on the differences between constructivism and constructionism and, with more than a grain of simplification, I will treat them as synonymous.

antitheses: as Letizia Caronia (2012) has noted, the pertinent conceptual oppositions would be, instead, those between realism and idealism (which is the one that Ferraris seems to discard as currently uninteresting), on the one hand, and between positivism and constructivism, on the other. This entails that realism (construed as the statement of the existence of a reality out there, independent from the knowing subject) does not exclude a constructivist epistemology (viz. the view that we cannot access reality unless through linguistic or, better, semiotic means).

Without being allowed to expatiate further on these analyses, we must highlight that they nicely epitomize an important feature of the Italian philosophical-educational (as distinct from merely philosophical) engagement with New Realism: while this engagement has been conducive to a refreshing re-focusing on the question of reality, it has not effected any over-hasty dismissal of constructivist motifs. Also in authors, like Massimo Baldacci (2013), who “sketch a realist and objectivist paradigm of educational research” (p. 82), a place is preserved also for a “constructivist assumption”, albeit in “a weak version” (*Ivi*, p. 86. My translation). Similarly, transactional realism – within the horizon of a recontextualization of Deweyan themes (Corbi & Perillo, 2013) – has been suggested as a suitable framework for educational theorizing and acting to the extent that it combines realist and constructivist insights as distinct moments in an evolving situation.

However, the scathing critiques of Ferraris of postmodern constructionism are directed more to the “postmodern” than to the “constructivist” side. As his emphasis on hermeneutics and interpretation shows, he picks on that theoretical attitude – exemplarily embodied by Gianni Vattimo (2000, 2012) – that has drawn the most far-reaching consequences from the Nietzsche dictum “There are no facts but only interpretations of facts” and the related ‘fabulization of the world’. The latter is not simply philosophical imagery, insofar as, in the ingenious reading which Vattimo (2000) provides of the contemporary media society, it may have found a manifestation in the pluralization of worldviews fostered by the multiplication of media.

In certain respects, Ferraris assumes this reading but definitely reversing the evaluation of the phenomenon. The postmodern attack on reality (as Ferraris [2012] calls it) has succeeded and it has been connected with processes of *ironization* (= everything is experienced as principally an effect of language, viz. reality is between quotation marks, so to speak), *deobjectivation* (= there are only interpretations not a reality) and *desublimation* (= the

privilege of the principle of pleasure). However, the result of this “erosion of the ‘principle of reality’” (Vattimo, 2000, p. 15) has not been, as Vattimo hoped, any liberation and emancipation but rather political populism and dangerous forms of ‘endarkenment’ (or counter-enlightenment). To put it bluntly: if you claim that there are no facts but only interpretations, at the end what you will have are Donald Trump’s “alternative facts”. What Vattimo calls fabulization of the world is for Ferraris (2012) nothing but “realityism”, viz. existence reduced to a sort of perpetual, fanciful and possibly oppressive simulation. As a consequence, the anchoring to reality, that is, to the obdurate resistance of facts to manipulation, is the only barrier that the powerless can oppose to those who can control (the creation of) social discourses.

The stakes in the controversy between hermeneutical postmodernism and New Realism have been, thus, eminently political or, better, political-educational as it has had at its centre the question of emancipation, which is a/the fundamental dimension of the continental tradition of educational theorizing (Biesta, 2011). And it is in this sense that the Italian community of educational philosophy and theory has engaged with it⁶. However, this has not taken place in the form of an ‘application’ of a typically philosophical controversy to the educational realm but rather as an ongoing dialogue, in which also points of divergence or a different take on the issue have emerged.

I have already mentioned that Italian educational philosophy has not given to the recovery of realist motifs a markedly anti-hermeneutical tone (which has been usual, instead, in the case of the critics of learnification, who, however, have never embraced realist themes). And the same holds for postmodernism insofar as, differently from the typically new realist attitude, Italian educational philosophy has undertaken a more balanced appraisal of its legacy. Indeed, postmodernism has been an important component of the Italian philosophical-educational discourse of this millennium (Cambi, 2006). Even when critically addressed, the need not to capitulate merely to a jargon of crisis – a possible outcome of postmodernist nihilism and deconstruction⁷ – has not led to the simple dismissal of the gains of

⁶ In a stimulating and wide-ranging article, Umberto Margiotta (2014) indicated dialogue with a new-realist perspective as a vehicle for a “re-birth” (p. 34) of critical pedagogy and its emancipatory thrust in contemporary scenarios. I cannot dwell here in more detail upon this contribution.

⁷ See Garrocho Salcedo’s (2021) *Carta a un joven postmoderno* as an eloquent document of the fears about this possible upshot and its calamitous educational consequences

postmodern thought, also in its most radical versions, like Vattimo's (Fabbri, 2015, 2019).

Accordingly, Italian educational philosophy has worked its way through in an original manner both in comparison with the international educational debate on constructivism and with the Italian philosophical debate. Concerning the former, as already pointed out, a reference to realist themes has been present, which does not appear in the critics of learnification. We can advance the hypothesis that this does not have only to do with the coeval dialogue with New Realism but rather it is linked with a much deeper source.⁸ In certain respects, it may be stated that the question of the opposition between realism and idealism (not constructivism!) inaugurates the inception of philosophy of education in Italy at the beginning of the 20th century (Gentile, 2003[1919]) and somewhat frames its developments, insofar as the battle against the neoidealist matrix (Cives, 1978) has been subsequently strategic, in the second half of the last century, for the profiling of educational research as an autonomous field (Oliverio, 2019b). Hence, one can make the surmise that the very institution and evolution of the disciplinary field has made Italian educational philosophy sensitive to issues (like that of realism), which do not resonate, instead, to the same extent with other cultural traditions.

A last and 'prospective' element should be, in conclusion, highlighted. The fight against the discourse of learning has also been a struggle against the neoliberal understanding of education; analogously, in Italy the contestation of constructivism has recognized that the success of the latter has also been due to its being a theory of learning apposite for a social-economic regime which appeals to the individual's self-management and flexibility in order to cope with frantically changing scenarios (Corbi, 2010)⁹. On the typically philosophical level, Stefano Azzarà (2013) has provided a stimulating reading of the controversy New Realism-postmodernism in terms of the need for a rediscovery of the reality of work and material processes of production, thereby offering a Marxian recontextualization of that debate¹⁰. The issue of a

(at least in the view of the author of the letter).

⁸ This hypothesis should be further explored and examined in-depth also through comparatist inquiries into the establishment of the disciplinary field in different cultural milieus.

⁹ We can find a similar position in the international debate: see Popkewitz, 1998.

¹⁰ It can be noted incidentally that Roth (2011, p. vii) himself hints at how "those with an intellectual heritage in dialectical (historical) materialism" are more inclined to reject

confrontation with the neoliberal logic of human capital and its stranglehold over contemporary educational policies has been newly emerging as a topical theme of Italian educational philosophy and theory (see Baldacci, 2014; Maltese, 2014; Conte, 2016, ch. 2). Accordingly, one may wonder whether it is precisely along these lines that the Italian engagement with realism and constructivism can find its most promising future developments.

the constructivist mindset “as suitable for understanding how human beings know and act in the world.” In this sense, a route is open to a recontextualization of Roth’s critique of the constructivist metaphor also in the direction here indicated.

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Word and *mimesis*: the poetic dimension of word and human expression

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The essay is developed through a dialogue between two definitions of a human being: *Human beings are human beings because they have word* (Sheler, Ebner, Ducci) and *Human beings are mimetic animals par excellence* (Aristotle). From this dialogue emerges the sense of a re-evaluation of the poetic dimension of word for human expression. A fundamental contribution to this re-evaluation of the poetic dimension of word will be provided by the research work developed by the theatre master Orazio Costa Giovangigli who spent his life solving the problem of how to bring the word of an author to life on stage through the interpretation of an actor.

Keywords: word, Edda Ducci, *mimesis*, Orazio Costa, Metodo mimico

La parola e la mimesis: la dimensione poetica della parola e l'espressione umana

Il contributo è sviluppato mediante un dialogo tra due definizioni dell'essere umano: "gli esseri umani sono tali perché possiedono la parola" (Sheler, Ebner, Ducci) e "gli esseri umani sono animali mimetici per eccellenza" (Aristotele). Da questa impostazione dialogica emerge il senso di ri-valutazione della dimensione poetica della parola per l'espressione umana. Un fondamentale contributo a questa ri-valutazione della dimensione poetica della parola proviene dal lavoro di ricerca svolto dal maestro di teatro Orazio Costa Giovangigli, che è stato a lungo impegnato nella esplorazione dei modi in cui trasportare la parola viva di un autore sul palcoscenico attraverso l'interpretazione attoriale.

Parole-chiave: parola, Edda Ducci, *mimesis*, Orazio Costa, Metodo mimico

Foreword

From the reflection on 'word' developed by Max Sheler, Martin Buber and Ferdinand Ebner, Italian scholar Edda Ducci (1929-2007) received inspiration for a proposal of philosophy of education based on the mystery of the reality of 'word' (Ducci, 2005).

Ducci uses the term 'mystery' in opposition to the term 'enigma'. While the latter can be solved (even if this resolution may require a lot of time and effort), the mystery will always have an edge (and precisely the most precious edge) that will escape any definition, this suggests the need to proceed in this investigation with an awareness that it will never be possible to consider this process of knowledge concluded and that this process will require an adequate approach and instrumentation (Ducci, 1999, pp. 30-31). The reality of 'word' presents itself, therefore, in this perspective, as one of the mysterious realities *par excellence*.

By proposing the ontological-existential statute of a human being as a statute of relationship (Ducci, 2002, pp. 87-116), word is rediscovered by Ducci as a measure of the ontological density of a human being and as the summit of the ontological participation (*methexis*) that is code of all creation (Ducci, 2002, pp. 110-111).

If the laws of relation are common to all entities, the measure of a human being is revealed by the relational complexity that constitutes 'word'¹.

And, although human beings are the only beings endowed with word, this possession does not set them in opposition to other beings but, on the contrary, expresses and manifests the common ontological participation that is shared by every being (Ducci, 2002, pp. 91-95).

Ducci develops her research around the mystery of word, proceeding with the investigation of the reality of dialogue (Ducci, 1999) founding and deepening the dynamics of *paideia* through the ontological dimension of *methexis* (Ducci, 1967).

We intend to proceed in this research, undertaken by Ducci in her investigation of the mystery of word in education, integrating the vision that *methexis* offers, (when it is accepted as a foundational movement of the onto-

¹ Word in human beings, in fact, poses and presupposes relationship. Word is made to say something to someone: someone who can receive the spoken word because he too is a holder of word. The word therefore has both an active and a passive value: the human being is both a maker and a hearer of the word.

logical-existential statute of relationship) with that which *mimesis* can offer if given comparable status to the former. Thus, *mimesis* and *methexis* are not considered as alternatives, but, on the contrary, are recognized in their capacity to integrate with each other and to confirm the hermeneutic validity of the other perspective; here it is only a matter of gaining another point of view – that which *mimesis* provides us with – to look at the same reality – that of word in human beings – in order to discern it better, respecting its mysterious nature, and to draw from this discernment what can be useful to the process of humanisation.

Clarifying the meaning of word

Word as intended here is not, of course, to be understood as the singular of 'words' but rather as our capacity to express something that makes sense to us and to others, and to grasp meaning in the things that others express; to grasp beauty and harmony in what we observe and to create things that can be recognized by others who observe them as beautiful and harmonious; to grasp the universal in the particular and to name it; to recognize similarities and to create them. Word is what allows us to choose the right words to say something to someone but also to choose a gesture or an object to do so; it is what allows us to create artistic works that can speak to others and allow us to enjoy the work that others create. Word is what allows us to recognize the other person as a subject and to build an inter-subjective relationship with them. Thanks to the word that is in me, I can dialogue with the other, giving meaning even to silence.

Putting 'word' at the heart of what is human also means recognizing that expressing oneself is both a need and a task for every human being. It is a need that must continually find fulfilment and a task that must be carried out ceaselessly if we want to avoid the pain of dissatisfaction and existential failure.

It also means recognizing the uniqueness of each person: each person, in fact, has the word with a trait of originality and can say something that no one else can say in their place. It means affirming that the very meaning of human life must in some way be linked to the singular expression of each person. An expression, the one to which every human being is called, which reaches its fullness where it is understood by others (and if this understand-

ding only comes after one's death, the lack of it during life will certainly have entailed a great deal of pain for those who were not able to make themselves understood in their time, but nothing will have detracted from their contribution to humanity), so that the task of the individual comes to be configured as that of expressing their own word in a language that can be understood by other human beings.

On the concept of mimesis

A fundamental connection between word in human beings, as outlined here, and the dynamism of *mimesis* can be found starting from a well-known passage in Aristotle's *Poetics* (1448b): this passage can be useful to find the sense of the statement in which, just above, we mentioned the possibility and usefulness of an adequate integration between *mimesis* and *methexis*.

The ontological participation that makes us brothers and sisters with all other entities can, in my opinion, be easily understood if we recognize the mimetic nature of word and if we go back to critically reading in its implication the definition of human beings contained in the *Poetics*: *human beings are the mimetic animals par excellence* (*mimetikótátón*); and it is thanks to this excellence – Aristotle argues – that human beings express themselves poetically, and learn-comprehend (*manthánein*) fundamental knowledge (*mathéseis prótas*).

Every poetic expression can be recognized as a manifestation of word – as defined earlier – and specifically can be recognised as a manifestation of the mimetic nature of word.

It may seem obvious to consider the value of the mimetic/poetic dimension of word but taking care of this value in the pedagogical field is another matter. Rather, the educational path that has prevailed in the western world has been committed to privileging the purely rational aspects of word, reserving a marginal place (and always at risk of further marginalization) for those that are poetic. The poetic aspects of word are exalted only in the artist's training, and in fact confined therein. Almost as if a poetic approach to the *logos* is not necessary for the education of an adult in the western world. It is difficult not to realize how much an action (that is supposed to be educational) that is coherent with such an assumption can be the cause of deprivation in a human being, and a deprivation that concerns fundamental aspects of their

humanity with inevitable repercussions to the quality of life of individuals and of the whole community. An action that does not recognize the mimetic/poetic nature of word and considers only its logical/rational aspects has no chance to truly help an individual in the expression of his uniqueness – to realize, that is, what we have previously recognized as the need and existential task of each human being – and cannot, therefore, be called educational.

I believe there is an urgency to work to repair this partial vision and to re-evaluate the poetic dimension of the word, if only because we care about human beings and the meaning of their being on this earth.

In fact, it seems essential to do so today, at a time when a sense of disorientation and displacement of individuals seems to prevail within coexistence; at a time when the word conveyed by science seems to have lost authority and credibility, showing subalternity to economic and political laws, giving up its problematic and dialogical essence. A situation that marks the present day, which requires the reconstruction of the social fabric in its fundamental relationships, undermined by the need for isolation and by not always justified narratives that describe the other as a threat to one's own integrity. In a time in which we choose to simplify more and more complexity in the utopia of returning as soon as possible to a normality of a previous life (a previous life that presented, in truth, already strong imbalances and negative inequalities). Re-evaluating the poetic soul of word could, perhaps, remedy some drifts and reconstruct a horizon of meaning in which to recognize ourselves as human and in which also the logical/rational soul of the word could come back to life.

Given this urgency, briefly described, this poetic re-cognition of the word must be achieved not only through a purely theoretical procedure but, rather, through a hermeneutic process in which theoretical reflection has to find its measurement through praxis: to receive from it those questions necessary to intensify that sounding that is its own and those confirmations essential to understand the meaning and scope of its epistemic effort.

Moreover, only by operating within this circular modality, that which dialogically involves the theory that investigates the poetic dimension of word and the existential dynamics in which it lives, can one really effectively investigate this mysterious reality; a reality that remains in its essence precluded to a theoretical analysis that is merely logic-rational and lacks interest in a quality of *aliveness*; furthermore, the strict adherence of theory to praxis nullifies the risk of drifting in mystical speculation, a pitfall when giving attention to the word in its mysterious nature.

Mimesis and word

Can a philosophical-educational proposal based on these premises find in the processes of *mimesis* and of artistic creation a place of excellence to seek out the dynamics of the expression of word?

Let us investigate this by returning to reflect on the meaning that can be attributed to *mimesis* – that does not seem to be truly resolved by the solution that is often chosen as its translation: imitation (Koller 1954; Gebauer et Wulf 1992; Halliwell 2002). Aristotle, who, in the *Poetics* 1448b, defines human beings through the concept of *mimesis*, does not concern himself with defining there what this reality really is. In the *Politics*, *mimesis* is more generically expressed with the traditional Greek words for likeness(es) (Halliwell, 2002, pp. 155-156)². To find a clear definition of *mimesis*, one must go back to Plato's *Republic* (393c) in which it is made explicit – through the verb *mimēsthai* – as a “making oneself similar”. There is *mimesis* when a human being makes himself similar to someone else or to something else. And this similarity can be achieved both through gestures and/or voice and through a process that can take place exclusively in the interiority, even without awareness. Plato calls all artists *mimētai* (373b), and for the Philosopher, those that recite epic poetry or drama occupy a privileged place.

Having attributed to *mimesis* the meaning found in Plato's *Republic*, the proposal presented in this study is that of accepting two definitions of a human being and exploring the implications of an educational philosophical reflection (which pays attention to the dialogue between theory and praxis) searching for connections between these definitions, which seem at first glance to have little in common.

Human beings are human because they have word (an expression that Ducci takes from Sheler and Ebner);

Human beings are the mimetic animals par excellence (Aristotle's defini-

² Halliwell points out that: “At *Politics* 8.5, 1340a, he claims that melodies and rhythms contain ‘likenesses’ (*homoiomata*, 18) of qualities of character (*ethe*), and soon afterward that they are mimetic (that they contain *mimēmata*, 39) of these qualities. The two terms are here clearly synonymous, and this is confirmed by the use of ‘likenesses’ (*ta homoia*, 23), in the same passage, as a compendious description of mimetic artifacts. The primary concern with music in this passage also reinforces the fact that for Aristotle, as for other Greeks, the language of ‘likeness(es)’ could be applied to much more than the visual media of painting and sculpture”.

tion in the *Poetics*).

What connects the ability to make oneself similar with *having word*? And if word is the ability to grasp and express meaning, what does *making oneself similar to the other that one wants to grasp and express meaningfully* have to do with *having word*?

A lot, perhaps everything.

To demonstrate this connection is a master of theatre, Orazio Costa Giovangigli (1911-1999), who found himself in the course of his professional existence facing and trying to solve a problem that can be expressed in these essential terms: how to make alive on the stage the word of a character (or, perhaps more correctly, the word of the author who created the character) through the word of an actor?

Orazio Costa Giovangigli, in an attempt to answer this question, came to structure a Method for an actor's training, with which he never stopped experimenting and perfecting throughout his life, based first on the rediscovery and then on the conscious use of mimetic capacity.

The Metodo mimico for the training of actors

Costa's research aims at training an actor to effectively express, for an audience, the word of a character (which in turn is caused by the word of an author). The concreteness and practical urgency that animates his research makes him an exceptional witness for our research: tracking his movements helps us penetrate into the mystery we are exploring without indulging in a thinking that is satisfied simply to be thought.

Costa recognised that the training of an actor is first and foremost a training to be human. Having grown up in Copeau's school, he shared with his master the certainty that first a man is formed and then a possible actor (Bogio, 2004, pp. 65-71; Piazza, 2018, pp. 28-37).

Actors must have deepened what makes them human to the point of being able to effectively measure themselves with the mystery of life that is in the word. For Costa, what makes human beings human lies in their mimetic capacity: in the poetics of their natural expressiveness (Piazza, 2018, pp. 38-45).

He observes that poetic dimension of expressivity (as already stated by Aristotle in *Poetics* 1448b) in the play that children engage with spontaneously before any educational input from adults. Therefore, it is by virtue

of an attitude, a natural expressive process, that children play (without anyone teaching them this game) to be a teacher, but also to be an airplane or a galloping horse; and this game consists precisely in making oneself similar, with a movement that is in analogical relation and that has the immediacy of connaturality, to whatever reality one desires to explore, and with this action children achieve a com-prehension of that reality (Boggio, 2004, pp. 149-163).

Through the practice of his Method, Costa aims to train the adult to rediscover his own innate ability, using the body, to make a *mimesis* of everything that has been experienced.

Costa thus forces the subject to existentially experience the brotherhood and sisterhood that binds the human being to every entity. *Mimesis* thus demonstrates *methexis*. If we can make ourselves similar with the bodily movement to any entity and this happens with the freshness of naturalness and immediacy this is a sign and proof of a *participation* that unites us. This awareness allows human beings to intimately grasp fundamental aspects of their own humanity which are necessary for the journey towards the intentional use of their own word (Boggio, 2004, pp. 69-71).

The methodology developed by Costa foresees a gradual process to reach his goals. Once the mimetic capacity of the body has been regained, it is then a matter of giving voice to this body which, in the different plastic mimic states realized by the movements representing the various realities, will be called to produce sonorities – those that constitute the single words that the body is currently expressing – which are the immediate phonetic expression of the body *mimesis*.

For Costa, in extreme synthesis, it is a matter of making the actor and the actress be what they say and say what they are; each one realizing his or her own interpretation, which will naturally have, without any forcing, its own character of originality: if one has to say 'wind', one must first become wind; if one is wind, one is authorized to say 'wind'; and each one who engages in this exercise, since they have their own body and their own feeling, will have a movement different from that of anyone else and, therefore, no one will say 'wind' in the exact same way as another. The result of making everyone reach an interpretation, which is both coherent and original, is obtained, therefore, through making oneself similar with one's own body (animated by that mimetic dynamism that has its seat in the most intimate fibres of our being) to what one wants to name and, in this mimetic-plastic condition, naming

(with a vocality that is properly the sound of the body) that word, that phrase, that line, which *is* already sense and meaning in the movement that one is making with one's own body (Colli, 1996, *passim*).

Angel of the word

The mimetic act for Costa is an act of openness and benevolence, an act of love, towards the world of natural and spiritual phenomena. An act with which we truly encounter things of the world and set out to express them is a poetic act.

Poetry is [...] feeling similar to things for that gift that we make to the things themselves through a life that is ours and that with their signs tries to explain itself. [...] '*Mimér l'aubépine*' says Proust; 'Dancing the orange' says Rilke. It is the discovery of our natural tendency to anthropomorphize the external world, in order to feel it affectively. The child says: 'the face of the tram'... Don Quixote saw giants in windmills... [...]. Living in love, in creation, in revelation, in continuous poetry, at the cost of every desperate effort, immersed in a supernatural made up of calls in which everything means multiple things to you and to others, where names and encounters are and remain signals definitively reached, plans and layers definitively acquired by the soul that is always more enriched, active and invading the space assigned to it (Costa, *Notebook n. 2*, in Piazza, 2018, p. 43).

Poetry becomes, therefore, a method of knowledge and mutual understanding, but also an ethical attitude that produces significant effects for the realization of the individual and for a quality of coexistence, going far beyond, thus, a functionality related only to the truth as performed on the stage.

The way to the awareness of one's own expressive means passes through the rediscovery of the poetic dimension of word and then to its expression. The whole effort to regain the mimetic attitude serves to modify the quality of human expression. It serves to allow the full expression of one's own word that is realized in the depths of relating. In fact, Costa, through body movement, wants the subject to gain contact with his own subjective feeling that lives in the encounter with the other.

Once the expression of word through body movement is turned on, the mimic method foresees the progressive lessening of body movement; therefore, word can finally be pronounced and made alive even without external body movement, because what counts is regained: the authentic and personal inner contact with the reality that one wants to express and that finds expression through us.

The pages that testify to Orazio Costa's teaching tell us of a man who, for his entire life, committed himself to the investigation of the mystery of human expression: a poetic mystery that only poetry could reveal. Poetry could then be argued as a way to recognize all reality, to gain the meaning of human expression as a service to the revelation of a larger mystery. Through the lens of Costa's vision, the nature of reality is poetry and poetry revels because it has in itself the mystery of reality (Piazza, 2018, pp. 46-60).

The greatness of poets (who are also the writers of plays) consists in grasping reality in its poetic state and delivering it to the world through 'word'. Costa gives the term 'temperie' to the state in which the author grasps and generates a work. Poets create in a 'temperie' in which they know how to make themselves messengers of a more mysterious word through their word. Actors do not know the 'temperie' in which an author has created the text, but through the words generated by the author's word they have the possibility of going backwards. By making oneself similar to the words that the author has penned, the actor seeks to re-experience the 'temperie' in which they were generated, nearly making oneself the author in the moment in which they exercised their word to reveal a larger word (Boggio, 2018, pp. 161-171). This research will finally allow an actor to fully carry out his work: to be, that is, *an angel of the word and a nuncio to himself and to the universe of a better self* (Costa, *Notebook 39*, in Piazza, 2018, p. 182).

This, that according to Costa must be the task of a human being who is an actor, shows us once again how much the reality of word is a mystery and that this mystery is not only for the actor to celebrate.

Costa's neo-humanism insistently goes beyond the boundaries of a merely acting theory, pushing beyond the boundaries of the stage and pointing out a destiny for human beings – on stage and off – higher and more worthy, in the sign of the awareness of one's own infinite expressive means and of the need to nourish and wisely employ them as an act of love towards oneself and the world of natural and spiritual phenomena. (Piazza, 2018, p. 164).

The “Centro di avviamento all’espressione” created by Costa and financed by the Municipality of Florence from 1979 to 1988, was established to allow all interested people (therefore not only those who had aspirations as actors) to know and experience the *Metodo mimico* and to find through the way of *mimesis* a path to intensify the expression of their own word (Colli, 1996, pp. 128-131).

Concluding note

The human ontological-existential statute as a statute of relationship has the possibility to unfold by finding in the word an expression of *methexis* and an expression of *mimesis*.

In this study we have tried to show to what extent the re-evaluation of *mimesis* to investigate the mystery of word and of human expression can be fruitful, and how much this research can benefit from the work of those who have existentially faced the problem of human expression by exploring the heights of artistic creation.

It remains to be verified if a human and spiritual rebirth for the individual and for society can be nourished by an educational proposal focussed on the poetic dimension of word. That is, it remains to be verified to what extent *mimesis* is a path to humanisation. If *mimesis* is an encounter between us and the other that enables us *to live in love, in creation, in revelation*; if *mimesis* is a quality of relationship, if it is a relationship so intense that it enables the other to live in us and us to realize ourself through the other; if the intentional use of *mimesis* deepens and enriches the encounter with the other human being, with another poetical being; and, if, finally, all this is what nourishes the expression of our word, then, perhaps, it could be a good thing that philosophical-educational research engages in investigating, both theoretically and existentially, this path.

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Making Thinking Fertile

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The paper focuses on the demand for an *exercise of thinking* – within the present historical contingency/conjuncture – meant as a sort of claim for cultural awareness, a competence empowerment to elaborate reality and mediate upon it as political actors. Considering some insights from the French philosopher François Jullien, it is explored how to rethink social interactions by applying the concepts of *écart* and *entre*. Further stress is on the analysis of theoretical and practical instances introduced by intercultural dialogue that, applied to the educational setting at large, can promote critical and responsible skills to face social challenges within contemporary scenarios.

Keywords: Education, Philosophy, Complexity, Intercultural Dialogue, Awareness.

Rendere fertile il pensiero

Il saggio afferma l'esigenza di esercitare un pensiero inteso come consapevolezza culturale e come sviluppo della capacità di progettare la realtà e di attuarvi delle mediazioni in qualità di attori politici, specie nelle circostanze dell'attuale contingenza storica. A partire da alcune considerazioni del filosofo francese François Jullien, il contributo esplorerà i modi in cui è possibile ripensare alle interazioni sociali mediante i concetti di *écart* e di *entre*. Inoltre, ricorrendo all'analisi di esempi teoretici e pratici pertinenti al dialogo interculturale, si mostrerà come questi, se applicati alle strutture educative in senso lato, possono incoraggiare lo sviluppo della responsabi-

lità e delle capacità critiche necessarie ad affrontare le sfide sociali poste in essere nel panorama contemporaneo.

Parole-chiave: educazione, filosofia, complessità, dialogo interculturale, consapevolezza.

However, somebody killed something: that's clear, at any rate--'But oh!' thought Alice, suddenly jumping up, 'if I don't make haste I shall have to go back through the Looking-glass, before I've seen what the rest of the house is like! Let's have a look at the garden first!' She was out of the room in a moment, and ran down stairs--or, at least, it wasn't exactly running, but a new invention of hers for getting down stairs quickly and easily as Alice said to herself.

Lewis Carroll, *Through the Looking Glass*

Complexity and Openness

We live in a world where time contracts: continuously connected to the network for every need, hyper-stimulated, in a visual and cognitive frenzy that causes a super activity of the brain. In our time of complexity, the network and speed of information are limiting the possibility to process knowledge, raising issues within spaces of inclusion, communication and understanding. Technological globalization emphasized direct information by inducing a paradoxical solitude in which individuals are clogged and saturated by network connections, compelled to navigate through symbols and codes yet estranged from knowledge intermediation processes. Technology more and more intertwines two faces: hope and fear by producing both bio-cultural threat and the expectations of its overcoming, along with the projections in post-human expressions and the reconstruction of subjectivity within the most advanced devices. The issue opens up vast spaces for reflection that are linked to the epistemological nature of complexity which implies generation of innovation and, therefore, has an implicit or explicit epistemology. The notion of complexity exploded in the mid-eighties as a new cultural paradigm, as a transversal model – in and between knowledge – as an innovative epistemological frontier, under the impulse both of a revision of the logic of science (more problematic and sophisticated and

interactive) and of a transformation of society (complicated by techniques, re-articulated in groups and classes, variegated in objectives, and then plural, flexible, open, interconnected) (Benkirane, 2007; Bertuglia, 2005). Over the decades various models of complexity readings were elaborated referring to structures such as the system, the network, along with the catastrophe, the rhizome, the labyrinth. These are mostly mathematical models yet equipped with strong analogical value and, therefore, applicable to different realms of knowledge, in which they allow to identify processes, to make them formally defined and cognitively controllable. Almost forty years later we can affirm that the paradigm of complexity governs all fields of experience, emerging as the paradigm of the human condition, understood both in the biological and in the cultural sense, attaining an ontological value in the *homination* of nature and of the species *homo sapiens*.

The articulation of complexity involves the whole life system and generates a situation of imbalance determined by the tension between a state of hyper-subjectivity – centered on the feelings and brittleness of the individual – and one of hyper-objectivity – expressed in the contexts of economic, political and legal reality. The affirmation of subjectivity, attested by the increasing claims of rights, produced strong thrusts of individualistic manifestations linked to redefinitions of personal dignity. Post-modern culture emphasized the subject's urge to regain a multidimensional-self, a *self*-filled with differences, contradictions, paradoxes. The statute of the subject is multifold, prioritizing the categories of existence within the space of freedom. Individuals solicited to a constant openness should rely on learning and reflectiveness as values to be pursued to favor unconventional solutions for a life form, for a social configuration.

The historical transition/transformation to which we bear witness calls for new ways of interaction, cooperation, empathy in nature and culture, so the search moves along a double path: epistemological/methodological and metacognitive/dialogic. The paradigms originated within postmodernity innovated the concept of culture which assumes anthropological characteristics intersecting all sectors of human thinking and acting. Every cultural reflection today moves in the space of a true antinomy between practical reason and theoretical reason, due to the feature to aggregate positions that are even ideologically distant from each other, due the plural axiological connotation which, within a globalized and multi-ethnic, gathers diversified proposals of public ethics and political participation (Crowder, 2004; 2019). Such dispo-

sition to the manipulation of reality – that once was described as *ontologically founded* – reaches its highest expression within an epistemological scenario no more centered on totalizing notions of truth. The assertion that there is no absolute point of view to look at phenomena, is not an implicit admission of ethical relativism, but an admission of onto-ethic relativity, as well as of intellectual honesty, since knowledge always presupposes a somatic-chronologic-topologic situation. As Hans-Georg Gadamer observes no one is without prejudice, since we all require some kind of prejudices to represent the horizon of our views (Gadamer, 1975). The acceptance of the notion of truth as practicability of ideas (Pragmatism), generates a constant socio-political process of fluctuations among levels of conflict/toleration/recognition.

Hence, takes on significant social value the ability/competence to critically process the effects of complexity and hyper-technology: an attitude that should be prefigured as fundamental in any educational experience. Philosophy of education, as well as philosophy itself, are not, and could never be, merely teaching matters, since they are knowledge tools to preserve and support human awareness, in order to empower individual self-consciousness. The need for critical thinking should be fulfilled by educational programs at all levels to give historical sense to private and collective biographies, to strengthen bonds and roles within communities, in order not to be overwhelmed by triviality (Nussbaum, 2012). Philosophy knowledge, in its pedagogical declination, can facilitate the practicing commitment toward an interdisciplinary educational transition which can provide the breeding ground for a better public culture responsiveness to changing life needs, over entrenched patterns.

Thinking otherwise

The propensity to openness led human sciences to elaborate a dialogical rapprochement to plurality – cultural, political religious and economic – to clarify how national identities always arise in interaction with one another. The area of philosophical studies provided a hermeneutical counseling, defined as inter-culturality, to deconstruct the concept of diversity. This prefix *inter* calls for specific *formae mentis*, mental attitudes to ensure dynamics of cooperation and trust among cultures, even when interests are conflicting. In the European context interculturality often designates a central concept

in a general philosophy of subjectivity or in the philosophy of education. To practice interculturality means to let the otherness break into the course of habits in which one recognizes – or to whom one is subordinated – to suspend repetitive behavior, to introduce a wise uncertainty into one's own *Weltanschauung* so to confront the world in which one lives as the space for the historical factuality of the connection between distance and mediation. Interculturality stimulates radical query, it questions one's own genealogical matrices without estranging them, leading to reject every dogmatic and oppressive ethnocentrism (Fornet-Betancourt, 2001, 2008). We are facing a multiverse that challenges cognitive and ethical domains, along with anthropological and spiritual spheres, stressing on the reconfiguring identity and difference as related and presupposing each other.

In this direction part of the latest European philosophical debate is enriched by the reflection of François Jullien, a French scholar who has woven philosophical practice to the study of Chinese culture in an unprecedented way, building an intense dialogue between the traditions of thought of Europe and China in name of a radical search to decentralize the vision of reality. Jullien, for whom “to philosophize is to think otherwise”, exploits the heuristic value of an indirect, oblique reading of the Western philosophical tradition, passing through the deviation, the *détour* offered by the encounter with the externality of China. The practice of thinking differences in a static way should be replaced with a research approach that considers differences in a continuous and sinuous movement, that integrates them into the dynamics of historical attraction that accrue in the social fabrics. The new theoretical paradigm, provided by François Jullien explores the concept of *écart*/discrepancy, distance/deviation, pointing out how the notion difference establishes a distinction and remains on the level of description, whereas deviation/*écart* proceeds from a distance and is productive. Unlike the traditional philosophical couple identity/difference, this distance/deviation arises as a disturbing and non-ordering figure, which does not make identity appear as fruitfulness but as generating a productive tension. The *écart*, unlike the difference, does not ascertain a distinction, which always presupposes an imaginary originality, but by proceeding from a distance produces action, puts in tension the parts of a given encounter (Jullien, 2012).

The capacity to recognize difference does not create other than itself, while the notion of *écart* generates *l'entre*, which has nothing of its own but always refers to another from itself. It is precisely this in-between which

brings out the Other, who is not only an imaginary projection of ourselves, but is really the Other with whom to dwell the space for *dia-logue*, by virtue of the two elements: *dia*, which can be translated as the *écart*, and *logos* which is the intelligible. While in the scope of difference, once the distinction is acknowledged, each of the two terms neglects the other one and remains closed in its own specificity, in the *écart* the distance keeps the two terms in tension leaving open the richness of the comparison. The *écart* is an adventurous figure, it disturbs and gives new impetus to the thought, it allows to explore and to bring out glimpses of unexpected possibilities; this is because it makes visible a space that allows to the two terms to remain turned towards each other (*ivi*, p. 57). The understanding of this notion, on the methodological level, promotes a cultural sharing of contents, decisions, structures, which can favor inter and multi-disciplinary conjectures to guide praxis on issues of contemporary relevance. Hence, the commitment to decontextualize and re-contextualize reality within new frameworks of imagination and intuition. At the research level the task is to encounter and preserve, rather than systematize, what is alive by building a plastic perspective that requires a full immersion in what seems distant, divergent and conflictual.

A systematic renewal

Any social discourse driven by intercultural thinking doesn't exhaust itself at the level – yet important – of geopolitical and economic analysis. Interculturality brings into play a profound change and renewal of knowledge – crucial within an educational process aiming at awareness – both in its normative profile and in the one of its applicability. In this respect, the possibility of configuring new social *ethoses* is necessarily placed in the critical space of intermediation, which represents the prior category of education, because knowledge experience can't be channeled into the predictable tracks of information/description. Educational relation is the enriching interaction in which is constantly confirmed the constitutive potential of human beings to grow within a horizon of ulteriority, producing a fertile dilation of one's own boundaries, proceeding in an unusual way, shifting away from what is expected and conventional. Personal destinies are situated on constant triggers of friction with time / history, therefore, it becomes essential to affirm a *Bildung* that allows individuals to cross multiple trajectories.

Some contemporary educational approaches, traced by intercultural philosophy, stress on the value of inter-relation, producing remarkable outcomes on teaching methodologies and practice, as well as on social policies and juridical resolutions. Social innovations or regulations, conflicts or mediations, can be professionally addressed when a dialogue takes place as a form of responsible commitment to the historical contingency. Queries and debates activated through cognitive openness constitutes a powerful antidote to the intrusive phenomenology of unilateral thinking that increasingly organizes, manages and controls human-relational architecture. Thinking is continually evolving from within, therefore, coherently connected with a form of political education where individuals are agents of continuous learning and cooperation, developing a willingness to wonder about who they are in themselves.

Individuals motivated by critical mindset can experience the universality of the cognitive experience, focusing on and learning about favoring the search for links connecting formative experiences to everything that exists, and to opting for a holistic model of knowledge, aimed at overcoming the traditional disjunctions produced by a strictly disciplinary thinking. This research approach reckons space and time form different configurations, opening to a profound harmony with the horizon of meaning of one's own era, accepting to relate also to the dark sides of human experience, in the awareness that influences and perturbing factors burst into them. Cognitive openness challenges thinking and acting when grounded on obviousness: where life experiences are visualized as visible facts that, understood or misunderstood, are simply commented upon. Much of what happens in human action cannot be explained, but has to be appreciated. Large portion of human potential lies in creative details, in vertigo of suffering, in the intertwining of objectives, desires and expectations. Trough an internal dialogue one can become aware on uncritical or unwarranted assumptions. The methodological principles of a contemporary critical scholarship are concretized precisely in the of hermeneutics of contexts and pre-figuration of an evolution. These two principles give rise to the coordination of insights such as learn to welcome light and criticism, ascertain how behavioral oscillations are exposed to fallibilism, give value to the incongruencies through which mankind combines and disrupts existence. In this exercise of thinking from diversity – and not about diversity – lies the plastic force that can guide expansion in creative areas of learning to enable change become the object of care out of the engagement in a

common responsibility. The educational effort must be truly interdisciplinary and interpersonal, involving not only the traditional fields of academia but the whole community of human beings that by facing practical and immediate problems can thrive out of them. The task is to risk new solutions, since – as Jullien further observes – to exist is to de-coincide: to make the new happen constantly, it is necessary to detach oneself from the previous state, to de-sympathize with its coherence, and not perpetuate it (Jullien, 2017). De-coincidence opposes to adaptation and is the driving of existence. Consciousness, as crucial human conceptual resource, always longs to de-coincide and to dismantle any temptation of settling in the spirit of closure.

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The reception of Dewey's thought in Italy

The case of Democracy and Education

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The reception of Dewey's thought in Italy was assimilated within a cultural and political project aimed at "renewing" Italian culture by means of a thorough transformation of educational models and practices. This project was initiated during the process of the post-war reconstruction of the country, after the establishment in 1946 of the democratic republic. Within this framework the democratic ideal described in *Democracy and Education* was inspirational for the advocates of educational reform, understood as the key to advancing cultural, political and social democracy. Nonetheless, this political focus has, to a great extent, diverted Italian scholars from the core meaning of Dewey's masterpiece, which is deeply theoretical. It is therefore important to implement a theoretical reading of *Democracy and Education* in order to discover its implications for the construction of a democratic theory of education.

Keywords: democracy, reconstruction, reform, political, theoretical.

La ricezione del pensiero di Dewey in Italia. Il caso di Democracy and Education

La ricezione del pensiero di Dewey in Italia si integrò in un progetto culturale e politico volto a "rinnovare" la cultura italiana mediante una completa trasformazione delle pratiche e dei modelli educativi. Tale progetto fu avviato durante il processo di ricostruzione post-bellica del paese, in particolare dopo l'istituzione della repubblica democratica nel 1946. Entro questo contesto l'ideale democratico descritto in *Democracy and Education*

fu una fonte d'ispirazione per i sostenitori della riforma dell'istruzione, intesa come fattore chiave del progresso culturale, politico e sociale della democrazia. Tuttavia, la grande attenzione rivolta alla dimensione politica ha, in una certa misura, distolto gli studiosi italiani dal fondamentale significato del capolavoro di Dewey, che è prettamente teoretico. Perciò, è importante realizzare una lettura teoretica di *Democracy and Education* al fine di scoprirvi le implicazioni per la costruzione di una teoria democratica dell'educazione.

Parole-chiave: democrazia, ricostruzione, riforma, politica, teoria.

Premise

The process of post-war reconstruction of our country was closely connected with the establishment in 1946 of the democratic republic, which required a deep cultural and political renewal. This implied different and innovative cultural references and models and a thorough transformation of educational models and practices, conceived as the most effective tools to cultivate new forms of citizenship.

Within this framework Dewey's thought proved to be a meaningful reference from pedagogical point of view. In particular, his masterpiece *Democracy and Education*, published in Italy in 1949, inspired the advocates of educational reform, understood as the key to advancing cultural, political, and social democracy.

As Franco Cambi states, these intellectuals discerned within Dewey's theories significant overtones of democratic political activism and referred to his ideas in their endeavour to design a new vision of Italian society (Cambi, 2016).

An important role in the reception of Dewey's vision of education and democracy was played by Ernesto Codignola and his son Tristano who founded *La Nuova Italia* (the New Italy) publishing house based in Florence, and the journal *Scuola e Città* (Schooling and the City). As a matter of fact, *La Nuova Italia* was not simply a publishing house but rather the main tool of a cultural and political project aimed at "renewing" Italian culture. This was undertaken by means of a careful selection of authors who could represent new cultural references and could inspire an effective transformation

of educational models and practices in order to sustain an effective political and social change. Within the remit of this project, almost all the Italian translations of Dewey's works, with only a few exceptions, were published by *La Nuova Italia*.

Democracy and Education was one of the first works to be translated and published within the series "Educatori Antichi e Moderni" (Ancient and Modern Educators). The translation of Dewey's masterpiece was carried out by Enzo Enriques Agnoletti, a scholar of Piero Calamandrei and his successor in the direction of the monthly review "Il Ponte", which was, as Norberto Bobbio points out, "the spokesman for an open, non-doctrinaire democratic socialism" (Bobbio, 1995). Within this historical and cultural context, this first Italian edition of *Democracy and Education* was conceived mainly as a political operation, with the purpose of defining a shared ethical and political aim to be subsequently developed and translated into democratic forms of education and teaching for the construction of a new democratic citizenship. One notable example of such a development is the *Scuola-Città Pestalozzi* (Pestalozzi School-City) initiative in Florence.

The 1949 edition of *Democracy and Education* has therefore become the core of a pedagogical "manifesto" and the reference textbook for the cultural, ethical and political formation of the following two generations of educational scholars and practitioners.

Over time there have been three notable new editions of Dewey's masterpiece, namely a 1992 edition by *La Nuova Italia* with a preface by Alberto Granese, a 2004 edition by *Sansepoli* with a preface by Carlo Sini and a 2018 edition by *Anicia* with a new translation by Marco Antonio D'Arcangeli. Teodora Pezzano and Giuseppe Spadafora and three introductory essays by the same scholars. All these works have highlighted the inner complexity of *Democracy and Education* and identified other possible dimensions, epistemological, philosophical and pedagogical, to be explored. However, they have not opened up a debate on Dewey's quest for a democratic "philosophy of education" which I believe to be the central focus of the book.

Dewey prophet or philosopher of democracy?

In the fifties the cultural project constructed around Dewey's definition of the democratic ideal was aimed at operationalizing a liberal -democratic

understanding of society within the political scenario emerging at the time of the Cold War. Accordingly, Aldo Visalberghi, who defined Dewey “the philosopher of democracy”, affirmed that Dewey’s ideas represented the most complete democratic alternative to the revolutionary universalism of the Marxist ideology and promoted a “lay” understanding of Dewey’s thought (Visalberghi, 1951).

As Massimo Baldacci points out, this understanding, which had a precise political meaning in that historical period in Italy, obscured Dewey’s critical positioning towards liberalism and did not contribute to sustaining a comprehensive vision of the American philosopher’s thought (Baldacci, 2017). For this reason, Luciana Bellatalla is very critical of a ritual and simplified reading of Dewey’s thought, which represents the American philosopher mainly as “the prophet of democracy” and of *Democracy and Education* as its “manifesto”. Instead, she highlights the necessity of reading the book from an epistemic perspective, which allows us to see how it represents an epistemological turning point, from a holistic to a systemic vision of the world, thereby enabling us to identify the utopian tension which sustains Dewey’s reasoning (Bellatalla, 2017). Additionally, Giuseppe Spadafora notes that, for an effective understanding of the whole meaning of the book, it is necessary to focus simultaneously on the philosophical, educational and political dimensions of Dewey’s reasoning (Spadafora, 2017).

As a matter of fact, it is true that in many cases, within the Italian educational debate, the approach to Dewey’s ideas has not been grounded in a philosophical and theoretical area of discourse, but rather in other practical areas, such as, for example, in an institutional or political field. This approach has progressively detached Dewey’s reasoning from the discursive context within which it was conceived as well as from the overall development of his thought. Moreover, the prevalent political focus of the first readings of *Democracy and Education* has, to a great extent, diverted Italian scholars from the core meaning of Dewey’s masterpiece, as a result divorcing the democratic and educational issues from the philosophical and epistemological ones. This has had a distorting effect on the understanding of Dewey’s ideas, since if the approach to an educational idea or theory does not pass through a reflective analysis of its theoretical and practical grounds and implications, there will easily be misinterpretations and manipulations, which can undermine the effective impact of Dewey’s thought on the educational debate.

The need for a democratic theory of education

As Dewey explains in the Introduction to the 1916 edition of *Democracy and Education*, in order to understand whether it is possible to promote democracy through education it is necessary, first of all, “to detect and state the ideas implied in a democratic society and to apply these ideas to the problems of the enterprise of education. The discussion includes an indication of the constructive aims and methods of public education as seen from this point of view, and a critical estimate of the theories of knowing and moral development which were formulated in earlier social conditions, but which still operate, in societies nominally democratic, to hamper the adequate realization of the democratic ideal” (John Dewey, MW, 1916, 9: 4).

For this reason, according to the American scholar, the relationship between democracy and education has to be explored through a sound process of inquiry which helps us to identify the “ideas” grounding a democratic society. Only once we have achieved this goal, can we apply such “ideas” to education, in order to render educational processes suitable for a democratic social and political society. The premise of this line of reasoning is that we can effectively understand and operationalize cultural, political and social processes only if we can detect and clarify the leading ideas underlying those processes, as well as the ideas and world views that orient the individual and collective activities and practices therein embedded. This observation can be seen as a legacy of an idealistic understanding of the power of ideas on individual and social life and on the course of human history. Dewey acknowledges and operationalizes this in his reflection, considering it a “permanent deposit” of Hegel’s idealism in his own thinking (Dewey, 1930, LW 5).

The main focus of the process of inquiry developed in *Democracy and Education* are the “ideas” embedded within society and, in particular, the ideas regarding the nature of individual and the process of his growth in relation to the organization of society. The exploration of these ideas requires an epistemological and methodological background, which defines and justifies their meaning and significance within a particular cultural context and historical moment. For this reason, it is the development of a theoretical frame of reference that allows us to identify, compare and relate ideas and to verify their practical implications.

In order to understand how to apply the ideas implied within a democratic society to the “enterprise” of education it is necessary to detect a theory

and a method useful to justify and perform this process. For this reason, Jürgen Oelkers points out that Dewey's exploration of the relationship between democracy and education is closely connected to the solution to a "theory problem": the determination of "which theory of education is at all suitable for this relationship" (Oelkers, 2005: 7).

In Dewey's view the theory and method required are those of philosophy, understood as a reflective device aimed at clarifying and understanding the problems emerging from all the experiences characterizing human life, including educational experiences. As a matter of fact, the American philosopher highlights an "intimate connection between philosophy and education", starting from the acknowledgment that education, understood as a "deliberately conducted practice", offers to philosophy "a vantage ground from which to penetrate to the human, as distinct from the technical, significance of philosophic discussions"; this is due to the fact that "the educational point of view enables one to envisage the philosophic problems where they arise and thrive, where they are at home, and where acceptance or rejection makes a difference in practice" (Dewey, 1916, MW,9, 338).

The practice of education is therefore the privileged context within which it becomes possible both to perform a philosophical exploration of the theoretical and ethical implications of the democratic ideal as well as to inscribe it within the cultural and social texture so that it can become the true basis of individual and collective lived experience. This implies also a reflective analysis of the idea of education embedded within the educational practices at stake as well as the models and theories which sustain them in order to verify their consistency with the cultivation of democratic forms of citizenship and the effective growth of a democratic society.

As David Hansen (2006) has acknowledged, in *Democracy and Education* Dewey was engaged within a process of philosophical rather than historical, sociological, or political inquiry which means that a sound exploration of the living condition of democracy requires first of all to design a general theoretical framework.

On this basis it could be possible to develop a democratic theory of education, which is, in our opinion, the ultimate goal envisaged by John Dewey.

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Confessioni di un borghese e Memorie di un antisemita

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L'articolo tratta di due romanzi autobiografici: *Egy polgár vallomásai* (*Confessioni di un borghese*), di Sándor Márai, e *Memorien eines Antisemiten* (*Memorie di un antisemita*), di Gregor von Rezzori. Dopo aver delineato le biografie dei due autori, fra differenze e tratti comuni, l'articolo si sofferma sui due *Bildungsromane* – che raccontano due esperienze di vita nel contesto della borghesia intellettuale mitteleuropea fra Otto e Novecento – e sul rapporto fra i concetti di *Erfahrung*, *Erlebnis* e *Dasein*. In particolare, dai due testi emergono, fra confessioni e memorie, i temi dell'*educazione borghese* e della *diseducazione antisemita*.

Parole-chiave: Márai, von Rezzori, educazione borghese, antisemitismo.

Confessions of a Bourgeois and Memoirs of an Anti-Semite

The article deals with two autobiographical novels: *Egy polgár vallomásai* (Confessions of a Bourgeois), by Sándor Márai, and *Memorien eines Antisemiten* (Memoirs of an Anti-Semite), by Gregor von Rezzori. After having outlined the biographies of the two authors, among differences and common traits, the article focuses on the two *Bildungsromane* – which narrate two life experiences in the Central European context of the intellectual bourgeoisie, between the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries – and on the relationship with the concepts of *Erfahrung*, *Erlebnis* and *Dasein*. In particular, the themes of *bourgeois education* and *anti-Semitic miseducation* emerge from the two texts among confessions and memories.

Keywords: Márai, von Rezzori, bourgeois education, anti-Semitism

Confessioni e memorie

Due opere letterarie sono come i loro autori: non posseggono alcuna validità veritativa. Non sono neppure delle testimonianze, quantunque possano contenere riferimenti autobiografici. Esse paiono solo ciò che sono: letteratura. La quale non sempre esprime una veritiera visione del mondo poiché la narrazione è menzogna. Getta, certo, un fascio di luce sulla vita, senza però spargliarne le ombre spirituali da quelle materiali. Il romanzo, poi, definisce un ambiente, lo porta allo scoperto, ne osserva il susseguirsi di *esperienze* e *inesperienze* fino a cogliere in modo ora coeso ora distratto le ossature formative di alcuni protagonisti. Se ciò non avviene in maniera incidentale, il lettore si troverà presto di fronte alla storia di una formazione o di un'educazione o di uno sviluppo. Sarà il *Bildungsroman*! – comunque lo si vorrà chiamare. Ma due autori non sono come le loro opere letterarie: la loro verità validativa è sussistente. In essa credono, o fingono di farlo, pur permanendo al di qua della testimonianza e al di là dell'autobiografia. Il compito letterario che si sono dati non è mai scientifico né deve apparire saggistico. Sanno di essere dei mentitori che rubano a se stessi brandelli di realtà, mentre celano o manifestano un mondo ben prima della sua visione scalena. La vita di quel mondo e di quelle opere resta infatti sempre disuguale dalla vita dei loro autori. Quando, però, due opere letterarie sussumono in se stesse l'epocalità che vogliono raccontare, allora significa che gli autori hanno cercato l'essenza di un mondo attraverso le pallide metafore della vita umana. L'*eidōs* di quel mondo – per quanto cor-rivo (o avventato) e correo (o complice) – diviene non soltanto l'essenza, ma anche l'idea originaria e la forma trasformativa di un duplice *Dasein*: l'essere esistente di cui opere e autori si faranno carico. Duplice (*zweifältig*) come è il loro dubbio (*Zweifel*). Perché ogni autore quando scrive un'opera è esposto a un duplice dubbio. È l'opera che s'impone oltre l'autore o è l'autore che governa l'opera controllandone la fabulazione? È l'opera che avviene in un mondo del quale l'autore finisce per svelare l'essenza o è quel mondo, frequentato dall'autore, che gli detta il proprio testo e quasi lo costringe a trascriverlo? C'è un'escussione – uno scuotimento – che grava sul rapporto tra opera e autore, tra mondo dell'opera e mondo dell'autore. C'è poi un'altra escussione – questa volta, un interrogatorio – a cui tutti si sottopongono nel loro evocare delle storie nella Storia. E qui le domande sarebbero non solo sulla vita di ignoti protagonisti, ma ancor più a proposito della vita di un'intera umanità. Perché fin qua arriva la letteratura. Tra confessioni e memorie.

Sándor Márai e Gregor von Rezzori

Nelle ambivalenze a cui memoria e confessione danno luogo, si distende la storia della condizione umana; della gente comune con le proprie tracce ora colte ora infelici incatenate al corpo della lingua, chiamato non a celebrare un'epopea bensì a schernire i tumulti emotivi o le maschere glaciali di un'epoca in cui a prevalere è stata la *gloria borghese* ben prima del potere. Con l'egemonia di ceto, così comoda e ufficiale nelle pieghe della vita cittadina, prende però lentamente forma la *vergogna borghese* dove memorie e confessioni lasciano trapelare l'ambivalenza delle ambiguità. Dietro le superfici levigate del perbenismo benpensante affiora l'ipocrisia individualista e, contemporaneamente, classista che condurrà alla catechesi laica del disprezzo. Il cupo gloglottio del male ribollirà sotto l'invidia del denaro, dilatando i confini prossemici dell'*infamia razziale* ostinata come l'arroganza da cui proverrà tutta la *protervia antisemita* che, petulante come l'albagia, nel troppo elevato concetto di sé scaverà la fastosa dimora borghese della supponenza immotivata. Márai e Rezzori hanno raccontato tutto questo, intrecciando – in due loro opere letterarie – borghesia e antisemitismo del secondo Ottocento Mitteleuropeo. Sándor Márai nasce l'11 aprile del 1900 a Kassa, nell'Impero Austro-ungarico, da una famiglia d'origini sassoni. Gregor von Rezzori nasce il 13 maggio del 1914 a Czernowitz, nell'Impero Austro-ungarico, da una famiglia di origine italiana. Kassa è diventata l'attuale Košice, in Slovacchia; Czernowitz è divenuta Černivci, in Ucraina; cambiano i nomi delle città, Márai e Rezzori rimangono ciò che sono stati. Márai – nato Sándor Károly Henrik Groschenschmied de Mára – appartiene alla modesta aristocrazia magiara. Rezzori prende il proprio titolo da una famiglia nobile siciliana, che a metà Settecento si era trasferita a Vienna. Se Márai è ungherese, Rezzori è rumeno. Suo padre svolse in Romania il proprio impiego di funzionario civile dell'Impero asburgico, ma poiché Czernowitz era allora capoluogo della Bucovina, l'Ungheria sta a Márai come la Bucovina sta a Rezzori. A entrambi starà il mondo: Márai morirà a San Diego, in California, il 22 febbraio 1989; Rezzori morirà a Santa Maddalena, vicino a Reggello, in Toscana, il 23 aprile 1998. Márai e Rezzori sono due cosmopoliti e apatridi, dall'identità plurima. Nessuno dei due è ebreo. Márai sposa però nel 1923 una donna di origini ebraiche: Ilona Matzner: Lola. Anche Rezzori sposerà, in seconde nozze, un'Ebreo. Sia Márai sia Rezzori sono di religione cristiano-cattolica. Márai studia giornalismo all'"Institut für Zeitungskunde" di Lipsia; frequenta le

Università di Francoforte e Berlino; non si laurea. Rezzori studia ingegneria mineraria, in Austria, all'Università di Leoben; quindi frequenta, a Vienna, i corsi di medicina e architettura; si laurea in arte. Ambedue poliglotti, Márai parla ungherese, tedesco, francese, inglese, yiddish, italiano, ma scrive in ungherese – la sua lingua madre; Rezzori parla tedesco, romeno, polacco, russo, francese, yiddish, inglese, italiano, ma scrive in tedesco – la lingua delle sue origini. Márai sarà corrispondente da Parigi per la “Frankfurter Zeitung”. Rezzori lavorerà come autore al “Nordwestdeutscher Rundfunk”, divenendo poi sceneggiatore e perfino attore. Tra le opere di Sándor Márai spiccano *Divorzio a Buda*, *Le braci*, *L'eredità di Eszter*; tra quelle di Gregor von Rezzori si ricordano *Un ermellino a Cernopol*, *Edipo vince a Stalingrado*, *La morte di mio fratello Abele*. Márai ha ricevuto il Premio Vojnits dell'“Accademia Ungherese delle Scienze” e, postumi, il Premio Kossuth e il Fits Joseph-Book; Rezzori ha vinto il Premio Theodor Fontane, il Premio Boccaccio e il Premio Lorenzo il Magnifico. La vita di Márai è stata caratterizzata da una sostanziale precarietà economica, mentre quella di Rezzori da una complessiva agiatezza. Sebbene entrambi provenissero da un contesto sociale aristocratico, sono ambedue appartenuti, per cultura, mentalità e stili di vita, alla borghesia. La borghesia intellettuale mitteleuropea. Per loro, tutto della vita è parso relativo. Solo la morte ha avuto qualcosa dell'assoluto. Márai la cercherà suicidandosi; Rezzori l'attenderà con disincantata pazienza. Il punto d'incrocio fra Sándor Márai e Gregor von Rezzori è dato da due loro opere: *Egy polgár vallomásai*, pubblicato da Márai nel 1934-35; *Memoiren eines Antisemiten*, edito da Rezzori nel 1979. Le due traduzioni italiane rispettivamente titolano: *Confessioni di un borghese* (Milano, Adelphi, 2003) e *Memorie di un antisemita* (Milano, Longanesi, 1980). Confessioni e memorie, dunque. Confessioni circa l'esperienza dell'inesperienza, così propria dell'individuo borghese. Memorie circa l'inesperienza dell'esperienza, così propria dell'individuo antisemita.

Esperienza dell'inesperienza. Le Confessioni di un borghese

Ogni storia borghese ha l'obbligo di “stare al passo con i tempi” (Márai, 1934, p. 17) per meglio celebrare l'“epoca nuova”, satura dello “spirito d'impresa del capitalismo” (*ibidem*). Ogni borghese, dunque, “non paga un affitto e non abita in casa d'altri”, bensì “in una casa di proprietà” (*ivi*, p. 18). La vita borghese ha i tratti di una certa purezza di ceto. E cetuale è il modo in cui l'in-

dividuo borghese guarda la vita altrui. La vita di chi non appartiene alla classe borghese (e perciò manca di classe). È l'“agiata vita borghese” a determinare il sussiego e conferire la supponenza. Persino tra i bambini, che – dice Márai – “giudicano in fretta, e senza appello (*ivi*, p. 22). Nella vita pubblica c'è la lingua; nella vita privata il dialetto; ma dopo cena ci si metteva a “chiacchierare in tedesco”. Nel mondo della provincia ungherese di fine Ottocento domina-no incontrastati “una mentalità feudale e un acceso spirito nazionalistico”: si sa: “la vita è sempre diversa dalla letteratura” (*ivi*, pp. 32, 28). Ereditare dai propri avi il *Pflichtgefühl* – il sentimento del dovere – è incomodo e troppo luterano per una famiglia cattolica nella mentalità prima ancora che nella religione. L'andamento della vita borghese – ossia, l'esperienza borghese in se stessa – era ritmato dalla quotidianità e vigilato dallo Stato. Tutto rientrava nell'ordine borghese: funzionari e gendarmi, prostitute e case di tolleranza, certezze economiche e brividi esotici, partite doppie e romanzi d'avventura. Un ordine anche pedagogico poiché le “famiglie benestanti” “stravedevano per i loro rampolli” e “li coccolavano in tutti i modi, senza lesinare quattrini né per la loro educazione né per il loro abbigliamento” (*ivi*, p. 41). Tuttavia, “il nostro stile di vita” si dimensionava più sulla “parsimonia” che nello “sperpero”. Il bricco in porcellana di Meissen contrassegnava la prima colazione, su cui sovrane regnavano la “calma” e la “benevolenza” del *pater familias*, che sorvegliava un tè aromatico morderò corretto con il rum, accompagnandolo al prosciutto, alle uova à la coque, a fette di pane abbrustolite insieme a miele e burro ungherese (*ivi*, p. 44). Il rito borghese del *Frühstück*, questa idilliaca e consolidata “liturgia” di classe, rispondeva alla necessità d'intraprendere la giornata lavorativa con la dignità dei gesti che esigono contegno. Una rassicurante esperienza che doveva rimanere impressa in tutta la famiglia fino a sera, quando si ritornava a tavola; alla quale si potevano sedere ospiti insigni, che avrebbero dato lustro alla casa. Così Márai: “la borghesia di provincia non conosceva la vita di società dei “salotti” occidentali: gli ospiti si riunivano intorno alla tavola imbandita, e lì continuavano a intrattenersi anche dopo cena, talvolta fino all'alba” (*ivi*, p. 45). Tuttavia, il “salotto” c'era, e pure arredato con cura. Mobili in mogano, intarsi di madreperla, specchiera con cornice, tavolo laccato, coppa in argento “piena fino all'orlo di biglietti da visita completi di titolo e rango di conoscenti illustri e ospiti occasionali” (*ibidem*). Il gusto di fine secolo, ornamentale e superfluo con i suoi “obbrobri in palissandro”, si sostituiva “al Biedermeier dei vecchi tempi e alle sue forme miti, gentili, piene di gusto” (*ivi*, p. 46). Come si arredavano gli ambienti si

arredarono gli spiriti, secondo “il cattivo gusto piccolo borghese dell’epoca vittoriana” (*ivi*, p. 47). Nella biblioteca materna comparivano le opere di Schiller – considerato un “rivoluzionario precursore del liberalismo” – e di Goethe – a proposito del quale la bassa-borghesia nutriva pregiudizi che lo tacciavano di “rigido formalismo”, “classicismo retrogrado”, se non di pura noia –. Poi c’erano il nazionalismo borghese di Rudolf Herzog, il prussianissimo letterario di Gustav Freytag, l’“istintiva ripugnanza” emanata da autori come Stratz e Ompteda, i romanzi sentimentali di Gyula Werner, su fino al “logorroico, tediosissimo” (*ivi*, p. 49) *Messias* di Klopstock abbandonato fra riviste tedesche per famiglie. Su tutto ciò sovrastava “la biblioteca di mio padre” (*ivi*, p. 50) perché un uomo di cultura “della classe media” la sera, prima di addormentarsi, deve leggere qualche pagina “di un volume appena stampato”. La borghesia di città comprava libri, giornali e riviste; frequentava le librerie per essere al corrente delle novità letterarie; discuteva di letteratura prevalentemente tedesca, ma anche ungherese: Mikszáth Jókai, Tömörkény, Gárdonyi, Herczeg. E naturalmente Sándor Petöfi. “I borghesi temevano la stampa”: era un’“autorità” e un “potere” (*ivi*, pp. 71-70). Tuttavia, “per sottolineare gli ottimi rapporti che intrattenevano con essa, i commercianti, i direttori di banca, i funzionari comunali affettavano in pubblico grande confidenza con i suoi rappresentanti” (*ivi*, p. 71). E tra questi “mercenari itineranti della parola scritta, la persona che godeva del massimo prestigio era il direttore” (*ivi*, p. 70). I giornalisti – spesso temuti e più spesso disprezzati – non facevano parte della società borghese. Il loro, in fondo, era un lavoro manuale. I *Lateiner* (*ivi*, p. 82) – ossia, chi aveva compiuto “studi umanistici” (*ivi*, p. 91) – erano d’altra estrazione e possedevano un’altra pedagogia: nella famiglia, nella scuola e anche altrove, “le botte erano uno strumento pedagogico universalmente accettato” (*ibidem*). Il pedagogo è sempre un po’ pedante. A volte diventa spietato nel liberarsi delle proprie nevrosi scaricandole non senza sadismo sulle membra degli altri. Ma lo zio Mátyás “era un buon pedagogo e una brava persona” (*ivi*, p. 106), mentre la zia Irma restava quel “truce genio tutelare che incombeva sulla mia infanzia, una dea irosa, adorna di merletti neri e profumata di lavanda” (*ivi*, pp. 89-90). In quell’“epoca d’oro” per l’iniziativa privata e l’individualismo (*ivi*, p. 107) si ascoltava ancora “il tono didascalico del pedagogo incallito” (*ivi* p. 108). Ma queste *ambizioni pedagogiche* erano appannaggio della borghesia provinciale. A Vienna la borghesia si muoveva con un altro ritmo: quello a tre tempi, “melodioso e languido”, del valzer (*ivi*, p. 111). L’assalivano poi desideri e passioni. La

“vocazione artistica”, l’“eleganza”, i “dagherrotipi”, le “porcellane di Karlsbad”. Funzionari, giuristi, ufficiali, ispettori, consiglieri, prefetti, intendenti: la Corona riponeva in loro il successo organizzativo dell’Impero. E loro corrispondevano a tale compito comunicando ora in tedesco, ora in latino, ora in ungherese: “nel vecchio mondo ungherese, dove tutti amavano darsi arie da signori, queste famiglie borghesi, venute da lontano, vivevano con timorosa frugalità” (*ivi*, p. 119). Era il mondo *fin de siècle*, dove si mischiavano – come in famiglia – “rabbia” e “rassegnazione”, povertà spirituale e personalità ipertrofiche: “erano borghesi, e all’epoca [...] avevano già raggiunto la fase critica e pericolosa della condizione borghese” (*ivi, passim* p. 133). Il segreto dell’essere umano riposa anche qui (*ivi*, p. 138), mentre “la scuola e l’educazione religiosa a poco a poco soffocavano in noi il primigenio anelito verso il mistero” (*ivi*: p. 142). E tutto contribuiva affinché anche l’affascinante enigma della sensualità restasse tale. La masturbazione era un vizio – e lo si occultava “con un’angoscia isterica” (*ivi*, p. 168). Márai ritorna sull’educazione:

Nel corso della mia lunga e movimentata carriera di studente sono passato, tra una scuola e l’altra, per le mani di circa un centinaio di insegnanti; e ora mi chiedo se fra costoro ne sia esistito almeno uno che fosse un vero educatore, che avesse la facoltà o l’intenzione di dare una forma alle mie attitudini, almeno uno che abbia lasciato un’impronta nella mia memoria anche sotto il profilo umano (*ivi*: p. 171).

Forse a tutti loro non apparteneva “la tentazione più pericolosa fra tutte quelle che si possono dare nella vita...”: l’*avventura del pensiero* (*ivi* p. 172). Il ceto piccolo-borghese degli insegnanti la sostituiva con “l’esecrabile, rincretinante smania del “primato” (*ivi*: p. 173) – specie nello sport, ma non solo. La pedagogia borghese dettagliava i propri stilemi: “I rampolli di una famiglia borghese come si deve erano tenuti a suonare il pianoforte, a perfezionare la conoscenza delle grandi lingue occidentali e [...] a prendere lezioni di scherma” (*ivi, passim*, p. 179). Per le *pulsioni borghesi* ci sarebbe stato tempo. Circa le *patologie borghesi*, esse si sarebbero manifestate con la pubertà: “per mentalità, modo di vivere e condotta spirituale [ero] un borghese, e tuttavia mi [sentivo] a casa in qualsiasi ambiente tranne quello borghese” (*ivi*, p. 195). La classe borghese possedeva qualcosa di “sopranazionale” (*ivi*, p. 257). Vi regnava l’“ipertrofismo della personalità” (*ivi*, p. 265), la metabolé della quale pareva sostenuta dal “ritmo frenetico” (*ivi*, p. 266) con cui la vita procedeva

con angoscioso disordine. Quel disordine diventava la forma dell'interiorità; "quel disordine era la mia forma" (*ivi*, p. 303); quel disordine corrispondeva alla sostanza del mondo borghese mitteleuropeo. Si direbbe, un mondo provinciale! Eppure, Márai, sarà pronto a denunciare anche il "provincialismo" berlinese della capitale tedesca. Una condizione che non contraddiceva con il resto della Germania e tantomeno con i Tedeschi, e "il loro mitico, irrisolto e invitto senso di colpa, la loro propensione ai movimenti di massa, il loro complicato spirito battagliero più impaurito che protervo, i loro circoli e le loro società corali, le loro uniformi inquietanti, la loro implacabile esigenza di ordine e il loro disordine interiore, i loro generali e le loro gerarchie tribali" (*ivi*, p. 347). Certo era anche una Germania "solida e onesta" (*ivi*, p. 257), forgiata sul modello bismarckiano ma forse per questo segnata "dal senso di inferiorità", dallo "zelo pedagogico", dalla "devozione dinanzi allo spirito", dalla "voluttuosa passione per la "disciplina", il rigore e la cieca obbedienza", insieme a "quell'affettazione di competenza" per il cui tramite i Tedeschi "di qualsiasi ordine e rango" malcelavano la loro vocazione alla "sottomissione volontaria" (*ivi*, p. 267). La mirabile sintesi di Márai si esplica nel "segreto tedesco" (*ivi*, p. 302): ovvero, "quell'insieme difficilmente definibile di lingua, sangue, ambiente e memoria in virtù del quale qualcuno è decisamente e irrimediabilmente tedesco" (*ibidem*). Oppure il "segreto" era riposto nell'"altra Germania: sì, la grande scuola, il Paese dei grandi maestri e degli anni di apprendistato", "l'altra Germania", "saggia e fraterna", "che si era formata su Goethe" (*ivi*, p. 347)? Sul segreto tedesco e sulla domanda a proposito della Germania si dipana l'esperienza dell'autore, che diventa narrazione di sé nell'opera letteraria. L'esperienza – quella che la lingua tedesca scinde per distinguersi ora in *Erfahrung* ora in *Erlebnis*: rispettivamente "esperienza nella pratica" e "esperienza della vita" – sussume i caratteri della storia. Personale o/e sociale che sia, la storia incide sull'esperienza dell'inesperienza. Fare esperienza di qualcosa di cui si ha soltanto inesperienza esercita un peso sulla formazione umana. L'esperienza evoca l'intreccio tra l'essenza e l'esistenza. Insomma, il *Dasein*. Ed è proprio l'"essere esistente" dell'uomo-che-si-è a venire coinvolto dall'esperire l'inesperienza. Questa bussola alla porta della vita e domanda l'apertura all'*esperienza dell'inesperienza*. Ciò di cui il giovanissimo Márai ha più inesperienza sono l'Ebreo e l'ebraismo: "Nel caseggiato abitavano due famiglie di Ebrei: una "neologa", "progressista", mondana, imborghesita e benestante"; poi ce n'era un'altra, "ortodossa" e assai numerosa, immigrata dalla Polonia, povera e straordinariamente feconda" (*ivi*, p. 18).

Così, i primi – potremmo dire, *inter legere*, gli Ebrei dell’assimilazione – “conducevano una vita mondana [...], viaggiavano parecchio, i figli venivano educati in scuole cattoliche, e la madre [...] si faceva confezionare gli abiti nella capitale”, sicché “le donne della borghesia e della piccola borghesia del palazzo naturalmente la invidiavano” (*ivi, passim* p. 19). Gli altri – potremmo dire, *intus legere*, gli Ebrei dell’ortodossia – “indossavano ancora quasi tutti i costumi galiziani, e osservavano rigorosamente i precetti religiosi” (*ivi*, p. 18), rimanendo “fedeli alla propria identità ebraica manifestandola con semplicità e senza soggezione” (*ivi*, p. 19). Nel caseggiato si guardava con “benevola accettazione” (*ivi*, p. 20) le loro feste, le loro usanze, i loro cibi, il loro abbigliamento, “il loro idioma forestiero e astruso per quella misteriosa mescolanza di parole tedesche, jiddish e ungheresi, la loro deliberata e ostentata estraneità” (*ibidem*). Esperendo l’esperibile, Márai osserva che “le due famiglie ebreë non si frequentavano mai”. Gli assimilati Weinrep “vivevano manifestamente su un altro pianeta” (*ivi*, p. 21) e “non mangiavano *kosher*” (*ibidem*). Gli ortodossi Jónap suscitavano una certa compassione, “un po’ come se si trattasse di negri addomesticati” (*ivi*, p. 20). Ma “se esisteva una “questione ebraica”, in quel casamento piccolo borghese, non era certo la numerosa famiglia Jónap ad alimentarla” (*ivi*, p. 21). Al contrario “guardavamo con singolare gelosia all’agiata vita borghese dei Weinreb, temevamo che potessero sottrarci qualcosa pur senza sapere bene che cosa” (*ibidem*). L’introspezione di Márai attraversa l’idea cristiano-cattolica della famiglia, per metterla a confronto con quella ebraica:

I cristiani non conoscono gli sforzi lucidi e disperati con cui ci si tiene aggrappati gli uni agli altri nelle famiglie degli Ebrei. Per costoro prima viene la famiglia, e poi gli individui che ne fanno parte; nelle famiglie cristiane ciascuno vive pensando possibilmente in primo luogo a se stesso, per poi concedere anche alla famiglia una parte più o meno sostanziosa delle proprie eccedenze affettive (*ivi* p. 80).

Ciò di cui si aveva solo inesperienza, lentamente entrava nel patrimonio esperienziale di qualcuno, lo metteva in subbuglio, lo trasformava: “nessuno me lo aveva mai detto apertamente, ma sapevo che qualcosa “non quadrava” con gli Ebrei...” (*ivi*, p. 200). Occorreva “tenerli d’occhio senza fare troppi commenti” (*ivi*, pp. 198-199). Ma quella “era l’epoca dell’antisemitismo gioviiale” (*ivi*, p. 199), dove prevalevano la “tolleranza” e persino la “complicità”,

i diritti civili e, sia pure, certi pregiudizi sempre presenti ma solo nel bosco volgo circa i “delitti rituali” o altre superstizioni. La vita borghese, così “opulenta”, non trovava pretesti per giustificare qualsivoglia forma di “odio per gli Ebrei” (*ibidem.*). Stimare gli Ebrei aveva a che fare con la “buona educazione”. Inoltre, gli Ebrei si imponevano nella vita sociale per il loro talento, la perseveranza e la diligenza, dunque esercitavano le più alte professioni, avevano accesso agli studi, quando “la dottrina della ‘razza ariana’ era del tutto sconosciuta”. Nessuno, tuttavia, si sognava “di considerare un Ebreo battezzato un suo simile” (*ibidem.*). L’inesperienza divenuta esperienza ammetteva una sintesi icastica: “Ma si può davvero dire che Ebrei e cristiani vivessero insieme all’interno della stessa classe sociale? No.” (*ibidem.*). Mentre si chiude il secolo e si spalanca davanti all’Europa la voragine del Novecento, la crisi dell’assimilazionismo e della simbiosi ebraico-tedesca avviene di pari passo con l’affermarsi dell’antisemitismo razziale in Germania e nella Mitteleuropa.

Inesperienza dell’esperienza. Le memorie di un antisemita

Nell’inconscio della storia – dove ribollono recenti e vetuste rimozioni – più della teoresi può la narrazione, quando cerca le differenti tracce lasciate dall’antisemitismo otto-novecentesco sul corpo malato della Mitteleuropa. Le *Memorie di un antisemita* seguono le contrade della Bucovina ormai a Novecento inoltrato, mentre un tredicenne viene firmando l’acerba visione del mondo segnata – come sempre accade – da “disavventure pedagogiche” (Rezzori, 1979, p. 11). E così c’è uno zio che era stato “attivo pangermanista, antisemita e wagneriano” (*ivi*, p. 21) negli anni Ottanta dell’Ottocento. Quella passione violenta, che lo spirito del tempo aveva fatto divampare in modo così “ardente da incenerire [...] quanto gli derivava dalla sua educazione e dalla sua formazione” (*ivi, passim* p. 22), non poteva risultare indifferente al nipote. Che presto si sentì “autenticamente e profondamente tedesco” (*ibidem.*). Non più lo “scetticismo della vecchia Austria”, bensì lo smisurato orgoglio del “riscoperto germanesimo” (*ivi*, p. 26). E poiché “le idee sono spesso surrogate dalle emozioni” (*ivi*, p. 31), la gioventù, “tedesca di lingua, tedesca di pensieri, tedesca di sentimenti”, maturava appunto “sentimenti germanici [...], imperial-germanici, pangermanici” (*ivi, passim* pp. 31-32), che vedeva riflessi nella “fluttuante bandiera nero-rosso-oro – questa bandiera giovane più di tutte le bandiere, con quel nero che è presagio di morte, quel

rosso che è ribollire di sangue e quell'oro che è inebriante promessa di vagheggiati destini..." (*ibidem*). Ma a guastare tutto, ecco un "gruppetto sbardato di pidocchi bambini ebrei che giocavano nella polvere della strada in mezzo ai passerotti" (*ivi*, p. 14). Poi "figure di uomini in lunghi caffettani neri e rossi berretti di volpe [...], con lunghi riccioli laterali e barbe bianche o castane" (*ibidem, passim*). A questa immagine il tredicenne dovrà vederne sovrapposte altre. Meno consuete e più interroganti. Come quelle di "qualcuno che alla già bizzarra diversità dell'intellettuale univa anche il fatto – tutt'altro che raro! – di essere un Ebreo" (*ivi*, p. 38). Si vedevano Ebrei nazionalisti, convertiti al credo bismarckiano; Ebrei liberi pensatori, agnostici e wagneriani; Ebrei prima appassionati di Wagner poi affascinati da Nietzsche; Ebrei nauseati dal nazionalismo guglielmino e divenuti sionisti; Ebrei che non sapevano cosa farsene di uno Stato nazionale ebraico, nella Terra promessa, e "il cui sogno più ardente era stato per tutta la vita l'assimilazione [...] in un mondo redento di uguaglianza, fraternità, libertà" (*ivi, passim* p. 48). Infine, Ebrei che avevano indossato i panni del *filisteismo borghese* (*ivi*, p. 49) nell'arrivista pretesa "di volersi procurare una rispettabilità borghese per così dire di facciata, con la [...] nuova ricchezza acquisita rapidamente e non sempre nel modo più chiaro" (*ibidem, passim*). Insomma, o Ebrei o Austriaci o Tedeschi che fossero, gli esseri umani portavano con sé quel carico di ambiguità riflesso perfino nell'amicizia tra due adolescenti, dove "la gelosia che nasce dall'invidia" (*ivi*, p. 57) – ma si potrebbe anche dire: l'invidia che nasce dalla gelosia – si alternava alla "magnanimità" che aristocraticamente preservava "dall'ignominia del risentimento" (*ivi*, p. 62). Quando la giovinezza si fa largo, impetuosa, nella vita mutano i corpi e gli sguardi. Sensualità e sessualità accompagneranno dunque l'ormai cresciuto ragazzo nella Bucarest del 1933. Il sesso era divenuto la sua preponderante ossessione, che cesellava i comportamenti pubblici e le condotte private. Una ridda complicata di figure femminili da conquistare si stagliava però su di uno scenario dove gli Ebrei continuavano a essere l'irredimibile feccia della Terra. E poiché "conquistare le donne" era come "conquistare il mondo" (*ivi*, p. 76), quel mondo si trovava però zavorrato da "ragazzacci ebrei" (*ivi*, p. 81), straccivendoli ebrei, venditori al dettaglio ebrei; con il loro "repentino alternarsi di superbia illimitata e di contrita mortificazione" (*ivi*, p. 94) si sarebbero forse meritati "un pogrom che avrebbe ripulito la Romania dagli Ebrei" (*ivi*, p. 93). Il giovane ammetteva a se stesso che "fin dall'infanzia [aveva] imparato a disprezzare [...] gli Ebrei" (*ivi, passim* p. 94); ma gli erano anche state "insegnate la riservatezza e

la discrezione" (*ivi*, p. 92); la "severa educazione" ricevuta – si diceva – imponeva "di comportarmi educatamente con chiunque" (*ivi*, p. 91); e a ciò soggiungeva d'essere stato educato "al cieco rispetto delle regole e dell'ordine costituito" (*ivi*, p. 92). Insomma: "ero impigliato nella rete della mia origine e della mia educazione come una mosca nella tela del ragno" (*ivi*, p. 90). Si trattava della contraddizione fra un'educazione borghese e un'educazione antisemita, ingigantita per giunta dall'inesperienza della vita, dell'amore e ovviamente del giudaismo. Questi tre elementi finirono per intrecciarsi nella conoscenza di una signora. Bella e amabile. Che però "non poteva nascondere di essere ebrea [poiché] la sua razza ce l'aveva scritta in viso" (*ivi*, p. 114). Quella donna, espressione della Grande Madre, simile a una civetta per la sua antica saggezza, con un volto andaluso, il portamento troppo austero e il gergo *yiddish*, quella donna – prosegue Márai – mi aveva indotto a fare "il gran passo e avevo dovuto riconoscere che in fondo mi era possibile amare un'ebrea – e, incredibilmente, proprio per la sua tragicità tutta ebraica, per il lutto atavico, pure tipicamente ebraico, impresso sul suo volto" (*ibidem*). Con lei, il giudaismo sembrava redimersi: "quel continuo alternarsi di servilismo e arroganza" (*ivi*, p. 115) non costituiva più qualcosa di insormontabile. Ciò che risultava "per noi non ebrei" del tutto intollerabile erano le "ambizioni sociali" culminanti nel "desiderio d'integrarsi con noi" (*ibidem*). E tutto questo al giovane pareva provenisse non da suoi "pregiudizi arbitrari", bensì da "un'effettiva differenza di mentalità, di psicologia", per cui la loro "presuntuosa temerarietà" e la loro "pretenziosa rispettabilità" erano presenti "nell'ottica della psicologia freudiana del profondo, che era poi un'ottica specificamente ebraica" (*ivi*, p. 117). Incapace di controllare i propri "impulsi antisemiti" (*ivi*, p. 118), il giovane vedeva in quella donna che pur amava l'"angoscia" radicata nella razza giudea, un "cattivo gusto" (*ivi*, p. 119) affiorante nei suoi abiti, nei suoi gesti e forse anche nel modo d'amare senza mai manifestare alcun "pregiudizio" circa la "sconvenienza" di quella relazione. Anche questo lo infastidiva, mentre con il passare del tempo gli pareva di avere compreso che, insieme "a tutte le ipoteche che si trascinava dietro per via della sua tribolatissima razza", in lei si addensasse anche "la maledizione di un'incorreggibile mentalità piccolo-borghese" (*ivi*, p. 118). La *nevrosi* aristocratico-alto-borghese non tarderà, di fronte a questa deduzione così antisemita, a mutarsi in *isteria*: il giovane finirà nel turbine riprovevole della violenza che non ammette alibi e non trova giustificazioni, neppure nell'"orrore" di una "abissale solitudine" (*ivi*, p. 130) o di una *stupida diseducazione* antisemita.

L'inesperienza dell'esperienza della vita è un fardello che si porta sopra le spalle anche quando queste diventano larghe. Il giovane era ormai adulto. Aveva fatto esperienze di relazioni con Ebrei, ma queste esperienze non erano state ripensate in profondità, sicché mai divenute parte del suo già modesto patrimonio culturale. Nel 1937, a Bucarest, alloggiato nella Pensione Löwinger, accettava con rassegnazione il tono grossolano delle conversazioni che gli ospiti intrattenevano nel più piatto conformismo, dove rientrava "un repertorio insolitamente ricco di folcloristiche pornolalie" (*ivi*, p. 150) per la cui competenza era debitore verso i colleghi austriaci a suo tempo frequentati. Le origini semite dei proprietari non sembravano confliggere troppo con i pregiudizi antisemiti degli avventori. Né con quelli del giovane uomo che consolidava un rapporto amicale con un antisemita dichiarato e scopriva contemporaneamente l'amicizia pudica verso una ragazza ebrea, della quale tuttavia ben conosceva "la razza":

Quelli come lei, bambini, in mezzo allo sterco dei cavalli e ai passerotti per le strade, recitavano le loro litanie alla scuola ebraica [...], sparivano poi per un paio d'anni nella più vicina città, ritornavano adolescenti, insopportabilmente invadenti, sfrontati e sicuri di sé, sciordinavano bandiere rosse e berciavano bellicosi inni socialisti, scomparivano di nuovo, tornavano ripuliti da non riconoscerli più, lustrati, addottrinati, civilizzati, mani e capelli ben curati: avevano conseguito la laurea e si sistemavano come dentisti, professori di scuola media, redattori, maestri di musica e sa il diavolo in quali altre professioni intellettuali, per diventare borghesi [...] (*ivi, passim* pp. 161-162).

Così, osservando quella giovane donna, non poteva "far a meno di continuare a vedere in lei la sfacciata monella ebrea intrisa di urina che, sulla strada del paese, ci toccava schivare con la macchina per evitare d'investirla" (*ivi*, p. 162), anche se, conoscendola meglio, con il trascorrere dei giorni quella "piccola ebrea" suscitava in lui "una tenerezza mista a rispetto" (*ivi*, pp. 180-81). Nella pensione, a tavola, si parlava della "situazione in Germania" (*ivi*, p. 163) e della "cosiddetta" questione ebraica" (*ivi*, p. 165). Mentre l'antisemita dichiarato si lamentava del fatto che "il nazionalsocialismo tedesco viene identificato con la questione ebraica [di cui] ci si serve per distogliere l'opinione pubblica mondiale da quanto di veramente rivoluzionario sta succedendo in Germania" (*ibidem*), la giovane donna ebrea ribatteva "che la cosiddetta questione ebraica viene usata dai nazionalsocialisti come pretesto

per distogliere l'attenzione da cose molto più sospette", attribuendo così "a una piccola minoranza di appartenenti a una diversa confessione la responsabilità di mille anni d'errori della storia tedesca", facendo della "cosiddetta "soluzione"" niente altro che "il nostro annientamento" (*ibidem*). La reazione dell'antisemita dichiarato non poteva che finire nella cloaca del destino: "perché non [si] vuole consentire ai tedeschi di eliminare qualche Ebreo dal loro corpo sociale se loro, nella stragrande maggioranza, sono convinti di diventare così più liberi di decidere del loro destino?". Pavidò o opportunista che fosse, il giovane uomo non seppe prendere una propria posizione. Chiudersi in una battuta gli servì solo a non sembrare un vigliacco. Ma la vita è a volte come un fulmine che nella notte buia trafigge soltanto per pochi attimi l'immensità silente e sconosciuta di una proiezione tonitruante di luce. La giovane ebrea gli confiderà di avere ancora bisogno del suo Dio:

lo cerco dopo avere lottato, come Giacobbe, con il suo angelo. Ma invano: so che non c'è più, il mio Dio [...] il Dio severo, esigente, appassionato, insaziabile e geloso. Il Dio dell'amore, quello sì che può esserci: è un Dio di questo mondo – un idolo in altre parole. Ma LUI, il Dio severo dei comandamenti, non c'è più (*ivi, passim* p. 184).

A confermarlo e insieme smentirlo non saranno i vaniloqui del giovane uomo, ma la brutalità dell'antisemita dichiarato, che non si farà scrupolo di stuprare quell'Ebreja che lui aveva invece rispettato (*ivi*, p. 187). L'inquietante reticenza a interrogarsi a proposito di se stesso, lascerà il solipsismo borghese del protagonista nell'angoscia di una quotidianità dove rabbia e aggressività sbocciano il tratto nevrotico della personalità impotente nel suo permanere irrelata con il mondo e insicura della propria affermazione, mentre le "buone maniere" a suo tempo introiettate poco potranno sul progressivo impoverimento dell'interiorità. La storia procede a volte a ritroso. E la narrazione riparte dall'inverno 1927. Il protagonista ritorna ragazzo. Figlio di un convinto antisemita che lo vuole nazionalista e austriaco. "Anche mio padre odiava gli Ebrei, e senza eccezioni, perfino quelli vecchi e dimessi. Era un odio inveterato, tramandato da generazioni, a sostegno del quale non aveva ormai più bisogno di addurre motivo alcuno" (*ivi*, p. 193): l'educazione paterna aveva già dato i propri frutti. Certo "doveva essere davvero increscioso sentirsi ebreo! Ma noi per fortuna non lo eravamo" (*ivi*, p. 192). Si poteva comprendere perché "cambiavano nome per mimetizzarsi", perché avevano

“certi occhi liquidi nei quali una malinconia millenaria si era raccolta a formare stagni oscuri” (*ibidem*) e perché “avevano iniziato la scalata sociale” (*ivi*, p. 193) in ogni anfratto della Mitteleuropa. Là dove era arrivato l’Impero Romano d’Occidente; con Carlo Magno e il Sacro Romano Impero; con “i gloriosi” Hohenstaufen, l’Impero aveva assunto “il suo carattere d’impero tedesco” (*ivi*, pp. 198-199); e poi “la casa imperiale austriaca” degli Habsburg, veri e unici eredi del vero e unico Impero – romano e anzitutto sacro.

L’impero era sacro, diceva mio padre. Era il regno di Dio sulla terra, non una costruzione politica pura e semplice, una struttura statale che poneva, sotto un’unica protezione, un’unica guida e amministrazione, un immenso territorio, popolato dalle più diverse etnie e minacciato da pericoli d’ogni genere, ma piuttosto un’idea e un ideale: il modello di un ordinamento del mondo, della società umana, che si sforzava di realizzare l’intenzione di Dio (*ivi*, p. 200).

L’ingloriosa caduta di questo Impero era da attribuirsi agli Hohenzollern prussiani (da distinguersi rispetto al “casato principesco della Germania meridionale degli Hohenzollern-Sigmaringen”) (*ivi*, p. 202), a Bismarck, ai Tedeschi del Secondo *Reich*, ai *Pieffkes* – i crucchi – che “rappresentavano una calamità quasi quanto gli Ebrei” (*ibidem*). “Questa Prussia, si accalorava mio padre, i cui sudditi addestrati come marionette – tutti quanti striduli saccenti millantatori e palloni gonfiati che con la rigida scriminatura centrale dei capelli tagliati cortissimi cercavano di darsi l’apparenza di galantuomini – erano naturalmente protestanti” (*ivi*, p. 204), e perciò antiromani, anticattolici, anticuriali, antipapisti. “E tutto questo, gridava mio padre rosso in viso, solo per la disgustosa ambizione degli Hohenzollern di Brandeburgo” (*ibidem*), per indebolire gli Habsburg, l’Austria e l’unico, sacro Impero. Questo ieratico richiamo alla sacralità era sempre vivo di qualsiasi riferimento irenico e si dispianava secondo modalità odeporiche nel lungo viaggio della vita, che il ragazzo aveva improntato secondo tre principi paterni e familiari: il “carattere” (*ivi*, p. 196), la “fedeltà” (*ivi*, pp. 196-208) e la “spina dorsale” (*ivi*, p. 195). Con chiunque parlasse metteva alla prova quanto imparato, ripetendo “tutto, parola per parola” (*ivi*, p. 205), citando Maars, Glagau, Dühring e Stöcker con i loro armamentari antisemiti (peraltro da lui mai esperiti direttamente sui testi). Poi la questione ebraica finiva per interagire con gli affetti giovanili e tutto si faceva più complicato. Meditabondo e misantropo,

borghese e aristocratico, si ritroverà nuovamente cresciuto nella Vienna del 1933 a diciannove anni d'età. E lì, a casa delle zie, conoscerà Minka. Bella, più grande di lui, dalla femminilità spigliata, ricca di amici e amanti, dotata di un'"affascinante amorosità", pervasa sempre di tenera dolcezza, Minka era ebrea. Sicché lui iniziò a "pensare che in fin dei conti un'ebrea non è un giudeo" (*ivi*, p. 228). Frequentò così la donna e la sua cerchia di amici e conoscenti: Ebrei, borghesi, colti e del tutto avversi all'"imbianchino" Adolf Hitler. Si trattava di personaggi come lo scrittore Karl Kraus, il giornalista Poldi Singer, l'attrice Else Wohlgemuth, il pittore C.L. Hollitzer. Prima nella Salisburgo del 1937, "inondata di Ebrei, i peggiori dei quali erano profughi dalla Germania" (*ivi*, p. 237), poi nella Vienna del marzo 1938 con l'*Anschluss* – l'annessione dell'Austria alla Germania nazionalsocialista –, infine, sia pur frammisto ad altre relazioni sentimentali, l'abbraccio ancora con Minka. Si era "lasciata prendere dal panico che regnava fra gli Ebrei" (*ivi*, p. 243), mentre nella città la croce uncinata e lo "Heil! Sieg Heil!" sovrastavano ogni cosa. Lui e lei – Georg e Minka – erano insieme quando nella capitale austriaca arrivò il *Führer* e per la prima volta udirono il *Deutschland, Deutschland über alles*. "Lei scoppiò in lacrime"; e lui le disse:

non sarà poi così tragica per voi. In fin dei conti c'è ancora abbastanza gente ragionevole che saprà evitare il peggio. In questo momento è riesplso il vecchio odio che voi conoscete bene, ma non devi aver paura, davvero, vedrai che si calmeranno. Credo proprio che il loro scopo sia solo quello di ristabilire l'ordine e la disciplina (*ivi* p. 251).

E lei: "Idiota, ma non senti che cosa stanno suonando? È il nostro vecchio *Gott erhalte*, l'inno della vecchia Austria imperiale, composto dal nostro Haydn, che ci hanno frodato per la megalomania della loro sporca Grande Germania" (*ibidem*). Calato in un caleidoscopio di figure ora ebraiche – "la casa, sempre ospitale, di Minka era diventata il luogo di ritrovo dei pochi Ebrei rimasti ancora a Vienna, nonché di qualche ariano che come me tradiva le proprie convinzioni" (*ivi*, p. 254) – ora naziste – "quei demoniaci carnefici di Ebrei chiusi nelle loro nere uniformi da SS quando si abbandonavano al loro freddo sadismo" (*ivi*, p. 256) –, Georg confesserà a se stesso di ritenere "mostruoso" non aver fatto "assolutamente nulla, né per loro né contro di loro" (*ivi*, p. 256). Frugando nelle incrostazioni permeabili della memoria geneticamente narratrice, l'ormai sessantenne antisemita "nonostante tutta

la sua apparente esperienza del mondo" (*ivi*, p. 265) rimane un "ingenuo" di fronte al passato. I "folli" anni Venti, i "raffinati" anni Trenta, l'ascesa di Hitler, la nazificazione di Germania e Austria, poi il grande rastrello delle foglie secche, Auschwitz, il "crollo" delle città sotto i bombardamenti, l'assedio di Berlino, "i Russi violentatori di donne" (*ivi*, p. 266), la divisione in zone, le macerie, il mercato nero, la fame; dunque tre matrimoni alle spalle; il primo con una Prussiana, il terzo con un'Italiana, e in mezzo quello con un'Ebreja; lui di lei dirà: "era semplicemente stupida. Bella e stupida. E per giunta aveva la pretesa di essere un'intellettuale" (*ivi*, p. 273). Ma si sa: gli anacronismi delle metamorfosi non calcolano mai gli anatocismi della vita, che "interessi su interessi" riscattano l'inesperienza senza tuttavia distinguere tra "realtà" e "verità", "neorealismo" e "Weimar", "identificazione" e "trasfigurazione" (*ivi*, pp. 274, 278, 292). Lei, pur dalla sua nevrosi di donna perseguitata perché Ebreja, lo amava senza discernere l'assoluto dal relativo; lui "si comportava nei confronti dell'affascinante consorte da tipico antisemita" (*ivi*, p. 280) – almeno, così si diceva di lui; lui che "credeva alla possibilità che attraverso il sangue si trasmettesse un'eredità psichica: una predisposizione mentale specifica di ogni razza trasmessa di generazione in generazione" (*ivi*, p. 281). *L'idea della razza* presiede sempre l'*esperienza antisemita*. Ciò lo autorizzava a chiosare: "ambiente e educazione non sono tutto nella *Bildung* di un essere umano" (*ivi*, p. 282). Equivocando a proposito della *formazione dell'uomo* aveva fallito anche nella sua paternità, vedendo nel figlio nato da quel matrimonio "il tarlo dell'albero genealogico" (*ivi*, p. 288). La morte precoce del bambino aveva trafitto irrimediabilmente i suoi sentimenti paterni, lasciando però intatta l'inesperienza di se stesso. L'esperienza della vita aveva bussato alla porta del suo antisemitismo, che l'aveva tenuta chiusa poiché l'*inesperienza dell'esperienza* possiede una ragione ideologica innervata da quel razzismo che uccide ogni amore credendolo soltanto prosaico, disforico e borghese.

Borghesi e antisemiti

Memorie e confessioni – lo si è detto – scavano nella realtà palesando i loro validi (ma incerti) valori di verità. Con alcune differenze, però. Quando Gregor von Rezzori pubblica nel 1979 per Steinhausen di Monaco di Baviera le *Memorien eines Antisemiten* tutto si è già compiuto: il nazionalsocialismo,

le due Guerre Mondiali, la *Shoah*. Sicché le sue memorie sembrano piuttosto una confessione. Probabilmente catartica. Nell'*ineluttabilità antisemita* la ricerca della verità è consegnata alle ambiguità del sogno ma anche all'indifferenza verso il destino. Tutto ha potuto la diseducazione. Quando Sándor Márai mette a stampa i due tomi di *Egy polgár vallomásai* sono invece gli anni 1934 e 1935. La storia inquietante del Novecento deve in gran parte ancora compiersi. Per quanto è fino allora accaduto, le sue confessioni appaiono semmai come una memoria. Presumibilmente vendicativa – se poi qualcuno lo querelerà per dei giudizi troppo taglienti. Nell'*ineluttabilità borghese* abbondano le tracce di una “colonizzazione spirituale” e “ideologica” (Márai, 1934-35, p. 404) in cui l'ossessione del denaro non ha fatto breccia nell'“essenza” della “estraneità” (*ivi*, p. 405). Molto ha potuto l'educazione. Prima ancora, le ambivalenze avevano moltiplicato le antitetività. All'interno della borghesia le differenze fra alta-, media- e bassa-borghesia si erano acuite a dismisura; l'antisemitismo, diffuso in ogni strato della classe borghese, lasciava immune soltanto alcuni gruppi più colti – anzitutto medio-borghesi, ma a volte anche alto- o basso-borghesi. E così come la borghesia era invisa all'aristocrazia, al clero, ai contadini e agli operai, in ciascuno di questi ceti prendeva forza e si espandeva un antisemitismo antiborghese. Antisemiti si trovavano dunque fra i nobili, i prelati, i funzionari, gli agricoltori, i lavoratori. Nessuno si dichiarava pubblicamente “razzista”, ma l'odio, l'avversione o il semplice fastidio provocato dalla presenza della stirpe giudea nella società tedesca erano assai diffusi fin dall'epoca guglielmina. Età in cui il processo di *identificazione* della borghesia nel riconoscimento economico e politico, sociale e psicologico di se stessa come classe dirigente avveniva secondo un rapporto di identità con il processo di *trasfigurazione* dell'antisemitismo “gioviale” e/o “bonario” in una ossessione razziale scientificamente avvalorata. La definizione biologica della razza e il suo mito sociale saranno l'esito storico – ben prima del nazismo – di una certa cultura positivista di secondo Ottocento, il cui fallace scientismo verrà impiegato per giustificare le pratiche persecutorie contro gli Ebrei – fossero o meno Tedeschi, fossero o meno borghesi. Sul piano letterario, le due opere di Márai e Rezzori evocano solo tangenzialmente quel contesto complessivo, storicizzandolo però secondo una poetica narratologica in cui la dialettica delle circostanze collettive s'interseca con la contingenza delle occasioni individuali. E l'umanità sofferente rimane a guardare sospesa nell'alchimia delle proprie occorrenze.

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OGGI UN FILOSOFO

Rubrica di Fulvio Papi



In ricordo di Egle Becchi

Non incontreremo mai più nei nostri passi Egle Becchi, collega di pedagogia all'Università di Pavia, scolara prima a Milano 1949-50 e poi autorevole insegnante.

Per strano che possa apparire, il nostro primo colloquio fu sulla letteratura bucolica del Cinquecento, l'ultimo, la valutazione per la lode alla tesi di una delle scolare che per un certo sadismo istituzionale (che suppongo la divertisse) obbligava a sostenere l'esame di teoretica alle sue laureande.

Nel lungo periodo di mezzo è una vita che forse avrei potuto conoscere meglio se il parlare triestino (da lì arrivavamo entrambi) fosse stata una mia capacità. Ma Egle parlava triestino in diretta con la mamma tutte le sere, mentre la mia memoria era ormai offuscata. Come la sua per quanto riguarda Abbazia, dove aveva vissuto e io invece avevo solo giocato per lo meno quanto è concesso dopo aver sostenuto l'esame di laurea.

La morte nella filosofia europea per molti anni fu la condizione finita ma totale del proprio senso. L'esito vale per un lavoro ben fatto, come per un tratto geniale. Egle, come tutti noi, apparteneva al primo caso, supportata anche dalle varie pratiche accademiche.

Egle si laureò con Banfi sulla filosofia di Cassirer, ma il "Cassirer" italiano era privo di entusiasmo e più che il formalismo relativista di Cassirer l'affascinava allora l'avventura della storia. Or si vede bene una storia più immaginaria, anche se di una elevata eticità.

Egle imparò a capire le varie congiunture educative che affermavano la loro egemonia in tempi diversi e lontani. Il suo capolavoro fu lo studio storico dell'infanzia: era un complesso epilogo che richiedeva nello spazio storico la conoscenza e la sensibilità per molti saperi.

Ho sempre avuto l'opinione che Egle li trattasse, questi saperi, come conoscenze che un umanesimo non poteva non avere intorno alla propria identità educativa.

Ho detto del primo colloquio ed ho fatto cenno dell'ultimo, la ragazza si guadagnò la lode. Ma anche Egle, che non vi aveva pensato, mi sembrava soddisfatta. Non era la sola ambiguità della cultura e anche del comportamento sociale di Egle Becchi. Ora dovrebbe cominciare lo studio del suo lavoro, ma qui mi fermo.

RECENSIONI

Zygmunt Bauman, *Das Vertraute unvertraut machen. Ein Gespräch mit Peter Haffner*, Hamburg, Hoffmann und Campe Verlag, 2017, trad. it. *A tutto campo. L'amore, il destino, la memoria e altre umanità – Conversazioni con Peter Haffner*, Bari-Roma, Laterza, 2021, ISBN 978-88-581-4087-1, euro 18.

Le precedenti interviste al grande sociologo ebreo polacco Zygmunt Bauman (*Intervista sull'identità*, 2003, *Vite che non possiamo permetterci*, 2010, ambedue pubblicate da Laterza) erano molto specifiche circa gli argomenti affrontati; questa intervista in oggetto, invece, concessa in due tempi (2014 e 2016) poco tempo prima di morire novantenne, nel gennaio del 2017, al giornalista Peter Haffner, e che appare come la sua ultima intervista, ha una natura molto differente. L'intervista è articolata in dieci capitoli, ognuno dei quali è dedicato a un nucleo tematico: tutti insieme avrebbero l'intenzione di toccare i temi principali della sua lunga riflessione, ma lo fanno – ed è la prima volta che questo succede – con una forte e costante attenzione ai dati biografici.

Haffner, l'intervistatore, è ben consapevole di questa ritrosia, fin qui manifestata da Bauman, a parlare di sé

(“Lei ha manifestato sempre una forte resistenza a parlare dei suoi dati biografici. I suoi lettori sanno che cosa e come lei pensi, ma non sanno chi lei sia e da dove venga”, p. 32). Per avvicinarsi alla biografia di Bauman, allora, senza rinunciare all'illustrazione di alcuni temi centrali della sua riflessione, Haffner utilizza, nel formulare le sue domande, i testi autobiografici scritti dalla amatissima moglie Janine (*Inverno nel mattino: una ragazza nel ghetto di Varsavia*, 1986 e *Un sogno di appartenenza: la mia vita nella Polonia del dopoguerra*, 1988, ambedue pubblicate da Il Mulino); in tal modo in queste pagine, non soltanto si scoprono infanzia, adolescenza e giovinezza dell'autore, ma – ed è un elemento di notevole importanza per inquadrare il tipo di sociologia che il lavoro di Bauman rappresenta – si scopre la irrinunciabile *motivazione personale*, esperienziale, nell'approccio ai temi che, di volta in

volta, lo hanno persuaso a scrivere. Il fatto di aver vissuto in prima persona in più occasioni l'esilio, in quanto dissidente rispetto allo *status quo* polacco sia prima che durante che dopo l'occupazione tedesca, l'emarginazione subita in patria, in quanto ebreo, e ancora: l'aver potuto constatare la tragedia dell'Olocausto avendola ben conosciuta, se non di persona, però nei racconti autobiografici della moglie, e infine l'aver sperimentato le contraddizioni insite in una militanza politica giovanile (da militante comunista, prima in Polonia, poi in Unione Sovietica) la cui ideologia regolarmente tradì ai suoi occhi le promesse di redenzione e benessere collettivo con le quali si era presentata alla ribalta della grande Storia, ebbene tutto questo ci si rivela come il nutrimento esperienziale per una incessante, inquieta concettualità che, pur senza rinunciare fino in fondo al tema della speranza, approda ad un razionale, giustificato pessimismo circa il nostro presente più immediato.

Si assiste, insomma, al lento sedimentarsi, attraverso i decenni, della grande categoria della 'liquidità', che, come ben sanno i lettori di Bauman, possiede la caratteristica di potersi applicare pressoché ad ogni aspetto della vita sia privata che collettiva, sia interiore che relazionale, andando in tal modo ad interessare i metodi e i contenuti di scienze umane non specificamente sociologiche, a innervare considerazioni valide trasversalmente presso saperi molto diversi da quelli solitamente frequentati, con derive verso l'etica, ad

esempio ("I confini fra le branche della scienza sono dettati da esigenze burocratiche. C'è un'amministrazione, ci sono finanziamenti che devono essere distribuiti, gli studenti devono essere inquadrati, devono conseguire la laurea. Il prodotto secondario di tutto ciò è l'impedimento a mescolare i campi specialistici", p. 56).

D'altra parte, questa multiplanarità d'approccio, "a tutto campo" come recita il titolo del libro, è giustificata dalla sua ricca formazione giovanile, nella quale letteratura filosofia scienza e religione – una sorta di quadratura culturale assunta dal giovane Bauman con parità d'interesse e d'intenti –, giocano ruoli altrettanto paritari nella definizione della configurazione concettuale. È così naturale trovare, accanto a Marx, a Gramsci, a Sartre, a Lévi-Strauss, a Simmel, a Windelband e Rickert, a Weber, tra i nomi che sono stati importanti per Bauman, ad esempio Dickens, London, Stevenson, Hugo, Tolstoj, e soprattutto Kafka e Orwell, poi poeti e narratori polacchi, registi e uomini di teatro della prima metà del Novecento, come Brecht.

Ma come appare oggi la sociologia agli occhi del Bauman anziano e protagonista della storia più recente di questa disciplina? Qual è il suo compito? Come si giustifica la validità ermeneutica della sociologia rispetto ai tempi presenti?

"Nelle condizioni presenti la sociologia ha una nuova sfera pubblica – d'importanza fondamentale – che è la comunità degli individui. Questi indi-

vidui si trovano a confrontarsi con bui, nebulosi modi extraterritoriali intorno a sé. [...] La sociologia vuol dire per me rendere non familiare quello che è familiare e rendere familiare quello che è non familiare. Questo è il suo compito” (p. 98). Nella frase citata gioca una funzione centrale la nozione di *individuo*, giacché agli occhi di Bauman la caduta delle ‘comunità’ con la globalizzazione, e prima ancora l’indebolimento e la decadenza degli Stati-nazione dopo la fine della seconda Guerra Mondiale, ha lasciato completamente *solì* gli individui, come se dovessero essere essi i soli autori del loro destino, non più in grado di rivolgersi ad una entità sovraindividuale legittimata a fornirgli un appiglio valoriale sicuro; la fine del senso di una vita ‘comune’ aprirebbe così l’esistenza del singolo all’orizzonte l’appartenenza nuda e semplice all’umanità, e in un contesto del genere la rete – l’unico vero tramite odierno del ‘comunicare’ – non rappresenta certo, afferma Bauman, la soluzione del problema, anzi, ne enfatizza le contraddizioni, ne allontana gli sviluppi fecondi. D’altra parte, ammonisce Bauman: “Le situazioni sono date, non le abbiamo scelte noi. La domanda è: come sono nate e a che cosa ci costringono, come ci confrontiamo con esse e come possiamo cambiarle. Come possiamo noi, sotto la pressione delle condizioni esistenti e con la conoscenza che ne abbiamo, fare storia in maniera consapevole? Qui è il segreto della nostra esistenza” (p. 21). E dal momento che “Il compito degli intellettuali è più

difficile. Essi devono nuotare controcorrente, recuperare le possibilità che nel passato sono state lasciate cadere” (p. 49), dal momento che, come ripete a più riprese, “brancoliamo nel buio”, non possiamo affidarci ancora a utopie che, a loro tempo, non hanno saputo realizzare le loro promesse. A tal punto che Bauman conia (ed è anche il titolo di uno dei suoi ultimi libri) il termine di “retrotopia” (“Un’invenzione linguistica creata dalla parola oggi di moda ‘retro’ e dalla parola ‘utopia’”, p. 120; “C’è una cesta piena di cose da cui possiamo attingere, e chiunque con qualunque intenzione scenda nel profondo del passato, ritornerà su con bottini diversi. Queste sono le idee che cerco di articolare in *Retrotopia*, p. 122) per descrivere l’estrema difficoltà odierna di immaginare un futuro che non sia distopico, e che d’altra parte non ripeta lo statuto illusorio delle utopie fino qui pensate: “In che modo le parole diventano i fatti. Questo è il problema che non mi lascia più. Come si può affrontare la crescente disegualianza. Ciò mi sta particolarmente a cuore” (p. 123).

Ed è per tutti questi motivi che Bauman racchiude il suo progetto di scrittura mobilitando il concetto di “responsabilità”, anzi, di “responsabilità della responsabilità”: “Tutto quello che facciamo tocca la vita di altri uomini. È una cosa che dimentichiamo volentieri. Il passaggio da questa responsabilità oggettiva a una responsabilità morale è quello che io chiamo ‘responsabilità della responsabilità’” (p. 141). Qui, in

questa terra concettuale difficile e scivolosa, è costretto a incontrarsi con le riflessioni novecentesche sull'Altro, con Levinas e con Hans Jonas, per esempio, e prima ancora con Kant, il cui 'tu devi' necessitato dall'imperativo categorico non lo trova d'accordo. Bisogna accettare, sostiene Bauman, nell'impostazione postmoderna dell'etica, nel nome di una "spontaneità" comportamentale (un'azione deve essere "non calcolata, ma spontanea e

spensierata", p. 143), il *rischio incessante di sbagliare*, di non essere all'altezza, occorre convivere con l'incertezza rispetto alle conseguenze dell'agire, in una parola: la morale "Non è una ricetta per essere felici. È una ricetta per una vita difficile. È un processo incompiuto, non si trova pace. L'habitat naturale della persona morale è l'eterna insicurezza" (p. 144).

Gianmarco Pincirolì

Romano Alquati, *Sulla riproduzione della capacità attiva vivente. L'industrializzazione della soggettività*, Roma, DeriveApprodi, 2021, pp. 218, ISBN 9-788865-483695, euro 18,00.

Alquati, scomparso nel 2010, è autore poco frequentato nel campo degli studi pedagogici e ciò vale a maggior ragione per la sua tarda produzione, in parte inedita oppure data alle stampe da piccoli editori (se si eccettua un volume del 1997 per manifestolibri) e di non facile reperibilità. Eppure questi lavori risulterebbero preziosi per chi intendesse cimentarsi in un'analisi critica della curvatura neoliberale dei contemporanei sistemi di istruzione e, in generale, per lumeggiare l'importanza della formazione nel capitalismo odierno, da Alquati cartografato mediante il ricorso al concetto di *iperindustrialità*. Ciò detto, in tempi recenti l'interesse per gli scritti dell'ultimo Alquati è cresciuto; di qui la pubblicazione di *Sulla riproduzione della capacità umana vivente. L'industrializzazione della soggettività*. Trattasi di un testo (steso nel 2002) che sviluppa categorie

abbozzate e progressivamente affinate a partire dalla seconda metà degli anni '80 – è sul finire di quel decennio che viene elaborato il *modellone*, una rappresentazione del sistema sociale che postula differenti *livelli di realtà* gerarchicamente ordinati e attraversati da variabili trasversali – e che schizza i contorni d'una tutto-sommato-inedita-soggettività implicata in processi di riproduzione della "*capacità-attiva-umana*" viepiù importanti per un capitalismo in difficoltà nell'incrementare i profitti in mercati saturi, perciò alla ricerca di nuove strategie per autovalorizzarsi.

Ora, per Alquati riproduzione si darebbe in ogni dove, nondimeno andrebbe individuato un *ambito di realtà* peculiarmente deputato a essa e di norma organizzato per assicurare un consumo di beni (tangibili e intangibili) tale da restaurare e accrescere la *capacità*.

Ovverosia per garantire un consumo formativo che la riprodurrebbe, incrementandola, sia in dimensioni solitarie (leggere un libro, ascoltare un vinile), sia in virtù di scambi con *partners* pagati per fornire servizi in agenzie specializzate (ad esempio la scuola) dove mettere il contenitore vivente di *capacità* nelle condizioni di svolgere un fruttuoso (soprattutto per altri) "*lavoro [...] di consumo-finale-riproduttivo*" (p. 21). Dunque equivalenza del lavorare e del consumare? Sì, essendo, secondo Alquati, "*il fruire [...] un lavoro specifico*" (p. 36) di "*co-autoriproduzione*" (p. 58) che non sarebbe peregrino (pure dal punto di vista capitalistico) retribuire, sì da permettere al possessore per conto terzi della *capacità* di elevarla e, al contempo, da salvaguardare "la produttività generale del sistema". Remunerare, insomma, "la fatica di sopravvivere come consumatori" (p. 60), salariare quel "referente principale della prestazione reciproca" (p. 85), propria dei servizi alla persona, che consumando detta prestazione si autoriproduce in quanto merce/forza-lavoro. Difatti, continua Alquati, quella che un tempo poteva definirsi "capacità-attiva-generica" (p. 73) oggi verrebbe sussunta al capitale (perdendo la genericità) e potenziata più che arricchita¹. Non solo: si dovrebbe registrare un "*impoverimento*" delle *capacità* "*pur nell'altissima potenza*" (p. 75), nonché riconoscere come la parte di *capacità* "davvero ri-

prodotta per i bisogni del suo vettore-attivo-vivente e formalmente titolare" sia tutto sommato "*residuale*" (p. 76). Quanto alle agenzie riproduttive, Alquati si sofferma sulla loro *imprezzazione*: quel processo per cui un dispositivo più o meno istituzionale in precedenza generativo di valore d'uso finisce per essere "sussunt[o] al capitalismo direttamente come luogo di investimento" e di generazione "di valore di scambio indifferenziato" (p. 142), ossia, per dirla con il Moro di Treviri, *astratto*. Processo, questo, contraddistinto da una formalizzazione e da una standardizzazione procedurale delle succitate agenzie al fine di aumentarne la produttività, dalla proliferazione di "nuove sub-tecnologie di riproduzione [...] sempre più minute", di "nuovi mercati" e nuove "professionalità sempre più specializzate", da una solo-apparentemente-paradossale iper-burocratizzazione consustanziale alla generale tendenza alla "razionalizzazione tayloristica del riprodurre" (pp. 139-140). Né ad Alquati sfugge che a questa *fabbrichizzazione* che industrializza la soggettività non si accompagni una crescita della "qualità delle prestazioni", bensì un suo peggioramento – a ben vedere nient'affatto imprevedibile se si pensa al fatto che la sussunzione al capitale della riproduzione formativa (così come di ogni ambito dell'esistere umano) implichi il trasferimento nel regno del quantita-

¹ Stando al *modellone*, mentre il potenziamento sarebbe legato a funzionalità sistemiche, l'arricchimento potrebbe essere usato per fini *autonomi* e autenticamente soggettivi (non industrializzati capitalisticamente).

tivo della sua programmazione e della valutazione dei suoi *output*. E siccome in Occidente i servizi che offrono riproduzione rappresenterebbero uno dei settori occupazionali in progressiva crescita, Alquati suggerisce l'immagine di una grande "fabbrica riproduttiva", di una "società-complessiva-fabbrica" abitata da "nuovi 'operai della riproduzione fabbrichizzata'", i quali avrebbero preso il posto negli anni '70 occupato dall'*operaio sociale* e dal *proletariato intellettuale di ceto medio*, con tutte le differenze relative all'intensità dell'antagonismo allora diffuso. Il che qualificerebbe l'*operaietà riproduttiva iperindustriale* alla stregua di una "grande classe *oggettiva*" che non è, però, un soggetto politico collettivo (p. 168). Ebbene, per uscire dall'*empasse* di una macro-classe senza voce e per questo subalterna, in sé ma non per sé, Alquati insiste sull'urgenza tattica di rivendicare – quale obiettivo intermedio – una riproduzione di *capacità umane complesse* a motivo del loro statuto *ambivalente*. Le *capacità complesse* possono, infatti, servire al singolo in quanto *attore* interno – per adoperare il vocabolario del *modellone* – all'*ufficialità capitalistica*, ma anche in quanto *soggetto* che

potrebbe perseguire fini *autonomi*. Esse svilupperebbero "l'intelligenza espezienziale e inventiva", sarebbero legate a momenti formativi incentrati non tanto sulla veicolazione di competenze procedurali povere, quanto, piuttosto, di un sapere ad ampio spettro e di un'attitudine alla problematizzazione del dato, e il loro possesso permetterebbe di "produrre [...] conoscenze nuove" (p. 65). La riproduzione di *capacità complesse* costituirebbe, in definitiva, il potenziale punto di abbrivio per un più ambizioso progetto di *demercificazione* della soggettività e l'eventualità di una rottura dell'esistente dipenderebbe dalla "*demercantilizzazione*" (p. 142) delle agenzie riproduttive. Il fatto che questo fascio di riflessioni formulate vent'anni fa non abbia perso nulla della sua forza abrasiva è una delle ragioni per avvicinarsi alle pagine di Alquati, che offrono argomenti alle pratiche intellettuali orientate a togliere la scorza mistica che avvolge le narrazioni e le retoriche con le quali da tre decenni si giustifica il riformismo permanente del settore dell'istruzione e si pianificano interventi modernizzatori.

Pietro Maltese

Augustin Mutuale, Guy Berger, *S'engager dans la recherche en sciences humaines et sociales. Le champ de l'éducation*, Paris, Esf Sciences humaines, 2020, pp. 196, ISBN 978-2-7101-4279-9, euro 18,00.

Impegnarsi in una ricerca nell'ambito delle scienze umane e sociali, in particolare modo nel campo dell'educazione – che rappresenta l'oggetto di interesse

speciale di questo volume – significa normalmente seguire delle procedure metodologiche standard, dei canoni accademici, di cui sono universalmen-

te noti ormai i momenti principali e fondamentali: definire un problema, formulare delle ipotesi, convalidare dei risultati. Scopo principale degli autori, provenienti entrambi da un doppio percorso, filosofia e scienze dell'educazione – Augustin Mutuale, professore, decano e direttore del ciclo dottorale della Faculté d'Éducation dell'Institut Catholique de Paris, docente anche alle università di Paris 8 e Paris 13; e Guy Berger, professore emerito dell'università di Paris 8 e tra i fondatori del Dipartimento di scienze dell'educazione di questa stessa università – non è quello di proporre un manuale usuale che ripercorra le procedure standard, ma piuttosto quello, molto più ambizioso, di offrire una riflessione originale ed innovativa. Al centro del volume, che intende evitare la solita scorciatoia fatta di rapide e pratiche sintesi in vista di una applicazione efficace sul campo, sta infatti la preoccupazione di riconsiderare tutti questi discorsi abitualmente tecnici alla luce di una visione più ampia e profonda, in cui alla giusta esigenza del metodo si accompagni la consapevolezza del 'senso' e della 'posta in gioco' nell'attività di ricerca che caratterizza l'ambito educativo, ma ovviamente non solo esso. I differenti momenti e le diverse tappe delle procedure metodologiche vengono ripercorse, ma con l'esigenza di un nuovo sguardo che ne rende più complessa la figura e le implicazioni. Pertanto, in questo volume – destinato a studenti, ricercatori, formatori, insegnanti ed educatori in senso ampio, ma anche a

storici e sociologi che hanno l'educazione come proprio ambito di studio – non si trovano le classiche nozioni finalizzate ad acquisire la capacità minimale di redigere una tesi di laurea o dottorato, di scrivere un articolo o un'opera scientifica. Nell'abbondante offerta di tematiche, percorsi e stimoli che il libro propone sono riconoscibili due paradigmi teorici che sostengono continuamente il discorso. Il primo paradigma ha di mira un riassetto epistemologico: riprendendo la celebre distinzione diltheyana tra *Erklären* e *Verstehen*, attraverso lo sviluppo ulteriore impresso alla questione dall'ermeneutica di Gadamer, si tratta di riaffermare l'irriducibilità tra scienze della spiegazione e scienze della comprensione. Il riferimento prossimo con cui la questione viene affrontata è il dibattito avvenuto in Francia, alla fine degli anni '90, tra Gaston Mialaret da un lato, Jacques Ardoino e Guy Berger dall'altro. Mentre per il primo non esiste una differenza di metodo, ma solo di oggetto, tra scienze della natura e scienze antroposociali – il che significa che queste ultime devono in sostanza adottare lo stesso procedimento e le stesse regole delle scienze della natura – per gli altri due occorre difendere la specificità del metodo scientifico-sociale, basato su un approccio culturale, interattivo e storico, sul problema del senso, più che sull'individuazione di prove, regolarità e leggi. Non solo la riduzione scienziasta delle discipline sociali continua con insistenza a presupporre un modello epistemologico ormai superato dalle stes-

se scienze della natura – e cioè il modello canonizzato dalla fisica tra la fine del secolo XVIII e gli inizi del secolo XIX –, ma uno dei sintomi maggiori di questo riduzionismo sarebbe proprio l'ipertrofia della didattica nell'ambito delle discipline dell'educazione, un'ipertrofia dietro la quale si annuncerebbe la riduzione della complessità del campo e dell'oggetto 'educazione' al fenomeno biologico e psicologico dell'apprendimento, oscurando così tutta la complessità delle situazioni, dei processi e dei dispositivi (in senso foucaultiano) in gioco nell'apprendimento stesso. La differenza tra i due approcci epistemologici, della spiegazione e della comprensione, si traduce in ambito pedagogico nella diversità di due approcci, che sono connessi al dualismo dello schema diltheyano, ma che non coincidono esattamente con esso: la ricerca 'sull'educazione' e la ricerca 'in educazione'. Mentre fare ricerca sull'educazione significa applicare un sapere codificato (sociologia, psicologia, economia, ecc...) ad un problema determinato dell'ambito educativo rendendolo 'oggetto' di studio, fare ricerca in educazione vuol dire invece partire dai problemi concreti e quotidiani implicati dalle pratiche educative, superando gli steccati disciplinari, mettendo in discussione i saperi costituiti, introducendo nuovi punti di vista. Per porsi nell'ottica della ricerca 'in educazione', è necessario tener presente quattro dimensioni irrinunciabili: innanzitutto la 'funzione sociale' dell'educazione, il fatto cioè che essa ha come obiettivo

la 'socializzazione', l'adesione a pratiche sociali, l'appropriazione di saperi, norme e valori; poi l'educazione come 'pratica sociale', come attività finalizzata a produrre una trasformazione dei membri di una comunità sociale; in terzo luogo, l'educazione come 'discorso', il suo legame a rappresentazioni, visioni del mondo, ideologie; infine, l'educazione come 'prassi', come processo di interazione che si ripercuote su chi lo mette in atto e non solo sui destinatari dell'atto stesso. Un ricercatore che abbia presente la complessità del trovarsi 'in educazione' deve mettere in atto un procedimento relativizzante e relativista, portando allo scoperto tutte le proprie 'implicazioni' – Gadamer avrebbe detto 'pre-comprensioni' – in gioco nell'attività di ricerca, anche se a questa prima tappa deve seguire l'altra, quella della individuazione del 'senso' del fenomeno considerato, in cui consiste l'elemento realista e comunicabile del lavoro scientifico-sociale. Forse, l'approfondimento del rapporto tra questi due momenti avrebbe meritato un maggiore spazio e un ulteriore sviluppo all'interno dello stimolante capitolo V, in cui si trova descritto, proprio perché rappresenta il nucleo più problematico in ordine alla difesa di un paradigma scientifico differente da quello delle scienze della natura. Per Mutuale e Berger, il contesto epistemologico che ha portato nel XX secolo al passaggio inaugurato dalle 'scienze dell'educazione' appare, attualmente, ancora monopolizzato da approcci che sono tipici delle scienze della spiega-

zione. Il tradizionale problema dello statuto epistemologico che deve caratterizzare l'approccio al fenomeno educativo sembra oggi, in sostanza, tutt'altro che risolto.

Il secondo paradigma rivendicato dagli autori, strettamente collegato al primo, non è meno ambizioso. Si tratta di abbattere la tradizionale separazione tra teoria e prassi, di cui due sono i sintomi più evidenti anche nel campo delle scienze del comprendere: da un lato, la dualità netta tra il momento della produzione di conoscenze e quello della loro applicazione tecnologica, per la quale le scienze dell'educazione subiscono da sempre le sollecitazioni degli attori sociali, politici ed economici che le promuovono; dall'altro, la frattura tra sapere ordinario-quotidiano e sapere specialistico, tra le persone comuni e gli specialisti, una frattura epistemologica – basata sull'inaffidabilità dell'esperienza sensibile e comune, da Platone a Bachelard –, che tuttavia si presta ad essere sfruttata ideologicamente, dal momento che l'esercizio del potere si serve sempre di più del parere della classe di esperti per convalidare e legittimare le proprie scelte. Il paradigma che Mutuale e Berger oppongono alla frattura teoria-prassi è quello della 'ricerca-azione', definizione non nuova ed esposta a partire dagli anni '40 (Lewin e la nascita della psicosociologia) ad una progressiva ed inesorabile polisemia. Esso viene quindi precisato come il doppio movimento che lega teoria e prassi in una strutturale relazione reciproca. Innanzitutto, riprendendo

alcune riflessioni di Dewey, la teoria è sempre un'ipotesi per l'azione, possiede sempre un orientamento prassiologico; nell'ambito educativo, in particolare, il progetto della produzione di conoscenze è inseparabile dal progetto di emancipazione sociale e politica e dal processo di democratizzazione della società. A questo primo programma, dal sapore ottimistico e neo-illuministico, del primo movimento si affianca il secondo movimento, quello che va dalla prassi alla teoria: la pratica quotidiana possiede implicitamente già un proprio sapere, attraverso cui essa si rende possibile. Questo secondo movimento è messo in evidenza contrapponendo Bourdieu, in cui è marcata la rottura epistemologica tra sapere ordinario e sapere specialistico tipica del procedimento delle scienze della natura, all'etnometodologia di Garfinkel, il cui obiettivo è proprio quello di descrivere e analizzare i modi e le procedure concrete con cui i membri di una data società mostrano di mettere in atto dei saperi e delle conoscenze relative al loro ambiente particolare e ai problemi che questo pone loro nelle diverse circostanze dell'esperienza. Mentre lo scienziato della natura sostituisce un sapere vero ad un'illusione sensibile, lo scienziato sociale analizza ed elabora dei saperi di cui gli attori sociali sono già portatori.

I due paradigmi proposti da Mutuale e Berger intendono porsi come lo sviluppo particolare delle intuizioni messe in campo dalla teoria della complessità (Morin) e dalla teoria dei sistemi (von

Bertalanffy), entrambe già acquisite ed assunte dalle scienze sociali nella seconda metà del XX secolo. Il volume addita e apre continuamente alla considerazione e all'approfondimento di vie, prospettive, problematiche, per le quali si fornisce in appendice una interessante raccolta di indicazioni bibliografiche per la ripresa delle questioni affrontate, suddivise secondo l'ordine dei capitoli. Sarebbe senza dubbio di notevole interesse confrontare e collocare le riflessioni di Mutuale e Berger in rapporto al dibattito contemporaneo impegnato sulla medesima tematica della ricerca in ambito educativo. Il volume si presta, infatti, almeno a due confronti di importanza decisiva a cui esso accenna, ma che potrebbero essere ulteriormente sviluppati: in primo luogo, il tema della continuità tra sapere/esperienza ordinaria e sapere specialistico/scientifico, interseca e

si connette direttamente al problema della *Lebenswelt*, della sua ripresa in ambito scientifico-sociale ad opera della pedagogia fenomenologica di origine tedesca a partire dagli anni '80 e di quella italiana della seconda metà del Novecento. In secondo luogo, il legame tra ricerca, o anche pratiche, in ambito educativo e processo di democratizzazione della società invocato da Mutuale e Berger andrebbe messo a confronto con le riflessioni sullo stesso tema rilanciate da tempo, in ambito mitteleuropeo e anglofono, dalla filosofia dell'educazione di Gert Biesta. In ogni caso, se lo scopo degli autori – come dichiarato – è quello di stimolare il lettore ad una presa in carico personale dei problemi ogni volta toccati, l'obiettivo di questo lavoro comune si deve dire riuscito.

Alberto Anelli

Luca Benvenga e Cyrus Rinaldi (a cura di), *Devianza, conflitti e media. La scuola di Birmingham*, 2020, pp. 204, Milano, Mimesis, ISBN 978-88-5754-171-6, euro 20,00.

Tradotti in italiano per la prima volta, gli "occasional stencilled papers" raccolti nel volume sono il frutto del lavoro di diversi studiosi del *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies*, fondato da Richard Hoggart a Birmingham nel 1964. Scritti fra gli anni '70 e gli anni '80, i contributi in questione si offrono tanto come preziosa testimonianza storica della Gran Bretagna post-bellica, quanto come spunti di riflessione per guardare al mondo globalizzato del presente.

In questa prospettiva, un possibile e fecondo punto di convergenza tra passato e presente può essere individuato nella valorizzazione dei *conflitti* – termine che non a caso è centrale nel titolo del volume. Infatti, ciò che pare accomunare i saggi di Stuart Hall, Christine Griffin, John Clarke, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson e Brian Roberts è proprio l'asunzione del conflitto sia a livello teorico, sia nelle concrete manifestazioni del suo darsi. Di qui, allora, il "detour

teorico” menzionato da Stuart Hall, che ai paradigmi elaborati da importanti teorici assunti come punto di riferimento del *Centre* – come Marx, Gramsci e Althusser – affianca l’indagine della *lived experience* secondo un’ottica fenomenologica che “insegna a partecipare, ancora una volta, al livello del senso” (p. 99). Paradigma di comprensione e insieme oggetto di analisi, il conflitto chiama in causa le strutture portanti della società e il modo in cui i diversi individui vi si rapportano. In altri termini, la critica delle elaborazioni ideologiche della cultura dominante è affiancata dall’analisi delle relative risposte ‘esistenziali’ individuali e/o di gruppo. È proprio in questa prospettiva che risiede quello che i curatori del volume definiscono “il più grande merito del *Centre*”, ovvero quello di restituire “visibilità a chi è stato per lunghi anni escluso dalla sociologia mainstream, *deviantizzato*, formattato in una sfera comportamentale risultante da una logica binaria (conforme-non conforme)” (pp. 8-9). Il *Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies* opera in un contesto storico in cui l’espansione post-bellica dei media è divenuta una realtà imponente e in costante evoluzione che richiede sempre più accorte analisi delle formazioni ideologiche, le quali, per essere efficaci, devono “trasformare e ampliare esse stesse per tenere conto, e integrare, dentro il contesto psicologico esistente, i nuovi eventi e gli sviluppi del conflitto sociale” (p. 91). Ciò è quanto ha scritto Hall nel suo saggio del 1971 intitolato *Devianza, politica e media*, dove l’attenzione è rivolta soprattutto

a quei significati ‘a portata di mano’, spesso presentati e assunti in una naturalezza ingannevole. Qui, il quotidiano assume la sua estrema rilevanza – certamente sulla scia dell’eredità offerta da Raymond Williams – in relazione alla crescente onnipervasività dei significati prodotti e fatti circolare da stampa, radio e tv, “strumenti della praxis della significazione pubblica” (p. 72). È grazie a questi potenti strumenti che avviene “la continua produzione quotidiana del sapere stesso, nella misura in cui questo sapere ci fornisce i termini, le categorie e le classificazioni all’interno delle quali la realtà sociale è appresa e mantenuta” (p. 94). Elaborando e diffondendo determinati significati a scapito di altri e lavorando al livello associativo delle connotazioni, i media non svolgono un ruolo meramente informativo, ma “diventano mediatori attivi” in grado di plasmare attivamente l’opinione pubblica, e anche con una certa aggressività simbolica, specie “nei momenti di tensione sociale, quando le incertezze sul futuro o le paure sulla natura divisoria dei conflitti assumono la forma troppo conveniente del capro espiatorio, generato dalla paura pubblica” (p. 119). Di qui l’implicita valenza politica di quelle pratiche di rappresentazione e di etichettamento che riguardano la sfera dell’illecito e della devianza, ovvero la sfera di quei fenomeni rappresentati in termini di “problemi sociali” che legittimano e avviano il rafforzamento del controllo sociale. È in quest’ambito che il confine tra “marginalità politica” e “devianza sociale” sfuma “nell’ampia

convergenza tra etichette criminali e ideologiche” (p. 57) che spesso hanno implicato la costruzione mediatica di “un grande ‘flusso criminale’ generalizzato, travolgente ma anonimo” (p. 124). Di qui, ancora, l’importanza dell’analisi critica delle “etichette” mediatiche: come sono costruite, quali fenomeni associano e su cosa si fonda la loro legittimazione? Si tratta di una questione pedagogica di non poco conto, se non altro perché “le etichette esercitano un effetto importante nel modellare la percezione pubblica degli eventi che sono, allo stesso tempo, problematici, discutibili, non chiari né ben definiti. Esse trasformano fenomeni sociali poco espliciti in categorie intellegibili, identificabili e controllabili” (p. 124).

Tali riflessioni si collocano entro un mutato panorama socio-politico ed economico e sono animate dall’intento di cogliere gli aspetti che hanno segnato la trasformazione sociale avvenuta negli anni ’50, ’60 e ’70 in Gran Bretagna. Situati nel cuore stesso di quella trasformazione, i giovani e le loro vite molto possono suggerire rispetto alla qualità e all’intensità di quegli stessi processi. Come ha scritto Clarke nel suo saggio del ’76: “c’è qualcosa di specifico nell’adolescenza che la rende particolarmente problematica per il capitalismo contemporaneo” (p. 159). Non è un caso, dunque, che ad accomunare i cinque saggi in questione sia l’attenzione rivolta alla gioventù, ovvero ai bambini e – soprattutto – agli adolescenti; un’attenzione peraltro già viva alla fine degli anni ’50 negli

ambienti della *New Left* – che lungi dal condannare moralisticamente le nuove condotte giovanili di consumo e di svago si sforzava di comprenderne il senso contestualizzandole – e che nel volume in questione va dalla rappresentazione dei movimenti di protesta studentesca alle risposte sottoculturali dei giovani caraibici tra attività illecite e musica *reggae*; dal “panico morale” destato dalle gang giovanili al profondo disagio vissuto dalle adolescenti femmine al contatto con i modelli contraddittori di femminilità circolanti nella cultura dominante. Riprendendo ancora le parole di Clarke, “in queste distinte vesti i giovani come categoria sociale sembrano poter trasmettere un messaggio profondo sullo stato della società, i cambiamenti sociali, politici ed altro ancora, senza fare ricorso ad un linguaggio politico” (p. 157). Da queste analisi di un passato non troppo lontano è possibile sollevare almeno un paio di spunti riflessivi sul presente. Il primo pertiene alla “praxis della significazione pubblica” che oggi si avvale di nuovi mezzi di produzione segnica. Quali sono, in questo campo, i conflitti rappresentati? E in base a quali confini? Il secondo, connesso al primo, riguarda la condizione esistenziale dei giovani oggi: quali modelli hanno di fronte? Quali sono le loro risposte sub-culturali? Quali le possibilità progettuali? Quale, infine, il “messaggio profondo sullo stato della società” di cui oggi si fanno portatori?

Irene Papa

Elsa M. Bruni, *Ispirarsi alla paideia. I modelli classici nella formazione*, Roma, Carocci Editore, 2021, pp. 190, ISBN 978-88-290-1071-4, euro 20,00.

Da tempo, ormai, la domanda sul significato della classicità è relegata alla ascosa penombra della tecnoscienza che incombe minacciosa (ma questa, in realtà, sembra essere più una rappresentazione collettiva seguita ad un indiscutibile incitamento ideologico) sulla prospettiva utilitaristica della formazione. Eppure, ancora in tempi recenti, l'instancabile voce di alcuni studiosi nostrani riconosciuti e rispettati a livello internazionale (Eugenio Garin, Tullio Gregory, Umberto Eco, Michele Ciliberto) ha sempre rimarcato l'importanza di un'ampiezza culturale che, nel segno della *bona civitas* (una civiltà di marca genuinamente umanistica: le *humanae litterae* come epicentro della relazione tra uomo e mondo), rilevi la continuità non aleatoria ma decisiva del rapporto affermativo tra l'uomo e il suo passato. Al pari di altre discipline di studio, la pedagogia, e con essa la formazione, con quel passato ha un rapporto contrastante, da un lato, e privilegiato, dall'altro. Contrastante perché, spesso, nell'epoca della piena digitalizzazione e della velocità adattativa dell'istruzione e dell'insegnamento, la classicità viene vista come un fattuale ostacolo all'ulteriore scatto onnicomprensivo della tecnica. Privilegiato, d'altro canto, perché è proprio nella "prosa" di quel mondo – passato, certo, ma non meno significante – che si ritrovano le aperture culturali che segnano in maniera decisiva ciò che an-

cora si può intendere per società civile. È questa dimensione etica, tra le altre, che percorre lo studio di Bruni, in relazione soprattutto al passaggio "tra passato e presente", che rivendica la memoria di una permanenza dell'antico *nel* presente. Senza andare troppo in là, basterebbe riprendere quel delizioso saggio leopardiano *Sopra lo stato presente dei costumi degli italiani* (1824), per comprendere quanto l'asfissia del progressismo illimitato (le "magnifiche sorti e progressive" dei versi de *La ginestra*) abbia lentamente (ma inesorabilmente) reso desueta la "favola degli antichi". Per questo, segnala Bruni: "Il passato deve *ri-vivere*, per porsi come pilastro per l'affermazione di un umanesimo di contenuto e non di forma, e di una paideia non cumulativa e progressiva, bensì organica e integrativa" (p. 39).

Non vi è, quindi, il concepimento di pura traslitterazione del passato *nel* presente (come ben sanno i filologi classici più avveduti o gli studiosi di iconologia che si ispirano a Warburg e alla tradizione di Alois Riegl): la modernità, nel suo furore secolarizzante, ha definitivamente fatto tramontare – se ancora qualcuno ne avesse nostalgia – la regola winckelmanniana dell'estetica classica come proposizione del bello ideale assoluto longiniano (su questo tema, in particolare, Gianni Carchia ha scritto saggi decisivi e lungimiranti). Anche la traccia del lascito

jaegeriano, ripresa da Bruni nella sua estensione socratico-platonica (pp. 61-69 e 111-117), coglie il significato più profondo della dialettica platonica così come espressa nel *Teeteto*. La metafora socratica della levatrice, in realtà, scopre la particolare domanda sull'essenza della conoscenza: se essa, infatti, è disvelamento (*aletheia*), si propone, d'altro canto, come necessità formativa e formante della capacità rispecchiante del pensiero. Ma è su un altro dialogo platonico che, a ragione, Bruni concentra la propria riflessione, il *Fedro*. Qui, nello specifico, il mito rivela la sua funzione specificamente educativa, attraverso la figurazione della biga alata, simbolo esoterico della tensione umana verso la conoscenza. Che cos'è, dunque, il mito? Esso "è in primo luogo – scrive Bruni – funzionale all'educazione, perché ricorda un passato, ormai inaccessibile e inverificabile, ma necessario come farmaco contro il disordine sociale" (p. 56). Sappiamo bene quale sia, per Platone e per i greci, il significato di *pharmakon*: nella giusta misura, infatti, esso cura e guarisce ma, se malamente dosato, porta alla morte. È proprio nel *Fedone*, dove viene descritta la morte di Socrate (*Plato in absentia*), che il termine *pharmakon*, nella sua polisemicità, viene indicato come ciò che dà a Socrate la morte. Come nell'*Antigone* sofocleo, la questione del rapporto tra *paideia*, *polis* e giustizia rimane centrale nella riflessione sulla permanenza della classicità. È in questo passaggio, infatti, che si rivela la possibilità contrastiva del *nomos*.

La formazione del cittadino – suggerisce Aristotele nell'*Etica nicomachea* – risiede nella capacità di seguire il proprio "buon daimon" (*eudaimonia*), ovvero nella possibilità di sviluppare una coscienza riflessiva sull'attuazione delle leggi consone e condivise che governano il *demos*. Per i greci, infatti, la formazione del buon cittadino (come anche indicherà in seguito Cicerone nelle *Tusculanae*, esplicitando che il più grande di tutti i mali è il disonore), non è finalizzata all'apprendimento bensì alla costituzione della *epimeleia eautou* (cura di sé) che, pur non sottraendosi all'evidenza e alla legittimità della norma, sia capace di dare valore e contenuto a quel *nomos*.

Se Solone, esplicita Bruni, costituisce l'archetipo del legislatore che si attesta sul principio della verità normativa della giustizia (procedura giustificazionista e mediativa che verrà ripresa nel Novecento da Kelsen per supportare la conciliabilità tra giustizia e sistema democratico), d'altro canto, la giustizia non può che trasparire come l'*ordo rerum* che definisce il grado di convivialità dell'umano. "Nell'idea soloniana di ordine – scrive Bruni –, tanto cara ai greci di tutti i tempi, vi è una fusione di individuo e comunità, di singolo e *polis*, di uomo e *kosmos*, che va costruita, rafforzata e vigilata per l'intera esistenza" (p. 99).

La funzione della mediazione – da Solone a Socrate – attraverso la dialettica platonica nonché il richiamo costante da parte di Aristotele alla funzione della *medietà*: nel rapporto del sin-

golo con il *demos* (nell'articolazione, quindi, delle libertà del cittadino in conformità con la legge dei molti), è necessario giungere ad un continuo ridimensionamento della prospettiva oscura e indeterminata della legge divina (*ō nomos theou*), per lasciar spazio sempre più alla dimensione dichiarativa e partecipativa della legge umana. Certo, è utile chiarire sempre che i concetti di libertà, democrazia e legge appartenenti al mondo greco non possono essere sovrapposti alle nostre attuali concezioni – anche se possono essere di qualche ispirazione – degli stessi termini, così come la pratica formativa della *paideia* non può essere traslata nella nostra contemporaneità. È interessante sottolineare questo passaggio decisivo evidenziato da Bruni: tra il IV e il V secolo a.C., quindi nel transito tra la piena età classica e l'avvento di Pericle, il fervore culturale che si alimenta, nell'Atene del *demos* (essa stessa città-stato come Sparta) e successivamente ai tre secoli della narrazione omerica, esiodea e del pensiero presocratico, è tale da far emergere le cosiddette scuole delle grandi correnti filosofiche, che sono alla radice del pensiero occidentale. L'*Accademia* (Platone), il *Peripato* (Aristotele), le scuole sofistiche e, in seguito, quelle stoiche ed epicuree, costituiscono una vivacità culturale che ha prosperato fino alla tarda epoca romana (313 d.C. Editto di Costantino). Tuttavia, come segnala Bruni, i sofisti – così vituperati da Platone e Aristotele, tanto che una vulgata ormai smentita ma pervicace

indica che quel termine è ancora segno di inaffidabilità – costituiscono la florida rappresentazione di un'attività formativo-educativa che, al di là della "ricerca della verità" sempre attribuita a Socrate, si svolge attraverso la retorica, l'argomentazione e l'utilizzo della dialettica (tematiche riprese e valorizzate, *in primis*, da Mario Untersteiner). "Con i sofisti – scrive Bruni – la *paideia* si carica di ulteriori valenze civiche, specificando qualcosa di più complesso rispetto al tradizionale significato di trasmissione di un insieme di precetti rivolti ai *paides*; infatti non è più intesa come la sola educazione rivolta ai fanciulli, ma assume i contorni di un'educazione più avanzata, riferita ad abilità più specifiche" (p. 106). Retorica, dunque, arte dell'eloquio e capacità di articolare discorsi divengono gli strumenti di accesso alle nuove aperture del sapere e formative: su queste basi – come ha segnalato Garin nei suoi studi –, ovvero su quelle tradizioni ellenistica e romano classica, si formerà tutta una cultura dell'attenzione filologica, della cura per il testo e la veridicità della parola antica, nonché della trasmissione commentata di quelle opere. Attraverso Dante, Petrarca, Val-la, Pomponazzi, Marsilio Ficino e Pico della Mirandola quel mondo di valore educativo e pedagogico inestimabile ha formato la "grande biblioteca" a noi giunta, che va dal Medioevo all'umanesimo fino alla nostra più digitalizzata modernità.

Gianluca Giachery

Franco Cambi, *Scuola e cittadinanza. Per la formazione etico-politica dei giovani*, Roma, Edizioni Studium, 2021, pp. 81, ISBN 978-88-382-5054-5, euro 12,00.

Il libro di Franco Cambi accompagna il lettore in una pausa di riflessione che, al di là di ogni spicciola lamentela mediatica e di un vociare sempre più ridondante, evoca il senso pedagogico del mestiere d'insegnare, e non solo.

La direzione è quella di una formazione critica alla cittadinanza che si faccia portavoce e tutela di Democrazia, ora più che mai, e di una cittadinanza attiva di valori e principi istituzionali, questi ultimi, tenuti vivi nella nostra Carta Costituzionale approvata dall'Assemblea Costituente il 22 Dicembre del 1947, promulgata il 27 Dicembre 1947 ed entrata in vigore il 1° gennaio del 1948. Un punto di partenza, dunque, è quello di imparare a conoscere le costituzioni a livello europeo, soprattutto dopo la tragedia del Secondo dopoguerra. In quanto espressioni guida delle vite collettive ed organizzate degli stati democratici, la loro conoscenza risulta fondamentale per una politica più attenta e matura che, attraverso il dialogo, il pensiero critico, l'argomentazione di largo respiro, possa dirsi costituzionalmente etica e sociale, verso un orizzonte che non può non essere decifrato se non a livello mondiale e, per l'Italia, a livello europeo. La riflessione di Cambi è un invito alla responsabilità del corpo insegnante che, a seconda dei gradi scolastici è impegnato nella formazione delle giovani generazioni o dei Millennials. In tale contesto, la scuola è un'agenzia formativa imprescindibile,

sebbene non l'unica, che, proprio in riferimento all'educazione alla cittadinanza civica e ambientale italiana – in riferimento alla legge n. 52, varata il 20 Agosto del 2019 ed entrata in vigore nell'anno scolastico 2020-2021 –, si presenta come disciplina chiave, come luogo di crescita in favore di un'idea alta e costruttiva di cittadinanza attiva e partecipata. Nel nostro Paese, già Aldo Moro, Ministro della Pubblica Istruzione nel 1958, volle l'educazione civica quale modello di comparazione dei poteri, ponendone al centro proprio la Carta Costituzionale declinata nei suoi titoli fondamentali. (p. 10).

Oggi, qual è l'idea di cittadinanza planetaria per il XXI secolo? Qui la scuola, come spazio vissuto sia scolastico che di aggregazione extrascolastica, può e deve assumere un ruolo fondamentale. Formare alla cittadinanza intesa come coscienza di principi e valori, fare un'analisi storica e critica delle molteplici visioni del mondo nella società stessa, informare sulla disinformazione, sulla complessità del problema ecologico, sulle immigrazioni del terzo e quarto mondo, sono solo alcuni dei temi che, dibattuti in un'ottica tutta Europea, possono forse promuovere cantieri di democrazia avanzata, laddove la contropartita è quella del rischio forte di naufragio della democrazia stessa nel vuoto e nella mancanza di una strategia politica comune. Nella prassi che supera le buone intenzioni, un'Euro-

pa divisa rimane spettatrice di scenari impietosi, i cui protagonisti, decine di migliaia di donne, uomini e bambini, perdono la vita, nel mare *nostrum*, nel tentativo di scappare da guerre, dalla fame, dalle dittature (p. 28). Un progetto guida dedicato al risveglio della formazione etico-politica dei giovani è, allora, urgente: per una scelta futura, ideale e politica, più riflessiva e critica. Il senso della parola etica, per l'autore, è quello dell'impegno sartreano di partecipazione al dialogo, di fedeltà ai principi-chiave comuni, per un'etica della responsabilità, quella di Weber, di Jonas (p. 26).

Tutto ciò, secondo quale idea di politica? Per una politica con la P maiuscola, etica e sociale, dove il senso più elevato lo si intravede sul piano politico, non partitico. È qui che la scuola può fare molto, nel promuovere una cultura politica argomentativa, critica e dialogica, nel tentativo di evitare ogni deriva dogmatica e di indottrinamento, in un tempo, il nostro, dove il rischio è quello dell'ideologia della fine delle ideologie. Questo esile libro è dunque una premessa alla formazione degli insegnanti verso un'educazione civica consapevole, per aiutare i giovani a sviluppare un pensiero libero (non unico) democratico, critico e riflessivo, la cui intenzionalità è quella di imparare a decifrare dispositivi di potere. Si pensi alle derive autoritarie del nostro inquieto presente, che ci consegnano tematiche come il razzismo, il leaderismo dittatoriale, l'odio, il femminicidio, l'incremento della violenza e dei suicidi in età giova-

nile. Il cammino qui proposto è arduo, e, come ci ricorda l'autore, esige impegno, studio, nel tentativo di andare oltre l'ideologia imperante dei soli mercati finanziari (p. 28).

I punti fissati nel volume si dispiegano in otto capitoli, che, nel dibattito teorico-pratico, qui centrato sulla condizione italiana dell'educazione civica e ambientale, si fanno portavoce di spunti di riflessione: un sostegno alla formazione degli insegnanti e dei cittadini, nutrito da bibliografie e da una appendice documentaria sulla Costituzione italiana, sulla Legge Moro del 1958 e sulla Legge 92 del 2019. I temi qui abbozzati, infatti, richiamano l'Europa, la democrazia, la Carta Costituzionale nella riflessione dei suoi diritti e doveri, i ruoli ed i limiti delle istituzioni. La riflessione si dispiega sull'insorgere di ideologie altre, i potenti e indifferenziati populismi, i sovranismi, che vincolano e dirigono l'immaginario collettivo e l'azione comune, il Mercato dei consumi e quella del popolo, entrambe, come ci ricorda l'autore, acriticamente imposte come Regole e come Miti (p. 43). Si fa riferimento al dibattito ambientale ed ecologico, dove il grande rischio è quello di una catastrofe planetaria ormai annunciata a causa di una sottovalutazione sia politica che di responsabilità civile. L'auspicio è quello di investire in un nuovo progetto di civiltà per un paradigma-ecologico inteso come modello di pensiero e di azione nella sua centralità culturale-politica ed etico-politica (p. 58).

Allo stesso modo, il tema della disinformazione, delle cosiddette *fake news* per un'educazione capillare e organica ai media, sull'utilizzo dei social e sugli stili antidemocratici dell'argomentare, sul razzismo, sui pregiudizi di genere, di religione, di cultura, sul prevalere dei diritti individuali su quelli di carattere sociale (p. 62).

Nell'ultimo capitolo la riflessione dell'autore si sposta sulle frontiere formative extrascolastiche, come il servizio civile, il volontariato e l'associazionismo, nella consapevolezza che una società civile e matura a livel-

lo etico-politico non può reggersi sul volontariato, che diventa allora strumento di denuncia e di impegno per una cittadinanza attiva e responsabile (p. 79).

Se il tempo della giovinezza è il luogo tragico della decisione e della scelta, allora l'insegnante deve farsi mediatore critico nell'accompagnare i giovani a ripensare il proprio tempo vissuto nella direzione di un riorientamento oggi più che mai aperto al mondo e alla sua complessità.

Cristina Gatti

Lecture dalla Francia

Maylis de Kerangal, *Canoës*, Parigi, Gallimard, 2021, pp. 176, ISBN 978-2-07-294556-4, euro 16,50.

“Canoë”, tre vocali e due consonanti, è una parola che spinge le labbra verso l’avanti per poi ritrarle indietro, come il movimento di una pagaia. È un involucro leggero, di legno, usato dagli indigeni dell’America Settentrionale per spostarsi rapidamente sui fiumi o sui laghi, ed è l’oggetto feticcio che collega tra loro, per lo meno in apparenza, i sette racconti (“*récits*”) e il romanzo breve (“*novella*”) di *Canoës* di Maylis de Kerangal. Otto canoe che non sono soltanto un nascondino letterario, ma che sembrano convogliare un’immagine della scrittura che scivola sulle pagine, attraversando sulla superficie esistenze increspate in momenti di crisi. Il desiderio che anima questa raccolta è quello di “sonder la nature de la voix humaine” (quarta di copertina), o piuttosto delle voci che compongono questo quadro composito, in cui ogni elemento costituisce una sfaccettatura di un’identità da cercare al contatto con l’altro.

Innanzitutto, la voce dell’autrice, che, per la prima volta, scrive “io”, ma che confonde le piste, poiché questa prima persona s’incarna nelle voci di donne di età e origini differenti, e persino nella voce di un uomo che ha perduto la moglie. L’identità del narratore, infatti, varia: ogni racconto racchiude un episodio raccontato da una voce

singolare; a ognuno di essi, il lettore accede in *medias res*.

Oltre alla voce dell’autrice che affiora qua e là sotto forma di cenni autobiografici, ci sono dunque quelle dei narratori, il cui suono è a un tratto corrotto, interrotto, silenziato. In dialogo fra di loro, i racconti sembrano risponderci. In *after*, per esempio, “un accroc, une rayure” (p. 134) blocca la laringe di una liceale dopo i risultati della maturità. Unitasi a dei compagni di scuola per festeggiare il rito di passaggio all’età adulta con una veglia notturna attorno a un fuoco, lanciano insieme grida primordiali per sciogliere i nodi in gola, esorcizzare il momento e squarciare la notte, l’ultima barriera prima del “poi”. In *un oiseau léger*, il racconto precedente, un uomo discute con sua figlia, invece, sull’opportunità di cancellare il messaggio registrato sulla segreteria telefonica dalla moglie – una voce cinguettante –, morta cinque anni prima. “L’irruption de la voix des morts dans le monde des vivants défait le temps, implose les frontières, l’ordre naturel se détraque, et la voix enregistrée de ma femme tenait toute sa place dans cette confusion” (p. 121): il suono della voce di Rose offende perché sconvolge l’ordine delle cose, ignora la decenza del lutto. Più delle immagini, questa registrazione sembra contenere l’es-

senza stessa della donna, per sempre. La voce, insomma, registra momenti dell'esistenza. In *nevermore*, una donna è contattata da due sorelle foniche animate dal desiderio di attribuire un'identità sonora unica a estratti letterari. Una volta inforcate le cuffie, la prescelta ripete ancora e ancora la poesia che dà il titolo al racconto, un componimento di Edgar Allan Poe, nella versione tradotta da Baudelaire, fino a quando la sua voce si incrina. Un frammento del passato, "la trace d'un accident" (p. 115) emerge in quell'istante, non c'è alcun dubbio secondo le sorelle Klang. La voce è come un'impronta, unica, pregna dell'esistenza di chi la porta, in cui le esperienze si incidono come su un disco di vinile. Voce registrata, voce incrinata, voce che grida, voce che si spezza: ogni parte di questa raccolta amplifica e approfondisce la precedente. La sintassi dell'autrice segue, muovendosi sinuosa come una canoa, attraversando pagine che talvolta sono occupate da una sola frase, attribuendo una sfumatura, un registro e un vocabolario diverso a ogni personaggio.

Mustang, infine. Questo romanzo breve sarebbe, secondo l'autrice, il fulcro della raccolta e qui la narratrice balbetta, esita, perché non sa cosa dire, né come dirlo, non sa trovare il suo posto. "Je n'étais pas sûre de vouloir activer en moi ce génie de l'adaptation, cette aptitude décisive qui aurait assuré l'espèce humaine" (p. 39): reticente a adattarsi, a prendere la patente per guidare la mac-

china vistosa comprata dal marito, a riconoscere come casa la cittadina in cui si è trasferita da Parigi (Golden, Colorado). Di sbieco, intercetta pensosa le mutazioni sonore e fisiche che accompagnano la rapida integrazione di suo marito, statunitense. La lingua inglese trasforma le espressioni facciali, modifica il suono della voce, allunga le vocali e rallenta la cadenza. Il testo questa volta è preceduto da una citazione di Ursula K. Le Guin. Nel 1986, l'autrice statunitense affermava che un romanzo non dovrebbe essere una tragedia mossa e dominata dalla violenza che metta in scena le avventure di un eroe, ma una serie di cominciamenti irrisolti, di iniziazioni, perdite, trasformazioni e traduzioni... Affermando che "désormais, je suis indisponible et solitaire. Une toute autre relation se joue entre moi et le monde. Je crois que j'essaie de capter une fréquence. Et je ne veux pas d'activités, surtout pas. Je ne veux rien" (p. 67), la narratrice di Mustang sembra confermare la volontà di Maylis de Kerangal di mettere in pratica *The carrier bag theory of fiction* di Le Guin, esplorando attraverso la loro voce l'identità di antieroi in bilico tra ingiunzioni sociali e volontà di adattamento, contraddizioni interne e assunzione della propria fallibilità. La storia è come un contenitore, un universo popolato da oggetti strampalati come un dinosauro dalle ciglia lunghe, una Ford Mustang e un pezzo di amazzonite, che funzionano come amuleti per ancorarsi all'esistenza.

Frammentaria, antieroica e introspettiva, la raccolta di testi che compongo no *Canoës* rivendica senza pretese un altro rapporto con la letteratura, offrendo un bouquet di voci nelle quali cercare la propria: “j’ ai eu envie d’aller

chercher ma voix parmi les leurs, de la faire entendre au plus juste, de trouver un ‘je’, au plus proche” (quarta di copertina).

Marta Baravalle



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