

# O BELLA CIAO

Critical education as resistance  
against populism, sexism,  
racism

Paolo Vittoria and Dave Hill (Eds.)

With participation of Inny Accioly

Articles from IX Conference on Critical Education  
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*Dedicated to Joyce Canaan,  
her sensitive enthusiasm  
for every breath of rebellion  
against the injustices of this Planet.  
With love*

*Your comrades*



■ PETER MAYO

# NAPLES

“a thousand colours”,  
Pino Daniele belts,  
laying soul bare,  
a subaltern air,  
squalor, beauty,  
narrow street,

creativity, chaos,  
musing philosophers,  
painters, dramatists  
decorated niches,  
Filumenà's Virgin with  
Blessed Maradona showcased

city's humour  
popular and on screen  
music so organic,  
Caruso pierces heart  
of forlorn migrant  
in Europe, beyond

*Pulcinella, San Gennà,*  
Wit, superstition,  
humped mammoth  
across famed bay  
in slumber lies  
like 'Veiled Christ'

poverty, Gomorrah,

'smash and grab',  
industrial riches bereft  
open Southern vein  
of Italian colonisation,  
natural charm, depredation

place eerily familiar,  
authentic home  
for me and others  
of southern stock,  
rigidity to escape  
and northern regulation

■ DAVE HILL

## FISH AND FASCISM

If it looks like a rotten stinking fish,  
if it smells like a rotten stinking fish,  
if it acts like a rotten stinking fish,  
if it stinks like a rotten fish.  
Then it is a rotten stinking fish.

If it looks like a fascist,  
If it sounds like a fascist  
if it acts like a fascist,  
if it smells like a fascist,  
Then it is a fascist.  
Even if the label on the box  
says democratic  
and it dresses in a pin-striped suit.

Bolsonaro, Orban, Trump, Erdogan, Salvini  
the Law and Justice Party in Poland  
all say they are democrats.  
They stir hatred.  
They stir violence.  
They stir suppression of critical thought.  
in universities, schools, in minds.  
They intimidate those of us who protest.  
They threaten.  
They enact.  
They destroy civility.  
They peddle fear,  
and hatred

They normalise dehumanisation  
they desensitise cruelty  
-they kill  
Marielle Franco, Pavlos Fyssas, Jo Cox, Heather Hayer....

There is a road,  
travelled in the past,  
and being travelled now,  
through the beatings and the killings  
Of the subhuman,  
“The Other”  
the Outsider,  
the immigrant,  
the minority,  
the LGBT,  
the feminist  
the homeless,  
the impoverished,  
the ‘alien ideology’,  
the internationalist,  
the trade unionist,  
the communist

It is that road we,  
we here,  
we elsewhere,  
we everywhere,  
must work to block,  
must work instead,  
in opposition,  
to build the road  
to social justice,  
to economic justice,  
to equality

It is not easy.



Many of us have the scars.  
We have to do it.  
We must do it!  
Like in the 1930s, the 1940s, the 1970s,  
In different places, in different times,  
like in past and recent history  
We have to do it

With our words, our hearts,  
our minds, our bodies,  
our political and social organisations and parties,  
our solidarity, our compassion-  
our humanity!  
our hard political analysis and understanding  
Our leadership of experiences and analysis and action  
Our leaderships not ossified but open

Fascists, neo-Fascists, pre Fascists, post Fascists,  
proto Fascists, quasi Fascist... Fascists  
No Pasaran

Like stinking fish,  
they belong  
in the dustbin of history.

Throw them there

■ PAOLO VITTORIA AND DAVE HILL

# FOREWARD

## CRITICAL EDUCATION IN TIMES OF RIGHT-WING POPULISM AND PROPAGANDA

Propaganda, management, manipulation –  
All arms of manipulation cannot be  
instruments of Humanization.  
(Freire, 2005 p. 68)

### THE ICCE CONFERENCE AND ITS IDEOLOGICAL, EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL CONTEXTS

We are very glad to present this special edition of *Educazione Aperta* resulting from the Ninth Annual Conference of the International Conference on Critical Education (ICCE) held in Naples in July 2019. The struggle on behalf of the oppressed is an ongoing global struggle with particular local characteristics and manifestations. The global and local context of struggle are the eruption of cruel, xenophobic, right-wing authoritarian populism and populist leaders- such as Boris Johnson in UK, Bolsonaro in Brazil, Salvini in Italy, Trump in the USA, Erdogan in Turkey, Orbán in Hungary - and many others through Europe, Latin America and Asia.

Ideological and actual material disputes and struggles are evidenced, for example, in the rejection, as opposed to the reception, of immigrants. Intolerance, indeed, often, hatred, is the basis of this kind of right-wing xenophobic populism. Recent events and political trends in many countries give witness to a strong wind that is contrary to the politics

of resistance and humanization: it is the wind of the criminalization of solidarity, of the exaltation of the individual, of the values of competition. These- at the social and (in)human level- are the effects of neoliberal economic policy, the transfer of wealth and income from the poor to the rich, the impoverishment and immiseration of hundreds of millions who have seen cuts in their wage and their social wage (benefits, public services) - in particular since 2008 but over the longer period since Reaganism/ Thatcherism of the 1970s and 1980s and the first test-bed of neoliberalism, the Chile of the murderous Pinochet regime.

This wind of intolerance and immiseration must lead the field of education to reaffirm and reorganize our international solidarity and redefine strategies, thoughts, methods of those of us committed to economic and social justice.

Struggles for social justice are, therefore, dramatically placed at the margins of what we can call “mass thought” or “dominant thought”, the current neoliberal ideological hegemony. The Conference was a cultural, educational and political organization of movements, associations, people who are fighting for justice, equality, solidarity, dialogue and action/ activism at local and international level. As it says on the Conference Website, <https://9icce2019.wordpress.com/> the 9<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Critical Education (ICCE): Resistance and Praxis against Populism, Sexism and Racism, held from 3 to 6 of July 2019 in Naples, Italy at the Università degli studi di Napoli Federico II, the Sala dei Baroni (*Hall of the Barons*) in Castel Nuovo, and Accademia di Belle Arti (*Academy of Fine Arts*), provided a vibrant and egalitarian platform, encouraging scholars, educators, activists, students, and those interested in contesting the current neo-liberal/ neo-conservative/ nationalist hegemony, to come together and engage in a free, democratic and productive dialogue.

The Conference was started in 2010 by Kostas Skordoulis of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece, and Dave Hill, of Anglia Ruskin University and Middlesex University, UK, and also of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece. Both are Marxist and Critical Educators, and both trade union and activists, and, following their initial, Bethnal Green meeting in the East End of London in 2009, had decided to organize such an annual conference- open to

critical educators and critical pedagogues of various varieties, schools and tendencies, on a non-sectarian and collegiate, comradely basis. ICCE is very much an international conference, regularly attracting 200-300 participants, including around 60 regular participants. Some sessions have been attended by many hundreds. The previous eight conferences were held at Universities in London, Athens, Thessaloniki, Ankara and Wroclaw (Poland). The conference is non-sectarian, embracing Marxist, Communist, Socialist, left social democrat, Freirean, emancipatory educators and activists from a variety of traditions. The conference aims to be a space for reflection and common planning for these communities. We learn from each other. And stimulate each other. And provide a safe space for those of us anti-hegemonic intellectuals and activists to give and take from each other intellectual, political and emotional support and solidarity.

## THIS PUBLICATION

We present here a special edition about the IX Conference in Naples organized in three parts: “Freire, Boal and critical education”, “Marxism, critical education and crisis of democracy”, and “Critical education, inclusivity and struggle for social justice”.

The first part is about the history, the thought, the social commitment of Paulo Freire and Augusto Boal. It comes from as *veias abertas da America Latina*, the open veins of Latin America: from historical wounds, fractures, and feelings of solidarity with the marginalized, the mistreated, the forgotten, the oppressed. Latin America becomes a metaphor of an existential, political, human, psychological, pedagogical condition of oppression: that of a historically colonized culture that invades the oppressed in all his/ her being. Freire and Boal are part of an anti-colonial culture, in favor of resistance of oppressed peoples, and cultural minorities. One major strand of Critical Education comes from this tradition of resistance. Freire and Boal were organizers of human hope that, if not historically rooted, if not politically organized, can easily become disillusionment. In this ontological vocation of historical organization of human hope, in this existential tension, we take the side the political, social and artistic aspects of revolutionary action of Freire

and Boal. It is the poetics of life, the poetics of those who dedicate their lives to art, to education: Boal in the theatre, Freire in education (Vittoria, 2016, 2019). They are both part of the historical circumstances in which social movements were organized in the fields of literacy, education, popular theatre and land reform for social transformation. These movements were brutally crushed by the 1964 coup that forced Freire and Boal into exile at different times. Via different paths Freire and Boal spread their thoughts in other countries of world, and then returned to Brazil at the beginning of the eighties, during the period of re-democratization. They joined as political activists, returning from exile, in active participation in the reconstruction of democracy in Brazil- a democracy, unfortunately seriously threatened by the recent political events, the electoral triumph of Bolsonaro, and his neo-fascistic threats and actions.

Freire and Boal have in common an immense trust in the emancipatory and maieutic power of the human relationship through education, art, theatre and literacy. A trust that we are all potentially artists and we are all educators/educates. The breaking of the relational barriers, the construction of a dialectical, open and reciprocal relationships for critical consciousness.

The spectator, in the theatre of Boal, takes part in the action, discusses it with the actors and other spectators: as Boal said, he becomes a spect-actor. In the pedagogy of Freire, the educator learns from educated, teaching and learning. The essays show as reinvent Boal and Freire, to build a more open, therefore dialogic, critical relationship.

In our times this form of siege and persecution reproduces itself in forms of false democracy. Political figures like Bolsonaro in Brazil have often expressed hatred and disappointment against the experiences of solidarity, defense of the Earth, critical consciousness.

The second part treats the crisis of democracy is truly the crisis of capitalism and to understand this is important read and/or to re-read Marx, resignify the role of critical intellectual, the Marxist intellectual, the activist intellectual

What Marxism does is to expose the class nature of society and of `official' education, the ways in which `official' education- in its organisation, its formal curriculum, its hidden curriculum and its pedagogies- serve

to reproduce the current class structure of society, with its economic relations of production and its social relations of production. This is so overall, despite the efforts of resistant and counter-hegemonic education workers. Capitalist economy and society is based on the expropriation, the extraction, the *exploitation* of the surplus value, the profit, produced by the labour power of workers- the working class- by capitalists - large shareholders, multi billionaires and millionaires, and by their chief organizers such as CEOs. While both the capitalist class and the working class develop historically and recompose- the re-composition of the labour market- the fundamental principle of capitalism, for Marxists, is this economic exploitation of the working class- those of us who sell our labour power to capital or to the institutions in society that support and sustain capitalism (such as health and education apparatuses).

For Marxists, capitalism is not just immoral and a case of 'oppression'. It is that capitalism is exploitative. It is based on economic exploitation. However, most Marxists and socialists (the terms are slightly different and used differently in different historical and geographical situations) point to the need for 'agency' for action, for the need for Marxist militants and activists to work to develop class consciousness, to use Marx and Engels' phrase (Marx and Engels, 1848) the development of the working class as a (conscious) 'class for itself', instead of a 'class in itself' with economically similar positions in relationship to the ownership of the means of production and similar social relations of production, but with no sense of class unity or class struggle (Marx, 1847). Freire used the term, 'conscientization' (Freire, 1972). Marxists believe in 'agentist' activism, in the need to develop strong political organizations to fight for major social and economic, revolutionary, change. For Marxists today, socialism and Marxism are not 'inevitable', they have to be fought for. Marxists believe that the point is not simply to describe the world but to change it. In Marx's words, 'The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it' (Marx, 1845, cited in Hill, 2019).

Of course, as with Freirean educators and critical pedagogues, there are different types of socialist, Marxist theorisations, analyses, programs, pedagogies. 'Resistance Marxists', many of whom are represented in this publication, (and in Rasinki, Hill and Skordoulis, 2018, reporting on a

previous ICCE Conference) synthesizing 'Reproduction Marxism' with 'Resistance Marxism', agentism within the ideological and repressive state apparatuses such as formal, 'official' education. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions, of teachers, educators, within official education institutions such as schools and universities, 'unofficial' schools and colleges/ universities, and in trade unions, political parties, social movements and community, friendship and family groups, have been carrying out forms of critical education, emancipatory education, socialist education, communist education across the globe and across the ages. This publication, and the ICCE conferences, academic journals such as the *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* ([www.jceps.com](http://www.jceps.com)), and *Educazione Aperta*, attempt to spread and to share and learn from, and act upon different approaches to critical education.

So, all this makes us understand that it is not possible to think of social inclusion only as a didactic and pedagogical technique, but that it must start from a political and economic analysis of social structures.

The third part treats about how it is unthinkable to believe that social and economic inclusion is independent of a critical reflection on the system of globalization, precariousness of work, and the growing individualism and hyper-individualism that creates fear and discouragement and pauperization. Right-wing Populism blows exactly on the wind of fear. It creates a climate of war against the poor, and war *between* the poor, war stoked and stimulated by those in power, a war premised and propagated on grounds of 'race', religion, sexuality, type of employment (private or public or unemployment) and relative degrees of wealth and poverty. The attempted (but always contested) hegemony of the authoritarian populist Right is partly based on the power of the algorithm, on the control of data on the web, on the speculative use of fake-news. It also develops into the use of brute force, of the burning down of immigrant or Roma camps, the turning away of boats of refugees, the murder of anti-fascist and anti-racist militants. It is not enough for those of us engaged in countering this neoliberal populist hegemony to say "inclusion", therefore, nor enough to engage ourselves in defensive and offensive anti-fascist, anti-racist, organization and involvement in movements and actions against right-wing authoritarianism. It is also that we actively develop and spread critical

thought, critical awareness, critical interrogation, critical consciousness on the reasons for exclusion, marginalization, oppression, exploitation. The third part of this publication is dedicated to this kind of critical reflection.

This astoundingly broad yet focused publication draws on critical intellectuals and activists from a variety of critical education traditions (some Freirean, some from different approaches of Marxism, though other tendencies and traditions are represented here). Through the richness of the theorization and praxis represented in this publication and through our activism as critical activist intellectuals in other arenas—we express our commitment, our reaffirmation of the need for the resistance, for solidarity, dialogue, critical consciousness and creativity and activism in such difficult times in which populism, propaganda, manipulation are strategies of the current hegemony. We have often heard and sung *Bella Ciao* during the conference in many languages. The Italian partisan resistance song resounded in an idea of education that is clearly anti-fascist.

So, keep in touch! Don't miss the next ICCE conference, the X International Conference for Critical Education, in Thessaloniki, 25-28 June, 2020! The website is [www.eled.auth.gr/icce2020/](http://www.eled.auth.gr/icce2020/)

December, 2019

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[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave\\_Hill\\_\(professor\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dave_Hill_(professor))

# Part I

## Critical Education in Freire and Boal



■ JONES IRWIN

# FREIRE AND SITUATIONISM – WHITHER THE PEDAGOGY OF THE OPPRESSED IN THE ERA OF THE CONTEMPORARY SPECTACLE?

## INTRODUCTION

The concept of the ‘society of the spectacle’ was introduced by the French Situationist thinker Guy Debord<sup>1</sup> to describe how in late capitalist or postmodern society, human agency and freedom have become almost entirely commodified. While the rhetoric of ‘consumer choice’ claims to allow us endless freedoms, for Debord this is the pseudo-agency of advertising which is far removed from human reality. Debord’s own work went on to inspire the student and wider revolutions of May ’68 and thus, his deconstructionist critique inspired the protest movement to positive action.

Debord wrote between the 1960s and the 1980s, but in 2019 we can ask his philosophical and political question once again - is there any free space left in the Society of the Spectacle? Moreover, what can artists and educators do in such commodified times to re-engage and re-inspire human freedom and creativity?

When the Brazilian philosopher Paulo Freire tells us that ‘education is never neutral’, he wants us as educators, and as artists, to realise that our work is always situated, that it always takes a stand (even if, or especially if, we deny this fact). Education and art are inherently political, even if we often run away from this responsibility and seek to hide behind excuses or alibis.

1 G. Debord, *Society of the Spectacle*, Rebel Press, London 2000.

No pedagogy is ever innocent - Freire provokes us with these words, in 1968, in his text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. One of the posters of '68 stated that 'the lessons will not be forgotten in '69!'<sup>2</sup>

But what did such a 'not forgetting' mean in 1969 and what does it mean in 2019? This short paper will seek to explore the insights which Freire and Debord's work can bring to this contemporary debate of a crisis in education and politics. In 2019, the question is as acute and topical as ever: Whither the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in the era of the Spectacle?

## FREIRE AND A SELF-CRITICAL PEDAGOGY

Freire's most famous text *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was published in English in 1968. The work had developed over a longer period of time, going back to Freire's original literacy work in Brazil and Latin America in the late 1950s and early 1960s. Here, the assumptions behind classical versions of development education had been put to the test and shown to come up radically short. While claiming to lead the poor and marginalised out of oppression, such pedagogies were shown by Freire to be rooted in a colonial mindset, which ultimately ended in a deeper oppression. Instead of a reinforcement of such hierarchical power dynamics, Freire instead advocated for a form of 'self-emancipation' for marginalised communities and marginalised subjects alike. This new form of radical 'problem-posing' education (which Freire opposed to what he termed 'sectarianism' on both Right and Left) came to full fruition in the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* text from the late 1960s, the latter distilling a lot of this earlier educational and political experience. Of course, the challenge of the latter to the status quo in Brazil would lead to Freire's expulsion and exile from his own society for over 20 years. The subsequent publication of this seminal text (bringing Freire's message to a much wider global audience for the first time) was so close to the events of May '68 that Freire added a footnote on the first page, referencing the student riots and uprising. There is nothing coincidental

2 P. Vermès and J. Kugelberg [eds.], *La beauté est dans la rue. Beauty Is In The Street. A Visual Record of the May '68 Paris Uprising*, Four Corners Books, London 2011.

about this referencing; rather the book as a whole acts as a kind of anticipation of the social and political upheaval happening in France and all around Europe. One of Freire's main themes – the First World vs Third World conflict – already points to an unsustainability at the heart of Western politics and identity. Thus unsustainability is both pedagogical, but also more fundamentally, it is fatalism at the heart of the socio-political and inter-subjective human world of relationship.

This is what Freire refers to as the 'banking system', a mindset and power structure of organisation which connects education, society, economy and the realm of the inter-personal. One of Freire's most original contributions is in relation to the complexity and multi-layered aspect of his diagnostic framework. As the commentator John Elias<sup>3</sup> notes, Freire is an 'eclectic' thinker, drawing on many different disciplines and ways of thinking to draw his insights together. This methodological eclecticism can be said to have advantages and disadvantages. From a negative perspective, it can lead to a certain confusion as to the status of some of Freire's claims. Here, for example, one can note the undermining of certain aspects of the claims of liberatory education. Whereas a more orthodox Marxist perspective might tend to assert the right of the liberatory educator to 'liberate' the oppressed (masses or students), instead in Freire we see a self-critique emerge.

In his text *Pedagogy of Hope* from 1992, which is sub-titled *Revisiting Pedagogy of the Oppressed*<sup>4</sup>, Freire challenges the conception of emancipation which often underpins a more naïve form of liberatory pedagogy. Freire quotes a letter: 'an excellent letter from a group of workers in São Paulo; "Paul" they said, "keep writing – but next time lay it on a little thicker when you come to those scholarly types that come to visit as if they had revolutionary truth by the tail. You know, the ones that come looking for us to teach us that we're oppressed and exploited and to tell us what to do"<sup>5</sup>.

Instead of what amounts to this reactive and suffocating form of pseudo-liberating education which puts teachers in control of passive students,

3 J. Elias, *Paulo Freire: Pedagogue of Liberation*, Teacher's College, New York 1994.

4 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope: Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Translated by R. Barr, Continuum, London 1992.

5 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of Hope*, cit., p. 32.

Freire seeks a more authentically liberating form of problem-posing education. At the heart of the 1968 text is the specific critique of the university system which was also such a catalyst for the '68 movements in France (the latter deriving from an original critique of the university by student movements and the philosophers Henri Lefebvre and Jean-Francois Lyotard at Nanterre). Freire describes in the aforementioned footnote the affinity between his own philosophy of education and politics and the contemporary movement of the '68 students at Nanterre and beyond: '[the '68 students] as they place consumer civilisation in judgement, denounce all types of bureaucracy, demand the transformation of the universities [changing the rigid structure of the teacher-student relationship] and placing that relationship within the context of reality'<sup>6</sup>.

This brings Freire's work very much into connection with that of Lefebvre and Lyotard, both figures of the French Far-Left at this point (although Lyotard's later work will drift into a different direction). A little older than the great generation of Derrida et al, and studying at the Sorbonne rather than the ENS, Lyotard was always a philosophical outsider. A student of Merleau-Ponty (whose strong influence is clear), Lyotard initially worked as a secondary school teacher of philosophy in Algeria during turbulent times and also was a key political agitator for Algerian independence in various leftist groups through the late 50's and 60's (most notably, Socialism or Barbarism). Most importantly, during the 1960's, Lyotard takes up a position at the infamous University of Paris at Nanterre, where he is a lecturer in Philosophy, in the lead up to and during the May 1968 riots and disturbances. Alongside Henri Lefebvre,<sup>7</sup> who was lecturing in Sociology at Nanterre, it is arguable that Lyotard is one of the central intellectual influences on and documenters of the May '68 student movement; again, his links to Situationism are very clear at this juncture and in these writings. Whereas other more fêted thinkers such as Louis Althusser are seen to fail miserably to deal with '68 (Derrida is also noticeably quiet, Foucault was actually abroad

6 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, cit., p.25.

7 H. Lefebvre, *Critique of Everyday Life: Foundations for a Sociology of the Everyday Volume 2*, Verso, London 2002.



at the time) and while Althusser's famous students (such as Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière)<sup>8</sup> only develop theories to engage '68 much later, Lyotard can be seen to be engaging the need for a revision of Marxist thought in relation to politics and education, right through the 1960's. As with Freire's *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Lyotard is arguing for a self-critique of liberatory education which still allows room for a more authentic form of pedagogical and political emancipation.

For Freire, such radical thinking and 'praxis' (involving a constant reviewing and renewal of the loop between theory and practice) involves both continuity and discontinuity with a Leftist (and Marxist) tradition. As Freire notes, 'If you were to ask me, "are you attempting to put into practice the concepts you described in your book [*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*]?", of course I am, but in a manner in keeping with the times'<sup>9</sup> (Freire and Torres, 1994, p. 106). This 'in keeping with the times' can lead Freire's pedagogy and politics into some unexpected and heterodox spaces from a more orthodox Marxist perspective. Here, we can draw on a key distinction between 'dogmatic' and 'nondogmatic' forms of Marxism, first employed by the Belgrade and Zagreb based *Praxis* school of philosophy<sup>10</sup> to distinguish between more humanist and scientific forms of Marxism. Freire is undoubtedly, as with Debord, on the side of the 'nondogmatic'.

## DEBORD AND SITUATIONISM

As with Freire, Debord's work can be seen as remarkably prescient with regard to the events of '68. Debord's work in the earlier 1960s and the publication in 1967 of his seminal *Society of the Spectacle* doesn't only anticipate but also significantly influences the radical social movements in France and beyond. Several of the '68 slogans (anarchist and Marxist)

8 J. Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster: Five Lessons in Intellectual Emancipation*, translated with an introduction by Kristin Ross, Stanford University Press, Stanford 1991.

9 P. Freire and C.A. Torres, 'Twenty Years After *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*: Paulo Freire in Conversation with Carlos Alberto Torres', in P. McLaren and C. Lankshear (eds.), *Politics of Liberation: Paths from Freire*, Routledge, London 1994.

10 H. Motoh, 'Punk is a Symptom': *Intersections of Philosophy and Alternative Culture in the '80s Slovenia*, in "SYNTHESIS PHILOSOPHICA" 53 (1/2012) 2012, pp. 285–296.

derive from Debord's writings and Situationist thought, either literally or in secondary terms. Debord also shares a certain critical distancing from what he regarded as more naïve forms of liberatory politics and education. Nonetheless he can also be seen as developing a specific form of revolutionary politics which is attuned to the complexities of the contemporary situation. In this, he continues to look back to Marx, most especially to the philosophy of the early Marx for inspiration. With regard to his critique of a more naïve Marxism, we can note his clear (if not vehement) disagreements with the Althusserianism of the time. Of course, here Debord fares better in the '68 moment, as it is Althusserianism which is shown to be very much out of step with the revolutionary and educational possibilities. For example, the *volte-face* of Badiou and Rancière (contra Althusser) after '68 is a clear example of a certain problematicity of the Althusserian Marxist framework becoming all too evident through the late sixties crisis in France and beyond. As Rancière notes, 'my book declared war on the theory of the inequality of intelligences at the heart of supposed critiques of domination. It held that all revolutionary thought must be founded on the inverse presupposition, that of the capacity of the dominated'<sup>11</sup>.

It is this insight concerning the 'capacity of the dominated' which also drives Situationism. Debord extends the critique of ideology to late capitalism or the spectacular society. Against Althusser (but a good ten years earlier than Rancière's *volte-face*), he subverts the science/ideology distinction in favour of emergent revolutionary 'situations'. Such 'situations' are fragile and can become 'recuperated' and 'commodified', thus, we have the need for a constant vigilance and self-critique in the educational practice and a move away from the self-assuredness of the revolutionary pedagogue, associated especially with Althusserianism and orthodox forms of Marxism in the 1960s. So Debord asks, given the determinations and the obstacles to an authentic critique of ideology, 'is there any space left in the society of the spectacle for nonideology, for freedom?'

There is, of course, a clear inheritance from the early Marx here of the *1844 Paris Manuscripts*, as in 'the more the worker produces, the less he has to

11 Rancière, *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, cit, p.xv.

consume; the more values he creates the more worthless and unworthy he becomes; the better shaped his products, the more misshapen he is'. But for Debord and the Situationists there is a need to supplement Marxism with a certain poetic symbolism. As with Henri Lefebvre, Debord also seeks to combine Marx's 'Change the world' with Arthur's existential cry of 'Change life' but, for the Situationists, these two watchwords are one. We can also see a more important continuity with Marx in the emphasis on 'praxis' (here there is also a strong connection between Freire and Debord). Both take their cue from Thesis 11 of Marx's *Theses on Feuerbach*: 'Philosophers have hitherto only interpreted the world in various ways; the point is to change it'<sup>12</sup>.

Their respective influence on '68 and their prescience with regard to a major period of social and political upheaval draws the philosophical and sociological work of Freire and Debord into close connection. But if there are affinities between Freire and Debord as described, there are also important disagreements. Certainly Debord takes the 'nondogmatic' aspects of Marxism further than does Freire or Critical Pedagogy more generally. At times, Situationism can appear unrecognizable as a Leftist politics, given its radical heterodoxy. Second, Debord's work tends towards a melancholy and even a pessimism which can seem paralysing whereas with Freire, there is an underlying optimism and hope (witnessed in his later text *Pedagogy of Hope*) despite the weighing up of realistic revolutionary possibilities and the at times vehement self-critique of liberatory education.

Both these affinities and disaffinities can be telling for us in relation to our attempt to size up our contemporary situation. Many commentators refer to the 'long '68', the afterlives of the events of May, and in some measure at least this long period of influence continues to today. If our time of 2019 also sees the emergence of very significant crises in the economic, social and values spheres (also in the education sphere), we can see strong analogies to some of the specific aspects of 1968. Nonetheless, over 50 years have passed, a whole half century since, and thus there are

12 Marx, K., 'The Theses on Feuerbach', in Karl Marx *Early Writings*, translated by R. Livingstone and G. Benton, pp. 421-423, London: Penguin, 1992. Marx, K., *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844), in Karl Marx *Early Writings*, translated by R. Livingstone and G. Benton, London: Penguin, London, 1992.

new and particular dimensions of today's crisis which seem very different from the crisis which Freire and Debord faced.

## CONCLUSION

To return to our original theme and question, whether the *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in the era of the contemporary Spectacle? Certainly, if we look at Freire's later work in philosophy of education and his revisiting of his earlier thematics, we can see a certain change of emphasis. In Freire's 'reliving' and 'rethinking' *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* in the wake of the failure of '68 and after (most notable in his 1992 text *Pedagogy of Hope*), there is a strong reemphasis on lived experience as an existential criterion. If this was already the case in the earlier *Pedagogy*, that pedagogy and politics dovetailed with personal and existential concerns, it becomes more of an emphasis in the later work. Not coincidentally, it is accompanied by a more radical critique of the authority of the teacher and of the 'emancipatory' educator/hidden power, which we saw outlined earlier in the critique of paternalism ('stop telling us we are oppressed').

This is a clear thematic in the '68 movements which both Debord and Freire anticipated and influenced. For example, in the famous poster 'Participation, all the better to eat you with my children'<sup>13</sup>. The dangers are clear here of a pseudo-revolution, a re-commodification of the potential of the revolution in false dawns and overly-hierarchical leadership, failing to see the self-emancipatory potential of the student or of the individual agent.

We see a similar theme emerge in Debord's later work<sup>14</sup>. In his earlier texts, Debord had spoken of a very real potential for the realisation of revolution. He speaks to the revolutionary project of a classless society which implies the withering away of the social measurement of time in favour of a *federation of independent times*' (Thesis 163) and the '*temporal realisation of authentic communism*'. But in the later work, the tonality has become somewhat more pessimistic and even satirical. 'It is certainly

13 P. Vermès and J. Kugelberg [eds.], *La beauté est dans la rue. Beauty Is In The Street. A Visual Record of the May '68 Paris Uprising*, cit., p.102.

14 G. Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle*, Verso, London 1990.

not the spectacle's destiny to end up as enlightened despotism'<sup>15</sup>. At times in this later text, there is a near-sense that Debord has started to become fatalistic about the spectacularity of the Spectacle - "This form of barbaric grandeur"<sup>16</sup>. Here, we might see a distinction between Freire and the later Debord which carries significance. However self-critical and undermining of naïve liberatory education Freire's work becomes, under the complex conditions of late capitalism, his work never becomes attracted by fatalism. If there is a danger that 'participation' may only eat us up, there is still always and ever the real possibility of action which can transform our world, whether in education or in politics or both. 'In action, we have the source of our beauty'<sup>17</sup>. Fatalism only leads to Freire's much repeated warning that 'the oppressed becomes the oppressor'<sup>18</sup>. At times, the later Debord's work succumbs to such revolutionary pessimism under the conditions of late capitalism. Freire maintains the tension which instead keeps the possibility of revolution alive. It is thus Freire who maintains the possibilities of what we have termed 'nondogmatic Marxism' even under the most difficult contemporary conditions. Nonetheless, the Situationist texts of Debord in the early to late 1960s (culminating in the *Society of the Spectacle*) point towards the maintenance of this enigmatic Leftist (anti-capitalist) critique of ideology, even while they fail to provide the inspiration to maintain this vision throughout the chronology of his own work. In this, we might see Freire's later work as the true inheritor of the early Situationist legacy to the Left-wing tradition of politics and pedagogy and thus as the true inheritor of the May '68 counter-culture.

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17 P. Vermès and J. Kugelberg [eds.], *La beauté est dans la rue. Beauty Is In The Street. A Visual Record of the May '68 Paris Uprising*, cit., p.103.

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# HEALING AND TRANSFORMATION THROUGH ART: THEATRE FOR RECONCILIATION

This article presents the theoretical approach and preliminary results of an ongoing research project called “Theatre for Reconciliation”. This project aims to systematize a set of theatrical methods to intentionally accompany interior and interpersonal reconciliation processes in people affected by conflicts and foster a deep dialogue with the rest of society. The research methodology consists in modifying and adapting existing participatory theatre techniques to conflict affected populations and documenting the adaptations made and their impact on the reconciliation process. The expected results in the short term are methodological reflections derived from workshops and plays produced with the conflict affected populations in Colombia. The medium-term expected results are articles that document the aesthetic and psychosocial results of the interventions and a methodological text that serves as a guide for the future Theatre for Reconciliation facilitators. The long-term expected result of this project is that this methodological systematization could lead to the establishment of a “Theatre for Reconciliation” professional course to certify facilitators capable of intervening with creative and healing tools in contexts of conflict worldwide.

## INTRODUCTION

This article presents the theoretical assumptions, methodology and preliminary results of an ongoing artistic research project called “Theatre for Reconciliation” (TfR). The key research question of this project is: *what creative methods can intentionally and systematically accompany reconciliation processes in people affected by conflicts and facilitate a deep*



*dialogue with the rest of society?*

Trying to answer this question, Theatre for Reconciliation aims to pilot and systematize a set of participatory theatre techniques that have proven effective in accompanying reconciliation processes among people affected by internal, interpersonal and social conflicts. The author of this paper initiated this project in October 2017, at the beginning as an independent researcher and since January 2018 in his capacity of Community Theatre Professor at the Instituto Departamental de Bellas Artes (Fine Arts Departmental Institute), in Cali, Colombia.

## THE HISTORICAL ORIGIN OF THEATRE FOR RECONCILIATION

The use of theatre (from the Greek: θέατρον, *theátron*, “place to contemplate”) to accompany inner healing and strengthen community cohesion is rooted in the very origins of theatre in various cultures. Existing history of theatre studies<sup>1</sup> identify the origins of this form of art in an evolution of magical rituals related to hunting, witnessed by cave paintings in various areas of Eurasia and Africa. These rites included music, dance and the enactment of hunting scenes, and progressively became dramatic ceremonies, where key values and spiritual principles of a given society were expressed and reproduced. The character of theatre as dramatized sacred ceremony appears in most historical studies as a common factor in the emergence of theatre in all civilizations. From Neolithic cultures, the performance of hunting scenes to propitiate success in the hunt and motivate the group has to do with collective healing from fear and insecurity. Therefore, theatre has had, since its very origins, the function of group healing and reproduction of community values.

In ancient Greece, theatre gradually departs from religious worship and becomes a purification ritual (from the Greek κάθαρσις, *kátharsis*) of the citizens’ antisocial impulses. In his *Poetics*, Aristotle defines catharsis as corporal, emotional and mental purification. Through the experience of mercy and fear (*eleos* and *phobos*), the spectators of tragedy experience the purification of his soul (*psyche*) from passions that are contradiction

<sup>1</sup> For an introduction to the origins of theatre, see Oliva and Torres, 2005, pp. 20-25.

with the hegemonic values. According to Aristotle, *catharsis* is the faculty of the tragedy to redeem or purify the spectator from his own antisocial passions. This process involves seeing these passions projected onto the characters in the play, and seeing the deserved and inevitable punishment of the guilty characters, without the spectator having to experience the punishment himself. For example, the incestuous and parricide impulses latent in the audience are projected onto the character of Oedipus in the tragedy King Oedipus of Sophocles and seeing Oedipus' punishment allows the public to purify itself from incestuous passions. Greek theatre then evolved from ancient religious rituals (*komos*) into rituals of collective purification represented in the form of myths, where word and action (*drama*) were added, through "*mimesis*". This dramatization of myths gave rise to tragedy. In this process, the audience went from being a participant in a rite to becoming a spectator of a play performed by actors. A few centuries after the birth of the Greek tragedy, comedy arose, assuming the function of satire and social criticism and reaffirming the separation of the audience from the performers.

The nexus between theatre and purification/healing (in tragedy) and between theatre and criticism of behaviours condemned by the dominant morality (in comedy) appears very clearly at the origins of Western theatre and runs through history of Western theatre, up to the 20th century. At the beginning of the 20th century, several authors criticized the role of theatre in reproducing the hegemonic ideology and emphasized, on the contrary, the potential of eversion and social transformation of arts. In Soviet Union, the *Agitprop* theatre (from Russian, *агитпроп*, contraction of *agitation* and *propaganda*), used art to spread revolutionary ideas (propaganda) and motivate spectators to change their behaviour (agitation). In these same years, Berthold Brecht emphasizes in his works the revolutionary potential of theatre, which would be capable of modifying power relations and dominant values. In his plays, Brecht opposes the values of the *bourgeoisie* and consciously opposes bourgeois theatre, arguing that this form of theatre is meant to entertain the spectator, without influencing any social change. On the contrary, Brecht seeks to motivate the spectator to become aware of the ideology of legitimation of the hegemonic order that influences her or him and thus to take action to change it. To this end, Brecht's plays are

based on real historical events, inextricably linking the representation of the socio-historical background with the search for the aesthetic result. In the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century, the Brazilian director Augusto Boal carried out a theatrical research initially influenced by Brecht's theoretical assumptions and European political theatre, adapting it to the Brazilian context. In the 1960s, Boal adopted an *agitprop* approach, producing plays that sought to mobilize landless peasants towards revolution and the seizure of uncultivated land<sup>2</sup>. Realizing the limits of this approach to motivate change, Boal adopted an approach that did not seek to influence the public to follow a pre-established course of action and decided to invite the audience to seek their own strategies for change. Boal called this new technique "Simultaneous Dramaturgy" and experimented with it during the adult literacy campaign in Peru, in 1973. During the campaign, simultaneous dramaturgy evolved into Boal's best-known systematization: Forum Theatre, where he gave the audience back the power to transform the story presented on stage, giving the spectators the chance to come on stage and rehearse their ideas of change, confronting directly the oppressive characters. In this new technique, Boal applied the Socratic concept of maieutic (from the Greek *μαιευτικός*, *maieutikós*, "of the midwife"; *μαιευτική*, *maieutiké*, "technique of assisting in childbirths") to the role of the theatre director, which Boal called "the joker". According to Boal, the director and the actors, like the midwife, are not "pregnant" with the truth about how to transform a conflict and reduce oppression, only the community that lives the conflict is "pregnant" with the possible alternatives to the conflict. The role of the actors and the joker is thus to invite the community to intervene on stage and try to change the oppressive story, so the community can give birth to its own truth about the conflict and its transformation.

This process of returning the aesthetic means of production to spectators, after the separation of audience and actors that occurred at the beginning of Greek tragedy, finds another important methodological systematization in the second half of the twentieth century in Jonathan

2 A. Boal, *Teatro del Oprimido: Teoría y Práctica*, Alba Editorial, Barcelona 2009, p.35-36.

Fox's *Playback Theatre*<sup>3</sup> 4. In a Playback theatre play, the conductor asks some spectators of a community to come on stage, one by one, and tell a story that is important to them. A group of four actors improvise the story told by the audience using theatre, dance and music. This improvisation returns (*plays-back*) the story to the narrator and to the entire community, transforming the narrator's words into acting, dance, dialogues, etc., while a fifth spectator accompanies the performance of the quartet playing musical instruments.

The research on "Theatre for Reconciliation" is rooted in this ongoing process of returning the means of artistic production to the audience, focusing specifically on communities affected by conflicts. This project then looks for creative ways to give the word back to those who have not been heard within a conflict (e.g., the disabled, children, women, indigenous people, people in contact with the psychiatric system, etc.) and to involve them in the search for alternatives to the discriminations they experience and in the construction of a plural and inclusive narrative about the conflicts they experience.

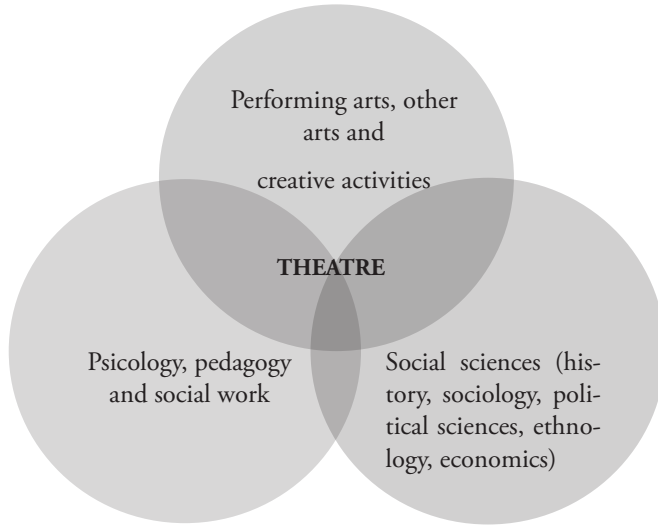
## FIVE THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS OF THEATRE FOR RECONCILIATION

Before presenting the methodology of this research, we present the five theoretical assumptions on which the Theatre for Reconciliation research is based. The first assumption is that Theatre for Reconciliation intentionally places itself at the crossroads between three groups of disciplines:

1. Performing arts, other arts and human creativity in general;
2. Psychology, pedagogy and social work;
3. Social sciences (history, sociology, political science, ethnology, economics, etc.)

3 J. Fox, *Acts of Service: Spontaneity, Commitment, Tradition in the Non scripted Theatre*, Tusitala Publishing, New York 1986.

4 J. Salas, *Improvising Real Life: Personal Story in Playback Theatre*, Tusitala Publishing, New York 1993.



The methodological systematization we intend to achieve comes from the synergy between these three dimensions and is nourished by knowledge and practices derived from these three groups of disciplines.

The second assumption is that any artistic production is (consciously or unconsciously) political and situated. With “political” we mean that the artistic product is created within existing power relations. By “situated” we mean that the art product is created and deeply influenced by its specific historical and cultural contexts of production and distribution. Both power relations and cultural/historical contexts condition the creative result and the access to it by the intended audience. These assumptions fit into the theoretical framework of Liberation Theology<sup>5</sup> <sup>6</sup> and Pedagogy of the Oppressed<sup>7</sup> where theology and pedagogy are seen as a contextual reflection from a historical praxis of liberation and of the Psychology of Liberation<sup>8</sup>, where the healing practice focuses on the historical oppressions internalized by subjects in society. Furthermore, the systematization of Theatre for Reconciliation is a reflection from an artistic praxis rooted in specific historical conflicts, mainly those of the Pacific area of Colombia at the beginning of the 21st century.

5 G. Gutiérrez, *Teología de la liberación: perspectivas*, Ediciones Sígueme, Lima 1971.

6 L. Boff, *Jesus Cristo Libertador*, Ed. Vozes, São Paulo 1972.

7 Freire P., *Pedagogía del oprimido*, Tierra Nueva Editores, Lima 1970.

8 I. Martin-Baró, *Acción e ideología. Psicología social desde Centroamérica*, UCA Editores, San Salvador 1983.

However, our assumption is that an artistic product cannot be reduced to power relations and cultural/historical contexts where it is created. On the contrary, our assumption is that an artistic product has a potential for transcendence of its social conditions of production and a potential for transformation of the context and power relations where it operates. The piece of art is not seen only as a *reflection* of the world that produced it, but also as an *activity* that (intentionally or unintentionally) transcends the historical and cultural conditions of its production, can transform the same conditions and can communicate with human beings of other historical periods and cultures. Furthermore, the piece of art does not only *reflect* the socio-historical reality that produced it, but can also *mould* it, in line with the famous Brecht's quote: "theatre is not a mirror where the reality is reflected, but a hammer to shape it".

The third assumption is that marginalized subjects are potential producers of beauty and creators of their own aesthetics and poetics. Theatre for Reconciliation places itself in continuity with Augusto Boal's latest methodological systematization: *The Aesthetics of the Oppressed*<sup>9</sup>. In his book, Boal notes how the oppressed internalize the aesthetics of hegemonic groups, such as the iconographies and representations of the body of Hollywood movies, the melodies of music production majors, and the colonial and elitist representation of theatre. On this subject, Boal writes: "the citizen who develops within him the artist that he is, even without knowing it, can face better the industries of the word, of the sound and of the image. The citizen who allows himself to be ritualized in obedience becomes a ventriloquist of the thought of others and a mime of their gestures<sup>10</sup>". From this observation, Boal declares the urgency for a "taking of the means of aesthetic production" by the oppressed. Taking up Boal's challenge, Theatre for Reconciliation aims to return the capacity of artistic production to people and social groups "silenced" and unconsciously submitted to hegemonic aesthetics.

The fourth assumption of this research is that the words "Theatre" and "Reconciliation" need to be understood more holistically than it is conventionally done. By "Theatre" we mean not only acting, direction,

9 A. Boal, *Estética de los Oprimidos*, Alba Editorial, Barcelona 2012.

10 A. Boal, *cit.*, p.11.

dramaturgy, scenography, etc., but also a set of creative practices that breaks the classical demarcations between arts. In this research, theatre is conceived as a *container* and *organizer* of creative processes such as oral narration, literature, poetry, acting, puppets, painting, visual arts, singing and music. By “Reconciliation” we do not mean a predefined concept, but rather an open question posed to communities we work with. The desirability of reconciliation and its contextual meaning are not imposed from the outside but became part of an aesthetic dialogue that could lead to very different definitions and practices of what reconciliation means for one person or one community and this definition and practices evolve over time. Whatever meaning communities and individuals who participate in the project’s activities choose to give to the word “reconciliation”, Theatre for Reconciliation explores these subjective significations using creative process that question the participants on:

1. What it means to reconcile with oneself, with one’s body, with one’s history, with the social masks that the subject wears in life and with painful biographical events that the subject metaphorically identifies as her or his “wounds”;
2. What it means to reconcile with the people with whom the subject lives: how we can explore and transform conflicts and heal the wounds in the subject’s significant relationships (for example: with family members, colleagues, members of an armed group, etc.);
3. What it means to reconcile with social structures and the historical period in which the subject lives: how to transform the subject’s relations with recent historical events that affected his or her own life (e.g. forced displacement, participation in an armed conflict, etc.) and with social expectations (e.g. gender stereotypes, local representations of mental health, etc.).

Theatre for Reconciliation addresses these three aspects of reconciliation *synergistically* and not one after the other. A key assumption is that each of the three aspects of reconciliation mentioned above always includes the other two, so reconciliation we seek cannot occur without holistically addressing these three aspects. In addition, “reconciliation” means a process of transformation of relationships at the same time between individuals and groups and between different dimensions that inhabit the individual. Different cultures define these multiple dimensions as

unconscious drives, spirits, goddess, ancestors, etc. Thus, reconciliation is not limited to the reconstruction of interpersonal relationships after a conflict, but also to the integration of the different dimensions that make up a person's interiority, transforming and healing her or his unconscious drives, incorporated memories and conscious aspirations. This theoretical presupposition also seeks to break the rigid demarcation between the *Self* and the *Other* and to recognize the individual as a constant osmosis between interiority and social interaction. Moreover, reconciliation is not only a process between living beings, but also between those who are alive and the memories of the dead, so this process seeks a re-conciliation with the incorporated inheritances of the ancestors.

The fifth theoretical assumption of this research is the need to overcome the dichotomy between art and science, where science seeks truth and art beauty. Theatre for Reconciliation seeks to discover the truth that is revealed in beauty and supports the return to the triadic unity of Truth-Beauty-Good that Plato places at the apex of his ideal world. In his dialogue on love, the *Symposium*, Plato states that: "beauty is the splendour of truth"<sup>11</sup>. However, creative work with marginalised groups does not mean that these people are the only ones capable of revealing the truth that inhabits beauty. Marginalised groups are subjects who produce beauty and reveal their plural and subjective truths, which Theatre for Reconciliation weaves with the truths of other subjects in a dialogical process (from the Greek *διάλογος* – dialogue – "discourse that goes from one side to the other", "crossed discourse"), which seeks a pluralistic and inclusive narrative around a conflict where all the actors can feel reflected.

The Theatre for Reconciliation methodological approach is in harmony with the ongoing work of the Truth Commission in Colombia, an institution established after the signing of the peace agreements between the Colombian government and the guerrilla army FARC-EP at the end of 2016. In a recent interview with the magazine *El Tiempo*, a journalist asked the president of the Commission, Francisco de Roux: "What does the work of the Truth Commission consist of? De Roux replied: "It is the search for a common history [about the conflict] where we all see

11 Plato, *Symposium*, CreateSpace, South Carolina 2007, p.67.



ourselves reflected”<sup>12</sup>. Leaving to other instances the task of ascertaining responsibilities and identifying culprits, Theatre for Reconciliation intends to construct a mosaic of stories about a conflict, a “textile of narratives”, in search of a shared memory of a conflict, for example: armed conflicts, conflicts experienced by people in the psychiatric system, etc. To achieve this goal of weaving conflict narratives, Theatre for Reconciliation cannot work only within marginalized groups, because this would reproduce existing power relations, creating two parallel aesthetics: an “aesthetic of the excluded” where the art production is presented only in poor neighbourhoods and with marginalised groups, and an “aesthetic of the included” where the production is presented in the spaces of the privileged, and the second aesthetics would be in a hegemonic relation with the first. Therefore, Theatre for Reconciliation seeks aesthetics ways to cross social barriers, strengthening empathic communication between social groups that often live in conditions of reciprocal segregation. In particular, this approach seeks to establish deep communication links with social groups that do not personally know the protagonists of a conflict and that in many cases adopt criteria for understanding a conflict they receive from the media. As Chomsky and Herman<sup>13</sup> argue, the media often adopt specific strategies to manufacture public judgements according to hegemonic interests. Crossing social barriers through art, the marginalized become not only producers of their own beauty, but also those who reveal the truths that inhabit their own beauties. In this sense, Theatre for Reconciliation intends, for example, to present productions of former combatants also outside the contexts of the conflict, or to present art works by persons living with epilepsy also outside the circle of relatives and mental health professionals.

In conclusion, we can affirm that the overall objective of Theatre for Reconciliation is to respond, through artistic creation, to a deep desire of human beings: to recognize the truth that inhabits beauty.

12 F. de Roux, *Francisco De Roux: el alma de la reconciliación*, in *El Tiempo*, No. 77, Augusto 2018, url: <https://jesuitas.co/francisco-de-roux-el-alma-de-la-reconciliacion-22736>.

13 E.S. Herman and N. Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, Vintage, New York 1995.

## THE PRATICAL BACKGROUND OF THEATRE FOR RECONCILIATION

The systematization of the Theatre for Reconciliation's techniques is based on the five theoretical assumptions presented above, and on a number of practical experiences of applying theatre in conflict situations. In particular, we would like to highlight the following experiences as the most inspiring for the development of this project.

1. The work of the theatre facilitator and psychotherapist Héctor Aristizábal in Colombia, with the Victims Unit, the International Organization for Migration and the Truth Commission in Colombia. Over the past few years, Aristizábal has been applying Theatre of the Oppressed, Ritual Theatre and Deep Ecology to accompany the healing of conflict-affected people and former combatants from various groups. Part of Aristizábal's work in Colombia is presented in Aristizábal<sup>14 15</sup>, while some of his theatrical practices are presented in autobiographical form in Aristizábal<sup>16</sup>.

2. The work of the American director Teya Sepinuk, inventor of the process called "Theater of the Witness" that she has been applying in the last thirty years (in the United States, Poland and Northern Ireland) with people affected by conflicts documented in Sepinuk<sup>17</sup>.

3. The work of Héctor Aristizábal, Uri Noy-Meyer and Angelo Miramonti in Northern Ireland, through the application of the Theatre of the Oppressed with conflict-affected communities and former combatants.

4. The theatrical work coordinated by the International Organization for Migration in Former Yugoslavia, with communities affected by the conflict, documented in Losi<sup>18</sup>.

5. The work of the International Organization for Migration in

14 H. Aristizábal, "Buscando la paz más allá de un acuerdo. Entrevista a Héctor Aristizábal", in "UNI-PLURI/VERSIDAD", Universidad de Antioquia, Vol. 17, N.º 2, 2017, pp.102-112.

15 H. Aristizábal, *Reconectando*, 2019. url: <http://www.reconectando.org/index.html>

16 H. Aristizábal and D. Lefer, *Blessing Next to the Wound. A Story of Art, Activism, and Transformation*, Lantern Books, Los Angeles 2010.

17 T. Sepinuck, *Theatre of Witness: Finding the Medicine in Stories of Suffering, Transformation and Peace*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London 2013.

18 N. Losi, *Psychosocial and Trauma Response in War-Torn Societies. Supporting Traumatized Communities through Arts and Theatre*, in "Psychosocial Notebook", Vol. 3, 2002.

Haiti on post-earthquake trauma (2011), documented in Schininà, G. et al<sup>19</sup> and the work of Angelo Miramonti<sup>20</sup> to empower hurricane-affected communities in natural disaster preparedness and response.

6. The workshops led by Brent Blair in Rwanda with the Kigali Health Center, which led to the systematization of a technique called “Museum of the Unspeakable” inspired by Boal’s Image Theatre and used to transform traumatic memories using body statues and dynamizations, without verbalizing with the group the contents of the traumatic event.

## THE PROCESS OF THEATRE FOR RECONCILIATION

Based on the theoretical and practical assumptions presented above, Theatre for Reconciliation aims to pilot and adapt the following theatrical techniques to the conflict context in Colombia:

- Theatre of the Oppressed of Augusto Boal, including Games-exercises, Image Theatre, Forum Theatre, Invisible Theatre, Legislative Theatre, Rainbow of Desire and Aesthetics of the Oppressed;
- Some theatrical adaptations of Active Listening of Carl Rogers;
- Theatre of Witness of Teya Sepinuk;
- Drama Therapy of Roger Grainger<sup>21</sup> and Phil Jones<sup>22</sup>;
- Ritual Theatre in the version developed by Michael Meade<sup>23</sup> and Héctor Aristizábal.

An ideal process of Theatre for Reconciliation in a conflict-affected community requires 150 hours of workshops with a group of approximately twenty people. The process also includes four or five public performances produced by the group. The intended participants in this process are adults and young people from rural or urban communities affected by conflict (e.g.: displaced communities) and all

19 G. Schininà et al, *Social Theatre, Community Mobilization and Sensitization after Disasters: the IOM Experience in Haiti after January 2010’s Earthquake*, in “The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance”, Vol. 12, No 1, February 2011, pp. 47-54.

20 A. Miramonti, *How to Use Forum Theatre for Community Dialogue, A facilitator’s Handbook*, Lulu, North Carolina 2017.

21 R. Grainger, *Drama and Healing*, Jessica Kingsley, London 1990.

22 P. Jones, *Drama as Therapy*, Psychology Press, London 1996.

23 M. Meade, *The Water of Life: Initiation and the Tempering of the Soul*, Green Fire Press, Massachusetts 2011.

forms of discrimination (gender minorities, psychiatric patients, etc.) No previous theatrical experience is required to participate.

Depending on the availability of participants, the process can be completed in two to four months. For example, assuming that a group of community members commit to participate in the workshops for eight hours per week, the process could be completed in approximately four months. It is not advisable to take less than two months to complete the process, to allow sufficient time for the facilitator to receive feedback from the community at each step of the process and make adjustments. However, it is also not advisable to complete the process in more than four months to ensure an intense immersion experience for the participants and not lose momentum and motivation.

The ideal agenda for a Theatre for Reconciliation process would be the following:

1. *Breaking the barriers*: Games-exercises and Image Theatre (15 hours);
1. *Becoming protagonists of change*: Forum Theatre and Invisible Theatre (30 hours). With a public presentation for the community;
2. *Shaping our future together*: Legislative Theatre for community decision-making (15 hours), including meetings with the community to agree on concrete steps in peacebuilding;
3. *Listening to each other with the whole body*: Active Listening and Dance Theatre (10 hours);
4. *Meeting our own shadows*: Rainbow of Desire and Cops in the Head (20 hours);
5. *Reconnecting with our own wounds*: Drama Therapy based on ancestral and mythological stories woven with autobiographical narratives (15 hours);
6. *Finding the medicine in the wound*: Theatre of Witness (25 hours) with a performance for the community;
7. *Weaving our common past and future*: Ritual Theatre (20 hours) with a final reconciliation ritual designed by the participants and offered to the community.

The process is designed to move from the most directly autobiographical techniques (where participants stage situations of their own lives), such

as in Forum Theatre and Rainbow of Desire, to an increasing level of symbolisation, where autobiographical events are counted seeking the healing in the wound, such as in Theatre of Witness, or are transfigured through imagination and counted through myths and symbols, such as in Drama Therapy. The highest level of symbolization is found in the eighth step: Ritual Theatre, where participants collectively design reconciliation rituals using the symbols and aesthetic languages of their own cultures (use of traditional instruments, chants, monologues, religious acts of worship, etc.) and propose these rituals to their community to celebrate the accomplishments of the process and invite the community to engage in future transformative relations.

### **THEATRE FOR RECONCILIATION IN ACTION: THE THEATRE FOR RECONCILIATION PROJECT**

Part of this research is being piloted in the framework of the Theatre for Reconciliation Project, launched in 2018 at the Departmental Institute of Fine Arts, in Cali, Colombia. The Project focuses on theatrical practices as synergy of creative processes, recognizing that all arts have the potential to catalyse inner and interpersonal transformation.

The objectives of the Project are:

1. To investigate and experiment with theatrical methods to accompany the transformation of inner and interpersonal conflicts;
2. Experiment and adapt existing techniques to facilitate dialogue, empathic understanding of the other and listening to their own sufferings in order to seek, through the creativity of each human being, a transformation of the conflict into an opportunity to build new relationships that bring origin of the conflict itself and the process of dialogue with themselves and others that was prompted by the experience of the conflict.
3. Systematize facilitation techniques and approaches that intentionally accompany reconciliation processes during and after a conflict.

The pedagogical starting point for the members of the Project is to experience *being a community* among themselves in order to support community empowerment processes. The project started in August

2018 and is ongoing. The Project's participants are students of Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Psychology and Social Work. At the time of publication of this article, the Project is composed of four working groups, facilitating workshops with the following populations:

1. Women victims of sexual violence in the armed conflict;
2. Former combatants of the FARC-EP guerrilla;
3. People in touch with the psychiatric system and people living with Epilepsy;
4. Adolescents coming from displaced families in the armed conflict.

The following are two examples of activities of the Theatre for Reconciliation Project, carried out in August and September 2018.

### THE COMMUNITY THEATRE COURSE IN THE INSTITUTE OF FINE ARTS

The majority of the Project participants have recently completed the Community Theatre course at the Institute of Fine Arts. This course provides basic tools for theatrical work with communities and is the first step for the achievement of the research objectives.





*Confidence and non-verbal communication exercises during the Community Theatre course (photo credits: Angelo Miramonti)*



*Sensitization and non-verbal communication exercises (photo credits: Angelo Miramonti)*



*Ritual Theatre exercise at the end of the Community Theatre course (photo credits: Angelo Miramonti)*

## FORUM THEATRE WORKSHOP WITH DISPLACED PERSONS

In 2018, the author of this paper facilitated a one-week workshop with displaced people coming from the war-affected departments of Cauca and Nariño. Some members of the Project participated in the workshop in support of the facilitator. This process focused on the autobiographical experiences of displaced persons and has resulted in a Forum Theatre play, eventually presented in the Institute of Fine Arts. The closing of the process has been a ritual to share the emotions aroused by the process and the students' desires for the future. At the end of the workshop, the participants decided to establish themselves as a theatre group called "*ReconciliActors*" which intends to present its productions to various Colombian institutions.





*Displaced people rehearsing scenes of violence in rural areas (photos: Angelo Miramonti)*



*Closing ritual of the Forum Theatre workshop with the “ReconciliActores” (photos: Nathaly Gómez)*

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■ ROBERTO MAZZINI

# ONE COIN, TWO SIDES BOAL AND FREIRE: SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Boal and Freire came from the same cultural background and lived in the same period in Brazil. The first was a theater activist, the second a popular educator.

For both their action was political, for both, dialogue was important, for both the idea of oppressed people was a key point. Here I try to draw a path among different concepts from the two authors, showing differences and similarities.

It is stated that congruences are more than differences: while Boal underlines more the importance of body and the transformative power of theater as a way to create more awareness, Freire focuses on “to say our own word on the world”.

Finally, I hope that both can be more widely used through tracing their strong interconnections.

## DISCUSSION

- 1) Political dimension: are we neutral?
- 2) Theoretical background: who are the references of both?
- 3) Aims: why did they create what they created?
- 4) Discipline area: in which discipline did they place themselves?
- 5) Language: what were the main means of communication they have been using?
- 6) Key concepts: what are the milestones of their approaches?
- 7) Method: how do they suggest to proceed in the process of conscientization?

8) Tools and mechanisms of raising awareness: how does the conscientization work in their view?

9) Techniques: which tools do they propose to get their objectives?

### *1) Theory*

Boal refers himself to the Marxist approach even if he never says he himself is a Marxist.

The critical view about his society has evident influences from the Marxist perspective and analysis; as in social classes struggle, the dominant ideas are the ideas of dominant groups, giving back to people the means of theater production, etc.

Freire has a double influence; the Marxist one is explicit in his text where he analyses the domination of oppressors, but also Theology of Liberation and Catholic Personalism are evident in the concept of love revolution etc.

### *2) Political dimension*

Both authors stress the political side of their action and their discipline. So, for Boal theater should be political as for Freire education is political. There is no chance for both to be neutral in a world that is not fair but contains structure of power, unbalance of possibilities, inequalities. But “politics” is used in the ancient Greek meaning as management of polis/ community, not as an ideological approach.

Connected to the maieutic attitude, both authors underline the importance to have a political engagement, but not ideological, rather to realize that we always have a political standpoint and we have to be aware of that.

### *3) Aims*

Theater of the Oppressed's aim is to support groups of oppressed to find a way of liberation from the oppression they suffer.

What Boal identifies as main objectives for Theater of the Oppressed, which specify the previous aim are two:

- to make active the oppressed people in the theater setting, in order to enable them in their real life (active citizenship);
- to give back to people the means of theater production.

Boal rejects a so called “ideological theater” which tells people how to think and which solution they must accept; rather, he talks about a “political theater”, in which to experiment for possible change.

The Freirian pedagogy is devoted to making people more aware about their conditions in order to enable them to “be more”, to overcome the social conditions that push them down on the current life and its limitations, to break down the fatalism, the acceptance of daily life as “natural”. While an illiterate person is learning writing and reading, one is also learning to read the world in which one is immersed.

In different words, both authors want to stimulate a liberation from the oppressive conditions, one more on the side of political theater, the other mainly on the side of political education; both permeate the two ways with the social and political activation of the oppressed.

#### 4) *Disciplinary area*

Boal often stated that his theater is moving at the border among art, politics, pedagogy, social action and therapy.

He meant that Theater of the Oppressed is not closed within a disciplinary enclosure, but is a bridge.

It is theater for sure, but a special one, because it is a political one: it wants to change the oppression in the world and for this reason in art+social action. Sometimes it can deal with a psychological disease, as a consequence of a bad social context, so in this case can be art+therapy. But it is also a process of awareness raising where groups of oppressed people explore their own oppression and learn how to face it better; in this case it can be seen as art+pedagogy, etc.

In synthesis, Theater of the Oppressed has to do with human beings and the totality of their lives, so it is hardly narrowed in a discipline.

Freire thinks of his *praxis* as pedagogical, but remarks many times on the political essence of his research. Pedagogy, he stated, is not neutral, but is political, because it can be in favour of oppressed or in favour of oppressors, sustaining oppression or stimulating liberation. So an emphasis on interdisciplinarity is common to both authors.

#### 5) *Language*

The means they use to convey their process of conscientization are different.

Boal uses theater, because at the origin of his political engagement there was a renewal of theater approach in Brazil. He stated in the early time that theater was the main language because it can include all the other forms of language (verbal as narrative and poetry, images, sounds, body, lights...); in the last part of his life he changed the perspective by saying that all arts should contribute to humankind's liberation; in his words the task of Theater of the Oppressed is "to humanize humankind".

Theater in his vision is a global approach, because it includes and affects body, thinking and emotion, all the main levels of human experience.

In Freire the emphasis is on dialogue and verbal communication since the beginning. But in the process of coding and decoding he also used images as a bridge language to communicate with illiterate people.

In the practices of Boal and Freire, they used different forms of language with a little overlapping, but this does not mean it is not possible to mix up the two approaches and use different languages in both fields.

The difference has to do with the personal background and education of the two authors.

The conclusion is that the synergy between the two approaches should be strengthened to have a better impact on society and improving the activists' actions.

#### 6) *Key Concepts*

At the conceptual level, they use similar ideas such as dialogue, oppressed/oppressor/oppression, rise/conscientization and political standing.

But here some differences arise: Boal's "body thinks" instead of the verbal language as a tool for the Freirian "conscientization". The focus is on action/body in Boal (also spect-actor) and the focus is on reflection/word in Freire.

Among the several concepts they created, I focus on the following:

*Dialogue*: Here there is a big difference. In Boal's view, dialogue is the aim of Theater of the Oppressed; he would like that among social classes, genders, ages and cultures, there was a balance, a dialogue, where each part should respect the others' needs and ideas. With that, the ideal of Theater of the Oppressed is to balance the different powers among men and women, rich and poor, black and white, youngsters and



adults, disabled and not disabled people, etc. Boal contrasts dialogue with monologue that he sees as an oppression. He uses dialogue as an alternative to oppression in several occasions.

According to Freire, dialogue is the *via maestra* to obtain the awareness raising.

Only in dialogue can human beings grow and know better their condition and discover how “to be more”. Dialogue in the former author is between different ones, in Freire among peers. In both authors it is positive, but for different purposes.

*Oppressed/oppressors:* This dichotomy is common in both authors; these words recur many times in their books and are the key points of their approach and practice. Oppressed is the person who lives an oppression, sometimes without full awareness, but often with the willingness to change it. Theater of the Oppressed aims to provide such people with specific and powerful tools to overcome oppression, to find solutions.

The oppressor in Boal swings between a bad guy who wants to keep his privileges or a social actor who responds to role expectation, due to being immersed in so-called “rituals”.

In our opinion, both concepts can live together but it is important to be clear about the social context in which an oppressor acts, the conditionings of his/her action and not only his/her will. Sometimes, as history has shown, people have done terribly oppressive things with good intentions and not only to keep their privileges. So, the analysis of the figure of the oppressor is crucial to find useful ways to liberate us from oppressions and avoiding stereotypes of the oppressor.

In Freire too there is a struggle between oppressors and oppressed. The oppression lived by the oppressed is a block of his/her development as a human being. The oppressor is the one who wants to keep the situation of oppression but, different from Boal, Freire speaks about a common liberation: the oppressed should be able to break down oppression and to free himself and also the oppressors.

*Oppressed colonization:* a key point in Freire’s thinking: the oppressed are oppressed also internally, actually the oppressor is internalised and often the oppressed do not want simply to break down oppression, but

to replace oppressors.

Therefore, the importance to fight also against the internal oppressor in order to not repeat oppression once liberated.

Boal uses different words and concepts: he talks about osmosis as a mechanism through which the dominant ideas and the oppression mechanisms act in the oppressed body/mind/emotion. Through osmosis, oppressors exercise their own power, from outside and from inside. Therefore, the oppressed are doubly weakened and have to fight against two fronts. Echoing Marx, Boal says that the dominant ideas of a society come from the dominant classes and therefore also the oppressed often have the same ideas and desires; moreover, ideas and oppressive mechanisms are disseminated in each small social daily interaction, like a medical visit, a school lesson, and any other social ritual. In this way the oppression is renovated day by day, both at the ideological level and on the practical body/emotional level.

Boal went deeper in this practice when he came to Europe and found more psychological oppressions; so he asked himself “where are the oppressors when a person feels bad psychologically?”. To answer, he and his group in Paris developed a two-year long research project which resulted in the set of techniques called “Cops in the head”. In these techniques the hypothesis is that the oppressors were internalised by the person oppressed and are now acting from inside, without need to have an external oppressive role. This research translated practically Freire’s concept of colonisation of the oppressed and seems to me a conjunction point between both authors.

Finally, at a cultural level, Boal developed a research called “Aesthetics of the oppressed” where he explored how to create a popular culture, freeing oneself from the dominant culture. So, with his group of CTO Rio de Janeiro he developed pathways and techniques to use several artistic languages (music, painting, dance, singing...) to create performance where the oppression is described also with original creations by the oppressed group; the idea behind this is to avoid using the dominant culture’s artifacts and to create one’s own vision/culture by the oppressed. Finally, Boal specified better the idea of dominant culture, developing also tools to struggle against the colonization of the oppressed.

*Popular knowledge valorization:* Boal in the classical book “Theater of the Oppressed” describes many ways to do popular culture or popular theater, some commercial or folkloric, some progressive. But the whole Theater of the Oppressed is based (see the concept “maieutic”) on the strong idea that oppressed people have a knowledge, they can know the oppression and how to solve it; the task of this theater is to create the better conditions for this exploration, not to teach them what to do. Even the last stage of “Aesthetics of the Oppressed” imagines that oppressed people can create their own culture and that the upper culture is not better than the lower, because both are expressions of different class interests. The idea in Boal is made extreme by the famous sentence “everybody can do theater, even actors”. Of course, he does not mean that “immediately” everyone is a good actor, but that human beings have this potential inside and theater can create the conditions in which this potential emerges.

In Freire too, there is a big trust in the oppressed to be able to analyse their own situation and discover their possibility “to be more”. In both, the starting point of their action is popular knowledge. Of course, both do not want to stop here, they aim to go deeper, questioning the “naive knowledge of the world”, so for instance in Boal the Forum-Theater should show not only how the oppression appears, but also its hidden mechanisms (nonverbal communication, use of space, use of object, rituals, structural oppression, language oppression, cultural oppression, etc.).

Freire as well starts by questioning the popular naive knowledge when the attitude is passive, fatalist or negative.

The valorisation of popular knowledge goes together with its problematization, without judgment or imposing of any idea, but reflecting through action (Boal) or through dialogue (Freire).

In both, popular knowledge is the starting point of a research process.

*Level of consciousness:* Freire identifies different levels of consciousness in different periods of his practice; sometimes he spoke about “naive consciousness, semi-transitive and transitive or critical one”.

In Boal there isn't such detailed division, but he is aware that people should be helped to reach a deeper awareness about the lows, the

mechanism which rule the oppression, to discover the natural laws ruling the nature.

Some T.O. practitioners started to deepen the analysis of consciousness in oppressed people, talking about alienates and victims. For instance, *Forn de Theater* Pa'tothom, a historical Barcelona based group of T.O., defines the alienated, the oppressed, and those who do not feel oppressed. As a victim, one is oppressed when one feels and thinks of him/herself as oppressed, but also powerless, and finally the oppressed is the person aware of oppression and willing to fight against it. This reflection reminds one in some ways of Freire's levels of consciousness.

*Praxis*: Both authors underline the connection between theory and practice that Freire, recalling Marx, calls *praxis*. Both want to know the world and to change it, to support the oppressed to know it and transform it.

Boal sees the praxis in the Forum play, where the audience is invited to come onto the stage, to replace the oppressed people in the story and to try to change the situation. But he also thinks that all Theater of the Oppressed techniques have to bring people to concrete social actions (a strike, a demonstration, a petition, an occupation, a sit-in, etc.).

The reflection in Boal is parallel to action on the stage or shortly after that but can be also in the preparation of the play, when the group chooses what to stage or not, or also after the Forum when the group decides how to proceed, and what concrete actions to carry out.

And in a cycle, the results of the Forum session can affect the structure of the play and the results of the concrete social action can affect the group strategy to fight oppression.

Freire thinks the union between action and reflection a *conditio sine qua non* for a popular educator: his/her practice without theory/reflection is empty activism, he said; a theory/reflection with no practice is empty intellectualism. Popular educators should reflect systematically on their practice so that they can draft a sort of systematization of the discoveries made during a period and to advance in the liberation. So, we need to join the two sides in our practice.

Similarly, Boal joins the two sides in the Forum play, in its construction and in the whole T.O. Process.

*Human being:* According to Boal, “the essence of human being is theater”. But what is theater for Boal? Theater is a human natural feature, the skill “to see oneself in action”. When I think about what I’m doing/saying, I see myself in action. When I draw a hunting scene, I see myself in action. When I come onto the stage I am acting and at the same time I see myself in action; and the audience too, can see my action and, if they identify in myself, they can see them in action.

So, the essence of theater is not acting, but this ability to see me, to access another level of complexity.

In other words, Boal speaks about human beings as a box; “the person is a box”, he says, in his workshops about “cops in the head”, a box where each of us has his/her multiplicity, all the possibilities to be...courageous and timid, angel and devil, etc. The task of theater is to warm up this box and let other aspects of myself go out, in order to enrich my “simple” one-dimensional personality.

In Freire a key concept is “to be more”, which sounds like Boal’s box. During a process of conscientization, oppressed people discover the limits of their humanity, limits that are social and not natural, and which therefore can be changed. If the oppressed people perceive that, they can start to find strategies to transform both reality and themselves.

*Globality of transformation:* In both authors, when describing transformation, their attention is on both sides, external and internal. External because the role of oppressors is not vanished. They exist and exercise their own power and role.

They have to be tackled and effective strategies have to be found. At the same time the struggle is internal, because of the colonization of the oppressed (Freire) and osmosis (Boal).

So, both liberations should be pursued in parallel, perhaps with different accents according to the moment and the group.

In Boal there is also a special emphasis on another idea of “globality”, the idea that body, mind and emotion are strictly entwined, so the change in one dimension can affect the other ones. This idea comes likely from the theater practice where it is clear that all the dimensions are affected and brings Boal to pay attention not only to the oppressive action and

reaction, but also on the results of oppression in the mind/body/emotion of the oppressed.

Oppression in Boal's vision is embodied in the so called social masks, conditioning the posture, gestures, voice, sight...mechanising body but also mind (way to think, key ideas, etc.) and emotion (which ones felt, which ones expressed, etc.).

This second "globality" is not clearly expressed in Freire's thinking, but seems to me crucial to better understand oppression and to overcome it.

### 7) *Method*

At the methodological level they both use a maieutic approach. As already noted, due to the trust they have in oppressed people and their knowledge, both see in a transmissive approach another way to oppress people. So after both having started in a passive way, they soon discovered the importance to change not only the content, but the relationship between "learners/oppressed" and "teachers/activists".

Boal provides the famous Virgilio anecdote, which happened in a small village of Northeast Brazil. To give questions is the key attitude of the Joker (Boal) and the Educator (Freire). The Socratic art of giving questions would deserve another article because it is not so automatic and requires attention from the practitioners in order to respect the other's culture, but also to be able to problematize it.

The second important methodological aspect is that for both, their approach is not a fixed method. Boal shows his approach as a tree, a living being, who grows, enriches in branches/techniques, etc. Freire advised, "do not copy me, re-invent the method". Also, this point seems to me an important similarity between the two researchers and a key point that is not easy to pursue, in balance between orthodoxy and innovation.

In fact, in Theater of the Oppressed world, there is sometimes confusion around dialogue, which is seen as simply starting talking, while dialogue means equal power, negotiating on the same basis.

Some theater group or professional is working in private enterprises without questioning how to stay in this structure of power without falling down in being manipulated or manipulating the oppressed. The same can happen in school, prison, wherever there is an imbalance of power and practitioners do not question power relations but rather

perceive them to be neutral. Is this innovation? Re-invention? Or betrayal of principles? There is some more little shift from fighting oppression and starting dialogue? Of course dialogue is important and, according to non-violent philosophy, first, one tries to dialogue and then to fight if dialogue is not possible. But behind this approach, sometimes, there is a misunderstanding about oppression that is not a simple misunderstanding in communication, because it has to do with different powers. So, communication is important if we also analyse the power relationship, otherwise to promote dialogue among groups with different power risks is to support manipulation from the most powerful side.

#### 8) *Process of conscientization*

There is a sort of parallelism about the way oppressed people are brought to awareness in both authors.

In Boal's framework this is called *ascesis/rise*, which means in his words, "going from the phenomenon to the law behind"; or in Brecht's perspective, "to show not how true things are but how truly are things". The conscientization is enhanced thanks to theater mechanism of "distancing" (or Brecht's estrangement) that allows people to see the daily life in a deeper way (remember that theater for Boal is "to see oneself in action"). The *ascesis/rise* is facilitated by the joker with appropriate questions to the audience, promoting the investigation on rules behind the facts: why is this happening? What are the reasons for that? What are the structural and cultural elements affecting the story? Etc.

In Freire's view, conscientization emerges thanks to questions and dialogue within the oppressed group, mediated by the popular educator and by the techniques of coding/decoding.

The real world of oppressed people, collected by popular educators in the early experiences, was coded in visual drawings and then decoded through dialogue that allowed the group to go deeper into the situation, finding first the chance to change and then the reasons for oppression.

We could say that Freire's coding is similar to the staging in T.O. and decoding in the first analysis made by the audience in a Forum-Theater session, and later in the spect-actor's intervention according to Boal.

In both cases the joker/educator is not judging the group/public comments

but simply organizing the debate, promoting a deeper thinking, the jump from “to see reality” to see “the chance of transforming it”.

The big difference between the two is that for Boal the key point for awareness raising is in the spect-actor’s action while in Freire it chiefly in the dialogue among the oppressed.

In this sense it seems to me that Boal has a more comprehensive approach that takes account of the globality of human beings and reduces the gap between idea and practice.

### 9) *Techniques*

At a technical level, of course, the differences are more marked: Boal had been using/inventing theater tools while Freire used different languages and techniques coming from literacy, popular culture, etc.

Techniques reveal the focus on theater as a concept of the human being and also as a main tool for awareness raising (Boal), or in dialogue among the oppressed (Freire). However, nothing prevents popular educators from using body or theater techniques and many different arts are used daily (painting, music, graphics, puppets, etc.) depending on the specific educator’s skills.

The common feature of all techniques is that they are nor too complex to be largely used, nor focused on right/wrong answers, but are tools to develop abilities, to open a space of research, to start a dialogue (both verbal and non-verbal). They all are ways to create a group and to support a research around oppression more than a way to learn a specific topic or skill, a way to specialise themselves and be evaluated.

So many times, there is not a wrong way to respond, but the techniques are more a research field and each answer/reaction is a piece of information about ourselves and our world.

## CONCLUSION

I think that the two authors are two faces of the same coin, with more elements in common than different. The synergy between them is a common advantage and unfortunately, at least in Italy, the two practitioners are not working together structurally; most of the time one uses only one approach and maybe does not know the other one.



Our Boal Freire National Network is important because in just a few years it strengthened this connection.

A second remark is that in some cases Boal is more useful, in other cases Freire, or at different stages of the research, one or the other.

For instance, I'd say that if a group is not aware enough of oppression, Freire's approach could be better because Boal's requires people who know, in some way, to have a problem/oppression, at least as a generic feeling. Then the process can bring more awareness.

On the other hand, the process triggered by Boal is more holistic and powerful (at least in Italy, maybe in Europe, while in South America popular educators use many tools and languages coming from arts), because it engages emotion and action and not only rationality. Moreover, the ritual theater can be really powerful to mobilize people towards action.

Thirdly, the interconnection among the two methods could be better explored; during a long-term process it is possible and desirable to use both approaches depending on the stage of the process. Maybe, in some context, Freire's is better than Boal's method: not all people like to play theater and someone can express one's self better in a verbal way than through action. So, depending on the individuals, groups, and stages of the process, one approach could be more useful than the other.

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■ ANNA ZUMBO

# CRITICAL EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR LOCAL COMMUNITY CHANGING: FROM PAULO FREIRE TO THE COMMUNITY GENERATIVE WELFARE SYSTEM

## SOCIAL INNOVATION AND TRANSFORMING THE WELFARE

tical framework, to engage participants in critic reflective activities prompted by the Boal game-exercise. In fact, I consider essential Boal's process of de-mechanization of the learner's body through a new discovery off the five senses<sup>12</sup>, not a simple warming-up exercise.

The control group, on the other hand, was formed by students who applied for the summer A2 Italian course: most of them had a clear instrumental motivation in obtaining a language frequency certification; few of them wanted to learn Italian to go studying in Italy and only two students applied for pleasure. The course required a manual with didactic units and the space of the room was fixed. During the two weeks of the course, three pre-selected dramatic activities, selected for their gradual complexity in language and dramatic involvement carried previously within the experimental group, were proposed to the control group-class.

The three selected activities of the control group and every session of the experimental one were videotaped to subsequently transcribe the dialogues considering MacWhinney conventions.

What I am going to describe in the following part regards students' model of participation in dialogue and their personal evaluation of the

experience.

1. *How to let learners meet as active members of society other than only as students of the same language*

1. For Paulo Freire, alphabetization process is fundamental to allow the raising of consciousness. Moreover, pedagogy in his formulation promotes the development of a decision-making process together with social and political responsibility.

During one session with the experimental group, I proposed a *rhythmic machine* activity<sup>15</sup>. This activity asks to represent a concrete or abstract topic with rhythmical and repetitive movements and sounds. Then the rhythm can be faster and then explode or decelerate. The important point is that every participant goes outside the machine and looks at the whole system to have a wider view of the total action. The topic tackled was the difference between the State of Spain and the region of Galicia, since it is a widely debated issue in the region. In the representation of the two realities, participants started with some stereotypical aspects and exaggerated them. After the first view of the whole machine, they began to change elements and sounds and at the third trial, they represented something completely different. What was significant was the conversation in Italian was promoted by the physical activity, because participants were engaged in finding a common cultural image, which actually was very different. Below, you can see a transcription extract showing the numerous participants' turns during the dialogue. The speakers alternate their turns to add new information about what it meant to be Spanish: cultural aspects in T23 and T24, geographical coordination in T28, language diversity in T33.

I. extract: Rhythmic machine session: co-building common cultural background about the State of Spain

→ T23\*NAT: *ma il flamenco non è tipico*

→ T24\*VIC: *non c'è il flamenco c'è il tango e non c'è il paso doble*

T25\*MOD: *bueno, un baile, ma il marziano non lo sa*

T26\*VIC: *credo che gli orari sono diversi*

T27\*MOD: *sì però sono parole queste*

→ T28\*LOR: *manca mediterraneo -, atlantico-, cantabrico?*

T29\*MOD: *potrebbe essere, le vuoi mettere tutte e 3? già per esempio*

*atlantico o cantabrico-+*

→ T30\*NAT: *un GPS per il marziano!*

T31\*MOD: *ah ah un GPS per il marziano! ehm# non lo so, una caratteristica che è*

*solo del vostro paese!*

→ T32\*LOR: *allegria.*

→ T33\*NAT: *più lingue, i quattro idiomi.*

→ T35\*VIC: *diversità?*

→ T36\*NAT: *diversità c'è in altri# paesi!*

## HOW TO CO-BUILD THE DIALOGUE THROUGH THEATRE OF THE OPPRESSED GAME EXERCICES: DE-CONSTRUCTING POWER THROUGH THE IMAGE THEATRE

Another relevant session was dedicated to the *Image theater* technique. This asks to represent a concept with an immobile figure done with the body and then, if necessary, the moderator can ask for a sound or a movement of the statue to better understand its message. The topic selected in the experimental group this time was the space of power. The exercise was repeated twice: first, every participant did his/her statue and second, after a look at everyone's representation, they were asked to complete another participant's image by interacting with his/her image. After some adjustments of all of the statues, we started a conversation on their meaning. It was meaningful for learners to notice how different one's external interpretation could be with respect to the original idea of the sculpture. The following extract of the conversational sequence shows two important conversational aspects: first, the process of interpretation and sharing of viewpoints managed by learners and second, the fact that every sequence is connected with the previous one by a textual connector that stand in addition (*e, anche*, T02), contradiction (*ma*, T03) and affirmation (*si*, T08). In some cases, the teacher-moderator is interrupted by participants (T05), which rarely occurs in standard language courses, and in others it happens that one learner preferred asking for language correctness from a peer, before speaking to the whole class, as in T07 and T09. Last turn (T30) shows an example of personal critical interpretation of the statue made by a participant involved in the discussion about power.

## II. extract: Sharing points of view through Image Theater

→ T01\*NAT: *fare che la gente non possa parlare, il pensiero, non poter esprimere il pensiero*

→ T02\*VIC: *e anche può essere una persona che sta con-, con# con lei ma sta dicendo: eh!, non puoi dire*

*qualcosa perché non gli# #lascia, non gli lascia [% altera il tono di voce per il discorso diretto]*

→ T03\*NAT: *ma se está d'accordo? sarebbe di fronte.*

T04\*MOD: *sì, <ma#> [>]*

→ T05\*VIC: [io lo# farò così, io# io mi #[% si porta le mani alla bocca per coprirla]

T06\*MOD: *farei, lo farei +...*

→ T07\*VIC: [*si rivolge a NAT*] *io stesso è unito?*

→ T08\*NAT: *sì*

→ T09\*VIC: *io stesso? [% rivolto a NAT che annuisce]*

T10\*VIC: *ehm, eu mesm, io stesso, mi###*

T11\*MOD: *mi chiuderé#, mi tapperei la bocca.*

T12\*VIC: *mi tapperei la bocca.*

In the following part of the same dialogue, I only ask two questions to make participants reflect about what they are doing. What is to be highlighted is that learners reply fast and without hesitation, which is not often granted in a standard language class.

T16\*MOD: *vedi, Natalia ha introdotto un tema molto importante, che è il tema dello spazio-,*

*dello spazio# del potere-,*

→ T17\*LOR: *uhm uhm+...*

T18\*MOD: *perché in questa immagine il potere dove sta?*

→ T19\*LOR: *alle spalle.*

T20\*MOD: *mentre nell'immagine che avevate fatto voi, il potere dove stava?*

→ T21\*NAT: *45 # gradi...girato di 45 gradi.*

(...)

T29\*MOD: *la sua postura era dritta, ferma e tu invece eri un po' più*

*così e stava davanti,*

*in questo caso anche se io sto dietro, perché si capisce che ce l'ho io il potere?*

[% NAT *interviene ma non si capisce*]

→ T30\*LOR: *senza avvisarmi senza dirmi qui, vad, vado, vado adesso, io... io sto parlando-*,

*e mentre, tu# il poter, il podere ti ferma la bocca.*

## THE OVERWHELMING EFFECTS OF A CRITICAL EDUCATION IN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING: PARTICIPANTS' EVALUATION

The last day of the workshop, participants were asked to draw a representation of their personal path across the language workshop from the beginning to the end, evaluating it. LOR used the metaphor of an egg crashing to let a new chick be born. The egg symbolizes the passing of time that gave the chance to improve her expression, aptitude, relation with colleagues and aspects of her personality. For this reason, she wrote at the end "classes but more than Italian, to grow as person".

→ T28\*LOR: *simboleggia il passo del tempo qui che per me non è stato solo imparare l'italiano, anche per migliorare la mia espressione+,*  
(...)

→ T31\*LOR: *l'attitudine, ehm, la relazione con i compagni e molte cose de#*  
*de la personalitè, personalitè#*  
(...)

→ T33\*LOR: *personalità chi no non, per questo io scrivo lezioni pero molto più che l'italiano, crescere come persona.*

### Results

*How to operationalize the emotional involvement raised from the co-built dialogue, as vector of the development of interactional competencies in the foreign language*

The most revealing part of the present conversational analysis is the

comparison of participants' reactions between the two observed groups. My hypothesis argued that a major involvement in conversation would have been found only within the experimental group, due to the longer duration of the course. This included a longer period for the participants to reach confidence with each other and to become used to the dramatic activities. On the other hand, I supposed that in the control group there would have been less involvement during the three activities monitored due to their non-standard character for the institutional context. On the contrary, I have found that the same dramatic activities elicited the same type of conversational moves, which I identified, as described earlier, with a certain grade of involvement. Below I present some examples of conversational sequences prompted by the three activities in the different groups.

*I. Self-selection in repair context without TRP: other-repair*

The first table shows the example of other-repair, here described as self-selection in repair context without TRP because the activity instruction allows a one-by-one conversational turn organization, to let the present speaker express herself. This activity was proposed on the first day of the two groups to its interactional aspect. It required a first moment of interview in couple making some questions to know the interlocutor and second, to assume our interlocutor's identity to talk about him/herself. So many factors could influence participant performance. The extract, on the contrary shows unexpected repair sequence to help the construction of the current speaker, making a medium strong move.

<i>Tab. 1: First Activity</i>	
II. Self-selection in repair context without TRP: other-repair	
Experimental group	Control group



<p>T26*LOR: <i>eh, io ho quaranteci#, quarantacinque anni, eh# eh vivo, abito, eh, a Santiago eh, cosa fa? io fa, io sono archeologo ehm, eh lavoro in una, eh#</i></p> <p>→ T27*CES: <i>istituto!</i></p> <p>T28*LOR: <i>istituto de##</i></p> <p>→ T29*CES: <i>scientifico?</i></p> <p>T30*LOR: <i>sì, scientifico.</i></p>	<p>T198*P12: <i>studio italiano per hobby+.. [%aspirazione della &lt;h&gt;come &lt;j&gt;].</i></p> <p>T199*MOD: <i>per?</i></p> <p>T200*P12: <i>per hobby</i></p> <p>T201*MOD: <i>per?</i></p> <p>→ T202*CORO: [% tutti suggerisco obby senza aspirazione della acca e ridono]</p> <p>T203*P12:####obby [% senza aspirazione dell'acc]</p>
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### *Self-selection without TRP giving extra comments*

The second table offers examples of strong moves because speakers who take the second turn in both groups want not to do a repair but to put emphasis on what the current speaker has finished saying. The second activity asked participants to choose an object from various items on the teacher's desk and re-invent it in name, function, color, smell and taste. Even in this case, instructions allowed one speaker at a time. It is a very funny game that can prompt numerous unexpected conversational slide sequences. In T67 of experimental group, we have a repair on the verbal item, where ANA propose a more expressive one for “open the door” as JOS is actually saying “pry open” a door; in T82 RU is asking for the taste of the Italian book invented by SI.

<b>Tab. 2: Second activity</b>	
Self-selection without TRP giving extra comments	
Experimental group	Control Group

<p>T66*JOS: <i>un strumento con quale tu puoi aprire la porta-</i></p> <p>→ T67*ANA: <i>forzare la porta!</i> [% enfasi su <i>forzare</i>]</p>	<p>T81*SI: <i>Questo non è una chiave,</i> questo è un libretto per studiare italiano [% <i>risate</i>] <i>è molo difficile il libretto!</i></p> <p>→ T82*RU <i>a che sa?</i></p> <p>T83*SI: <i>sa## a pizza italiana</i> [% <i>risate</i>]</p>
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Turn-changing without TPR: other – repairs prompted by images

The last table has three examples of the use of dramatic action. As we can see, as in the experimental group as much in the control one, there are turns-change with repair purpose, but this repair is prompted by and made on the interpretation of the image more than on the incorrectness of the sentence. This activity is carried out in pairs: A is miming his routine day while B is describing it verbally. In the first column we find even an overlap of two repair turns where in T016 LOR is restructuring her turn and at the same time ZUL initiates her repair sequence to specify what participant B is “drinking”. Within the control group the same kind of repair is found in T310, where SI is correcting the item worn by student B in his mimic. In fact, SI identified in B’s performance some specific elements relating to sport activity, changing the lexical item “pajamas” with “tracksuit”. These repairs are significant here because they are made outside of the teacher’s instructions: they are spontaneous and elicited by dramatic activity regarding students’ personal routines.

<i>Tab. 3: Third activity</i>	
Self-selection prompted by images: other-repair	
Experimental group	Control group

T014*LOR: <toma caffè>, [//] <prende caffè> [>]	T309*MOD: <i>si toglie o si mette?</i>
T015*MOD: [<] <prende caffè>	ti metti il <i>pigiama?</i>
→ T016*LOR: <i>no, non prende</i> <caffè> [>] <i>non le piace.</i>	T310*SI: <i>no, si mette ropa de sport</i>
→ T017 *ZUL: [<] <è## succo d'arancia>	

## CONCLUSION

The analysis of conversational sequences allows one to understand how, in linguistic terms, a critical language teaching approach promotes participants' involvement. In this study I underlined how Boal's Theater of the Oppressed techniques influence the organization of the turn-taking system by prompting an amount of strong moves, like self-selection in absence of teacher instruction. Another strong move is the other-initiated other-repair where the correction is given without hesitation. These types of repair sequences are elicited by the images and performances generated from the TO techniques. Moreover, my initial hypothesis on the control group participation has not been confirmed because we found a lot of sequences elicited by the same activities as the experimental group participants did. In light of this, it is possible to say that a critical language teaching approach promotes speakers' involvement in the dialogue, creating an adequate space for learners to express themselves, entering in deep relation with each other by sharing experiences and points of view. At the end of the course, participants felt to have experienced something more than a normal language course, a relevant personal experience that gave them new tools to read reality from different perspectives. That is possible because TO techniques, being a practical vector of Freire's critical pedagogy, draw from participants' personal resources in terms of life experience, interests and creativity which prepares both people to enter into relations and linguistic soil to flourish in pushed output. That is manifested by the numerous turns of conversational transcription of experimental groups where several turns are taken in order to share different points of view and co-construct a common cultural background by critical interpretation of images

on reality themes (see extracts of *rhythmic machine* and *image theater* activities).

Of course, the present study also presents limits: first, limits in the number of participants involved in the experimental group. That contributed to create a relaxed environment among participants; second, participants originally were all from Europe even if from different countries.

Finally, the two languages taken into account are of the same linguistic family, not so distant from each other.

It would be interesting to repeat the research with students from various cultural and linguistic backgrounds to observe not only the type of turn system organization and intercultural aspects but also how students develop language competence. Nevertheless, this study proposes a new look at critical language teaching approach, offering a contribution to begin its diffusion.

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■ MARIATERESA MURACA

# THE LEGACY OF PAULO FREIRE IN STRUGGLES FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE: NOTES FOR A PEDAGOGY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

## INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, adult education has been the subject of an attempted appropriation by neoliberal educational policies, which, in many cases, have actually managed to reduce its problematizing character by encouraging conniving perspectives or even functional ones to the current configurations of capitalism.

In this scenario, some interesting attempts to remain faithful to the philosophy and experiences of popular adult education and its critical vocation have been made by researches aiming at understanding and highlighting the political and educational significance of social movements committed at local, national or international levels. Such research promotes the emergence of a pedagogy of social movements. It is a developing field of study within political pedagogy, especially interested in exploring the educational dimensions of collective subjectivities and forms of participation, which move in the domain appointed by the Italian feminism of difference *politica prima*<sup>1</sup>.

Pedagogy of social movements is often invisible, both for it embodies a departure from the agenda of mainstream educational issues, and the same characteristics of the study object. Social movements, in fact,

1 F. Graziani et al, *Sottosopra rosso "È accaduto non per caso"*, Libreria delle donne di Milano, Milano 1996.

similar to the karstic rivers, alternate phases of greater vitality and dissemination, to “back off” phases, during which they organize themselves through channels and forms not always recognizable. This paper lays within this horizon of research and is divided into two parts. The first part analyzes the relationship between Paulo Freire’s pedagogy and social movements. The second part proposes a reading of the educational dimensions of social movements, which consists of four angles once they are taken into account: pedagogical subjects and agents of transformation; contexts of learning; laboratories of decolonization of knowledge; and generative spaces of pedagogical theories. This paper therefore aims to delineate the pedagogy of social movements as a field of studies, faithful to the radically transforming impact of popular adult education experiences.

## FREIREAN PEDAGOGY AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

I would like to begin by recalling the immense faith that Freire had in social movements. This faith characterized his whole life, right until the end. We can say that Freire’s last public words were devoted to social movements. In his final interview, given to TV PUC on April 17th 1997 (just fifteen days before his death) he commented on a march of the Landless Rural Workers Movement and said “I would happily die if I saw Brazil full, in its historical time, of marches. [...] Marches are historical itineraries for the world”. He also said that, in his opinion, the Landless was one of the strongest expressions of the political and civic life of the country and that it was trying out some theoretical statements by political analysts: that it is necessary to struggle to promote social transformation.

On the other hand, Freire’s pedagogy is, by its constitution, a pedagogy of movements<sup>2</sup>, at least for three reasons:

- First, because it is a generated, problematized and radicalized pedagogy starting from the practices of social movements<sup>3</sup>. Just

2 D. R. Streck, *Uma pedagogia em movimento: os movimentos sociais na obra de Paulo Freire*, in J. Mafra et al. (eds), *Globalização, Educação e Movimentos Sociais: 40 anos da Pedagogia do Oprimido*, Instituto Paulo Freire e Esfera, São Paulo 2009, pp. 63-72.

3 P. Vittoria, *Narrando Paulo Freire. Por uma pedagogia do diálogo*, UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro 2011.

think of the movements for adult literacy, within which Freire developed his literacy and conscientisation method. To this regard, Beisiegel<sup>4</sup> points out that the change of theoretical references from “Education as a practice of freedom” to “Pedagogy of the oppressed” – both concluded in Chile – must be considered a return effect of the application of the literacy method. In particular, according to the author, the practice of the method had revealed to Freire that the existential condition, the organization of society and the possibilities, implications and limits of education could be better interpreted through the Marxist categories. This characteristic of the Freirean pedagogy, as a pedagogy elaborated in dialogue with the reality, is even more evident by reading “Pedagogy of hope. Reliving Pedagogy of the Oppressed”. This work testifies that Freire allowed himself to be provoked, challenged and questioned by the social movements, which he met around the world: the movements for ex-Portuguese colony independence in Africa; feminist, black, migrant movements; the movement for the re-democratization of Brazil. He also received confirmations confronting himself with them. In particular, “Pedagogy of hope” shows that Freire took into consideration the criticisms put forward by feminist scholars, who have examined the masculine language of his writings. Unfortunately Freire did not indicate the names of these scholars but we can recognize the voice of bell hooks<sup>5</sup>.

- Furthermore, Freire’s pedagogy is a pedagogy of movements because it was created and recreated in displacements, in cross-border crossings, and even paradoxically thanks to the experience of exile. In this aspect, we can find many points of contact with feminism since feminism originates precisely from the strength with which readings of reality by groups of women were able to generate resonances in other parts of the world. Also in this case,

4 C. R. Beisiegel, *Das 40 horas de Angicos aos 40 anos da Pedagogia do Oprimido*, in J. Mafra et al (eds), *Globalização, Educação e Movimentos Sociais: 40 anos da Pedagogia do Oprimido*, Instituto Paulo Freire e Esfera, São Paulo 2009, p. 133-138.

5 bell hooks, *Teaching to transgress: education as the practice of freedom*, Routledge, London 1994.



paradoxically, it was not the ambition of universalism to build bridges but rather the deep rootedness in specific experiences of oppression and struggle<sup>6</sup>.

- Finally, Freire's pedagogy is a pedagogy of movements because, in these recent decades, it has shown an extraordinary capacity to move through different contexts, reinventing itself in the light of new challenges. Freire's pedagogy is constitutively open, on-going and characterized by an internal dynamism of action-reflection.

## TOWARDS A PEDAGOGY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In order to remain faithful to Freirean inspiration today, it is very important to contribute to the action of social movements. The first contribution that we, who are engaged in cultural work, inside, outside and across the university, can offer, is to actually recognize and give visibility to social movements. It is not an easy undertaking due to their characteristics: they arise, disappear and constantly regenerate and in this process there are losses, sacrifices and a waste of energy.

Generally, we consider the 70s as the epoch par excellence of social movements. But from the 70s to the present the forms of participation and struggle have multiplied<sup>7</sup>. Of course, many times they express themselves through unrecognizable channels and methods: they are fragmentary or intermittent. I think that, at least in Italy, this characteristic is due precisely to the great vitality that social movements knew during the 70s and mainly to the criticism they developed towards power and the system of representation. This very profound and lucid analysis caused the current distrust of social movements towards institutionalization processes. The price of this mistrust is precisely the intermittent of the movements. On the other hand, social movements are silenced by the same power of the neoliberal system, in which we live, in many different ways. For example, through a constant attempt at the appropriation

6 C. T. Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes" Revisited: *Feminist Solidarity through Anticapitalist Struggles*, in "Signs", n. 2, 2003, pp. 499-535.

7 Burgio G., *La politica della moltitudine. Il progetto pedagogico dei movimenti sociali*, in "Bollettino della Fondazione Nazionale Vito Fazio-Allmayer", n. 2, 2011, pp. 53-77.

of languages, struggles and themes in social movements, aimed at the annulment of every transformative outcome. Just think of the populist organizations and the extreme right groups that are spreading in Europe and beyond and which, like social movements, claim popular roots, arise from political instability and feed on the desire for change.

In public representation, there is a very problematic assimilation between social movements and these other formations, even if they are characterized by different and generally contrasting methodologies and objectives.

Therefore, making the distinctive features of social movements explicit is a theoretical task of pedagogy of social movements, with relevant political consequences. From a Freirian perspective, we must say first of all that, without critical education, there are no social movements. If the profound reasons for social phenomena are not investigated, if political emotions are exploited, if the fulfilment of directives established by others prevents the personal exercise of thought, we cannot say that we are facing a social movement. A social movement exists only where the concern for change is accompanied by a commitment, both personal and collective, with history and there is circularity between action and reflection.

To affirm that there can be no social movement without critical education is a significant starting point but we must go further in exploring this complex relationship. Hence, I propose four perspectives which, in relation to education, allow us to define social movements as: learning contexts; pedagogical subjects and transformation agents; knowledge decolonization laboratories; generative spaces of pedagogical theories.

I will illustrate these four perspectives briefly by referring to the studies in the field of pedagogy of social movements and to my own experiences of empirical research: in particular, a collaborative ethnography carried out from 2011 to 2015 with the *Movimento de Mulheres Camponesas* – MMC (Peasant Women's Movement) in the State of Santa Catarina, in the South of Brazil<sup>8</sup>. The research aimed at interpreting and strengthening the educational dimension of the MMC's political

8 M. Muraca, *Educazione e movimenti sociali. Un'etnografia collaborativa con il Movimento di Donne Contadine a Santa Catarina (Brasile)*, Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2019.

practices. Deriving from a concept created by Kapoor<sup>9</sup>, we can define this movement as a subaltern social movement of the South. It began in Santa Catarina in 1983, during the period of democratic transition, from four genealogical roots: the Brazilian peasant movement; Freirean popular pedagogy and the theology of liberation; agroecology struggles and female and feminist movements. Since 2004, it has been organized as a national movement, and nowadays, it is active in most Brazilian states and focused on agroecology. This is an ecological paradigm of agriculture that, in opposition to the agribusiness model, aims to promote justice in relationships between human beings and between human and non-human beings.

So, as I wrote before, social movements are primarily contexts of practical, symbolic, linguistic, reflexive, ethical, theoretical, cultural and political learning<sup>10</sup>. That is, in social movements we learn to participate and to organize ourselves; to critically interpret reality and to build a common language; to reflect on our own practice by elaborating knowledge; to coexist with others, cultivating values such as sharing and solidarity; to recognize and relate to different interlocutors within the public sphere; to value differences and to confront one another in a non-violent way. We also learn new content and analysis categories. Such learning can include formal education contexts. Just think of the Zapatista schools or of the Landless schools. But more often such learning concerns the field of non-formal education and includes meetings, assemblies, moments of socialization and narration of experiences, decision-making paths, campaign organization, task allotment, strategy development, etc.

The scientific literature points out the characteristics of the educational processes that take place in social movements:

- First of all, they are rooted in a broader social fabric, thus reconnecting mind and body, knowledge and experience, theoretical elaboration and struggles.

9 D. Kapoor, *Globalization, dispossession and subaltern social movement (SSM). Learning in the South*, in A. Abdi, D. Kapoor (eds), *Global perspectives on adult education*, Palgrave Macmillan, London-New York 2009, pp. 71-92.

10 M. G. Gohn, *Movimentos sociais na contemporaneidade*, paper presented at the 33rd annual meeting of the ANPED (Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação), 2010.

- They are dialogical and interactive. They are based on the awareness that nobody educates anybody else, nobody educates himself, people educate among themselves, mediated by the world.
- They hold together the transformation of the world and the transformation of people.
- They are concerned with differences, which can promote mutual growth or, on the contrary, produce inequalities, focused on gender, class, cultural belonging.

But social movements are not just learning contexts, they are also pedagogical subjects and agents of social transformation with respect to the society with which they interact. In this sense, they can be defined as a critical conscience of society, prophets of utopian possibilities of the future, promoters of hope, protagonists of humanist mundialization, the voice of people and otherwise voiceless situations. It is exactly their marginal and hidden position, their character of minority and unrecognized forces that allow social movements to interpret reality with lucidity and to understand the need to commit themselves to change<sup>11</sup>. Moreover, within social movements it is possible to build alliances, capable of going beyond individual efforts, which – as we know – are not sufficient to trigger change. In agreement with Mayo, then, social movements constitute “the broader general context in which educational initiatives of social transformation can be effectively implemented”<sup>12</sup>.

As a third point, in relation to critical education, social movements can be considered as spaces for knowledge decolonization. Thanks to Latin American decolonial thinking, we know that coloniality differs from colonialism<sup>13</sup>. The latter, in fact, identifies a relationship of one nation's domination over another and, following decolonization struggles, it no longer exists. Coloniality, on the other hand, is a model of power experimented for the first time with the conquest of America but still operating within the current global structure. It runs through all spheres of existence: the authors speak of coloniality of power, being, gender,

11 M. Contini, *Elogio dello scarto e della resistenza*, CLUEB, Bologna 2009.

12 P. Mayo, *Gramsci, Freire e l'educazione degli adulti*, Carlo Delfino, Sassari 2008, p. 85.

13 A. Quijano, *Colonialidad del poder, eurocentrismo y America Latina*, in E. Lander (ed), *La colonialidad del saber: eurocentrismo y ciencias sociales perspectivas latino-americanas*, CLACSO, Buenos Aires 2000, pp. 201-245.

nature. In particular, coloniality of knowledge refers to the imposition of Eurocentrism and the expulsion of other symbolic systems, rationalities and knowledges. It also indicates the penetration of coloniality into epistemological, academic and disciplinary perspectives. According to Quijano<sup>14</sup>, coloniality of knowledge has been, and continues to be, the most profound and lasting form of violence against indigenous peoples, especially in America and Africa. According to Walsh<sup>15</sup>, the decolonial category outlines a permanent path, in which positions, horizons, alternatives, transgressions and creations can be traced. This process takes place in spaces of marginality, resistance and struggle. In particular, the decolonial vocation of social movements is articulated in two moments: a deconstructive moment of dominant pedagogies, which are based on epistemological silencing and ontological denial, and a constructive moment of alternatives that emerge from radically different communities, genealogies, rationalities, knowledges, systems of civilization and life<sup>16</sup>.

4) As a fourth and final aspect, social movements constitute generative spaces of theory. This perspective questions the dominant academic-scientific canons, which sanction the primacy of theory and prescribe the modelling of practice in applying the theory. This is a reversal that the Freirian pedagogy has in common with other critical approaches. For Walsh<sup>17</sup>, for example, decolonial pedagogy is a thinking struggle and a struggling thought. On the other hand, in feminism, theory is generated to name the intuitions, positions, inventions and practices of the political movement of women<sup>18</sup>. This dimension directly involves research and its social responsibilities: in fact, action-research, collaborative research and collective self-research experiences provide a privileged

14 *Ibidem*.

15 C. Walsh, *Introducción. Lo pedagógico y lo decolonial: Entretejiendo caminos*, in C. Walsh (ed), *Pedagogías decoloniales: Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir. TOMO I*, Abya Yala, Quito 2013, pp. 23-68.

16 S. Motta, A. M. Esteves, *Editorial: The Pedagogical Practices of Social Movements*, in "Interface: a journal for and about social movements", n. 6, 2014, pp. 1-26.

17 C. Walsh, *Gritos, grietas y siembras de vida: Entretejeres de lo pedagógico y lo decolonial*, in C. Walsh (ed), *Pedagogías decoloniales: Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir. TOMO II*, Abya Yala, Quito 2017, pp. 17-45.

18 A. M. Piussi, P. Mayo, *Co-costruire apprendimento e conoscenze come bene comune: partnership tra università e comunità per la ricerca socialmente responsabile e trasformativa*, paper presented at the Università di Verona, 2011.

opportunity to activate theorizing processes within the movements<sup>19</sup>.

## CONCLUSION

With this paper I wanted to offer a contribution to the emergence of a pedagogy of social movements. In Brazil, this field of study has a significant history, especially thanks to Freirean pedagogy, which, as Streck put it<sup>20</sup>, is a pedagogy of movements in a wide variety of senses. Regarding Italy, this perspective is almost absent, even though some fundamental precedents can be found in the thematization of the link between pedagogy and politics by some historical experiences of popular education (e.g. the school of don Lorenzo Milani at Barbiana, the nonviolent movement promoted by Aldo Capitini and the initiatives of Danilo Dolci in western Sicily) and by critical pedagogies (among them: the thought of Antonio Gramsci, Problematicism and Pedagogy of Sexual Difference). According to Freire, one of the tasks of the popular educator is to show the possibility of hope, because without hope the struggle is a violent confrontation with a taste of revenge<sup>21</sup>. This paper aimed to strengthen our hope and our struggle, starting from the recognition of the social movements' daily, intelligent and often invisible commitment, that allows people, living beings and the planet itself to continue to live with a minimum of dignity, despite the violence and cruelty of the neo-liberal system.

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19 Y. Espinosa, D. Gómez, M. Lugones, K. Ochoa, *Reflexiones pedagógicas en torno al feminismo descolonial: Una conversa en cuatro voces*, in Walsh C. (ed), *Pedagogías decoloniales: Prácticas insurgentes de resistir, (re)existir y (re)vivir. Tomo IV. Hacia el re-existir y el re-vivir*, Abya Yala, Quito 2013, pp. 403-442.

20 D. R. Streck, *Uma pedagogia em movimento: os movimentos sociais na obra de Paulo Freire*, cit.

21 P. Freire, *A pedagogia da esperança: um reencontro com a pedagogia do oprimido*, Paz e Terra, Rio de Janeiro 2003.

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■ WILLIAM SOARES DOS SANTOS

# NARRATION AND DIALOGUE IN DANILO DOLCI AND PAULO FREIRE

Narrative is a very particular type of discourse. It has a specific structure and it is used, mainly, as a way of recapitulation of past experiences<sup>1 2 3</sup>. I will not have time to explore all its complexities, but it is important, for our purpose here, to say that the narrative discourse has a lot of impact in our everyday lives because, among other elements, it carries within multiple meanings related not only to the moment of the narration itself and to its theme, but also connected to who we are and the identity constructions we make of ourselves and of those around us.

Bastos and Santos<sup>4</sup>, writing about the narratives in interviews, observe that in dealing with narratives, the interviewees should not be seen just as a source of information for a specific research, but as someone who constructs, through the narrative process, a discourse about something important to his or her existence. In a previous research<sup>5</sup>, I have demonstrated how narrative is a power tool used by converted people to discursively construct their attachment to new religious principles, but it is also a very strong tool to implement democratic practices of education

1 W. Labov and J. Waletzky, *Narrative Analysis: oral versions of personal experience*, In *Essays on the verbal and visual arts*, University of Washington Press, Seattle/Washington 1967, pp. 123-144.

2 W. Labov, *Language in the Inner City: Studies in the Black English Vernacular*, University of Pennsylvania Press, Pennsylvania 1972.

3 L.C. Bastos, *Contando estórias em contextos espontâneos e institucionais – uma introdução ao estudo da narrativa*, In “Caleidoscópio” Vol 3, n. 2., Ed. Unisinos, 2005, pp. 74-87.

4 L.C. Bastos and W. S. dos Santos, *Caramba, e eu era assim, pelo amor de Deus” – a perspectiva do presente na reconstrução identitária em narrativas de conversão religiosa*, In I. Magalhães, M. Grigoletto and M.J. Coracine (Orgs) *Práticas Identitárias: Língua e Discurso*, Claraluz, São Carlos 2006, pp. 223-234.

5 W.S dos Santos, *O longo Caminho até Damasco: rede de mudança e fluxo de mudança em narrativas de conversão religiosa*. Tese de Doutorado. PUC-Rio. 2007.

since, as Charlotte Linde<sup>6</sup> observes, we make coherence of our world through the use of narratives.

The aspect of the narrative discourse I'm most concerned with here is what Jerome Bruner<sup>7</sup> calls the narrative principle in education. It refers to the development of ways of thinking and feeling that help children (and people in general) to develop a version of the world in which they can build a place for themselves. Reviewing the way of dealing with the educational process of both Paulo Freire and Danilo Dolci, it is clear that they incorporated this principle in their works. Both of them also applied in their works the principle studied by John L. Austin<sup>8</sup>, which understands that in developing discourse, we are producing changes in the social world. Margaretha Järvinen<sup>9</sup> also calls attention to the fact that it is important to understand the narratives as a discourse which is profound related to the issues of the present existence of the narrator. According to Järvinen, "this theoretical approach presents an alternative to both subjectivist approaches, that continue the search for the solitary, true self behind the life histories, and to structuralist approaches, in which the self and its past experience disappears". Also, according to Järvinen, when we investigate narratives in their social aspect, we can focus on the perspective of the present without losing sight of the past and emphasizing the interactionist dimensions of life histories, paying attention to the people and their ongoing projects. This perspective also echoes the viewpoints about narrative discourse developed by Paul Ricoeur<sup>10</sup>.

For Bruner, the educator must present the disciplinary contents with an intuitive account that is perceptible to the student, returning to the subject later with a more complex report, reviewing the subject as many times as necessary until the student fully grasps the subject. In this way, it is possible to teach honestly to any child (or adult) over all areas of knowledge using a narrative perspective. It is through the use of language that the student understands the connections between his/her daily life

6 C. Linde, *Life Stories – The Creation of Coherence*, Oxford University Press, New York 1993.

7 J. Bruner, *Acts of meaning*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge 1990.

8 J.L Austin, *How to do Things with Words*, Oxford University Press, London 1962.

9 M. Järvinen, *Life Histories and the Perspective of the Present*, In "Narrative Inquiry", 14(1), John Benjamins, Amsterdam 2004, pp.45-68.

10 P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative* (Vol. 1), University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1984.

and perceives the connections of the language of the common sense with the scientific language, for instance. Bruner concluded that knowledge becomes more appropriate when the learner discovers it through their own cognitive efforts. Thus, the new knowledge is related to what was previously known, no matter how difficult it is to understand the area addressed, it can be represented in simpler ways, making it more accessible to the student. Discourse (and particularly narrative discourse), being one of the main tools used by the teacher, plays a fundamental role to help in the understanding between teachers and students. Giusy Randazzo<sup>11</sup>, in his article about a particular kind of methodology involving narratives (based in Danilo Dolci's methodology), says that it

highlights the instrumental and enriching value, which allows to create a space and a time in which everyone has the privilege - so it now seems in this society - to be freely himself, to show the power of his own resources in the community and to draw on from the mutual comparison also to the resources of the other. An ethic in which building together everyone builds better and learns to learn<sup>12</sup>.

One of the common grounds between the works of Paulo Freire and Danilo Dolci was that the societies in which they lived and produced, in the twentieth century, were basically formed by few riches and a great mass of poor people who strive to live around the centres where feeble forms of capitalism were emerging. Let's see each of their works separately to have a better glimpse how they use narrative discourse in order to construct their educational process.

## PAULO FREIRE AND THE USE OF NARRATIVE DISCOURSE IN EDUCATION

Throughout his work as a teacher, Paulo Freire perceived the many forms in which great part of the people of poor cities in Brazil were subjugated

11 G. Randazzo, *Per una scuola democratica: la dialettica del dialogo: metodologia della Narrazione e della Riflessione*, in "Educazione Democratica", 2, 2011, p.216.

12 "(...) mette in evidenza il valore strumentale e arricchente, che permette di creare uno spazio e un tempo in cui ognuno ha il privilegio – così sembra ormai in questa società – di essere liberamente se stesso, di mostrare in comunità il potere delle proprie risorse e di attingere dal confronto reciproco anche alle risorse dell'altro. Un'etica in cui costruendo insieme si costruisce meglio e s'impara ad apprendere".

and we can say, following the perception he constructed, that their suffering, their poorness, their limited mindset made them oppressed people. So, discussing the influence of oppression in the lives of the people who strived to survive in that difficult environment was one of his prior researches in the years to come.

Paulo Freire started to work as a teacher while he was still a student at high school. He received a scholarship to study in a private institution and in return started working as an assistant teacher. But it was his direct contact with poor and illiterate people, that gave him the opportunity to think about the educational process in another level than the simple transmission of knowledge. He considered that the education is an important toll in the process of freedom.

In the core of the educational experience of Paulo Freire was the pursue of a “New Society”, as he wrote in his book *The importance of the act of reading (A importância do ato de ler)*, this society would be without any kind of exploitation. It would be a place in which no men nor woman, nor any class would exploit the work force of any other human being. It is a society in which there is no privilege to those who work with pen regarding to those who work in factories or in farms. Everybody would be considered a worker in the service of the common wellbeing.

Concerned with the illiteracy of a huge number of adults in Brazil, Paulo Freire developed a method (known as “método Paulo Freire” or, in English “Paulo Freire’s method”) to teach adults to read and write. His method started from the simple premise that people would be more interested and able to learn reading and writing with words of their own world. Thus, Paulo Freire and his group, before beginning the classes, made a research to know the community, the works people were involved in and the words the people used in their daily lives. From this research they would develop a material to start their work. He firstly used the methodology in his work as a teacher in his hometown, Recife, but it was only in 1962 that he had the opportunity to put his method in practice in a larger scale. It was in the city of Angicos, in an experience that entered to History as “the 40 hours of Angicos” because he and his group of teachers, by applying his method, were able to teach 300 hundred people (all of them from the working class) to read and write in forty hours of lessons. Angicos is an inner city in the “sertão” (draught areas) of the State

of Rio Grande do Norte, at the northeast region of Brazil. In the process of applying his methodology, the narrative was a central element of education. Paulo Freire and his group not only brought letters and words to be learned, but they implemented the production of narratives of story lives in their classes. Narrating their stories, people could perceive how their illiteracy made their positions very restrict in the world they lived. The reality them was rash and the indices of alliteration was very high. Unable to perceive that a development in education can bring also an economic development, the local elite at the time called the process as “the communist plague”. In a similar way, in some places of Brazil (even today) many projects of social transformation are labelled by the local elites as communist or any equivalent label that can represent the expression of threat to their stablished *status quo*. But the process developed by Paulo Freire in his experience in Angicos gave good results: all enrolled in the course were able to read and write at its end. This positive outcome called the attention of the Brazilian central authorities at the time. Even the governor of the State of Rio Grande do Norte, Aloízio Alves, and the president of Brazil, João Goulart (also known as “Jango”), were present at the end of the course. Due to his work at Angicos, in the following year (1963) Paulo Freire was invited by the Brazilian Ministry of Education to create the National Program of Education, a work that was interrupt by the military coup of 1964, in which the president was deposed and many people were persecuted, put into prison or had to exile in order not to die, as many did. In this new scenario, the work of Paulo Freire was accused of subversive. He was put into prison and, after, exiled from Brazil. Even today the methodological principles developed by Freire are used in different parts of the world helping people from different backgrounds to learn how to read and write. But his method is much more than that. Using the narrative principle in classes teachers can provide a space for their students express their lives and gain confidence for overcoming their difficulties in a collective way. It is a pedagogical principle that seeks the expression of liberty from all societal tethers.

## DANILO DOLCI AND USE OF NARRATIVE FOR A RECIPROCAL MAIEUTIC

Contemporary of Paulo Freire, the Italian educator Danilo Dolci de-

veloped a very important educational work at Sicily, one of the poorest places of Italy at the time. In many ways, Danilo Dolci was a pioneer in using the narrative discourse as an educational principle. One of his most important innovative actions was his work with narratives in the context of workers and other communitarian associations, which gave the possibility for very poor people to have their histories listened in social spaces for mutual cooperation. Danilo Dolci, as puts Vittoria<sup>13</sup>, made the community narrate.

In one of his most insightful books, called *Peasant Conversations* (*Conversazioni contadini*), Danilo Dolci brings us some of the real examples of the application of his methodology of reciprocal maieutic in collective dialogues taken at the communal centre of the poor neighbourhood of Spine Sante, in Sicily. Important issues were brought to that community and, during the process of narration, they had the opportunity to express their opinions and, many times, learned how to resolve some of their problems through the narrative process developed by Dolci. With the reciprocal maieutic, Dolci breaks the cycle of education as a simple way of knowledge transmission and puts the dialogue in the centre of the educational process.

In registering these experiences in a book, Danilo Dolci provides us with the perception that the oppressed people don't have many spaces to narrate and organize themselves collectively in order to construct knowledge about the world or to create the ethics of their coexistence. But, when this space is provided, people feel empowered to take their lives in their own hands and transform to better their societies.

In one example brought in the book, the community discusses the problem of a teacher who asks for a false certificate in order to get a job. The people of the community have the opportunity to express different views about the question through the narrativization process, conducted by Dolci with the reciprocal maieutic. Different from the classical Socratic perspective, the questions made are never in one direction, or produced by someone who already has a solution. On the contrary, all have

13 A. Vigilante, *Danilo Dolci: uma revolução comunicativa*, In P. Vittoria and A. Vigilante, *Pedagogias da Libertação. Estudos sobre Freire, Boal, Capitini e Dolci*, Quartet / FAPERJ, Rio de Janeiro 2013.

the right to narrate their own perceptions and provide solution. Several ethical elements are affronted: if they don't give the certificate for the teacher, he is not going to have a job position, but if they give, they will lie. Narrating they arrive at a solution that congregates the tensions and different views of the issue.

Dealing with fascism through the counter production of narratives

Different times create their own forms of fascisms no matter what they are called. Paulo Freire and Danilo Dolci had to face the fascisms of their times. Bringing back the memory of their work is a continual reminder that we have to face the fascisms of our own times. And they are a lot, no matter their names, they pervade many aspects of the social life of many different countries.

Maybe many younger people of our time don't know (or were not appropriately taught) about the destructive forces of fascism. Maybe they don't know, for example, that during the process of transforming the German society into a nazist society the hitlerist regime spread narratives to diminish the Jewish people and construct the idea that they were inferior beings with racial categorisations. The hitlerist regime also made use of narratives which the main objective was to destroy the dignity of the Germans, to cancel their individuality and submit them to the desires of the forces that conducted that dictatorial regime. Maybe they don't know how the paramilitary organisation called Hitler Youth substituted the schools with the main goal of destroying the capability of criticism and produce people for the blind belief in the regime.

The propaganda machine of the nazist regime produced the mass hypnosés, the fanaticism that, step by step, substituted the democracy. And, at the right moment, came the burnings of forbidden books, persecutions, imprisonments with false or absurd accusations and the fires at the synagogues in the whole country accompanied by shouts as "put the Jewish in the flames" and they put, as we know.

All of us who are committed to building democratic societies need, as soon as possible, to realise the importance of narratives in the educational process of our students. All over the world we have been witnessing the growth of fascist narratives and people engaging in these narratives without realising their destructive power or without any knowledge that these narratives have caused the destruction of thousands of lives in the

past. Today these narratives are much more pernicious because they navigate through the channels of the world wide web. They arrive decoded in personal messages that are previously and accurately constructed through the capture of personal data and the use of algorithms.

In the centre of all this process is the attempt against democracy. The democracy principles have been undermined by the forces of capitalism which always makes use of the technology for its own purposes of domination. Paolo Vittoria<sup>14</sup> is very aware of this problematic when, writing about the work of Danilo Dolci, he says that:

Capitalism is a way out, an impediment to the evolution of the species. Since dominium is made mainly of misleading relations, the true revolution will consist in the conversion of domain relations, in the spreading of intimately open, communicative, and creative maieutic structures throughout the social body. Education is not just about family and school, it is not inculturation of the new generations, nor is it limited to so-called adult education. The maieutics covers the whole of society<sup>15</sup>.

More than ever, the works of Paulo Freire and Danilo Dolci are a striking reminder that we need, more than urgently, to create educational spaces in which educators and learners can be aware that fascist narratives are destructive. We urgently need to create spaces to produce our own counter narratives. Narratives that combine education and liberation from all forms of oppression and violence and that lead us to build a world with true equality and justice for all.

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14 P. Vittoria, *ibid*, p. 298.

15 O capitalismo é uma rua sem saída, um impedimento na evolução da espécie. Uma vez que o domínio é feito, sobretudo, de relações enganosas, a verdadeira revolução consistirá na conversão das relações de domínio, na disseminação em todo o corpo social de estruturas maiêuticas intimamente abertas, comunicativas e criativas. A educação não tem a ver apenas com a família e com a escola, não é inculturação das novas gerações, nem se limita à assim denominada educação dos adultos. A maiêutica abarca toda a sociedade.



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■ MARIA PAOLA ROTTINO

# A PAULO FREIRE-BASED COMMUNITY EDUCATION APPROACH IN VENTIMIGLIA: UNDERSTANDING THE COMPLEXITY OF THE MIGRANTS' CRISIS AT THE FRENCH-ITALIAN BORDER

## INTRODUCTION

This article<sup>1</sup> traces the intricacies of complexity and its challenges as they have been experienced through a community education approach based on Paulo Freire's and Augusto Boal's work. This approach has been employed to understand the stories and facts relating to the ongoing flux of migrants at the France-Italy border in the Italian town of Ventimiglia. Although the events reported here occurred in the middle of the migration crisis in 2015-2018, the challenges facing those who were then involved have not been unpinned yet.

Most of the actors involved in this story chose the only humanitarian approach possible to deal with an emergency, which saw around 1,000 migrants suddenly storming into the streets of Ventimiglia; a town with a population of 26,000 inhabitants. A few actors, the so-called left-wing activists, exposed themselves personally and politically. This

1 Many hanks to Anna Costantino, for her participation in the composition of the article, for linguistic and stylistic suggestions.

resulted in them being marginalised by many of the actors representing the authorities and, sometimes, being detained by the Police. The Association “Popoli in Arte”, on behalf of which I write, has taken a different approach to the story. Drawing on Paulo Freire’s pedagogy, the Association, with a volunteering team of four, have chosen a different type of practice, which has taken into account most of the actors with whom the oppressed, that is, the migrants, have come into contact across the French-Italian border. We have decided to face the migration emergency by getting out there in the field and seeking to figure out the vicissitudes and agendas of the immigrants, very often conflicting and clashing with the agendas and the ideological stances of the other actors involved.

Over the years, we have spoken to the immigrants on a regular basis, listened to them while visiting them in their shelters. We got to know their life stories, and the circumstances that have driven them to flee their countries. We heard of and witnessed cases of torture from authorities in Africa and in Europe. We learnt how to identify the duration of their permanence in Europe and their health conditions. We observed their routines and those of the other actors acting in the background of the emergency: NGOs, activists, the French and Italian police, the Catholic Church, and ordinary citizens. We have sought to raise awareness of the situation by facilitating a dialogue amongst the parts involved. This has entailed relentless educational work to formally and informally connect the people involved such as locals, social workers and activists; sometimes more visibly (depending on the resources available), sometimes less visibly. This has not meant that the Association has not supported humanitarian endeavours in specific occasions. On the contrary, our humanitarian work has always coalesced into seeking to understand the present and openly interpret it.

Methodologically, we have taken fieldnotes, which have been regularly shared and discussed by the volunteers’ team. We have gained insights that have allowed us to put together a picture of the migrants’ emergency, which is far from being unambiguous. All this, we claim, might perhaps forge a new form of resistance, which to us means positioning ourselves in the middle of all the positions that have come to shape the

‘migrants’ crisis’, so that we can build a common vision and struggle to transform the unquestioned narrative.

## THE CHALLENGE OF COMPLEXITY

Eyewitnesses. To live at the border between Italy and France on the sea-coast, while being part of an association linked to Paulo Freire’s legacy, has become a real challenge over the last four years. We call it the challenge of complexity and we claim that the following story is a practical example of how critical pedagogy, specifically, a Freirean approach to education, can display its potential in dealing with the crucial issues we face nowadays in Europe.

The beginning. Since June 2015 thousands of migrants have passed through the Italian border town of Ventimiglia; back and forward between France and Italy.

The “Associazione Popoli in Arte” works in the field of community education. It was established in 2007 in Italy with the aim of engendering an international cooperation approach based on mutual exchanges. After several partnerships developed in Brazil, in Guinée Conakry, and currently in Haiti, and since 2015, at home, in Italy, we have become eyewitnesses of the ongoing global changes as they have displayed just outside Ventimiglia. Since 2015 we have sought to keep a record of the facts and events concerning the migrant crisis. Those of us who were specifically involved in the work with the migrants have critically reflected on those notes through weekly briefings and discussions.

The story began in mid-June 2015. The French authorities closed the French borders and blocked a group of migrants who was walking to France. One Sunday morning, the migrants climbed up on some sea rocks, right at the Franco-Italian border (the so called “Low Border of St. Luigi”). According to the French authorities, the Schengen Agreement<sup>2</sup> relating to the freedom of circulation of people in Europe had been broken. That triggered a state of alert. The situation was believed to be solved shortly. Unfortunately, that was not the case. The emergency is still ongoing.

2 [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/borders-and-visas/schengen_en)

## A DOUBLE SECURITY SYSTEM

In 2015 and 2016 the number of migrants passing through Ventimiglia was around 1,000 a day; high for a town of 26,000 inhabitants. However, from the end of 2016 onward the number of migrants in transit sharply decreased.

A double security system has been built around the passage of migrants, both on the French and Italian border: a system that is still operating. At the so-called Higher Border, at the St. Luigi check point, the French Police has set up two containers in which they lock for hours migrants who have been caught moving on foot or by the local train to Nice. It is impossible to establish for how many hours the migrants are kept in those conditions. You can imagine a group of people (up to 30) locked in darkness within a container: men and women, some of whom are pregnant. Their mobiles and, eventually, their documents, and any of their belongings are being taken away. Their detention could be estimated between a couple of hours up to 12 hours. Sometimes their shoes are cut off: the sole is removed in order to refrain them from leaving. On the other side, on the Italian territory, the Italian police has a migrant's check point in place. Migrants who have been caught are sent to Southern Italy by local transport such as town busses. Initially, the raids used to take place at the sunset or later in the evening.

Since 2016, those raids started to take place at any time, even at 11 a.m., and everywhere in town, especially around the train station of Ventimiglia; in bars, public garden and in the street. The goal has always been to catch from 50 to 100 migrants a day and the general goal was to keep the number of migrants in town under the 200 units. Currently, the target has been reached. Therefore, the frequency of the raids has varied. They could take place from two to three times a week. From late 2017 and from 2018 onward the arrivals from Africa plunged significantly because of the Italian and European agreements with Libya and with other countries of West Africa, mainly Niger<sup>3</sup>. However, the Balkan route is still active. Several migrants have lost opportunities to live in Germany or somewhere else in Northern Europe. In those cir-

3 <https://www.osservatoriodiritti.it/2019/02/08/accordo-italia-libia-migranti/>

cumstances, they have started to be sent back to Italy, at times even by plane. From Milan, several came back to Ventimiglia.

## INFORMAL AND ILLEGAL ECONOMY

Alongside the transit of migrants, an informal and, quite often, illegal economy has flourished. Such an economy includes a well organised smuggling system, women trafficking, prostitution, drug dealing, along which other expedients for survival emerged. The price for the smuggling of migrants across the border has varied, ranging from €50,00 per migrant to €150,00 during the first week in 2015. Since then, the price stagnated around € 150,00 per migrant. The smugglers are mostly French – North African convicted criminals who speak Arabic and do not always rely on the local Italian criminals. Women trafficking developed later in time because it was only in 2016, to a greater extent than in 2015, that the passage of women migrants became visible, even though women outnumbered men by 10% across the overall number of the migrants. The racket of prostitution, made especially of Nigerian women and targeting the large male population of migrants, was established in 2016. Many young Eritrean women were employed or worked independently as prostitutes for Italian clients in order to earn money to pay their passage to France. Since 2016, the practice of drug dealing has become common among migrants in order to earn money to cross the border to France.

At a certain point in time in 2017, several informal camps were set up all along the river Roya on the West part of the town. There, in the camps, a system of ranks emerged: shoes which were received for free from the local Caritas<sup>4</sup>, or other charity organisations, were re-sold for a prize ranging from €2,00 to €3,00 to new migrants who did not know that these goods were provided for free. This system worked even for blankets that became the walls for shelters or even huts between 2017 and 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Local Caritas is one of the major charities dealing with migration, which is run by the local Catholic Church. <https://www.caritas.org/>

## NOW IN THE DEADLOCK

For the migrants, the situation has not changed throughout the years. Rather, it worsened and reached a deadlock. According to the Common European Asylum System<sup>5</sup> and its Dublin regulation (Dublin III, 2013), the first country a migrant reaches in Europe is the one responsible for their reception. In other words, the country of the first landing is obliged to carry out the procedure to declare and acknowledge the refugee status and ensure the reception of a migrant during that entire process. Therefore, the majority of those entering Europe through the Italian territory are obliged by the law to stay in Italy. Unluckily, most of the migrants who reach Italy do not intend to stay and they move illegally towards other destinations. In many cases, they are caught by the French police after crossing the border and are sent back to Ventimiglia. Ventimiglia, as a place of transit, brings to the fore all the backlashes of the Dublin regulation. Alongside with those migrants who seek to go to another country passing by Ventimiglia, other migrants flow into the town: they are the victims of the First and the Second Security Decree (*Decreto Sicurezza*) (L. 132/1.12. 2018 and L. 53/14.06 2019) This has reduced the chances to obtain the legal documentation required to stay and to find their own way to live in Italy. Even those migrants arrive in Ventimiglia knowing that in there they can find better chances to survive than in other towns in Italy.

In Ventimiglia the inconsistency and flaws of the legal procedures and current law is noticeable. If you sit down along the routes of migrants and spend some hours talking to them, you know it. Since 2015, Popoli in Arte have been doing this once – twice a week. By volunteering at the canteen of the Red Cross Camp (the Roya Camp), we have managed to visit the places where the migrants have joined together. To listen to the migrants speaking is like taking an intensive course in International Socio-Political Studies. Political activists from West Africa and from Sudan, who have just passed by, are followed by people from many other countries in search of a better life. Then you can encounter Syrians, people from the Middle East and from Pakistan escaping from instable

5 [https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum_en)



regions; people persecuted for any sort of reasons; many young Eritreans leaving the long lasting and harsh military service under which they should serve in their country. You can also see many Gambians persecuted in their country for their sexual orientation; merchants, unskilled-workers, young university students, teachers, skilled-workers and so on in what is a very complex mix of people. Since the beginning, some nationalities emerged over the others as domineering, such as the Nigerians. In Ventimiglia we have indeed witnessed a local act within the theatre of global processes.

### THE COUNTERPART, THE ITALIANS

However, another side of the story needs to be unravelled; a side that increases the complexity of the situation. It refers to the involvement of the Italian, one of the counterparts. The population of Ventimiglia adopted a variety of stances, sometimes consisting in very spontaneous reactions. For instance, at the very beginning of the events, a woman turned up at the train station of Ventimiglia with a home-made cake for the migrants' kids. Unfortunately, in that occasion, there were so many kids that she did not know what to do with her cake.

However, curiosity and willingness to help attracted many people, as it happens after an earthquake, for example. Immediately, the Red Cross was officially put in charge to deal with the situation. An enclosed camp run by the Italian Red Cross was set up near the train station. Furthermore, in the summer of 2015, an informal camp had been established on the sea rocks as a result of the early weave of migrants trying to escape from the Italian and French Police. This camp, named Balzi Rossi Camp, was joined by left-wing activists, both locals and from different parts of Italy. At the end of September 2015, this informal camp had been cleared out forcefully through a massive police operation. The Red Cross Camp did not interfere with the life of the Balzi Rossi camp. Yet, from mid-June up to the end of July, the Red Cross started supporting the migrants at the Balzi Rossi Camp. This camp was independent from another camp in town which was set up by the Italian Government a week after the first emergency. The management of this Camp was entrusted to the Italian Red Cross. However, the condition was that only

the migrants could access this camp upon leaving their fingerprints to the Red Cross staff. Therefore, in 2015 anyone willing to know better the situation so to help must go through the Balzi Rossi camp.

As we go on with tracing the treads of complexity, it is important to consider how the Italian placed themselves against this landscape. Complexity among the helpers was already visible in the first year, but it emerged as difference and hostility the year after. Progressively, the press, both local and national, trivialised the situation. There has been a tendency to look at the situation simplistically. The migrants became either a question of humanitarian emergency, which portrayed the Italian at their side as 'the good ones'; or, they were viewed as a law and order issue; that is, an issue relating to hygiene and public decency. From the outset, nobody in the mainstream press wrote about the situation as a political issue and, even less, as a historical turning point. The humanitarian emergency continued to be perceived simplistically.

Interestingly, the various power agencies which supported the migrants on a daily basis, such as the local Catholic Church, did not take any political position. This contributed to reinforcing the narrative that it was a humanitarian emergency. Groups who recognized themselves as part of the NoBorders Movement (then active in Calais, France) were the ones who raised the migration issue as a political one; and they were tolerated for a while. Their work contributed to opening the Balzi Rossi Camp, which they supported. However, from the end of September 2015, they were directly attacked through several measures of control which the police exercised upon the activists<sup>1</sup>. Some of those measures included forbidding some of the activists staying in Ventimiglia and in neighbouring towns as well as charging four activist leaders with being dangerous to the public, which restricted their freedom of movement and speech in public places. In conclusion, the trivialisation of the situation deepened. Thus, in the case of Ventimiglia, the Gianchette Camp, a camp set up inside a Catholic parish and tolerated by the authorities for around one year, from June 2016 to August 2018, was eventually closed down by the *Prefettura*, the local representative office of the Ministry of Interior.

1 Since 2015, police forces applied penalties against activists which date back to old fascist laws; specifically the prohibition to transit and stay in Ventimiglia.

No more space was left for those willing to support the migrants. Currently, amongst the inhabitants of Ventimiglia and the authorities order, hygiene and public decorum are the most popular words in the discourse surrounding the migration crisis.

## THE INHABITANTS OF VENTIMIGLIA

Complexity has displayed other actors: that is, the inhabitants of Ventimiglia. Ventimiglia is a working-class city, with over 50% of its inhabitants being descendants of migrants from Southern Italy. Ventimiglia is a border town that for decades has provided manpower to neighbouring Monte Carlo, situated at a 15-minute ride from Ventimiglia. Furthermore, it must be mentioned that the Local Council has been dismissed since it was charged with Mafia infiltration no longer than 10 years ago. Furthermore, Ventimiglia claims to be a touristic resort as it has some rather exclusive beaches in the area. It is also rich in history dating back to pre-historical times which enjoyed its peak during the Medieval period. Its cathedral is a great example of Romanesque style. The socio-cultural fabric of Ventimiglia is also complex

Many authorities have dealt with the migration emergency: the Local Council, the local Catholic Church, the *Prefettura* of Imperia, different police corps, and the Red Cross at the regional level, already extensively mentioned. Not all of them have always agreed with each other over the years. However, there is something else to consider.

In a place like Ventimiglia everybody has acquaintances, if not relatives working with or linked to these institutions. This intermingling of relationships has played an important role in the overall drama since these bonds sometimes put in contact actors who could not be more distant for background, age, conditions of life, and roles in the society. For example, there have been cases of policemen who hoped to be off-duty when they learnt that they would be engaged in operations of evacuation of an unofficial migrants' camp. There have also been cases in which devoted Catholics put in contact migrants to human smugglers, or to other activists so that migrants could cross the border to France; or cases in which the Ventimiglia's local Council, run by a left-wing administration between 2014 and 2019, prevented the distribution of food in the

streets for a long period whenever this was carried out by Italian activists. Moreover, the Council was particularly keen in fining the French or German activists who broke the ruling concerning how to deal with the migrants. For years, the German activists have been bringing the migrants food in the street every evening. The Council decided that that duty was to be fulfilled by the Caritas instead in its centre and only at lunchtime, which would allow for the French to bring food in the evening.

The same local administration supported a local Committee in May – June 2016 in order to put pressure on the Minister of the Interior to open a new transit camp run by the Red Cross. Through pressures from this Committee (Committee Article 2), the local Town Hall asked the Ministry of Interior to set up a “Camp of Transit”. This Camp of Transit became the Roya Camp. It was set up along the river Roya, situated 4-km away from Ventimiglia, and allowed access to volunteers outside the Red Cross network. Personally, I go every week to the camp. In order to do so, I have to request a permission weekly from *Prefettura* in order to gain access to the camp. As I go on by doing examples, I hope to be able to elaborate even more on the meaning that complexity has acquired so far in our work.

Yet, I would like to spend some words on those who have helped the migrants in Ventimiglia. They also constitute a whole incoherent world. We have spoken to individuals, both local and coming from outside Ventimiglia, who have had a life-changing experience after these events. We have also witnessed the involvement of national and international NGOs: the *Terre des Hommes*, *Médecins sans Frontières*, Save the Children, Oxfam in partnership with the Waldensian Deaconry, including smaller organisations such as WeWorld). Other actors have included the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), groups and committees, small and large associations like the nearby French *Roya Citoyenne*; anarchists, left-wing activists, militants from the Italian social centres – local as well as from over Northern Italy and from Spain – people who had experienced the life of the camp in Calais (NoBorders Movement) and some sections of the Catholic world: groups of Scouts from around Italy, the Emmaus Communities and the Sant’Egidio Community and so forth. In 2016, Amnesty International collected and

published some of the migrants' stories in their annual report<sup>2</sup>. All their efforts have been in vain, since every actor was more focused on themselves than on the cause of opening the borders. This was the case even though they help the migrants in a number of instances and reported issues as they arose.

## REFLECTING OVER OUR PRACTICE

Although being a very small association, *Popoli in Arte* has tried hard to stay in touch with all the actors, by focusing on the political denunciation of these actions and promoting advocacy for the oppressed, faithful to Freire's pedagogy, as mentioned earlier. Thus, in 2015 – 2016, we promoted training for the migrants and called for meetings which were successful in establishing a local Committee (Committee Article 2). It meant that in 2016 we set up a two-month program of street education, which involved listening to the migrants' stories and giving them legal advice. This was financed and had as partner the NGO "WeWorld"<sup>3</sup>. It meant to try to liaise with an Charity from Milan and Bergamo, linked to Progetto 20k<sup>4</sup>, and with the Melting Pot Network<sup>5</sup> all together we opened a service in Ventimiglia, the Eufemia Point<sup>6</sup>, a space for the free recharging of mobile-phones which lasted one year and half (July 2017 – December 2018). It meant to establish links with activists on the northern Italian borders (Como, Brennero, Trieste) by putting them in contact with each other and organising a meeting which took place in Trento (June 2018).

It meant for us to attend compulsory courses in order to become legal guardians of minors. It meant to liaise with and establishing partnerships such the Red Cross such as the Monegasque one. It meant to be in touch with many activists on regular basis and to readdress the issue on a political level. It meant to participate in and support a Rally which took place in Ventimiglia on July 14<sup>th</sup> in 2018, which was organized by

2 <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/EUR3050042016ITALIAN.PDF>

3 <https://www.weworld.it/progetto-sostegno-migranti/>

4 <https://www.facebook.com/progetto20k/>

5 <https://www.meltingpot.org/>

6 <https://www.produzionidalbasso.com/project/eufemia-info-legal-point/>

Progetto 20k from Bergamo and Milan. It meant to participate in a series of events, which were organized by various NGO's, by the Catholic Church, by the Town Hall and other institutions.

Popoli in Arte is always ready and willing to unify the parts which support the cause of the migrants. We try to keep updated on everything has been happening in town concerning the migrants' issue; we try to capture the mood of the residents, activists and volunteers in order to gauge whether actors can be liaised and connected in a common endeavour. Unfortunately, we did not reach any resolution on this.

We are fully aware that we do not have enough strength and notoriety to be acknowledged as a point of reference for all the actors involved. Nevertheless, Popoli in Arte has continued to be involved in the migrant situation by staying on the field and resisting; by listening to the narratives reported by the actors involved seeking to understand the decisions they made and looking at how those decisions evolved into action. Popoli in Arte claims its own understanding of resistance. To us, this means fostering a dialogical relationship with everybody; remaining vigilant towards the narratives portraying the migrants issue only as a humanitarian issue or as an issue of law and order. To us, resistance is to remain in the middle-ground so that we can eschew bias.

The possibility of a dialogue between all the actors has become weaker and weaker; and if the dialogue is difficult with whoever is on your side, it becomes even harder with those who have military power and come to Ventimiglia to exercise it. Political claims have hardly been listened to, since they tend to be criminalized by the media, overrun by mainstream concerns with law and order. Those claims also tend to be silenced by police measures, but also tend to be exploited and misled by radical groups, which, even being allegedly on the migrants' side, force them towards political positions which do not belong to the migrants. Even though the situation is so critical, it does not mean that we intend to give up. For us, political claims must be raised in the name of the Human Rights, by assuming the risk of questioning. We are aware that an activation of the Oppressed is slow to take off, as we have seen in several movements in South America during the decolonization years.

In conclusion, Freirean approach has helped us identify and overcome ideological positions. It has allowed us to describe and understand spe-

cific power relationships and to re-invest in different strategies in order to allow people to join together, and to nourish the hope for world citizenship.

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7 In community education there is an exchange au pair among the educators and the learners/ members of the community. The educator becomes engaged in the story of the Oppressed not only as a professional but also as an activist. The educator does not give answers. Rather, their role is asking the members of the community questions. He/she guides the community through a reading of the meaning of words and through an analysis of the status quo and their contradictions. The educator leads the community through an understanding of the topic on which the community have focused so that their members progressively understand their oppression. Once the community become aware of their oppression, the educator supports the process of self-organization.





## Part II

# Critical Education, Marxism and Crisis of Democracy



■ E. WAYNE ROSS

# THE PROBLEM OF DEMOCRACY IN THE TIME OF TRUMP

When most people think of democracy, the image that comes to mind is national democracy — that is representative democracy, political parties, and elections rooted in a nation state. In 2017, the Polity Project reported 96 out of 167 countries (57%) were considered democracies of some kind and 21 countries (21%) were autocracies. Forty-six (28%) of countries exhibit some blend of both democracy and autocracy. Thus, 85% of countries have some elements of democracy.<sup>1</sup>

The number of democratic countries are at a modern-day high.<sup>2</sup> Despite this trend, people who live in democratic countries are not necessarily happy with democracy in action, indeed dissatisfaction with democracy is trending upward. In a 2018 global survey conducted by Pew Research Center, 51% of people said they were dissatisfied with how democracy was working in their country. Sweden and the Philippines were among those with the highest levels of popular satisfaction with democracy; Indonesia, South Korea and the Netherlands were not far behind. At the other end of the scale, people in Mexico, Greece, Brazil and Spain expressed the most dissatisfaction with the state of democracy. The source of this discontent has been linked to concerns about the economy, individual rights, as well as anger at political elites.<sup>3</sup>

1 This data is from Center for System Peace, The Polity Project, <http://www.systemicpeace.org/polityproject.html>. Freedom House rates 86 out of 195 countries (44%) as “free,” using criteria that include both political and civil rights. And though nearly half of the 167 countries in the Economist Intelligence Unit’s Democracy Index are considered to be some form of democracy, only 12% (20) are rated as “full democracies”; nearly a third (55 countries) are counted as “flawed democracies” – including the U.S.

2 D. Deseliver, *Despite global concerns about democracy, more than half of countries are democratic*, in “Pew Research Center”, Washington, DC May 14, 2019, url: <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2019/05/14/more-than-half-of-countries-are-democratic/>

3 R. Wike, L. Silver and A. Castillo, *Many across the globe are dissatisfied with how democracy is working: Discontent is tied to concerns about the economy, individual rights and out of touch elites*, in “Pew Research Center”, Washington, DC April 29, 2019. Retrieved from <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2019/04/29/many-across-the-globe-are-dissatisfied->

At the same time, it is impossible to ignore democratic electorates voting autocrats into positions of national leadership. Many democrats have tried to explain away the illiberal results of liberal-democracy by pointing to the rise of so-called “right populism” and people voting for the “wrong” candidate. Right populism is often presented as an opposition to democracy and as a result the remedy to the election of authoritarian politicians — such as Bolsonaro, Duterte, Erdogan, Orban, Salvini, Trump, et al., — is perceived to be more democracy. The problem with this remedy is that Liberal-democracy is actually the source of so-called ‘right-populism’.

I have a long held a strong commitment to the idea of democracy in my work as an educator and activist. And while I retain a strong belief in the first principle of democracy — providing means for giving power to the people, not to an individual or to a restricted class of people — I am losing confidence in the concept of democracy, indeed what I will argue here is that national democracy as an idea and practice have become so deformed that it is possibly unsalvageable and that, as the political form of capitalism, democracy should be abolished.

But first, I’ll speak as a democratic apologist, in defense of a unique vision of democracy to which I have long subscribed.

## **DEWEYAN DEMOCRACY AS UTOPIAN IDEAL**

I have always offered a resounding “Yes!” to the suggestion that the solution to many of societies’ ills and inequities was more democracy. As a social studies educator (teaching history, geography and citizenship), I have spent my career teaching that democracy was much more than a system of government providing a set of rules that allow individuals wide latitude to do as they wish. Following from philosopher John Dewey, I have taught about democracy as a way of living and working with others.

In Dewey’s 1939 essay “Creative Democracy: The Task Before Us”, he argued that democracy is a way of life, an experience based on faith in human nature, the capacity of human beings for intelligent judgment

and working with others. In his view, democracy is a moral ideal that requires everyday effort to create. For Dewey, democracy is not an institutional concept that exists outside of us. “The task of democracy,” he wrote, “is forever that of creation of a freer and more humane experience in which all share and which all contribute.”<sup>4</sup>

A Deweyan conception of democratic life requires us to pay attention to the multiple implications of our actions on others. The primary responsibility of democratic citizens is a concern with the development of shared interests that lead to a sensitivity about repercussions of their actions on others. In his magnum opus *Democracy and Education*, Dewey characterized democracy as a force that breaks down the barriers that separate people and creates community.

The aim of a democratic society from this perspective is the production of free human beings associated with one another on terms of equality. In this light, it is nearly impossible to think about or teach democracy without placing the pursuit of social justice and a critical examination of existing social, economic, and political inequalities at the center of the endeavor.

Dewey identified the principal obstacle to achieving democracy as the powerful alliance of class privilege with philosophies of education that sharply divided mind and body, theory and practice, culture and utility.<sup>5</sup> Based upon this foundation, I have long argued that the best way to achieve democracy is to initiate children in a form of social life characteristic of democracy: a community of full participation. The aim of education in general and social studies education in particular should not be merely preparation for living in a democracy. Rather, our aim should be to create a curriculum that fosters broad participation in a community of inquirers, a community reflective of framework that:

- empowers all;
- includes all;
- engages its members in meaningful, real-world activities and that

4 J. Dewey, *Creative democracy: The task before us*, in *John Dewey: The later works, Volume 14: 1939-1941: Essays, reviews, and miscellany*, edited by J. A. Boydston, Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale, IL, pp. 224-230. (Originally published in 1939)

5 R. B. Westbrook, *John Dewey and American Democracy*, Cornell University Press, Ithaca, NY 1991.

- accommodates learners with diverse needs, interests, and abilities;
- intentionally builds learning support strategies; and
- fosters partnering and builds real collaboration within the school and with families and the community.<sup>6</sup>

Dewey's conceptualization of democracy and democratic education retains an appeal for me, but at the present moment it is an anachronistic philosophical concept sometimes at odds with the philosophical foundations and practices of existing liberal-democracy. At other times Dewey's vision provides a protective cover against criticism of democratic institutions and practices by articulating an attractive possibility of a democratic utopia — muting criticism of existing democratic practices, with much the same effect as Churchill's supposed aphorism “democracy is the worst form of government, except for all the others.”

The hegemonic idea and practice of national democracy is so far removed from Dewey's notion of democracy as a way of life as to be almost completely unrelated and Dewey's work doesn't provide a sustained critique of the inherent problems at the heart of liberal-democratic theory and practice, which is the source of the crisis of illiberal democracy we are now experiencing.

## LIBERAL-DEMOCRACY, A CONTRADICTION OF TERMS

In 1989, Francis Fukuyama declared the “end of history,” arguing the collapse of the Soviet Union, end of the Cold War, and universalization of liberal-democracy was the end point of the humankind's ideological evolution.<sup>7</sup> Since then we've seen a continued retreat of civil rights, a massive rise in inequality, and liberal-democracy has now delivered a string of illiberal authoritarian, nationalist leaders in The Philippines (Rodrigo Duterte), Hungary (Viktor Orban), Israel (Benjamin Netanyahu), Jair Bolsonaro (Brazil) and, of course, the racist, misogynist, xenophobic, narcissist in the White House — the “orange mother of all assholes” to use Paul Street's description — Donald Trump. Individual-

6 R. Gibson & M. P. Peterson, *Whole schooling: Implementing progressive school reform, in Aa. Vv., in The Social studies curriculum: Purposes, problems, and possibilities (Revised Edition)*, edited by E. W. Ross, State University of New York Press, Albany, NY 2001.

7 F. Fukuyama, *The end of history?*, in “The National Interest” 16, 1989, pp. 3–18.

ism is at the heart of classical liberalism and as such is the root of the democratic crisis that is represented the rise of so-called “populism.” As Ian McKay recently reminded us, the structural flaw that defines liberal-democracy and that provides the roots cause for the current democratic crisis is individualism. In a discussion of democracy and utopia, Furet and Costopoulos describe the philosophical and practical problem of democracy this way:

Since the eighteenth century, democracy has presented itself to the modern individual as a promise of liberty, or more precisely, of *autonomy*. This is in contrast to earlier times when [people] were viewed as subjects, and consequently were deprived of the right of self-determination, which is the basis of the legitimacy of modern societies.<sup>8</sup>

Theorists of democracy — from Hobbes to de Tocqueville — have continually wrestled with but never resolved the central questions of democracy:

- What kind of society should we form if we think of ourselves as autonomous individuals?
- What type of social bond can be established among free and equal people, since liberty and equality are the conditions of our autonomy?
- How can we conceive a society in which each member is sovereign over self, and which thus must harmonize the sovereignty of each over self and of all over all?<sup>9</sup>

As Furet and Costopoulos remark “the gap between the expectations that democracy arouses and the solutions that it creates for fulfilling them is striking.”<sup>10</sup>

Canadian political scientist C. B. Macpherson, and many others, have pointed out the key contradiction within liberal democracy is not merely individualism, but “possessive individualism.”<sup>11</sup> Liberal democrats have long argued for the rights

8 F. Furet and P. J. Costopoulos, *Democracy and utopia*, in “Journal of Democracy” 9, 1998, pp. 65-79.

9 Ivi.

10 Ivi.

11 C. B. Macpherson, *The political theory of possessive individualism*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, England 1989.

of the individual, but in theory and practice the only individuals that matter were those that owned property. Property is the key and in liberal democratic theory and practice “society [is] little more than an agreement among the privileged to respect each other’s property.”<sup>12</sup>

From the very beginning, liberal democrats worked to make the world safe for property. The conflict between protecting private wealth and creating a democratic society is conspicuous throughout US history, for example. The framers of the US Constitution were keenly aware of the threat of democracy. According to James Madison, the primary responsibility of government was “to protect the minority of the opulent against the majority.” Madison believed the threat to democracy was likely to increase over time as there was an increase in “the proportion of those who will labor under all the hardships of life and secretly sigh for a more equal distribution of its blessing”.<sup>13</sup>

In crafting a system giving primacy to property over people, Madison and the framers were guarding against the increased influence of the unpropertied masses. As Noam Chomsky describes it,

[The unpropertied] might gain influence, Madison feared. He was concerned by the “symptoms of a leveling spirit” that had already appeared, and warned “of the future danger” if the right to vote would place “power over property in the hands without a share in it.” Those “without property, or the hope of acquiring it, cannot be expected to sympathize sufficiently with its rights,” Madison explained. His solution was to keep political power in the hands of those who “come from and represent the wealth of the nation,” the more capable set of men,” with the general public fragmented and disorganized.<sup>14</sup>

The first US political party, The Federalists — who appealed to business and to conservatives who favoured banks, national over state government, manufacturing, and opposed the French Revolution — expected that the public would remain compliant and deferential to the politically active elite, and for the most part that has been true throughout US history.

12 I. McKay, *The democracy alarm*, “The Vancouver Sun”, May 29, 2019.

13 Madison quoted in N. Chomsky, *Profit over people*, Seven Stories Press, New York, NY 1999, p. 47.

14 Ivi, 48.



Despite the party's demise in the 1820s, their conception of democracy prevailed, though in a different form as industrial capitalism emerged. Their view of democracy was most succinctly expressed by John Jay, the first Chief Justice of the US Supreme Court, who said "the people who own the country ought to govern it."<sup>15</sup> Jay's maxim is the principle upon which the US was founded and is obviously one of the roots of today's neoliberalism.

So-called democratic politicians and theoreticians have railed against a truly participatory democracy, which engages the public in controlling its own affairs, for over two hundred years. For example, Alexander Hamilton warned of the "great beast" that must be tamed. In the 20th Century, Walter Lippman warned of the "bewildered herd" that would trample itself without external control, and the eminent political scientist Harold Lasswell warned elites of the "ignorance and stupidity of the masses" and called for them not to succumb to the "democratic dogmatism about men [sic] being the best judges of their own interests."

These perspectives have nurtured a neoliberal spectator democracy, which deters or prohibits the public from managing its own affairs and resolutely controls the means of information. At first this may seem an odd conception of democracy, but it is the prevailing conception of liberal-democratic thought, and one that has been fostered by traditional approaches to political education in schools. In spectator democracy, a specialized class of experts identify what our common interests are and think and plan accordingly. The function of the rest of us is to be "spectators" rather than participants in action.

Dewey warned of the anti-democratic effects of the concentration of private power in absolutist institutions such as corporations. He was clear that as long as there was no democratic control of the workplace and economic systems that democracy would be limited, stunted. He emphasized that democracy has little content when big business rules the life of the country through its control of "the means of production, exchange, publicity, transportation and communication, reinforced by command of the press, press agents and other means of publicity and propaganda." "Politics," Dewey said, "is the shadow cast on society by

15 F. Monaghan, *John Jay*. Bobbs-Merrill, New York, NY 1935, p. 323.

big business, the attenuation of the shadow will not change the substance.” A free and democratic society, according to Dewey, is one where workers are “masters of their own industrial fate.”

But liberal-democratic thinkers have always struggled to reconcile their assumptions about “free-standing individuals who own property with the democratic demands of the exploited and excluded.”<sup>16</sup> The rise of the welfare state created a gentler liberalism, preserving privileges of the wealthy in exchange for a social safety net, education, unions, health and housing programs. But as we all know, ultimately liberals resolved the internal contradiction within liberal-democracy by working to make the world safe, not for democracy, but property. Neoliberalism does not merely challenge liberty and democracy but subjugates both to the acquisitive drive of unfettered capitalism.

The crisis of democracy emerges where capital is unregulated; profits and property are valued over people; unfathomable gaps in wealth exist between workers and the elite; and everyday life of the vast majority of people is precarious because of insecure employment, social instability, and the attacks on reason, while the media, the state and universities are remade in neoliberal terms. As McKay argues, “this very precariousness is represented, not as culturally or psychologically damaging, but as freedom itself.”<sup>17</sup>

C. B. Macpherson’s left-leaning neo-Helgelian Canadian idealism aimed to “work out a revision of liberal-democratic theory, a revision that clearly owed a great deal to Marx, in the hope of making that theory more democratic while rescuing that valuable part of the liberal tradition which is submerged when liberalism is identified as synonymous with capitalist market relations.”<sup>18</sup> Is it a fool’s errand to look to liberal-democracy as a source for solving the problems it is responsible for creating? McKay argues we should take up Macpherson’s challenge to liberate democracy from its neoliberal chains “by rethinking property relations right down to their foundations.”

16 McKay, *The democracy alarm*, cit., p. E2.

17 Ivi.

18 D. Morrice, *C. B. Macpherson’s critique of liberal democracy and capitalism*, “Political Studies”, 42, 1994, pp. 646-661.

## TRUMP, DEMOCRACY AND FASCISM

McKay explains the paradox of electing of authoritarians — who only offer more hardships to a global army of precarious, angry and disenfranchised citizens — as resulting from a desire for solace of an imagined national community within a culture of militarism.

On the other hand, Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen sees national democracy as the political form of capitalism and proposes that we should demolish it as it slides into fascism. In his book *Trump's Counter-Revolution*, Rasmussen key arguments are:

1. (*Counter-revolution*) Trump's election was a protest against neo-liberal globalization — a response by the electorate to the 2008 financial crisis, bailing out the banks, and the ensuing spending cuts and foreclosures that fueled a dramatic rise in discontent that is manifest as nationalism (similar to Brexit). But Trump's election was also a protest against protests (e.g., Occupy, Black Lives Matter). Trump's ultra-nationalism is an attempt to derail the articulation of alternatives to neoliberalism.
2. (*Image politics*) Following Debord and the Situationists, Rasmussen argues Trump's election and presidency is the final confirmation of politics' transformation into image politics. Trump's political messages are not just put into images, but emerge as genuine image events. It doesn't make sense to try and prove Trump is lying and contradicting himself. His politics is a virtual politics that is purposefully self-contradictory, silly, and violent.
3. (*Fascism*) Trump is a temporary solution that simultaneously promises to continue the neoliberal program, but also increases neoliberalism's racist solutions, giving them an explicitly fascist dimension. The program is the reestablishment of a fictive former greatness — Make America (not the US) Great Again ... where all 'real' Americans are white Americans. Trump's racism, misogyny and Islamophobia are the ingredients of a postmodern, pastiche fascism that uses systematic lies and attacks on the mainstream press, ultra-nationalism, and the mobilization of an outraged white petty bourgeoisie.

When Rasmussen asks “whether democracy after Trump?” His response is neither Trump, nor democracy.

In a situation of deep economic crisis for the state, Trump’s American fascism offers an unstable solution, in which racism and protectionism are combined in a strange fascism. ... Political democracy is not doubt a lesser evil than Trump’s late-capitalist fascism, but it is an evil nonetheless. An evil that made possible the election of Trump and his racist and exclusionary policies.<sup>19</sup>

In many ways, Trump appears as a democratic coup — democracy is hijacked when people vote the “wrong” way. Trump is presented as a right-wing, nationalist threat to democracy. But Rasmussen argues that “there is no populist, totalitarian or fascist excess, if by that we understand something essentially different from national-democratic normality.”<sup>20</sup> The argument that populism/fascism is in opposition to democracy is a “short circuit” that excludes revolutionary alternatives by invoking the status quo — cops murdering Black Americans or migrants turned away or detained at US and European borders illustrate this.

The populism analysis — which argues that Trump’s populism appeals to the people in a suspect manner, his nationalist rhetoric undercuts representative democracy and clears the way for racist, misogynist, Islamophobic policies — is problematic because it affirms mainstream national democracy as the “infallible norm.” Populism is bad. Democracy is good and must be defended, even though it is national democracy that delivered the orange asshole to the White House as well as his cronies across the globe.

Here Rasmussen is following the lead Giorgio Agamben<sup>21</sup> and Karl Korsch<sup>22</sup> who have illustrated the intimate relationship between democracy and fascism.

Agamben points out that democracy depends on a founding ambiguity, by which it means both the power of the people as well as government,

19 M. B. Rasmussen, *Trump’s counter-revolution*, Zero Books, New York, NY 2018, p. 4.

20 Ivi, p. 81.

21 G. Agamben G., *Homo sacer: Sovereign power and bare life*, translated by D. Heller-Roazen, Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA 1998.

22 K. Korsch, *The workers fight against fascism*, “Living Marxism”, Winter, 1941, url: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/korsch/1941/fascism.htm>

the form through which power is legitimated and exercised — democracy is a movement between these poles. Democracy carries bioclass struggle, which often threatens to break out, and does (e.g., the refugee crisis). For most people, democracy as a concept references national democracy — representative democracy, political parties, and elections rooted in a nation state, with all the racist, classist, sexist, heteronormative, an national security state politics and policies that we have witnessed for years — cops murdering Black citizens, huge wealth inequalities, border regimes, government exercising control over women’s bodies, rolling back civil liberties — all of this happens in perfectly respectable democracies. For Korsch there is no essential difference between bourgeois democracy and fascism, rather there is an internal connection — bourgeois democracy has inherently fascist dimensions. Defending democracy to avoid authoritarian rule doesn’t work, it never has and the recent national democratic elections of Trump, Bolsanaro, Duterte, Orban, Netanyahu et al. speak to this truth.

As Rasmussen points out, the analyses of Agamben and Korsch make it clear that “it is a mistake to put democracy opposite fascism or suggest a popular front to defend democracy against Trump’s fascism is to misunderstand the founding ambiguity of national democracy, in which fascism is an immanent possibility, not an external threat.<sup>23</sup> In a state of emergency it is standard practice for national democracies to shut off civil and political rights and intensify nationalist, exclusionist logic (e.g., colonies, internment of citizens, border regimes, etc.). This, Rasmussen argues is what is happening with Trump.

## CONCLUSION

Given what we know about the state of democracy in the world today, is it even possible to teach for a democracy that is not dominated by capital and internally linked with fascism?

Do we want to teach for liberal/capitalist democracy? Is there an alternative?

Is the concept of democracy bankrupt?

23 M. B. Rasmussen, *Trump’s counter-revolution*, cit., p. 83

Is democracy as a concept and practice even salvageable?

If democracy is salvageable, then teaching about and for democracy in contemporary times cannot be done without engaging the complexities and contradictions that have come to define what really existing (or non-existing) democracy is and its relationship with capitalism, populism/fascism.

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■ PETER MAYO

# CRITICAL PEDAGOGY: AN INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Critical pedagogy is an approach that enables pupils and students to confront and question structures, processes of domination and related attitudes, assumptions, myths and specific social constructions of reality – all of which constitute ‘regimes of truth’. All involve critical scrutiny of crucial aspects of dominant hegemonic relationships. It is a pedagogical process targeted at the development of a critical consciousness.

According to one of its major exponents and founding figures, Henry A. Giroux, it attempts to:

- create new forms of knowing;
- pose questions concerning relations between margins and centres of power;
- encourage readings of history...that tackle issues of power and identity in connection with questions of social class, ‘race’/ethnicity, gender, colonialism;
- refute the distinction between ‘high’ and ‘low’ culture with a view to developing a curriculum that connects with people’s life-worlds and everyday cultural narratives;
- give importance to a language of ethics throughout the educational process<sup>1</sup>.

Henry Giroux is from the USA, as are most of the major exponents of this area of pedagogy who appear in the relevant literature. The area therefore has a USA ring to it. The issues it confronts, however, are widespread, concerned with the relationship between education and power. It sees education not in reductively instrumental terms but according to the broader view of its contribution to the development of a healthy democratic public sphere where questions are raised and assumptions

<sup>1</sup> H. Giroux, *On Critical Pedagogy*, Continuum/Bloomsbury, NY and London 2011.



are challenged. It connects with the quest to challenge the mantra of there being no alternative to the present Neoliberal scenario governed by the ideology of the market and which spreads throughout all aspects of people's lives. This is a universal concern as mainstream education is being transmitted worldwide according to the technical-fix model, using the centuries-old approach of colonizing people's ways of learning and attempting to ride roughshod over Indigenous ways of learning, knowing and interacting with the environment.

Despite the North American orientation, the movement draws on a writer from the South who speaks to the global south, one whose ideas, in the pursuit of learning through *conscientização*, are at the furthest remove from the instrumentalist notion of education. This is Paulo Freire who had spent time in exile in different places, forced to leave his native Brazil by an authoritarian military regime precisely for his propagation of a politically democratic approach to education at odds with the type of instrumental education favoured by the country's rulers. His pedagogy of the oppressed was meant to contribute to the democratization of Brazilian society. It can therefore be argued that Critical pedagogy draws from a Southern perspective. Freire's exposition of his pedagogical views in the acclaimed book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* was a source of influence. Ironically one of his places of exile, and precisely the place where he had this book translated from the original Portuguese, *Pedagogia do Oprimido*, was the USA. This is where he came in contact with USA-ensconced academics and activists and where the basic elements of his radical pedagogy began to creep into USA and Canadian thinking, allied as they were with those that belonged to the Deweyan tradition in this part of the world. It also drew on European intellectual traditions, especially the Frankfurt School of Critical Theory, although this raised questions regarding emancipatory politics in view of the 'negative dialectics' of some of its major exponents. Within critical theory, it drew on Jurgen Habermas' view of communicative action and deliberative democracy. It drew insights concerning power/knowledge and moral regulation from Michel Foucault and of course it built on the notion of hegemony at the heart of education and vice versa from Antonio Gramsci. While often open to the criticism of being somewhat Eurocentric, critical pedagogy, often owing to the presence of students from Southern diasporas in the

North, broadened its areas of concerns. The influence of the Jamaican born Stuart Hall and Afro-Americans such as Angela Davies began to be felt. One of the foremost Afro-American exponents of Critical Pedagogy is bell hooks whose early work such as *Talking Back. Thinking Feminist Thinking Black* drew substantially from two major early works by Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* and *Education for Critical Consciousness*. The more the parameters of critical pedagogy began to be broadened the more one drew on other figures of inspiration from different parts of the world. To give one example, I would argue that radical Italian educators such as don Lorenzo Milani can be regarded as key figures who anticipated many insights associated with critical pedagogy as well as critical sociology of education. The issue of citizenship and people exercising the 'right to govern' rather than simply be governed, either in a heavy handed manner or through moral regulation and governmentality, as argued by Foucault, was given ample treatment by Milani and the students at Barbiana. This and other aspects of Milani's proposed education and critique of public schooling makes him and his ideas congenial to a critical pedagogy. Equally congenial is the work of another Italian, Ada Gobetti<sup>2</sup>, and her notion of emancipatory education pronounced by a person who dedicated her life to teaching after years of engagement as a partisan fighting Nazi-fascism. One can go on and include people such as Maria Montessori, who, while not overtly professing a critical pedagogy and the notion of education as political, had her schools closed by the fascist regime. The kind of education these schools promoted and personality they helped develop were considered anathema to those desired by the regime. One can also refer to Aldo Capitini and his notion of grassroots democracy (Omnicrazia) and Danilo Dolci, with his view of learning through collective community action, into the equation. This goes to show that critical pedagogy is not something new and confined to a specific context. Italy, like many other nations, has had its fair share of those who would qualify as critical pedagogues<sup>3</sup>. Different contexts

2 A. Marchesini Gobetti, *Educare per emancipare: scritti pedagogici 1953-1968* (Educate to Emancipate: Pedagogical writings 1953-1968), Piero Lacaita Editore, Manduria 1982.

3 M. Tarozzi, *Prefazione (preface)*, In: P. Mayo and P. Vittoria, *Saggi di Pedagogia Critica. Oltre il Neoliberalismo. Analizzando Educatori, Lotte e Movimenti Sociali* (Essays in Critical Pedagogy. Analysing Educators, Struggles and Social Movements), SEF, Florence 2017.

have their own traditions in this regard. People living within them can draw from other different contexts provided that they do not transplant ideas and projects but reinvent them, as per Freire's own words.

The strands and influences are, therefore, many. However, the common goal is social justice. I would summarise by saying that critical pedagogy exists in the context of the collective struggle for social justice and the dismantling of structures of oppression. It entails reason, emotion, imagination. According to Peter McLaren, emphasis is placed on the centrality of politics and power. One cannot see critical pedagogy as simply an individualising approach. It has to be seen in a wider global context characterised by social and human–earth differences and North–South imbalances and exploitation.

Some argue for a political economy approach to studying education to understand how schools and the rest of the educational system function. The Marxist influence has been very strong here and one can highlight the contribution of Peter McLaren and his colleagues from the UK (Dave Hill, the late Joyce Canan, Sarah Carpenter and Mike Cole in particular). Following on Gramsci and others, some argue for a focus on the state and education, even allowing for challenging the current mantra that, in this globalising world, the state has receded into the background. This view has been criticised on the grounds that the state plays a central role in this neoliberal period. It paves the way for the mobility of capital and serves to police the victims of neoliberalism's excesses, pouncing on them rather than the structuring forces at play in these contexts.

Others have focused on textual representation and the construction of the students' subjectivity<sup>4</sup>. The manner in which mainstream education contributes to 'otherising' has become a main concern of critical pedagogy which broadens the area of enquiry to view education and pedagogy in its broader contexts including different forms of public pedagogy such as advertising, entertainment (especially the film industry), all forms of mass popular culture, elite culture and activism. One area of great concern is pedagogy within social justice oriented social movements, and here the challenge has also been posed with regard to

4 P. McLaren, *Life in Schools: An Introduction to Critical Pedagogy in the Foundations of Education*, Longmans, Sydney 1994, p.167.

developing a non-monolithic and non-western-oriented notion of social movements. The domain of popular culture also brings into focus the strong relationship that exists between critical pedagogy and cultural studies in terms of how, in the words of Raymond Williams, cultural products and ideas connect with ‘a whole way of life’ and with a people’s ‘structure of feeling’ which is felt but is not always articulated by everyone. The realms of complex relations between education and power are infinite and this is the domain of critical pedagogy which can be enriched by the ever important contributions emerging from different contexts including those of ‘food production’ in say India, the struggle against epistemicide and ‘decolonisation of the mind’ in the Global South and the context of ‘settler colonialism’ and Apartheid in Palestine<sup>5</sup>. It often foregrounds the work concerning people living a bicultural existence and hence the relationship between culture and language, as foregrounded by the Puerto Rican scholar, Antonia Darder<sup>6</sup>, the lead editor in a compendium bringing international perspectives from different parts of the world into critical pedagogy<sup>7</sup>. It also foregrounds the Neoliberalisation of Higher education<sup>8</sup> and New Fascist politics in the age of populism - populism has taken different forms throughout history and in different contexts which also includes left wing populism, much augured by the likes of Chantal Mouffe. It foregrounds education against the culture of militarization<sup>9</sup> <sup>10</sup> and the New Right amalgam of Neoliberalism and traditional values in the USA<sup>11</sup> and more recently Turkey<sup>12</sup>. The list is not exhaustive.

5 N. Silwadi and P. Mayo, *Pedagogy Under Siege in Palestine: Freirean Approaches*, in “*Holy Land Studies*”, Vol. 13, No. 2, 2014, p. 71-87.

6 A. Darder, *Culture and Power in the Classroom*, Paradigm, Boulder 2012.

7 A. Darder, P. Mayo and J. Paraskeva (eds.), *The International Critical Pedagogy Reader*, Routledge, London and New York 2015.

8 H. Giroux, *Neoliberalism’s War on Higher Education*, Haymarket Books, Chicago 2014.

9 H. Giroux, *The University in Chains: Confronting the Military-Industrial-Academic Complex*. Paradigm, Boulder 2007.

10 L. Milani, *A just war no longer exists: The teachings and trial of don Lorenzo Milani* (J. Burtchaeil ed.), University of Notre Dame Press, Indiana 1994.

11 M. Apple, *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*, Routledge, New York and London 2000.

12 G. Gezkin, K. Inal and D. Hill, *The Gezi Revolt: People’s Revolutionary Resistance Against Neoliberal Capitalism in Turkey*, The Institute for Educational Policy Studies, Brighton 2014.

The last mentioned highlights the critical pedagogy work of educators in Turkey who place their jobs on the line because of their stances, including editors of journals in Critical Pedagogy; critical pedagogy has quite a following in Turkey. Turkish critical pedagogues certainly ‘place their money where their mouth is’ as manifest by the presence of several of them in the 2013 Gezi Revolt in Istanbul. The different international learning experiences of Occupy Movements provide much grist for the mill of a critical pedagogy, well captured in the slogan ‘Occupy Knowledge’ promoted by Greek scholar and activist, Maria Nikolakaki who directs an international higher education cooperative which has critical pedagogy as one of its main programmes.

Taking my cue from Michael W Apple, who identifies more with critical education than with critical pedagogy (more a question of personnel involved than any substantial difference in conceptualisation), and his work on the Curriculum<sup>13 14 15</sup>, a series of questions emerge. These can be posed regarding a variety of forms of textualisation, not only curricula, to include museums, films, documentaries, re-enactments etc. Who benefits? Who suffers? Who is included and who is excluded? Which culture is valorized and at the expense of which other cultures? How are people represented? This represents a call for educators to take sides and not remain indifferent. As Lorenzo Milani would argue: better a fascist than indifferent, of course not to be taken literally<sup>16</sup>. Likewise, we have Gramsci’s statement “odio gli indifferenti” (I hate those who are indifferent) which connects with Freire’s well known statement that being neutral is tantamount to siding with the dominant.

Furthermore, while not eschewing individual learning, critical pedagogy primarily promotes collective learning and action. As Freire<sup>17</sup> would argue, people liberate themselves not on their own but in concert with others. Everything is also to be read ‘against the grain’, through the dif-

13 M. Apple, *Ideology and Curriculum*, Routledge, New York and London 1990.

14 M. Apple, *Education and Power*, Routledge, New York and London 1995.

15 M. Apple, *Official Knowledge: Democratic Education in a Conservative Age*, Routledge, New York and London 2000.

16 C. Borg and P. Mayo, *Public Intellectuals, Radical Democracy and Social Movements: A Book of Interviews*, Peter Lang, New York 2007.

17 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Continuum, New York 1993.

ferent liminal spaces available (see the late Roger I Simon's 1992 classic). Gramsci's and Milani's readings of Italian history, against conventional sanitized interpretations, are cases in point. What is not said in texts is as important as what is said. What is intimated or possibly understated is just as important, if not more, than what is explicitly stated. Here the work of Palestinian Edward Said and the notion of 'contrapuntal readings' becomes relevant. While highlighting different forms of culture there is the important caveat that none of these should be romanticized. Critical pedagogical work needs to be open to the criticism regarding its own absences and occlusions.

There is one final point which needs to be made. While the ideological bases of all kinds of knowledge should be unmasked, one ought to be careful not to shortchange learners. One of the challenges, in my view, is to grapple with the task of imparting and learning what Young and Muller<sup>18</sup> call 'powerful knowledge'. There are echoes of Gramsci and his idea of the Unitarian School here. The concern is with a type of education that does not sell the subaltern short in comparison with the ruling classes who can still obtain these skills, irrespective of whether they are offered by established educational institutions, through their materially rewarding cultural capital and what are nowadays referred to as 'invisible pedagogies'. The School of Barbiana's exposure of the situation concerning the Giannis and the Pierinos, sons of peasants and middle class persons respectively, underlines this.

Critical pedagogy can ill afford to avoid the challenge posed by the need to acquire 'powerful knowledge', which is, after all, the political pedagogical challenge also posed in the 1930s by Antonio Gramsci, and much later, in curricular circles, by the likes of Lisa Delpit<sup>19</sup>, with regard to Afro-American schooling in the USA, and Michael Young in the UK. On the other hand, it has much to offer in terms of complementing this rigour and mastery of powerful knowledge through its emphasis on the politics of education. One can impart this knowledge differently from the way it has been conventionally taught. The classic example

18 M. Young and J. Muller, *Three Educational Scenarios for the Future: lessons from the sociology of knowledge*, in "European Journal of Education", 45 (1), 2010, p. 11-27.

19 L. Delpit, *The Silenced Dialogue: Power and Pedagogy in Educating Other People's Children*, in "Harvard Educational Review", 58 (3), 1988, p. 280-298.

concerns how to deal with the colonizing language within a politics of decolonization and provide cognitive justice<sup>20</sup> to that which is Indigenous. It would be foolish to throw away the colonizing language, say English, given its current hegemonic status, a point stressed by the rulers of Guinea Bissau, with respect to Portuguese, to Paulo Freire<sup>21</sup>. Hegemony contains the elements of change within its own interstices. In this case, the dominant colonial language needs to be taught and learnt not in a simply technical manner but in a way which involves questions of its role in global politics and social stratification, and as a colonizing force. These issues cannot be avoided in a genuine attempt at a critical pedagogy. The knowledge denounced as ‘colonial’ or ‘hegemonic’ can serve as an instrument of political empowerment in a globalizing world. Not learning it would, as Gramsci argued, maintain people in a politically and economically marginalized state<sup>22</sup>. Critical pedagogy, no matter how internationally relevant and context conscious, should safeguard against the danger throwing out the powerful knowledge baby with the ideological bathwater.

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■ SANDRA MATHISON

# THE REVOLUTIONARY POSSIBILITY OF THE MUNDANE

## INTRODUCTION

When we think of actions for social changes we are drawn first to organized, collective, public actions. We think of demonstrations, riots, revolutionary uprisings. We think of petitions, strikes, boycotts, and class action law suits. These actions are often recorded as ruptures or turning points in history.

Many of these actions create evocative images of how collective action challenges power. We think of the Yellow Jackets descending upon Paris, disrupting the City through marches, violence, and graffiti to compel the French government to pause and back down on repressive policies. We think of the throngs of protestors taking to the streets in Hong Kong and compelling the local government to at least press pause on the extradition to China bill. We must, of course, acknowledge the importance and potential effectiveness of such highly visible, collective actions in service of social change.

However, I want to talk about quieter, mostly individual, more local actions inherent in everyday lived experience that also matter in the disruption and redistribution of power. These actions are sometimes called ‘everyday resistance,’ a term coined by James Scott in *Weapons of the Weak*<sup>1</sup>, a study of peasant rebellions in Malaysia. Scott, in a recent interview, said “historians, by paying attention to formal organization and public demonstrations, have missed most acts of resistance throughout history<sup>2</sup>.” Collective and everyday forms of resistance are complemen-

1 J. C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*, Yale University Press, New Haven 1985.

2 J.C. Scott, *Everyday Forms of Resistance to State Power*, url <https://conversations.e-flux.com/t/>

tary; both are necessary in political and class struggle. Indeed, one may lead to the other.

This idea of everyday resistance is also at the heart of Vaclav Havel's manifest for dissent, *The Power of the Powerless*<sup>3</sup>. Havel saw the undercurrent of the Czechoslovakian revolution as individual acts of courage, what he describes as overcoming fears that lead people to "live within a lie." This notion of living within a lie is key to understanding how we participate in the hegemonic narrative of capitalism, indeed the hegemonic narrative of any social relationship where power is differentially distributed. The alternative to living in a lie, is to live in the truth, or "Live Not by Lies" as Solzhenitsyn<sup>4</sup> enjoins us. One means to living not by lies is everyday resistance.

What I want to do in this discussion is connect the idea of everyday resistance to power, explicate what everyday resistance is, and show how mundane acts in social life have the potential to be revolutionary and the potential for social change.

## POWER & RESISTANCE

Resistance must be understood as a necessary component of power. If we think of power as structural, as embodied within the State or bureaucracies, and existing prior to resistance, then resistance becomes an external response to alter pre-existing social structures. This view of power gives precedence to organized, collective forms of resistance that noticeably disrupt or alter social structures. We are likely to dismiss everyday acts of resistance as trivial acts that at best provide temporary relief to individuals, but having little sociological import.

If, on the other hand, we understand power does not reside anywhere and it cannot be possessed, but rather is an outcome of ongoing transactional relations between the more powerful and the less powerful, we can then see the inherent possibility for resistance in mundane, everyday ac-

james-c-scott-on-everyday-forms-of-resistance-to-state-power/7557

3 V. Havel, *The Power of Powerless*, url <https://www.nonviolent-conflict.org/wp-content/uploads/1979/01/the-power-of-the-powerless.pdf>, 1978.

4 A. Solzhenitsyn, *Live Not by Lies*. This essay was Solzhenitsyn's call for moral courage in the face of powerlessness, url <http://www.orthodoxytoday.org/articles/SolzhenitsynLies.php> 1974.

tions. Havel contended, people always have “*within themselves* the power to remedy their own powerlessness.” People are never truly powerless. Power, in this transactional view, is a ‘probabilistic social relationship’ and contingent on the participation of both the more and less powerful. Participation of the less powerful may be expressed in many ways including complacency, sanguinity, organized resistance, or everyday resistance. This fluid conception of power creates the resistance deployed by the less powerful to thwart the class, institution or state that dominates the public exercise of power.

Foucault summarizes this view of power: “Power must be analyzed as something which circulates; or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localized here or there, never in anybody’s hands, never appropriated as a commodity or piece of wealth. Power is employed and exercised in a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in a position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always the elements of its articulation<sup>5</sup>.”

## EVERYDAY RESISTANCE

James Scott defines everyday resistance thus:

The Brechtian or Schweikian forms of resistance I have in mind are an integral part of the small arsenal of relatively powerless groups. They include such acts as foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, feigned ignorance, desertion, pilfering, smuggling, poaching, arson, slander, sabotage, surreptitious assault and murder, anonymous threats, and so on. These techniques, for the most part quite prosaic, are the ordinary means of class struggle. They are the techniques of “first resort” in those common historical circumstances where open defiance is impossible or entails mortal danger. When they are practiced widely by members of an entire class against elites or the state, they may have aggregate consequences out of all proportion to their banality when considered singly. No adequate account of class relations is possible without assessing their importance. That they have been absent or marginal to most accounts of class

5 M. Foucault, *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and other Writings 1972 – 1977*, Pantheon Books, 1980, p.98.

relations is all too understandable. The purpose of many such techniques, after all, is to avoid notice and detection<sup>6</sup>.

Everyday resistance is conscious (of being less powerful in a power relationship) and it is purposeful (meant to disrupt that power relationship). For example, squatting requires the squatter knows the property is owned by someone else and they have reason to believe they have a claim or right to the property, or perhaps simply the right to housing. And, not every petty theft can or should be considered an act of resistance.

While everyday resistance may be driven by principles (like social justice or feminism or environmentalism) it need not be, and indeed may be about expressing human dignity. The resistance may be about self-preservation, perhaps even one's survival.

Numerous studies focus on the everyday forms of resistance in institutional contexts like mental hospitals, prisons, schools, bureaucracies and courtrooms. A wave of recent research focuses on resistance in refugee camps<sup>7</sup> and that of Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

For example, the Palestinian practice of *sumud*, understood as steadfastness, is apparent especially among women who refuse to leave their land and act as if life were normal<sup>8</sup>. The home becomes a place of safety and resistance by maintaining a sense of normalcy in the face of a situation anything but normal. This resistance also includes: "upholding cultural traditions such as weddings and holidays; maintaining a sense of normalcy; engaging in micro-enterprises; sharing songs and folklore despite threats to personal safety and surveillance; and documenting the Pales-

6 J. C. Scott, *Everyday forms of resistance*, In F. D. Colburn (Ed.), *Everyday Forms of Peasant Resistance*, Routledge, New York 1989, p.5.

7 See, for example, the following studies focusing of refugee everyday resistance.

E. Olivius, *Sites of repression and resistance: Political space in refugee camps in Thailand*, in "Critical Asian Studies", 49(3) 2017, pp. 289-307.

D. Roy, *From non-places to places: Transforming partition rehabilitation camps through the gendered quotidian*, in "Millennial Asia: An International Journal of Asian Studies" 9 (1), 2018.

8 See, for example, the following studies on the resistance of women in Palestine.

S. Richter-Devroe, *Palestinian women's everyday resistance: Between normality and normalization*, in "Journal of International Women's Studies," 12(2), 32, 2011.

C. Ryan, *Everyday resilience as resistance: Palestinian women practicing sumud*, in "International Political Sociology" 9(4), 2015, pp. 299-315.

tinian struggle through writing, protest art and graffiti<sup>9</sup>.”

Everyday acts of resistance are individual; however, resisters often rely on the complicit silence of others and so are always in some way shared. This implies a common sense of shared rights and shared oppression, even if not everyone resists.

Organized collective resistance relies on strategy, everyday resistance on tactics. There are common tactics, but everyday resistance is contextual and the tactics used are constitutive of the lived experience of power relations and reflect the creativity and imagination of the less powerful. Tactics derive from perceived cracks and vulnerability within a particular context, and so there will be many forms of everyday resistance devised to thwart power and appropriation. “What gives these techniques a certain unity is that they are invariably quiet, disguised, anonymous, often undeclared forms of resisting claims imposed by claimants who have superior access to force and to public power<sup>10</sup>.”

Tactics are relatively safe (often because of the small scale nature of the resistance), often ambiguous (so as to enable deniability), provide some clear sense of gain (often material, but also emotional or social), and require no or relatively little collaboration or coordination.

A couple of examples of seemingly little import illustrate tactics.

*Example 1: The Right to Bare Arms*<sup>11</sup>

Recently, women working in the British Columbia provincial legislative building were told by the legislature’s sergeant-at-arms to cover their arms in the hallways of the capital. The Speaker of the House asserted the legislature dress code calls for “gender-neutral business attire,” generally consisting of layered clothing that includes covered shoulders for both men and women.

The following day, many women came to work bare armed, individual

9 R. Vasudevan, Everyday resistance through women’s practices of sumūd in Palestine, url <https://sites.utexas.edu/internationalplanning/case-studies/case-study-7/>

10 J. C. Scott, *Everyday forms of resistance*, cit., p.8.

11 These events were described in a local newspaper article. Dress code: Women working at BC Legislature win right to bare arms. <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/dress-code-women-working-at-b-c-legislature-win-right-to-bare-arms>, April 1, 2019.

choices made by workers challenging the restrictive dress code, forcing a change in that dress code, and winning ‘the right to bare arms.’

*Example 2: Amelia Bedelia’s literal interpretations*<sup>12</sup>

Peggy Parish’s book series about a young woman, Amelia Bedelia, often highlights women’s domestic labour and Amelia demonstrates resistance through literally doing what she is asked. In a sequence from *Come Back, Amelia Bedelia* she literally serves a cup of coffee with cereal mixed in after her employer Mrs. Rogers asks for cereal with her coffee.

Amelia Bedelia’s resistance may seem amusing, but it is no less a commentary and self-dignifying act of resistance than when Jesse Jackson as a young man working as a restaurant server (before fame as a civil rights leader) would spit in the food he served to white people<sup>13</sup>.

In education we might be most interested in schools as contexts for everyday resistance. Schools are complex contexts of power relations, usually hierarchically structured with students at the bottom (or maybe it is support workers, like janitors and maintenance workers, who are at the bottom), teachers in the middle, then administrators. But, there are also policy makers outside of the school, parents, and other community players. And in spite of their hierarchic nature, schools are driven by a hegemonic narrative that says ‘we are all on the same side’ and thus power differentials are often masked.

Teachers resist, for example, by deviating from the official curriculum; hoarding supplies and materials; sending subversive messages to students and parents. In a school ethnography I did<sup>14</sup>, teachers were told

12 Beginning in 1963, Peggy Parish wrote a dozen chapter books with Amelia Bedelia as the central character. There were many more Amelia Bedelia books subsequently written by other authors and the later books did not always retain Amelia’s resistance to authority whilst preserving the comicalness of her literalness.

13 Jesse Jackson’s resistance to authority and specifically the reference to spitting in restaurant goers food was part of a New York Times story about his rise to prominence as an African American preacher and champion of civil and social rights. <https://www.nytimes.com/1972/07/09/archives/jesse-jackson-i-am-audience-i-am-jesse-somebody-audience-somebody.html> July 9, 1972

14 S. Mathison and M. Freeman, *Constraining elementary teachers’ work: Dilemmas and paradoxes created by state mandated testing*, in “Education Policy Analysis Archives”, v. 11, 2003, url <https://epaa.asu.edu/ojs/article/view/262>

they could not pull students out of class for special individual reading instruction. Teachers had invested considerable time in preparing curricular materials and were committed to the idea of individualized instruction. They went against the policy by teaching students in broom closets where they were unlikely to be detected by administrators.

Students resist, for example, by expending the minimum amount of effort; being argumentative; playing with dress codes; responding to teachers with silence or mumbling; avoiding 'diversions' that get in the way of academic success; sleeping in class. Students may even resist by rejecting school—dropping out or seeking alternative forms of education. There are a number of excellent critical ethnographic studies that illustrate students' everyday resistance. One of the best is Paul Willis' *Learning to Labour*<sup>15</sup>, in which he describes student resistance as a meaningful political act to subvert the hidden implications of schooling.

And other less powerful actors will also resist; perhaps the janitor steals time by watching movies on his phone, as does the secretary who does online shopping during work, or the administrative assistance who fudges his over time to enhance what he considers inadequate pay, or the principal who augments her work benefits by registering for conferences that are really an opportunity for a vacation.

## REVOLUTIONARY POSSIBILITY OF THE MUNDANE

Two primary ways that mundane everyday acts of resistance have the potential to create change far in excess of what might be expected are: 1) when there is a significant accumulation of these acts such that real consequences ensue, and 2) the everyday narration of everyday acts of resistance creates shared knowledge about tactics, thus spreading their use and possible consequences across times and places.

### *Accumulation of Everyday Resistance*

Individual acts of resistance are mundane when taken individually, but

15 P. Willis, *Learning to labour: How working class kids get working class jobs*, Routledge, New York 2000.



if they are practiced widely by entire classes against a powerful elite or the state, they have the potential for cumulative consequences. “[J]ust as millions of anthozoan polyps create, willy-nilly, a coral reef, thousands upon thousands of petty acts of insubordination and evasion create a political and economic barrier reef of their own. And whenever, to pursue the simile, the ship of state runs aground on such a reef, attention is typically directed to the shipwreck itself and not the vast aggregation of actions which make it possible<sup>16</sup>.”

Scott uses the example of military desertions to illustrate the cumulative impact of everyday resistance<sup>17</sup>. Desertion is contrasted with mutiny, the former being an individual everyday act of resistance and the latter being an organized collective action to gain control of military force. Scott points to desertions from the Confederate Army during the US civil war as key to the Confederacy’s collapse, and the desertions from the Czarist army contributing to the 1917 Bolshevik victory. In neither case were the desertions part of an organized rebellion, but their cumulative impact was as momentous as open acts of sedition might have been.

A contemporary educational example of this cumulative consequence has occurred in Canada, in British Columbia. Teachers’ and parents’ everyday resistance to standardized testing has over time changed the ways this information can be used. This resistance stems from a right wing think tank’s use of the data to rank all schools in the province, a thinly disguised attack on public schools and the promotion of a narrative favoring privatization of schooling.

The individual acts of teachers encouraging parents to opt their children out of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade standardized government tests, along with the individual acts of parents and children who opted out, have, over a period of a few years, so disrupted the available data (in some instances whole schools do not participate in the testing; in many others there is great irregularity in the data) that any rankings are suspect. While this right wing think tank continues to report rankings, the public and even right wing journalists know they are compromised and of little value.

16 J. C. Scott, *Weapons of the weak: Everyday forms of peasant resistance*, cit., p. xvii.

17 Ivi, p.30.

*Narratives of Everyday Resistance*

Everyday acts of resistance often serve to advantage the individual materially (stealing food, for example, and this is especially so when people live a life that is close to the margins of survival). At a symbolic level, these acts may maintain or restore individuals' desire for fairness or maintain a fundamental sense of human dignity and decency.

Although everyday resistance may be individual acts, they are not isolated and are understood collectively. The acts of resistance become part of a narrative of the less powerful, shared and reinforced at a collective level. Indeed, these narratives of everyday resistance often challenge other narratives (such as narratives of vulnerability, incompetence, ignorance) meant to reinforce asymmetrical power relationships. These narratives create an understanding and a practice of everyday life and may even be the groundwork for more organized political action. Storytelling collectivizes and disseminates what is otherwise understood as only an individual act or experience.

A study of everyday resistance to legal authority in the US by sociologists Ewick & Silbey<sup>18</sup> illustrates how individual acts are extended in time and space transcending the personal, even if not necessarily altering power relations. The overwhelmingly popular closed Facebook group, Badass Teachers<sup>19</sup>, illustrates teacher sharing of experiences of oppression and tactical responses to that oppression. Stories posted often define the oppression and the comments share how teachers can and might respond. The Badass Teachers are not, however, a singular voice and do not respond to every authoritarian act in a common way. The comments are in effect individual narratives that others can tap into to develop an understanding of their own experiences and potential responses avail-

18 P. Ewick and S. Silbey, *Narrating Social Structure: Stories of Resistance to Legal Authority*, in "American Journal of Sociology" 108. 1328-1372, 2003.

19 Badass Teachers Association (BATs) was created in 2013 and is manifest primarily in its closed Facebook page. There are 64K+ members, mostly from the USA and a small number from other countries. The group is a pro-public education and pro-union and often focuses on issues of anti-privatization, anti-testing, and unionism with racial and social justice work. While this FB group illustrates how narrative creates shared tactics and responses to oppressive conditions, the group also serves other purposes, such as sharing curriculum resources. <https://www.facebook.com/groups/BadAssTeachers/>

able to them.

In both examples, stories are ones where the less powerful become the protagonists in the face of more powerful legal or bureaucratic authority, and the stories reveal very specific ways power can be reversed or disrupted, albeit often temporarily. When individuals tell stories of their everyday resistance they build a shared understanding of power structure and where the cracks in that structure can be exploited. When these everyday forms of resistance are shared through stories, they become shared knowledge, transcending the specific context and suggesting consequential ways of acting in the face of power.

Let me conclude by repeating myself: Organized, collective resistance and everyday resistance are complementary, both are necessary in political and class struggle.

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■ DAVE HILL

# MARXIST PUBLIC POLICY PRINCIPLES: SCHOOLING AND TEACHER EDUCATION/ TRAINING

## INTRODUCTION

This paper sets out Marxist principles for public policy and puts forward a Marxist Manifesto for Education and an eco-Marxist Manifesto for Teacher Education, focusing on activity within formal education systems. It calls for education workers- including teachers and teacher educators- and other cultural workers to become Marxist Activist Public Organic Intellectuals of the Working Class within micro-, meso- and macro-social and political arenas.

## ARENAS OF ACTION

There are many types of Marxist. This is written from a classical, a revolutionary Marxist perspective.

*Key Characteristics of Marxism*

*What is Specifically Marxist About Public Policy Proposals such as the Education / Teacher Education Proposals proposed in this paper<sup>1 2</sup>?*

Marxists work for and willingly embrace reforms, and are committed to forms of analysis and action that non-Marxist social democrats, radical

1 D. Hill, *La educación marxista contra el capitalismo en la era neoliberal (Marxist Education Against Capitalism in the Neoliberal Era)*, in “*Nuestra Bandera: Theoretical Journal of the Spanish Communist Party*” 236, 2017.

2 D. Hill, *Marxist Education and Teacher Education Against Capitalism in NeoLiberal/ NeoConservative/ NeoFascist/ Times*, in “*Cadernos do GPOSSHE On-line*” 2 (1), Universidade Estadual do Ceará Fortaleza, Brazil (*Grupo de Pesquisa Ontologia do Ser Social, História, Educação e Emancipação Humana*), 2019. url <https://revistas.uece.br/index.php/Cadernos-doGPOSSHE/article/view/1524/1275?fbclid=IwAR349OKt6lL5HRD1SiJK-6Iv7EwlQLo-JpbNIVQqrjvH-LW89JHT5fAeXdFA>

liberals, radical democrats, feminists, anti-racists, Queer activists and environmental activists are not. These are:

1. *Class Analysis: the Capital- Labor Relation*
2. *Capitalism must be replaced by Socialism and that change is Revolutionary*
3. *Revolutionary Transformation of Economy and Society need to be preceded and accompanied by a Class Programme, Organization, and Activism*

## CLASS ANALYSIS: THE CAPITAL- LABOR RELATION

The first distinguishing feature for Marxists is the *salience of class* as compared with other forms of structural oppression, discrimination and inequality. Marxists in general stand with the reforms suggested, enacted by non-Marxist reformists, together with social movements and civil rights campaigners in opposing racism, sexism, homophobia, and other forms of discrimination. But Marxists go further than criticizing (and acting against) social discrimination, oppressions, into economic rights. And further than that, that full economic rights cannot be achieved under a capitalist economic system, but only under a socialist or communist (socialism being the stage on the road to full communism). And that only the organized working class can organize and replace Capitalism.

*The Communist Manifesto*<sup>3</sup> is startlingly powerful and relevant in its analysis of capitalism. Capitalism is the systemic and systematic exploitation by the capitalist class of the labor power of the working class(es), with the capitalists appropriating the surplus value created by the labor of the working class(es). This is the Capital-Labor Relation. With capitalists pocketing this surplus value as profit.

In Capitalism each of the two (major) classes of society engage in permanent struggle over increasing the proportion of surplus value (the value left when raw materials, rents, and wages/salaries have been paid) that should go into capitalists' pockets as profits, or into workers' pockets as wages, plus, as welfare benefits- into the social wage.

<sup>3</sup> K, Marx and F. Engels, *The Communist Manifesto*. Marxist Internet Archive, 1848/2010. url <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/download/pdf/Manifesto.pdf>

There is, under capitalism, a continuous ‘class war’, a continuous antagonistic relationship between the exploiting class and the exploited class, whatever the state of subjective appreciation/understanding/political and class consciousness is. In the words of *The Communist Manifesto*, “society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat<sup>4</sup>”. In today’s language, the 0.1%, ‘the rulers of the universe’, pitted against most of the rest, the 99%<sup>5 6</sup>.

## CAPITALISM MUST BE REPLACED BY SOCIALISM AND THAT CHANGE IS REVOLUTIONARY

Marxists believe that *reforms are not sustainable under capitalism*, even if, when they are implemented, they are welcome. Reforms, social benefits and provision, are stripped away when there are the (recurrent and systemic) crises of capital, as happened in the 1930s, 1970s, and since 2008.

Social democratic politicians and parties, such as Pablo Iglesias/Podemós in Spain, Alexis Tsipras/Syriza in Greece, Jeremy Corbyn/the Labor Party in the Britain, Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortés in the USA, do not want to *replace* capitalism. They just want to manage it better, to regulate it, to reform it- to make it work better, with more ‘social justice’.

In classical Marxist analysis capitalism is never acceptable, whether regulated, reformed, social democratic or not, because it is the exploitation (economic, therefore political, cultural, social oppression) of humans by humans. What defines classical and revolutionary Marxists is an analysis that *capitalism must be replaced*.

This is why Marxist activists work to develop class-consciousness, a sense of the working class being ‘a class for itself’ (a class with class consciousness) as opposed to ‘a class in itself’ (simply a class of people

4 Ibid.

5 D. Hill, *ibid*, 2017.

6 D. Hill, *ibid.*, 2019.

with the same relationship to the means of production, distribution and exchange<sup>7</sup>), a class with ‘good sense’ as opposed to ‘common sense’<sup>8</sup>. In *The Communist Manifesto*<sup>9</sup> explicitly identify the “formation of the proletariat into a class” as the key political task facing the communists. Therefore, *what is needed is a revolution* to replace, to get rid of, the capitalist economic system with its capitalist economic and social relations of production. The ballot box alone cannot bring about revolution. An elected socialist government would not be able to bring about much change which went against the interests of the capitalist class because the military, judiciary, police and corporate hierarchy are not democratic. The national and global capitalist class use state violence, and/or the instruments of global or US capitalist economy or military to stop Socialism.

### **REVOLUTIONARY TRANSFORMATION OF ECONOMY AND SOCIETY NEED TO BE PRECEDED BY AND ACCOMPANIED BY A CLASS PROGRAMME, ORGANIZATION, AND ACTIVISM**

The *third* point of difference between Marxist and non-Marxist radicals is that in order to replace capitalism, Marxists have to actually work to organize for that movement, for that action. Thus a duty as a Marxist is *activist praxis*, within the limits of one’s ability and competing demands. Most Marxists move beyond proposal into activism and praxis- *praxis* is action guided by theory, or theory in motion. Thus Marxist teacher educators focus on political activism and developing political and class consciousness within formal teacher education courses and its wider education structures. As Marx notes, ‘philosophers have only interpreted the world. The point is to change it’<sup>10</sup>.

Marxists recognise that political organization, programme development,

7 K. Marx, *The Poverty of Philosophy*. Marxist Internet Archive, 1847, Online at: <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1847/poverty-philosophy/>

8 A. Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, Hoare, Q. and Nowell Smith, G. (eds. and trans.), International Publishers, New York 1971.

9 K. Marx and F. Engel, cit.

10 K. Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*. Marxist Internet Archive, 1845/ 2002, Online at <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/theses/index.htm>



and political intervention are necessary. Revolutions do not fall off trees, like apples. As Lenin, in 'State and Revolution' wrote, socialist revolutions have to be fought for- and defended.

## EDUCATE, AGITATE, ORGANIZE

There are various arenas in which Marxist and Critical Educators and Teacher Educators can be, are, and should be active. Within the:

- 1) classroom/seminar room/lecture theatre;
- 2) wider school community/organization- such as the staffroom, the trade union branch;
- 3) local community/town/city- for example in tenants', benefits', anti-racist, anti-austerity, environmentalist or other local community organizations and movements- and within town-wide/city-wide political parties, social movements and trade unions;
- 4) national levels in such social movements, parties and organizations.

These are arenas for transformative political social and educational activism since education takes place outside formal schooling and education systems as well as within. Many Marxists engage in what Jennifer Sandlin, Henry Giroux and Mike Cole call 'public pedagogy', and what Marx, Engels, Lenin, Gramsci, McLaren *et al* call for-developing class, political consciousness. However, this chapter focuses on some aspects of education and schooling *within formal education systems* and relate these to various issues in Marxist theory.

Both in the education arena - including in teacher education courses- and in the wider society, Marxists seek to serve and advance the interests of the working class- recognising the fundamental nature of class exploitation and also the multiple oppressions based on identities and subjectivities and the gendered and raced; nature of social class. We, as teachers, as educators, are working class, too, those of us on permanent contracts, tenure, are a relatively well paid level, or stratum, of the working class. Those of us in precarious/ casual work on far lower levels of income: we all sell our labor power to capitalists and to the apparatuses of the capitalist state, such as schools and universities.

Marxists have to consistently and courageously challenge the dominant hegemonic ideology of the ruling capitalist class, and what Althusser

called, its Ideological State Apparatuses- its universities, departments and schools of teacher training/teacher education, schools, media, and their allies in the institutions of religion.

The context is not just a war of ideas, an ideological war, a war of discourse. It is an economic class war, where the social and economic conditions and well-being of the working class are undermined and degenerated by the ruling class<sup>11 12</sup>. Capitalist onslaughts result in deaths for ‘superfluous’ workers and sections of the non-working industrial reserve army. The poor get sick earlier and die young.

## A MARXIST MANIFESTO FOR EDUCATION

Elsewhere<sup>13</sup> is set out a Manifesto for Education, partly drawing on an attempt at a Marxist teacher education course<sup>14</sup>. Many of these proposals are supported by other reform and social justice groups. But taken together, they offer a sustained challenge to neoliberal/neo-conservative, pre-/proto/quasi fascist capitalism.

[1] Cut class sizes

[2] Abolish league tables and abolish most externally set assessment tasks

[3] Restore local democratic control of state schools that have been handed over to private corporations, charities and individuals to run, and establish local democratic control of such schools

[4] Establish a fully Comprehensive Secondary School system so that each school has a broad social class mix and mix of attainment levels

[5] Remove Private Profiteering from Schools/Education services that

11 D. Hill, *Class struggle and education: Neoliberalism, (neo)-conservatism, and the capitalist assault on public education*, in “Critical Education”, 4(10), 2013, url <http://www.ieps.org.uk/media/1147/class-struggle-and-education-2013-dave-hill-in-critical-education.pdf>

12 L.M. Prendergast, D. Hill and S. Jones, *Social Exclusion, Education and Precarity: neoliberalism, neoconservatism and class war from above*, in “Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies”, 15(2), 2017, url <http://www.jceps.com/archives/3526>

13 D. Hill, *A Socialist Manifesto for Education, 2010*, url <http://www.ieps.org.uk/PDFs/socialistmanifestofored.pdf>

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have been privatized. Return these services to public/social control

[6] Integrate private schools and colleges/universities into the state education system

[7] Remove organised religion from schools and end state Faith Schools.

[8] Provide a good, and local, school for every child

[9] Provide free, nutritious, balanced school meals

[10] Provide free adult education classes, non-vocational and cultural as well as vocational

[11] Restore or establish free, state-funded residential centres and Youth Centres/Youth clubs

[12] Free up curricula that are over-prescriptive, to move beyond 'the basics curriculum'

[13] Revise school inspectorial and surveillance systems so they are supportive and advisory rather than punitive

[14] Encourage Critical Thinking across the curriculum. Teach children not 'what to think', but 'how to think'. Teach about Marxist analysis and the class exploitative nature of capitalism

[15] Teach in schools for ecological literacy and a readiness to act for environmental justice as well as for economic and social justice.

[16] Ensure that schools are anti-racist, anti-sexist and anti-homophobic and are environmentalist

[17] Provide an honest sex education curriculum in schools that teaches children not just 'when to say no', but also 'when to say yes'.

[18] Develop proper recognition of all school workers, with no compulsory job redundancies

[19] Set up school councils which include student as well as teacher and non-teacher worker voices

[20] Broaden teacher education and training on the detailed lines suggested below, so it is theorised and socially and politically contextualised, not restricted (primarily or totally) to technical 'delivery' and control skills

[21] Set up a completely Free, fully funded, publicly owned and democratic education system from pre-school right through to university, with no fees, and with financial grants for poorer students post 16 and for further and higher education.

To repeat, most of these proposals would be accepted by social democrats. Marxists develop and propagate them in the context of the three basic principles of Marxism set out earlier. Social democrats don't.

## TEACHER EDUCATION: AN ECO-MARXIST POLICY

Now, congruent with these proposal for teacher education/training (based on Edwards, Hill and Boxley<sup>15</sup>) are proposals for a Marxist manifesto for teacher education for economic, environmental and social justice. Such a programme should:

- Engage in pedagogic theory in which the socio-political, economic and environmental contexts of schooling and education are explicit. This includes understanding of children, schooling, society and nature, their inter-relationships, and alternative views and methods of, for example, classroom organization, schooling, and the economic and political relationship of schooling to society and nature;
- Develop equal opportunities policies and praxis so that children do not suffer from labelling, under-expectation, stereotyping or prejudice;
- Enable student teachers to develop as critical, reflective teachers, able, for example, to decode media, ministerial (and indeed, Radical Left) distortion, bias, and propaganda. This encourages the development of teachers, able to interrelate and critique theory and practice (their own and that of others);
- Include not only technical reflection, but also Marxist critical reflection, so as to question a particular policy or theory, and to ask such critical questions as '*whose interests are served*'; '*who wins?*' (if only by legitimating the status quo) and '*who loses?*';
- Enable student teachers to understand the social, economic and environmental inequalities and injustices present in their places of work and communities, and to challenge them.

15 G. Edwards, D. Hill and S. Boxley, S, Critical Teacher Education for Economic, Environmental and Social Justice. *Journal for Critical Education Policy Studies* 16(3), 2018, url <http://www.jceps.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/01/16-3-1.pdf>

## CURRICULUM CONTENT IN AND FOR THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING OF TEACHERS

The first three areas of Curriculum Content below are common across different ideological positions. Because of their near universality these are not developed here. The next two are also widely shared. The final ten propositions, 6 to 16, are more specifically eco-Marxist/Radical Left. The Initial Teacher Education (ITE) Curriculum should include:

- (1) *Classroom skills and competencies.* Teachers need reflective skills and understanding of learning, teaching and classroom management.
- (2) *Subject Knowledge.*
- (3) *The development of higher level analytical and intellectual skills.* This demands that teachers are capable of acting and thinking at an abstract level as understood by, for example, Vygotsky's 'scientific' thinking.
- (4) *Support for a major role for higher education institutions in ITE and opposition to school-led routes.* Higher Education institutions focus on developing the theoretical perspectives outlined above, promoting the advance of pedagogy through a theory-practice dialectic.
- (5) *Welcoming of different routes into teaching concordant with graduate teacher status and the above principles.*
- (6) *A commitment to economic, social and environmental justice, and recognition of the interconnection between the three.* If equal opportunities policies stop at celebrating cultural diversity and establishing positive and non-stereotypical role models, and do not see themselves as a development of broader economic justice, then they can be viewed as, in essence, conservative, for failing to challenge the status quo, based as it is on (raced and gendered) social class exploitation.
- (7) *Research evidence on equality issues: on racism, sexism, social class inequality, homophobia, and discrimination/prejudice/regarding disability and special needs, and the intersection of these factors with economic and environmental inequalities.*

- (8) *A class-based approach to social, economic and environmental justice in the curriculum.*
- (1) *Skills in dealing with the incidence of classist, homophobic, racist, and sexist remarks and other types of harassment at various levels, such as within the classroom and throughout the institution and society.*
  - (2) *Developing within institutions open fora on social and ecological justice where students and staff in institutions can meet in a supportive environment.*
  - (3) *Critiques of competing approaches, ideologies, curricula, pedagogies of schooling, teacher education and society.*
  - (4) *Developing knowledge and skills to critically examine the ideological nature of teaching and the nature of teachers' work.*
  - (5) *The concurrent rather than the consecutive development of critical reflection, throughout and from the beginning of the ITE course. If the social context of schooling is left until "post-initial training," then many newly qualified teachers will miss out. Many do not receive any post-initial/ in-service training other than what are, currently, instrumentalist, non-critical, in-service training programmes concerned with how to "deliver" results, working within the current schooling system.*
  - (6) *Substantially predetermined rather than primarily negotiated curriculum objectives/Should a critically reflective teaching program have predefined content or be negotiated? At various times the focus has been on programme content, critical analysis and curriculum development, pedagogic relationships between teachers/teacher educators and pupils/students. Arguably, heavy use of learner-centred discussion militates against the development of the broad span of critical theoretical insights argued for here. For organic intellectuals, the goal is not 'to tell the people what to think' but to enable them to think clearly to provide them with the tools such as critical literacy to engage in cultural action incorporating the exercise of critical (dialectical) consciousness aimed at social transformation.*
  - (7) *The application of critical evaluation to school-based practice and experience. Theory can provide the analytic and conceptual*

apparatus for thinking about practice, within the formal and hidden curriculum, while practice can provide the opportunity for the testing and assimilation of theory. Successive governments in the USA and UK for example have prioritised school-led and school-based ITE programmes. The detheorization of teacher education is a major problem in the development of effective teaching, critical skills, awareness and teaching, and in the development of a revolutionary transformative critical pedagogy.

(8) *Environmental justice pedagogy*. This entails active engagement between students, communities and the environment and addresses complex social, economic and environmental issues so that students can develop critical, historical and transformative knowledge. This is important for students and teachers living and working in economically disadvantaged urban communities – because it can reorient the curriculum to deal with specific environmental justice issues that these communities face.

## THE ROLES OF MARXIST ACTIVIST EDUCATORS

The role of organic Marxist public intellectuals is crucial. Marxist public intellectuals - such as the 'political' shop steward, or union organizer, the member of a socialist/Marxist party or group, the teacher, the teacher educator, the youth worker – intellectualise social, political, cultural, economic matters from the standpoint of what Gramsci termed 'good sense', from a class – conscious perspective. Herein lies Marxists' pedagogical importance, of party, organization, leaflets, newspapers, booklets, books and social media; here, as well as in conversation and in rhetorical speeches, we carry out the role of socialist analysis, of revolutionary pedagogy, of connecting the here and now of a rent strike, a pro-immigrant rally, an anti-austerity march, a picket line of a zero-hours contract employer, an occupation of a tax avoiding multinational company owned shop: here is essential Marxist pedagogy.

Marxists are necessary, necessary in leading and developing changes in consciousness, a change in class consciousness, and in playing a contributory role organizing to replace capitalism.

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■ GIANNA KATSIAMPOURA

# ONCE AGAIN ON THE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY OF INTELLECTUALS

Since the end of the 19th century, by taking advantage of the social acceptance of their position in the productive structure of society and the institutional validity of their speech, intellectuals choose to associate with the public sphere and intervene in political and social issues that are not directly related to their scientific discipline.

The issue of social involvement of intellectuals has been a topic of discussion and a field of study for a series of thinkers such as Antonio Gramsci, Jean Paul Sartre, Henry Giroux, Enzo Traverso, Russel Jacoby and others. Key questions concern the position of the intellectual in the social division of labor, her social responsibility, the question of her simultaneous intervention in the public sphere, and her responsibility in scientific practice. This paper will focus on the following question: Does now, in the epoch of late capitalism, exist the intellectual who has the courage to think differently (uncompromising) and to act with a sense of political commitment, moral conviction and social responsibility that examines and interferes with important social issues? The presentation will focus, in particular, on the role of the university teacher as an intellectual and her role in the educational process so as to fashion citizens with a strong sense of individual and social responsibility, with an expanded intellectual horizon and the ability to think critically and participate in social debates with large audiences.

## WHO IS THE INTELLECTUAL?

As I have previously mentioned, since the end of the 19th century, by taking advantage of the social acceptance of their social position and the

institutional validity of their word, intellectuals have chosen to intervene in political and social issues that are not directly related to their scientific field of activity.

The founding act of the emergence of the social category “intellectual” is considered to be the “Dreyfus affair” in France. In 1894, Colonel Dreyfus was accused of spying in favor of Germany, with a slanderous indictment and being punished with exile from France. This case opened the wick of anti-Semitism that began to develop in France.

For the first time, a series of scholars and writers intervened publicly against this verdict by signing the Manifesto of Intellectuals in 1898. Among them, the socialists Jean Jaures and Leon Bloom, Marcel Proust, Anatol Frances and Emile Zola, who wrote the *J'Accuse...! (I accuse)*, an open letter published on 13 January 1898 in the newspaper *L'Aurore*.

The result of this mobilization was the foundation of the Union of Human Rights in 1898 by the French politician Georges Clemenceau, the President of France during the 1<sup>st</sup> World War. Thus, the Dreyfus affair puts under the microscope a series of functional features of modernity: democracy, justice, human rights, Semitism/anti-Semitism. It is, rightly, considered a symbolic moment for the emergence of the social category of “intellectuals”<sup>1</sup>.

This is the first time that the adjective “intellectual” is used as a noun, meaning: one who exploits any scientific or artistic credibility achieved on a personal level, in order to intervene in social tensions and in cases for which he has no formal appointment. She functions as an upsetter of the established order, a subversive element for the state and the nation. In this context, the “intellectual” and the “leftist” scholar are identical/synonymous concepts<sup>2</sup>.

For Jean-Paul Sartre, the intellectual grows in an unfertile soil and he becomes a renegade of his class (bourgeois or middle class, usually). And here lays the difference between the modern intellectual from the philosopher of the Enlightenment: the Enlightenment philosopher opposes the Palace and converses with the “progressive” bourgeoisie and/or the

1 E. Traverso, *Où sont passés les intellectuels?*, Les éditions Textuel, Paris 2013.

2 J.P. Sartre, *Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels*, Gallimard, Paris 1972.

aristocracy. The 20th century intellectual lives within a much more complex social structure, politically divided into Left and Right<sup>3</sup>.

The social position of the intellectual in modernity, with such characteristics as the industrialization, urbanization and the emergence of mass society, the mass media, etc. changes and allows for an elementary functional autonomy: she can live without the help of any ruler, from the products of his intellectual labour (eg. writings, works of art etc.) that seriously influence the public sphere<sup>4</sup>.

The intellectual now increasingly undertakes to realize the second part of Marx's "11th thesis on Feuerbach": to change the world.

We will find her to mobilize during the revolt of the Spartacists in Berlin and in the crisis of the short-lived Weimar Republic, to be a protagonist in Red Vienna, causing the anger of typical academics like Max Weber<sup>5</sup>. Conservatives and nationalists will thus define the intellectual of the interwar period, often a Central European Jew, as the representative of the so hated late modernity, which is considered by the conservative post-modernist theorists as a time of generalized decline<sup>6</sup>.

It is the time when Antonio Gramsci introduces the notion of the "organic intellectual", by making a distinction between the "organic" and the "traditional" intellectual. The organic intellectual is a renegade of his class, the traditional intellectual defends the interests of his class of origin. Gramsci goes further, defining the duties of the working class intellectual, based on the abolition of the distinction between intellectual and manual labour, Homo Faber and Homo Sapiens.

In this way, Gramsci, whose work has set the context for further discussion, considers that intellectuals represent the rival social classes, divided into "traditional" and "organic", focusing on the analysis of the role of the collective-working class intellectual, which for him is the Communist Party. The goal of the collective organic intellectual is not simply a corrective political intervention but hegemony at the level of the existing

3 A. Elephantis, "Introduction", Jean-Paul Sartre, *Plaidoyer pour les intellectuels*, Greek edition, Politis, Athens 1994.

4 E. Traverso, *Où sont passés les intellectuels?*, cit.

5 M. Weber, "The Politics as a Vocation", Max Weber, *The Vocation Lectures*, Hackett Publishing Company, Indianapolis, IN 2004.

6 E. Traverso, *Où sont passés les intellectuels?*, cit.

social formation as a whole<sup>7</sup>.

Leftwing intellectuals fighting for social progress and human rights became one of the main targets of fascist regimes. Joseph Goebbels, for example, speaks with contempt for “the intellectuals of the asphalt”, asphalt here should be conceived as a symbol of the city deformed by modernity.<sup>8</sup>

In the interwar period, therefore, the intellectual identifies herself with the Left and criticizes the entire social, cultural and political structure of the Western world. It has to be noted that a series of mobilizations against anti-fascist intellectuals took place and is known to be particularly massive. But this opens the gate for another presentation...

Before I move on, I would like to raise another matter for discussion and this is the position of intellectuals in the Soviet Union under Stalin.

The position of Stalinism on the role of intellectuals (Stalin used to call intellectuals “the engineers of souls”) has to be studied further giving emphasis on institutions like the Academy of Sciences and focusing on the distinction between the dissidents and those who were loyal to the regime.<sup>9</sup>

After the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, in the context of the Cold War, the leftist intellectuals will be mobilized in the support of both camps, west and east. That was a period of intellectual confusion for the left in general due to the frequently unconditional support given to the eastern bloc by the intellectuals of the western Communist Parties.

This schism will be lifted by the events of May 1968.

Historically, the last massive appearance of intellectuals in the sense of criticism of the knowledge and power relationship and in favour of new forms of social organization is the late 1960s, when intellectuals are sided with the rebellion of May 68 and inspired by the emerging radical social movements (anti-colonial, anti-racist, anti-nuclear, feminist). These social movements acted as a source of inspiration for leftist intellectuals both in terms of theory and action.

7 A. Gramsci, “The Intellectuals”, in Roger S. Gottlieb (ed.), *An Anthology of Western Marxism*, Oxford University Press, New York-Oxford 1989, pp. 113-119.

8 E. Traverso, *Où sont passés les intellectuels?*, cit.

9 M. Labridis, «Σταλινισμός και διανοούμενοι» (“The Intellectuals and the Stalinist regime”), *Λεβιάθαν (Leviathan)*, no 12, 1992, (in Greek).

## THE ECLIPSE OF INTELLECTUALS?

The question that arises today, in the epoch of late capitalism, is whether the type of intellectual who thinks subversively and acts with a sense of political commitment, moral conviction and social responsibility by analyzing and intervening in important social issues, still exists.

This question has been and continues to be of interest over the last years, with answers focusing on the characteristics of the intellectual who continues to be active in the social sphere arguing for the need of change of the existing social system, although it is now obvious that a majority, perhaps, of this social category has come to accept the hegemony of capitalism by internalizing (even passionately) its values.<sup>10</sup>

Has the end of history, as the postmodernists suggest, lead to the absence of those who have a range of knowledge of the world as a totality, do not refrain from expressing their views in the public sphere and intervene politically on the side of the oppressed of this world?<sup>11</sup>

It is a fact that in the 21st-century the organic intellectual, as we used to know her, is in eclipse, or to put it differently, the majority of those who claim to represent her has embodied the values of the dominant class.

A number of causes can interpret this change, including the impoverishment of public culture, the replacement of intellectuals by high tech intelligent people who do not intervene and enrich public life.<sup>12</sup> The discomfort for over-professionalism and specialization is a universal feature of the discussion that is being held on the modern zeitgeist.

This discussion, which opened during and after May 68, focuses on the role and function of research, knowledge and science in late capitalism.

## THE UNIVERSITY TEACHER AS AN INTELLECTUAL

In contrast to the dominant model of the technocrat / specialist univer-

10 R. Sayre, M. Löwy, «Figures of Romantic Anti-Capitalism», *New German Critique*, vol. 32, 1984, p. 90.

11 See, as example, Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Free Press, New York 1992.

12 R. Jacoby, *The Last Intellectuals. American Culture in the Age of Academe*, Basic Books, New York 1987.

sity teacher, it is now necessary to reinvent the philosopher / educator as the new radical / organic intellectual of our epoch. In this new model of intellectual, philosophy is the expression of the class struggle at the level of theory as Althusser has pointed out.

The university teacher who will not only have a critical attitude towards the existing relationship of knowledge and power that functions to the benefit of the dominant social classes but will also be able to see critically his own place in the production and transmission of knowledge.<sup>13</sup>

The core of the answer here is the political nature of intellectual labour, a Gramscian principle that is crucial to my analysis. Based on this, the function of the intellectual in education is to challenge the dominant conception of neutral and objective research and teaching. The word of a university teacher is not neutral, not empty of values, not independent of class references, culture, power and politics.<sup>14</sup>

Therefore, the university teacher should not accept the commonly held view that her role is to produce specialists, a glance at the university curricula and the OECD documents reveals this orientation: the educational practice turns into management of power strategists.

On the contrary, the role of the teacher-intellectual is to educate students in a critical view of society.<sup>15</sup> It is not a matter of teaching the principles of a reified social world, the teacher must instead place the social rights as a teaching aim, not as a corrective measure of the present situation but as an emancipatory project opposing oppression and exploitation. Knowledge specialization, though it is ultimately necessary in today's knowledge societies, should not be identified with opposition to critical thinking.

Specialization is a mechanism that is often used by fragmenting complex areas of knowledge and refusing at the same time to students the critical tools they need to link these areas in order to gain a better understanding of reality.

13 S. Aronowitz and H. Giroux, "Teaching and the Role of the Transformative Intellectual", in Stanley Aronowitz, Henry Giroux, *Education under Siege: The Conservative, Liberal and Radical Debate over Schooling*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, London 1986, pp. 23-46.

14 S. Aronowitz and H. Giroux, "Teaching and the Role of the Transformative Intellectual", *ibidem*.

15 E. Traverso, *Où sont passés les intellectuels?*, cit.

As Sartre said, what made Oppenheimer an intellectual, despite his scientific expertise, was not the construction of the atomic bomb based on his knowledge, but the fact that he took the stand against the arms race. Perhaps what is necessary is a process of radical transformation of the academic world about the ways in which knowledge is constructed and pedagogy defined.

While there is room for specialization and well-defined disciplines in the academic field, too often these disciplines exhibit defensive behavior in their territory. By being well defined and delimited, they leave out problems that they cannot tackle.

The boundaries between disciplines are structurally restrictive of intellectual work, and create confusion as to how academics are positioned within the structure of knowledge in higher education.<sup>16</sup> Interdisciplinarity is therefore, crucial.

The aforementioned define a number of characteristics for the social function of the university teacher as an intellectual.

The new intellectual at the university should:

- 1) regain the role of criticizing the existing social system and standing by the side of the weak.
- 2) envision another type of society, another social organization is possible!!
- 3) acquire organic connections with the multiplicity of realities operating in society and especially to be aware of the reality that the students are experiencing.
- 4) In this context, the challenge concerns both criticism and self-criticism of the academic discipline and the academic workplace.
- 5) That is to say that she adheres to academic and social responsibility, both in the academic and public spheres
- 6) so that her space of activity becomes a place of struggle against the dominant ideology and social inequality.

16 Henry Giroux, “Πολιτισμικές σπουδές, διανοούμενοι και νεολαία» (Cultural Studies, Science and Youth”, *Επιστήμη και κοινωνία (Science and Society)*), no 29, 2012, pp. 19-35 (in Greek).



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■ EMILIA ROMANO

## THE REASONS OF UTOPIA

The necessary epistemological complexity of pedagogy, the continuous tension between autonomy and the need for looks that help to better understand the meaning and possibilities of educational action guaranteed contamination of theories and models (in some cases elaborated in other disciplinary fields). These are the reasons that have made pedagogy an autonomous science, but open and plural, on the other, available to deal with other knowledge. As F. Pinto Minerva points out, “in the search for a definition of one’s field of reflexivity and effectiveness, pedagogy has, therefore, come to think and experience the border, not as a line of closure and separation but as a place where the adventure of trespassing takes place”<sup>1</sup>.

Among the themes inherent to the pedagogical discourse (on education) there is undoubtedly the one of change and its possibility. The idea of educability, in fact, is closely related to the idea of the possibility of change.

Also with respect to this matter, the methodology proposed here is a research methodology (of a critical type) which, starting from the categorical analysis of the pedagogical discourse, helps to rediscover the axiological sense to investigate the baggage of meaning and meaning that they carry with them and to which they refer.

It is an attempt to put together logical and hermeneutical looks in order not to risk losing sight of the complex and plural character of the object of study and research and to be able to “challenge and question the dogmatic positions, prejudices and problems, especially those whose evidence risks assuming a logical form conceived in indisputable and unalterable terms”<sup>2</sup>.

1 F. Pinto Minerva, *La pedagogia scienza dialogica e in movimento*, in I. Loiodice (ed.) *Sapere pedagogico*, Progedit, Bari 2013, p.4.

2 M. Muzi, (notes for a conference) “*La pedagogia da sapere empirico a esercizio critico*”, 28

The question of Utopia addressed here starts from the reflections proposed in this regard by Giovanni Maria Bertin<sup>3</sup>. This scholar is responsible for the elaboration of a complex model of pedagogy, the pedagogical problematicism, which, although it does not belong to the wide panorama of critical pedagogy (also for chronological reasons) can be considered a model of research and educational practice critical for many reasons. First of all the interpretative hermeneutic tension that distinguishes Bertin's pedagogy and the idea of reason understood not as an abstract entity but as a rationalizing requirement of the problematic nature of existence, a need that is always present and never concluded the way transcendental tension is made.

The rationalizing need proposed by Bertin becomes a real possibility because it is based on the certainty that it is in the possibilities of man to respond to the existing and try to direct it in the direction of reason. In the Bertinian perspective, this means that every educational choice (and not) must be made in such a way as to widen the possibilities of realization of each one and not be directed towards choices that could be "obligatory".

If it is true that change is a theme inherent to the tradition of pedagogical reflection and since we belong to a society that defines itself as a society of change, we need to re-propose a reflection around this theme to explore its heuristic possibilities and training potential, but also the "de-formative" pitfalls.

Since it is a given fact to understand change as an objective strictly connected to the pedagogical, what we feel the need to reflect on again are the limits and possibilities of this change in relation to the freedom of the subject in training and, aspect not less important, to the formative and de-formative potential of change and the processes put in place to carry it out.

In particular, what interests us is the direction that we can give towards the change in the sense of deviation and detachment concerning the

giugno 2002.

3 G. M. Bertin, Among his works: *Introduzione al problematicismo pedagogico*, Marzorati, Milano 1951; *Educazione alla ragione. Lezioni di pedagogia generale*, Armando, Roma 1968; *Crisi educativa e coscienza pedagogica*, Armando, Roma 1971; *Nietzsche. L'inattuale, idea pedagogica*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1977.

already given. As educators and educators we need to ask ourselves even more clearly how far we can imagine pushing ourselves with our educational projects, towards what goals we can imagine arriving, what limits if there are limits, we must put to our pedagogical hopes?

In our opinion, the answer to these questions is clear: no limit when we make the notion of *Bildung* ours, which “transcends the mere cultivation of pre-existing provisions [...]”<sup>4</sup>.

This idea of *Bildung* as a possibility for the subject in training to transcend the already given seems to combine well with the utopian dimension of pedagogical problematicism as proposed by Giovanni Maria Bertin. In his theoretical model developed over about fifty years, a model attentive to grasp the changing needs of his present (but also of ours), Bertin understood the principle of reason as a methodological principle closely linked to the moment of experience. In this relationship between reason and experience, the timeliness of this model, which offers tools to read humanity at all times and to elaborate, paraphrasing Bertin himself, constructions of existence in which the subject in formation can recognize oneself and above all to see the rationalization of one’s experience realized. Objective, the latter one, which cannot be renounced in the Bertinian perspective, for any explicitly or implicitly formative life project.

Bertinian reason, defined in synthesis, is not the abstract and dogmatic reason, sufficient to itself, but it is a reason that resolves (or attempts to resolve) the problematic nature of existence.

It assumes this resolution as its indispensable task, a problematic nature of existence and experience that manifests itself in the impossibility of identifying univocal meanings to things, to events, to the world.

In other words, Bertin reminds us that in the relationship between subject and object (where from time to time each of the two poles can be the subject itself, the other facing him, an object of study) an absolute and total understanding between the two poles of the relationship. Their integration is the transcendental goal (in the sense of never-ending) towards which to strive. The same is true in the educational relationship. The utopian tension, in this sense, is the tension towards the prefigura-

4 H.G. Gadamer, *Verità e metodo*, Bompiani, Milano 1983, p. 34.

tion of a possible world in which this (yet transcendental) integration can find its maximum expression.

All that applies to experience in general is also valid for the educational experience whose intent is the process of personality formation within the antinomic dimension characterized by egocentric instances and heterocentric instances. Their widest possible integration would give rise to a rational personality capable of confronting the antinomicity of different instances without denying them. The formation of such a possibility is not a certainty, but there is a certainty that such formation is possible. In life, everyone starts from given, unchangeable conditions, starting from his or her own genetic heritage, from the plot of relationships, from his or her own belonging, but tends towards imaginable, prefigurable and achievable conditions thanks to a gradual and transcendental work of rationalization of the present problematic. This prefiguration is sustained by a look at the future that becomes utopian tension: without any guarantee of success, but with the certainty of the possibility of its realization.

The problematicism is to configure as a model of education to the reason in which rationality itself constitutes a choice. The principle of rationalizing the problematic of existence "saves" man from the destiny implicit in his starting condition and frees him from being condemned to a someway predestined life. The liberating force of reason opens up future scenarios and makes it possible to transform the utopian dream into an existential project. Even if reason does not guarantee the achievement of the result, it opens the possibility of change. It is the certainty in the possible change that gives strength and the necessary push to those in the educational field who work in the material and human peripheries of our cities. No one can count on a guarantee of success, but at the same time, no one can be considered or considered to be doomed to failure. In this perspective also the educational contact with the lives characterized by high levels of problematic aims to give shape to a future with less gloomy colors because it allows us to prefigure possible horizons not predetermined. Certainty in the possibility of change for oneself and others expands worlds and horizons of possibility.

The utopian becomes the space in which to prefigure alternative selves and to evaluate the possibilities of success and failure in a perspective

that we could almost define as experimental, as a laboratory, with less risk.

Existential planning makes it clear (and is still a current indication) that “the need to overcome the crisis with a solid and massive reorganization of forces aimed at recovering the ethical potential of reason, carried out through a clear and rigorous individual and collective design, anchored to the present, but looking to the future”<sup>5</sup>.

Bertin pushes this utopian tension to the maximum by drawing on the Nietzschean idea of overcoming, of “sunset” of the present man and of the construction of a subject characterized by reason, but provided above all by a protean reason nourished by demonicity, capable of confronting dimensions of the tragic, of the comic, of violence and of eros. It is a design that makes the difference to a value brand. Difference compared to the others, compared to what is expected of us, to the standardizing requests of the groups in which we are inserted, but above all difference concerning the hour, to the already given. Difference that, in order to become concrete, must be able to look to the future with the certainty of being able to somehow inhabit it. In this sense, the not-yet represents not a yearning, but the prefiguration of what, with commitment and rationality, is possible to realize.

The interpretation proposed by Bertin of the existential perspectives outlined in the Nietzschean writings, characterized by utopianism and inactivity, considers these elements as anything but negative. Of the utopian we have already highlighted the function of anticipating long-term goals for a future that can sometimes appear to have no outlets. Concerning the current, Bertin gives an interesting interpretation in that he maintains that “the pedagogical idea, as such, must be outdated since otherwise, it would be a tendency, a mere ideological superstructure, a cover for the dominant praxis and that to it adverse”<sup>6</sup>.

For Bertin, therefore, it currently means the task of identifying and highlighting inconsistencies, bias, and dystonias; he must solicit the will to trace unpublished, alternative, unrecognized solutions; it must reveal mystified or deformed instances of current events.

5 G.M. Bertin, M.G. Contini, *Costruire l'esistenza*, Armando, Roma 1983, p. 89.

6 G.M. Bertin, *Nietzsche e l'idea di educazione*, Il Segnalibro, Torino 1995, p. 25.

In the Bertinian reading of the German philosopher, the very idea of superman assumes a different meaning: with it “a new species, conceivable in a model [ideal ...]. It would rather allude to new existential attitudes [...], to new visions of life and to new types of consequent value, to be hypothesized and experimented, which serve as a breaking line and opposition perspectives [...]”<sup>7</sup>.

Of course, also rationality becomes different, the bearer of an energy capable of clashing with the present and its evidence, supported by a strong element of demonicity and lightness that pushes us to look far and towards the elsewhere and not yet.

Among the many and diverse learning environments in which pedagogy is called upon to intervene and evaluate one’s “possibilities,” there is one that for its own characteristics, for the people who live there, seems to be particularly complex: the community for minors.

The birth of these communities in Italy is to be placed at the end of the seventies. They are structures, alternatives to institutions, which have undergone a long and complex transformation that has passed through numerous legislative interventions. There are different types. Within them diversified methodologies are used, united by a strong pedagogical matrix and one of the characterizing elements is the size of the educator. Pedagogical intentionality takes shape in the search for the “meaning of educating in the community [which] must be made explicit, made visible [...]”<sup>8</sup>.

Many questions and issues must be addressed by those who work in this area, but what we intend to focus on here is the right of children welcomed in communities to imagine a future: to believe in a utopia.

To make this utopia a formative possibility, it is necessary to elaborate for each child a framework project that is configured as “the horizon of meaning and at the same time the container, the frame of all the interventions that [concern] it to guarantee a new orientation to the future”<sup>9</sup>. Because the future outlined for children welcomed in the community

7 Ivi, p. 50 - 51.

8 P. Milani, *Bambini e ragazzi in comunità. Dimensioni dell'educare e formazione degli educatori*, p. 147-185, in *Le comunità per minori. Modelli di formazione supervisione clinica*, edited by P. Bastianoni, A. Taurino, Carocci Faber, Roma 2009. p. 150.

9 Ivi, p. 153.



can have a value for themselves, each educational intervention must be a design and conduct according to a logic of personalization of education. This personalization can take place if the actual act of education becomes an act of care not of the individual child, but of his world of relationships (functional or dysfunctional) of his references (positive or negative), of his personal history (which is done of past and future). When a child is entrusted to a community “it is not only the child who is accepted, nor his identity, but his story and the intertwining of his relationships which, through memory and new experiences, the process of care promotes and takes on new meanings”<sup>10</sup>.

A lot of research has been carried out mainly in the international sphere, even if this evaluative attention to the outcomes of family and residential foster care programs is beginning to spread out in Italy.

They focus their attention on the fact that among the elements that distinguish a “good” community there is no doubt the attention to include the bond with the home, with the environment and the relationships of origin.

If it is true, as we have argued from the first lines, that the dimension to the dimension of the future is an unavoidable part of any pedagogical construction, it is good to keep in mind that the push towards the future looks like an indispensable temporal dimension of doing and thinking about education. It is for this reason that an educational project cannot free itself from a characterization of the utopian that accentuates the dimensions of yearning, of dreaming, of desiring. We can say that the specific mandate of the social service to the community to which the children are entrusted is precisely this: a desirable and possible future for each child.

Utopia, its desire for the future, combined with the dimensions of problematic rationality leads us to seek solutions that do not limit the possibilities for the subject but broaden them. If the future is an escape from the past, it would be a forced future, a path to follow. Directing educational planning in the direction of reason forces us to evaluate many

10 L. Strumendo, V. Belotti (eds), *Linee Guida per i servizi sociali e sociosanitari, La cura e la segnalazione. Le responsabilità nella protezione e nella tutela dell'infanzia e dell'adolescenza in Veneto*, Public Prosecutor's Office, Regione Veneto, Romano d'Ezzelino (VI) 2008, p. 43.

possibilities and to multiply points of view: the past cannot be excluded from the planning of the future. In this logic, the right of every child to “have access to a sensible and unitary narrative of his or her own history [...]”<sup>11</sup> must be protected.

In the past and future of the Bertinian model, there are new possibilities of relationship within the designed utopia (“existential” in Bertin’s language). Its intentionality is aimed at developing value criteria and objectives of action on the level of everyday lived towards the future.

In conclusion, utopia does not coincide with the evasive or the surreal; on the contrary, it represents “the manifestation of the most clear and decisive dissatisfaction of humanity for itself, rejection of its own limit and as a requirement to go beyond<sup>12</sup>” this limit.

In one of the most recent writings, “*La lievità, paradosso pedagogic nietzscheano*”, Bertin argues that the lightness has a function to “anticipate in a socio-cultural context in crisis or without outlets, in the sphere of the possible, long term objectives and goals, and thus making more persuasive, tenacious and farsighted in a perspective [...] launched on the future and about this”<sup>13</sup>.

We all, as educators, as educators and even before, as men and women, should take utopia as a regulative idea<sup>14</sup> to overcome the crisis and disorder of the existing and to find new solutions, imaginable with imagination and imagination, whose realization requires courage and intelligence in identifying the most suitable tools for their realization.

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12 G.M. Bertin, *Crisi educativa e coscienza pedagogica*, Armando, Roma 1971, p. 43.

13 G.M. Bertin, *La lievità, paradosso nietzscheano*, Cluet, Trieste 1980, p. 63.

14 See E. Romano, *Formazione e libertà di scelta. Il modello di G.M. Bertin*, Anicia, Roma 2005.

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■ CONSTANTINE D. SKORDOULIS

# MARX, NATURAL SCIENCE AND THE MATERIALIST CONCEPTION OF NATURE

## INTRODUCTION

This article is about the relationship between Marxism and Science. This relationship is considered to be highly controversial and a vast literature exists on the subject reflecting debates that emerged in the earliest days of Marxism. One of the reasons is because “science” and “Marxism” are both terms that have been understood in various ways over the course of the last 100 years.

One can distinguish at least two main currents within Marxism: classical ‘scientific’ Marxism and humanist critical Marxism initiated by G. Lukacs and the Frankfurt School in the ‘20s.

While ‘classical’ Marxism stresses the scientific character of Marxism, ‘critical’ Marxism is highly critical of science and its practice. The two currents of Marxism differ on the degree that consider important the Hegelian influence on Marx. A general inclination of criticizing science has been a characteristic feature of Hegelian perspectives within Marxism. Alternatively, Marxists who embrace science have a tendency to minimize Hegel’s influence on the development of Marx’s thought.

This paper stands on the grounds of ‘scientific’ Marxism. It argues that i) Marx was both a materialist and a scientific realist recognising the ontological objectivity of nature as highlighted mainly in the ‘Theses on Feuerbach’ ii) Marx employed a materialist conception of nature, which was not at all foreign to the major revolutions in the science of his time and which he combined with a dialectic of emergence and contingency. To substantiate these claims, the paper follows closely Marx’s intellectual

development examining his relationship with the two figures that assume special importance in the development of his materialism: the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus and Charles Darwin. From Epicurus, Marx in his doctoral dissertation developed his critique of teleological explanations in natural and human history. From Darwin, Marx developed a distinctive theory of 'coevolution' that accounted for the ways in which society shaped, and in turn was shaped by nature. Linking together Marx's materialism with his critique of capitalism is the concept of 'metabolism' which Marx derived from the work of the German chemist Justus von Liebig in soil chemistry. For Marx, 'The Capital' is a work of science.

In the final section a general discussion of Marx's materialism as a form of scientific materialism is given along with implications for environmental and science education.

## THE TOPOGRAPHY OF MARXISM

Marxism and Marxist scholars have been divided into roughly two tendencies: one conceiving Marxism as "critique" and the other conceiving it to be a social "science." Marxism has been divided between Critical Marxists and Scientific Marxists. The Two-Marxisms are both in fact differentiations of a single originally undifferentiated Marxism.

As different, elaborated versions of Marxism, Critical and Scientific Marxism emerge under different socio-historical conditions and among different persons and in differentiated social networks and groups.

Critical Marxism includes Georg Lukacs, Karl Korsch, Antonio Gramsci, J-P. Sartre, Lucien Goldmann and members, or onetime members, of the "Frankfurt School" as Max Horkheimer, T. W. Adorno, Leo Lowenthal, Erich Fromm, Walter Benjamin, Herbert Marcuse, or its second generation, such as Jurgen Habermas.

Opposed to this group, are Marxists who turn their back on critical theory as mere ideology and who conceive Marxism as a true science. They include Galvano della Volpe, Louis Althusser and those influenced by him, Goran Therborn, and Robin Blackburn, an editor of the prestigious British journal *New Left Review*.

The most important part of this theoretical tension is organized as a

conflict between those supporting (and those rejecting) the importance of Hegel for Marx, and between those using and those rejecting a more Hegelian conception of “ideology critique.”

Both Scientific and Critical Marxism tend to view ideology differently and their critique of ideology differs as well. Scientific Marxism views ideology as a distorted reflection of the world, indeed, as turned upside down by the distorting lens of self-interest but, nonetheless, as a reflection mirroring the world. Critical Marxism, however, believes that even as men go about fashioning ideological masks for class domination, they do so under the scrutiny of their own and others’ critical reason, and must thus seek masks that will persuade themselves and others. What makes ideologies persuasive is precisely their elements of rationality. From the standpoint of Critical Marxism, then, reason even seeps into ideology itself and it must, therefore, contain something more than the false and mistaken; consequently, ideology cannot simply be shrugged aside as a mere tool of domination, or straightened out simply with a transformative criticism that turns it “right side up.”

The difference between Critical and Scientific Marxism reflects a conflict between those viewing Marx as the culmination of German idealism and those emphasizing Marx’s superiority to that tradition. It is, therefore, also a difference between those accepting the young (and consequently more Hegelian) Marx as authentically Marxist and others who regard the young Marx as still mired in ideology.

Critical Marxists conceive of Marxism as critique rather than science; they stress the continuity of Marx with Hegel, the importance of the young Marx, the ongoing significance of the young Marx’s emphasis on “alienation,” and are more historicist.

The Scientific Marxists, or anti-Hegelians, have stressed that Marx made an epistemological rupture with Hegel after 1845. Marxism for them is science, not critique, entailing a “structuralist” methodology whose paradigm is the “mature” political economy of Capital rather than the “ideologized” anthropology of the 1844 Manuscripts.

In one part, the controversy about the young versus the old Marx is a metaphor for the more analytic distinction between Critical and Scientific Marxism. Critical Marxists, therefore, commonly stress the continuity between the young and old Marx because the young Marx was patently an Hegelian;

they wish to establish Marxism's enduring link with the larger tradition of German philosophy of which Hegel was the culmination.

Correspondingly, Scientific Marxists may stress the quantum leap that the maturing Marx presumably made from ideology to science, as well as ascribing sharp differences between ideology and science in general.

## MARX AND SCIENCE

Marx himself wrote no systematic treatise on science, but throughout his writings there are numerous scattered passages in which he comments on the nature of science and on general questions of methodology. There are also several places in which Marx compares his own historical, economic and political studies with the kind of research carried out by natural scientists.

In *Capital*, for instance, he compares his 'scientific analysis of competition', based on an account of the 'inner nature of capital', to the way in which astronomers explained the 'apparent motions of the heavenly bodies' by developing a theory of 'their real motions...which are not directly perceptible by the senses'<sup>1</sup>.

There are few discussions of Marx's views on science, and those which exist (such as David-Hillel Ruben's *Marxism and Materialism*<sup>2</sup> or Patrick Murray's *Marx's Theory of Scientific Knowledge*<sup>3</sup> tend to be highly academic, so there is little alternative to plunging into Marx's writings themselves.

1 K. Marx, *Capital* vol 1, New York 1967, ch XII, p316.

2 2nd edn Brighton, 1979. Ruben discusses how Marx's views about knowledge and reality emerged from, and help solve, problems left by his philosophical predecessors, and he attempts to articulate a Marxist theory of knowledge in greater detail. By calling his account a 'reflection theory', however, Ruben encourages a confusion between a theory of truth and a theory of knowledge which, as we shall see, it is important to avoid. The book's final chapter is a sympathetic discussion of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. Ruben is also the co-editor (with John Mepham) of the multi-volume series *Issues in Marxist Philosophy* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, 1979) which contains a number of essays on dialectics, materialism and science.

3 Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, 1988. Murray shows how Marx's own scientific method emerged from an internal critique of Hegel, and examines Marx's critique of political economy in the light of this. I have discussed Murray's interpretation in a review of his book in the *Radical Philosophy Review of Books*, no 2 (1990).



Most of Marx's explicit comments on methodology and science are scattered in such works as *The Holy Family*, *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, the *Theses on Feuerbach*, *The German Ideology*, the *Grundrisse*, *Capital*, and in his *Correspondence*.<sup>4</sup>

From Marx's direct remarks, a relatively systematic account of science emerges. While recognising that 'sense-experience must be the basis of all science',<sup>5</sup> Marx rejects the empiricist view that science is largely concerned with systematising what is directly observable rather than with discovering underlying causes. As the philosopher Allen Wood notes, Marx 'criticises empiricists for emphasising observation too much at the expense of theory, and for treating scientific concepts and theories only as convenient mechanisms for relating isolated facts rather than as attempts to capture the structure of reality'.<sup>6</sup>

Marx is a scientific realist who holds that science aims to give us knowledge of the underlying structure of an independently existing material world.<sup>7</sup> He notes that '*all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided*'.<sup>8</sup> He takes it to be obvious that there are 'sensuous objects, really distinct from the thought objects'<sup>9</sup> so that 'the priority of external nature remains unassailed',<sup>10</sup> and he scorns the views of the Young Hegelian philosophers in the 1840s by comparing them to what he regards as the absurd view that the world is constructed by consciousness.

Many influential scholars have argued that Marx was not a realist, and

4 The *Holy Family* and *The German Ideology* are, of course, joint works written with Engels, but precisely because they are joint works they reflect Marx's views at the time as well.

5 *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, in D McLellan (ed), *Karl Marx: Selected Writings* (Oxford, 1977), p94.

6 K. Marx (London, 1981), p162. Wood's book is a very clear discussion of various aspects of Marx's philosophical thought. The sections on 'Philosophical Materialism' and 'The Dialectical Method' are particularly relevant to the topic of this article.

7 It is no coincidence that many recent defenders of scientific realism have been influenced by Marx. In the US these have included Hilary Putnam (in the late 1960s and early 1970s), Richard Boyd, Richard W Miller, Peter Railton and Michael Devitt. In Britain the best known figure is Roy Bhaskar. Essays by Putnam, Boyd, Miller and Railton can be found in R Boyd et al (eds), *The Philosophy of Science*, op cit.

8 K. Marx, *Capital* vol 3, New York, 1967, ch XLVIII, p817.

9 K. Marx, *Theses on Feuerbach*, in D McLellan (ed), op cit, p156.

10 *The German Ideology*, in D McLellan (ed), op cit, p175.

that he did not believe that the natural world exists independently of our knowledge of it. Perhaps the first to come to this conclusion was the Hungarian Marxist Georg Lukács, who claimed in the 1920s that to distinguish between ‘thought and existence’ is to accept ‘a rigid duality’.<sup>11</sup> Lukács abandoned this view in the 1930s after reading Marx’s *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, which convinced him of the importance of recognising the ‘ontological objectivity of nature’,<sup>12</sup> but many others have advocated similar views since then.

Often, Marx’s ‘Second Thesis on Feuerbach’ is taken to support this interpretation:

*The question whether objective truth belongs to human thinking is not a question of theory but a practical question. It is in practice that man must prove the truth, ie, the actuality and might, the this-sidedness of his thinking. The dispute over the actuality or non-actuality of thinking isolated from practice is a purely scholastic question.*<sup>13</sup>

Scholars who deny that Marx was a realist claim that this passage shows that he defined truth in terms of practical success, not in terms of some kind of correspondence with independent reality, and that he rejected arguments about whether thought actually does correspond with reality as ‘scholastic’.

But this is to misread Marx’s formulation. His claim is that practical success is a guide to truth, not that truth is literally no more than practical success, and what he rejects as scholastic is not the question about whether thought corresponds to reality, but the attempt to answer that question purely theoretically, without reference to practice.

In fact there are passages where Marx explicitly accepts a correspondence view of truth. In the *Afterword* to the second German edition of *Capital*, for instance, Marx says that an adequate description is one in which ‘the life of the subject-matter is ideally reflected as in a mirror’, and he adds that ‘the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the

11 History and Class Consciousness (London, 1971), p204. Lukács is led to this claim because he rejects the view that human consciousness passively reflects existing reality. He is right to reject the latter view, but wrong to think that it is implied by realism or a correspondence theory of truth.

12 Ibid, pxvii.

13 D McLellan (ed), op cit, p156.

human mind, and translated into forms of thought'.<sup>14</sup>

Marx is quite clear that it does not follow from this that truth can be obtained simply by, so to speak, holding a mirror up to nature. That, he thinks, was the mistake of the empiricists who thought that the world would simply imprint knowledge on our passive minds. But knowledge can only be obtained by a combination of actively constructing theories which attempt to understand what is going on beneath surface appearances, and by actively intervening in the world to see if these ideas can survive the test of practice. A theory of what it is for a claim to be true is one thing. A theory of knowledge (which will tell us how to obtain truth) is quite another.

Marx is aware that there is no timeless, ahistorical set of concepts out of which scientific theories are to be constructed, and no timeless, ahistorical scientific method by which such theories can be tested. As our knowledge of the material world develops, our understanding of the appropriate methods to use to find out more about the world, and our understanding of the concepts appropriate to describe it, develop as well. Moreover, methods and concepts may well be subject matter specific - what is appropriate in one area will probably not be appropriate in another. Marx insists that there is 'a dialectic of concept and fact', because the categories which we use to describe experience must be carefully scrutinised and grounded in the particular subject matter under examination.<sup>15</sup>

For example, the concepts in physics did not arise automatically from experience, but were developed by a long and complex process of abstraction. The same holds true for the very different concepts employed in biology or in any of the other areas of science.

Marx thus sees science as a dialectical process in the sense that its methods and concepts, as well as its theories, develop over time in dynamic interaction with one another and with the material world, allowing progressively more accurate descriptions of reality to emerge.

In addition to advocating a realist and dialectical conception of science, Marx emphasises that science can only be fully understood in its broader

14 K. Marx, *Capital* vol 1, p19.

15 P. Murray, *op cit*, pxiv.

social context. Where, he asks in *The German Ideology*, 'would natural science be without industry and commerce? Even this "pure" natural science is provided with an aim, as with its material, only through trade and industry'.<sup>16</sup> Or as he puts it in *Capital*, 'modern industry ... makes science a productive force distinct from labour and presses it into the service of capital'.<sup>17</sup>

Thus, for example, the scientific revolution and the rise of modern physics in the 17th century can only be properly understood in the context of the development of capitalism.

It does not follow from this, however, that science is no more than bourgeois ideology. It is true that capitalism may set the agenda for scientific research, and that capitalist ideology may have a significant influence on the development of scientific theories. Thus for example, Marx notes that 'Descartes, in defining animals as mere machines, saw with the eyes of the manufacturing period'.<sup>18</sup> But at the same time, economic competition, the expansion of production and the need to find more efficient ways of generating profits gives the bourgeoisie an interest in acquiring objective knowledge of the natural world, since without such knowledge they will fail to accomplish their goals. So, while capitalist ideology may often limit scientific development, the need to construct practically successful theories allows natural science under capitalism to achieve a considerable degree of objectivity. To put the point slightly differently, Marx recognises that the objectivity of scientific results does not require impartial or value-free motivations for engaging in scientific research, but only requires that the values which drive science are ones which are likely more often than not to lead to more accurate theories of the world.<sup>19</sup>

All these themes in Marx's writings are developed at much greater length in the works of Engels, particularly in his *Anti-Dühring* (1878), *Ludwig Feuerbach and the Outcome of Classical German Philosophy* (1888) and *Dialectics of Nature* (not published during Engels' lifetime). These

16 D McLellan (ed), *op cit*, p175.

17 Vol 1, ch XIV, section 5, p361.

18 *Ibid*, ch XV, section 2, p390n.

19 This argument is laid out in greater detail in P Railton, 'Marx and the Objectivity of Science', *op cit*.

books present Engels' attempts to formulate a sophisticated, non-reductionist and dialectical version of materialism, to develop a comprehensive, scientific worldview which sees a fundamental unity between the natural and social worlds, and to articulate a dialectical account of scientific method.

Unfortunately, for much of the 20th century Engels' discussions of these questions suffered a dual fate. In the Soviet bloc, at least from the 1930s, a caricatured version of Engels' views was treated as the Holy Bible, and serious critical discussion was virtually non-existent. By contrast, in the West Engels' work was either completely ignored or rejected as worthless, even by authors who are otherwise relatively sympathetic commentators on the Marxist tradition.<sup>20</sup>

Recent scholarship has confirmed that there is no evidence of any fundamental disagreement between Marx's and Engels' ideas about science.<sup>21</sup> What is true is that Engels had a much more detailed grasp of contemporary scientific developments than Marx. In fact, the biologist J B S Haldane regarded Engels as 'probably the most widely educated man of his day',<sup>22</sup> and Hilary Putnam describes him as 'one of the most scientifically learned men of his century'.<sup>23</sup>

## THE INFLUENCE OF EPICURUS ON MARX

Two figures assume special importance in Marx's materialism: the ancient Greek philosopher Epicurus and Charles Darwin. From Epicurus, Marx developed his critique of teleological explanations in natural and human history. From Darwin, Marx developed a distinctive theory of

20 F. Engels, New York 1977, p91.

21 See, for instance, J D Hunley, *The Life and Thought of Friedrich Engels* (London, 1991).

22 Preface to *Dialectics of Nature* (New York, 1940), pxiv.

23 'The Philosophy of Science', in B Magee (ed), *Men of Ideas* (Oxford, 1982), p206. In the late 1960s and early 1970s Putnam developed a version of scientific realism strongly influenced by Marxist ideas, but by the time of this interview he had abandoned both realism and Marxism. Putnam goes on to claim that, while Engels' views on science are largely sensible, they are not original, but then immediately undermines this judgment by noting that Marxism 'might have made a contribution [to mainstream philosophy of science] if people had been less ideologically divided, because I think non-Marxists could have learned something from it.'

coevolution that accounted for the ways in which society shaped, and in turn was shaped by nature.

Along with German idealism Marx was struggling early on with ancient materialist natural philosophy and its relation to the 17th century scientific revolution, and the 18th century Enlightenment.

For Kant, 'Epicurus can be called the foremost philosopher of sensibility,' just as Plato was the foremost philosopher 'of the intellectual'. Epicurus, Hegel claimed, was 'the inventor of empiric natural science'. For Marx himself Epicurus was the 'the greatest figure of the Greek Enlightenment'.<sup>24</sup>

For Marx, Epicurus represented, most importantly, a non-reductionist, non-deterministic materialism, and articulated a philosophy of human freedom. In Epicurus could be found a materialist conception of nature that rejected all teleology and all religious conceptions of natural and social existence. In studying Epicurus's natural philosophy, Marx was addressing a view that had a powerful influence on the development of European science and modern naturalist-materialist philosophies, and one that had at the same time profoundly influenced the development of European social thought.

In the Epicurean materialist worldview, knowledge of the world started with the senses. The two primary theses of Epicurus's natural philosophy make up what we today call the principle of conservation: nothing comes from nothing, and nothing being destroyed is reduced to nothing. For Epicureans there was no scale of nature, no sharp, unbridgeable gaps between human beings and other animals. Knowledge of Epicurus provides a way of understanding Marx's materialism in the area of natural philosophy. His study of ancient and early modern materialism brought Marx inside the scientific understanding of the natural world in ways that influenced all of his thought, since it focused on evolution and emergence, and made nature not god the starting point. Moreover, Marx's dialectical encounter with Hegel has to be understood in terms of the struggle that Marx was carrying on simultaneously regarding the nature of materialist philosophy and science.

Epicurus, not Hegel, emerges as the pivotal figure in Marx's early de-

24 See J B Foster, *Marx's Ecology*, op cit, pp49-51.

velopment. Marx's doctoral dissertation assumes decisive weight in this account, marking a significant (albeit incomplete) rupture with Hegel. Rather than contained within the idealist philosophy of the Hegelian system, Marx's thesis aimed at recuperating an antiteleological materialism that (dialectically) "incorporated the activist element" of Hegelianism (p. 15). Formally, "the doctoral thesis pivoted on the differences between [Epicurus and Democritus on] the physics of the atom" (p. 52). These differences, however, "pointed beyond physics to epistemology" (p. 52) and thus to broader conflicts within European philosophy in the 18th and 19th centuries - between teleological and antiteleological perspectives, and especially between materialism and speculative philosophy.

Building on Epicurus, Marx's emergent materialism denied neither the objectivity of nature, as Hegel did, nor humans' active relation to nature and to each other, as did the mechanical materialism of Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton, and others.

Three aspects of Epicurus's materialism were especially important for Marx:

*First*, all divine intervention, direct or indirect, and thus all absolute determinisms, all teleological principles, were expelled from nature (p. 35). The very creation of the world, argues Epicurus, can be accounted for only by reference to the realm of chance, created by the "swerve" of the atom. The collision of atoms resulting from these swerving atoms—which themselves have "no *cause*" (p. 54) - allows for "a kind of freedom for rational organization of historical life, building on constraints first established by the material world" (p. 53).

*Second*, his argument for the swerve is evidently premised on the objectivity of nature independent of human thought, in contrast to the Hegelian formulation. Yet Epicurus, contends Marx, went beyond a view that "reduce[d] thought to 'passive sensation'" (p. 55). Quite the contrary, Epicurus argued that "perception through the senses is only possible because it expresses *an active relation to nature* - and indeed, of nature to itself" (p. 55, emphasis added).

*Third*, this conception of the nature - society dialectic as driven by an active relation of humans to nature was embedded in a sophisticated treatment of time.

Prefiguring the historical geologists of the 18th and 19th centuries, Epicurus argued for a conception of “deep time” (p. 46). “Central to Epicurus’ view was that life was born from the earth, rather than descending from the sky” (p. 39). Epicurus’s notion of deep time applied not only to natural but also to social history, identifying distinct periods of socio-historical development. Even more significant for Marx’s thinking was Epicurus’s notion that “material existence was only evident through change, that is, evolution” (p. 40). The idea that evolutionary processes existed only through time - that is, in terms of emergence - would remain a cornerstone of Marx’s dialectical method.

For Marx “Dialectical reasoning can thus be viewed as a necessary element of our cognition, arising from the *emergent, transitory* character of reality as we perceive it” (p. 232).

Marx developed a “dialectical naturalism” (p. 229) that admits a dialectical approach to the study of nature as well as society, contra Georg Lukacs’s (1972) contention that imposing the dialectical method on nature amounts to positivism (pp. 136-140). Hence, Marx’s examination of Epicurus’s dialectical treatment of time and evolution provided a much more thoroughgoing materialist foundation for subsequent investigations of human society.

Marx’s doctoral thesis shows that he was “ambivalent from the start” about the Hegelian system (p. 33). “Not only did Marx demonstrate an independence from Hegel in his very first literary work; he did so on the basis of an encounter with materialism, which was to have a lasting influence on his thinking” (p. 65). Still, the thesis was a “transitional work” that achieved only a partial rupture with Hegelianism.

## MARX AND DARWIN

Darwin’s theory of natural selection amplified Epicurus’s critique of teleology, this time on the basis of natural history, thereby “annihilating the ‘doctrine of final causes’” that had gained widespread currency as a conservative response to materialism’s implications in 19th century Europe (p. 192).

Darwin had similar roots in natural philosophy, linked to the anti-teleological tradition extending back to Epicurus, which had found its



modern exponent in Bacon. We now know, as a result of the publication of Darwin's notebooks, that the reason that he waited so long--20 years--before making public his theory on species transmutation was due to the fact that his theory had strong materialist roots, and thus raised the issue of heresy in Victorian England. Darwin's view went against all teleological explanations, such as those of the natural theology tradition. He presented an account of the evolution of species that was dependent on no supernatural forces, no miraculous agencies of any kind, but simply on nature's own workings.

Marx and Engels greeted Darwin's theory immediately as 'the death of teleology', and Marx described it as 'the basis in natural science for our views'.<sup>25</sup> Not only did they study Darwin intensely, they were also drawn into the debates concerning human evolution that followed immediately on Darwin's work, as a result of the discovery of the first prehistoric human remains<sup>26</sup>.

Many major works, mostly by Darwinians, emerged in just a few years to address this new reality, and Marx and Engels studied them with great intensity. Among the works that they scrutinised were Charles Lyell's *Geological Evidences of the Antiquity of Man* (1863), Thomas Huxley's *Evidence as to Man's Place in Nature* (1863), John Lubbock's *Prehistoric Times* (1865), Darwin's *Descent of Man* (1871), along with a host of other works including Lewis Henry Morgan's *Ancient Society* (1881).

Out of their studies came a thesis on the role of labour in human evolution that was to prove fundamental. Inspired by the ancient Greek meaning for organ (*organon*)--or tool, which expressed the idea that organs were essentially the 'grown-on' tools of animals, Marx referred to such organs as 'natural technology', which could be compared in certain respects to human technology. A similar approach was evident in Darwin, and Marx was thus able to use Darwin's comparison of the development of specialised organs in plants and animals to that of specialised tools (in chapter 5 of *The Origin of Species* on 'Laws of Variation') to help explain his own conception of the development of natural and human

25 See the discussion *ibid*, pp196-207, 212-221.

26 Neanderthal remains had been found in France in 1856, but it was the discovery of prehistoric remains that were quickly accepted as such in England in Brixham Cave in 1859, the same year that Darwin published his *The Origin of Species*.

technology. The evolution of natural technology, Marx argued, rooting his analysis in *The Origin of Species*, was a reflection of the fact that animals and plants were able to pass on through inheritance organs that had been developed through natural selection in a process that might be called "accumulation" through inheritance'. Indeed, the driving force of evolution for Darwin, in Marx's interpretation, was 'the gradually accumulated [naturally selected] inventions of living things'.<sup>27</sup>

In this conception, human beings were to be distinguished from animals in that they more effectively utilised tools, which became extensions of their bodies. Tools, and through them the wider realm of nature, as Marx said early on in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts*, became the 'inorganic body of man'. Or as he was to observe in *Capital*, 'thus nature becomes one of the organs of his [man's] activity, which he annexes to his own bodily organs, adding stature to himself in spite of the Bible'.<sup>28</sup>

Engels was to develop this argument further in his work, 'The Part Played by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man' (written in 1876, published posthumously in 1896). According to Engels' analysis--which derived from his materialist philosophy, but which was also influenced by views voiced by Ernst Haeckel a few years before--when the primates, who constituted the ancestors of human beings, descended from the trees, erect posture developed first (prior to the evolution of the human brain), freeing the hands for tool-making. In this way:

...the hand became free and could henceforth attain ever greater dexterity and skill, and the greater flexibility thus acquired was inherited and increased from generation to generation. Thus the hand is not only the organ of labour, it is also the product of labour.<sup>29</sup>

As a result, early humans (hominids) were able to alter their relation to their local environment, radically improving their adaptability. Those

27 K Marx, *Theories of Surplus Value*, vol 3, Moscow, 1971, pp294-295.

28 K Marx, *Early Writings*, New York, 1974, p328; K Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, op cit, pp285-286. See also J B Foster and P Burkett, 'The Dialectic of Organic/Inorganic Relations: Marx and the Hegelian Philosophy of Nature', *Organization and Environment*, vol 13, no 4 (December 2000), pp403-425.

29 F Engels, *The Dialectics of Nature*, New York 1940, p281.

who were most ingenious in making and using tools were most likely to survive, which means that the evolutionary process exerted selective pressures toward the enlargement of the brain and the development of language (necessary for the social processes of labour and tool-making), leading eventually to the rise of modern humans. Thus the human brain, like the hand, in Engels' view, evolved through a complex, interactive set of relations, now referred to by evolutionary biologists as 'gene-culture co-evolution'. All scientific explanations of the evolution of the human brain, Stephen Jay Gould has argued, have thus far been theories of gene-culture co-evolution, and 'the best 19th century case for gene-culture co-evolution was made by Frederick Engels'.<sup>30</sup>

All of this points to the fact that Marx and Engels had a profound grasp of ecological and evolutionary problems, as manifested in the natural science of their day, and were able to make important contributions to our understanding of how society and nature interact. If orthodoxy in Marxism, as Lukács taught, relates primarily to method, then we can attribute these insights to a very powerful method, but one which, insofar as it encompasses *both* a materialist conception of natural history and of human (ie social) history, has not been fully investigated by subsequent commentators. Behind Marx and Engels' insights in this area lay an uncompromising materialism, which embraced such concepts as emergence and contingency, and which was dialectical to the core.

Darwin's *The Origins of Species*, Marx wrote in 1860, "contains the basis in natural history for our view"; it "provides a basis in natural science for the historical class struggle" (p. 197). What could this mean? Marx shared with Darwin a view of history characterized by struggle, adaptation, transformation, and the dialectical interplay of organism and nature. Marx's great innovation was to take Darwin's conception of natural history, in which organism and environment alike are transformed, to comprehend human history as a coevolutionary process. From this standpoint, human evolution, comprising natural as well as social history, had to be traced through the development of tools. This was because tools represented the development of human productive organs—the evolution of the human relation to nature—just as animal organs rep-

30 S J Gould, *An Urchin in the Storm* (New York, 1987), pp111-112.

resented the instruments by which animals had adapted to their local environments (p. 201). In this way, Darwin helped Marx establish a basis in natural history for an original and “general theory of the role of labour in the development of human society” (p. 202).

## METABOLISM, THE METABOLIC RIFT

Binding together Marx’s coevolutionary materialism with his critique of capitalism is the concept of metabolism (*Stoffwechsel*). In Marx’s hands, this concept has a broad social meaning referring to “the complex, dynamic, interdependent set of needs and relations brought into being and constantly reproduced in alienated form under capitalism” (p. 158) and a more specific socioecological meaning that refers to material exchanges between nature and society.

Marx derived the socio-ecological rendering of metabolism from Justus von Liebig’s pioneering work in soil chemistry, published in the early 1840s.

In 1862, the great German chemist Justus von Liebig published the seventh edition of his pioneering scientific work, *Organic Chemistry in its Application to Agriculture and Physiology* (first published in 1840). The 1862 edition contained a new introduction. Building upon arguments that he had been developing in the late 1850s, Liebig declared the intensive, or ‘high farming’, methods of British agriculture to be a ‘robbery system’, opposed to rational agriculture.<sup>31</sup> They necessitated the transportation over long distances of food and fibre from the country to the city--with no provision for the recirculation of social nutrients, such as nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium, which ended up contributing to urban waste and pollution in the form of human and animal wastes. Whole countries were robbed in this way of the nutrients of their soil. For Liebig this was part of a larger British imperial policy of robbing the soil resources (including bones) of other countries.

31 J Liebig, *Die Chemie in ihrer Anwendung auf Agricultur und Physiologie*, vol 1 (Brunswick, 1862). Except where otherwise indicated all of the brief quotes from Liebig in the text below are taken from an unpublished English translation of the 1862 German edition by Lady Gilbert contained in the archives of the Rothamsted Experimental Station (now IACR-Rothamsted) outside London.

The importance of Liebig's critique did not escape the attention of Karl Marx, who was then completing the first volume of *Capital* and was deeply affected by Liebig's critique. In 1866 he wrote to Engels, 'I had to plough through the new agricultural chemistry in Germany, in particular Liebig and Schönbein, which is more important for this matter than all of the economists put together.' Indeed, 'To have developed from the point of view of natural science the negative, ie destructive side of modern agriculture,' Marx noted in volume one of *Capital*, 'is one of Liebig's immortal merits'.<sup>32</sup>

Marx's two main discussions of modern agriculture both end with an analysis of 'the destructive side of modern agriculture'. In these passages Marx makes a number of crucial points:

- (1) capitalism has created an 'irreparable rift' in the 'metabolic interaction' between human beings and the earth, the everlasting nature-imposed conditions of production;
- (2) this demanded the 'systematic restoration' of that necessary metabolic relation as 'a regulative law of social production';
- (3) nevertheless, the growth under capitalism of large-scale agriculture and long distance trade only intensifies and extends the metabolic rift
- (4) the wastage of soil nutrients is mirrored in the pollution and waste in the towns--'In London,' he wrote, 'they can find no better use for the excretion of four and a half million human beings than to contaminate the Thames with it at heavy expense';
- (5) large-scale industry and large-scale mechanised agriculture work together in this destructive process, with 'industry and commerce supplying agriculture with the means of exhausting the soil';
- (6) all of this is an expression of the antagonistic relation between town and country under capitalism;
- (7) a rational agriculture, which needs either small independent farmers producing on their own, or the action of the associated producers, is impossible under modern capitalist conditions; and
- (8) existing conditions demand a rational regulation of the metabolic relation between human beings and the earth, pointing be-

32 K Marx, *Capital*, vol 1, New York, 1976, p638.

yond capitalist society to socialism and communism.<sup>33</sup> Marx's concept of the metabolic rift is the core element of this ecological critique. The human labour process itself is defined in *Capital* as 'the universal condition for the metabolic interaction between man and nature, the everlasting nature-imposed condition of human existence'.<sup>34</sup> It follows that the rift in this metabolism means nothing less than the undermining of the 'everlasting nature-imposed condition of human existence'. Further there is the question of the sustainability of the earth—i.e., the extent to which it is to be passed on to future generations in a condition equal or better than in the present. As Marx wrote:

From the standpoint of a higher socio-economic formation, the private property of particular individuals in the earth will appear just as absurd as private property of one man in other men. Even an entire society, a nation, or all simultaneously existing societies taken together, are not owners of the earth. They are simply its possessors, its beneficiaries, and have to bequeath it in an improved state to succeeding generations as *boni patres familias* [good heads of the household].<sup>35</sup>

The issue of sustainability, for Marx, went beyond what capitalist society, with its constant intensification and enlargement of the metabolic rift between human beings and the earth, could address. Capitalism, he observed, 'creates the material conditions for a new and higher synthesis, a union of agriculture and industry on the basis of the forms that have developed during the period of their antagonistic isolation'. Yet in order to achieve this 'higher synthesis', he argued, it would be necessary for the associated producers in the new society to 'govern the human metabolism with nature in a rational way'—a requirement that raised fundamental and continuing challenges for post-revolutionary society.<sup>36</sup> In analysing the metabolic rift Marx and Engels did not stop with the soil nutrient cycle, or the town-country relation. They addressed at various points in their work such issues as deforestation, desertification, climate change, the elimination of deer from the forests, the commodification

33 Ibid, pp636-639; K Marx, *Capital*, vol 3 (New York, 1981), pp948-950, 959

34 Ibid, vol 1, pp283, 290

35 Ibid, vol 3, p911.

36 Ibid, vol 1, p637; Ibid, vol 3, p959.

of species, pollution, industrial wastes, toxic contamination, recycling, the exhaustion of coal mines, disease, overpopulation and the evolution (and co-evolution) of species.

The concept of metabolism illuminates relations at two geographical scales, corresponding roughly to Marx's distinction between the technical and social divisions of labour (Marx, 1867/1977, pp. 470-480). In the first instance, the labour process regulates the relation between the labourer and nature, which becomes a deeply alienated and unsustainable relation with the emergence of capitalism and the development of capitalist class relations. In this way, metabolism "provided Marx with a concrete way of expressing the notion of the alienation of nature (and its relation to the alienation of labour)" (p. 158). Outlined in *Capital*, Marx's conception of metabolism rests on the labour process, through which humans mediate and transform, yet never really control, nature. Consequently, under capitalism the degradation of labour and nature are inextricably (dialectically) linked. Far from a one-sided account, for Marx the historically specific interplay of capitalist class and metabolic relations promised not just degradation but liberation. Thus, "the concept of metabolism allowed [Marx] to express the human relation to nature as one that encompassed both 'nature-imposed conditions' and the capacity of human beings to affect this process" (p. 158). Marx envisioned a future society of associated producers in which freedom in "the realm of natural necessity" (p. 159) is realized through the rational governance of the "human metabolism" (Marx, 1894/1981, p.959, quoted on p. 159).

The metabolism of the labour process at once shapes, and is shaped by, the metabolism of the social division of labour. Transforming the division of labour between town and country, capitalism creates a rift in the metabolic relation between the two: Nutrients flow out of the countryside and into the city and thence into rivers and waste dumps, never returning to the point of origin. In this way, the antagonistic relation of town and country disrupts nutrient cycling and undermines nature's capacity to regenerate.

In Marx's day, this metabolic rift manifested in growing concern throughout Europe and North America over declining soil fertility.

Marx, "made the concept of metabolism *central to his entire system of*

*analysis* by rooting his understanding of the labour process upon it” (p. 157).

Marx’s insight that capitalism’s metabolic contradictions determine and are determined by capitalism’s social contradictions means two things: (a) The degradation of the soil and the degradation of the worker are mutually relational—one cannot exist without the other; (b) the liberation of the soil and the liberation of the worker are mutually relational—alienation can be resolved only through practice that simultaneously restores the general social metabolism *and* the socioecological metabolism to equilibrium.

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■ MARIA CHALARI

# CRISIS AUSTERITY AND NEW FRAMEWORKS FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING: A PEDAGOGY OF HOPE FOR CONTEMPORARY GREEK EDUCATION

In this article, I present the objectives and the structure of my book *Crisis Austerity and New Frameworks for Teaching and Learning. A Pedagogy of Hope for Contemporary Greek Education*, which was published by Routledge, New York and London in July 2019. The book attempts to examine the educational consequences of the recent social and economic situation in Greece, and it explores—on a general level—new possibilities for teaching and learning at times of national crisis. My book concentrates on understanding the situation in Greece during the age of austerity: How did Greek society get to such a place? Where could it lead? What might Greek people want to do about this? What role should education play in preparing young people for such a social, cultural and economic transition? What is education, and what is its purpose? It also explores ways through which the existing strengths of the education system could be built upon in order to create a system better suited to facing major societal changes and challenging circumstances.

In my book, using Greece as an exemplary case, I demonstrate how the relationship between neo-liberalism and education is especially salient during difficult times; I also demonstrate the effect of this relationship on teachers' day-to-day experiences. By attending to, yet moving beyond, the negative implications of socio-economic crisis, my

book aims to present core educational values of the current era, as well as the crucial issues that may become opportunities for reflection and change. Through this book, I attempt to convey a positive message, to help educators understand the issues of teaching and learning and the purpose of education itself and to encourage the generation of practical and hopeful strategies for an alternative and better future, and the generation of a pedagogy of hope for contemporary Greek education. Thus, my book goes beyond the limits of one that presents an empirical analytic study; it explores how things might be different. In doing so, it rejects a stance of despair and instead seeks to articulate a possibility of hope and to present new frameworks for teaching and learning.

## INTRODUCTION

There is an enduring interest in the impact of economic policies on education, and there is a perceptible trend in sociological and cultural studies of a broader effort to develop and highlight a discourse of hope and optimism, despite tremendous setbacks to this such as, for instance, the installation of Trump as US President, or Brexit. With a title that includes the words 'crisis', 'austerity', and 'pedagogy of hope', people probably have come to this book with a certain expectation - that this work will contribute to the understanding of crisis and its impact on the lives of people, as well as on education, and that this understanding is for the purpose of building a momentum for transformation and change.

It is also likely that people have been intrigued by a book that explores how the aforementioned issues are being addressed in contemporary Greek society. The 2008 economic crisis had truly global consequences, but its impact was perhaps felt most immediately and most severely in Greece. Greece has been the focus of international media and of political and academic concern since 2009 because, when it came to the multiple crises facing 'the West' in the second decade of the twenty-first century, Greece was ahead of the curve. As the politics of austerity are now common across much of Europe, a book about the case of Greece can hold lessons for all; many countries around the world and multiple emerging nations might find this book informative with regard to their own struggles.

There is always a reason why someone wants to write a book. In my case, the reason was both personal and political. I have always wanted to do something with my life that would make a difference to my country and to the world in general. As a student, I was constantly aware of the power of education systems for creating (and, indeed, for restricting) truly transformative experiences for students; this undoubtedly influenced my decision to enter the field of education and become an educator myself. In those days, my purpose was noble and valiant – I have tried to hold this purpose in the forefront of my mind, no matter the challenges before me.

For me, being an educator means that my work truly does have positive or negative ramifications for my students, their families, and their future; for me, being a good educator means being a key promoter of human rights, striving to prevent injustice, oppression and discrimination, and preparing students to think more critically and creatively about their future. I believe that any person working with children, teenagers and young adults, both in formal and informal education, possesses tremendous power to make a difference in society. This sense of responsibility was behind my decision to continue my studies in Education and Human Rights and then to carry on with my doctoral studies in Education. Five years ago, I gave birth to a bright little boy, named Fotis. His name means *light* (φως) in Greek, and this is exactly what he brought to my life: as mother to Fotis, a new light entered my life. I began to reappraise everything that I had done up until that point from a different perspective; I became more compassionate in my aims and my dreams, and I felt a greater responsibility for the well-being of my family, my students, and of the rest of the world. My son brought not only light but hope into my life, and made me realise the importance of bringing hope into schools and into our society in general. This realisation was the motivation I needed to start writing this book.

At the time of writing, the social and economic situation in Greece has contributed to the generation of an increasingly complex society, uncertainty among Greek people, and a sense of the unpredictability of the future. However, it has also revealed new tendencies and possibilities in society. It is my belief that we may succeed in becoming aware of these new tendencies and possibilities if we manage to sidestep the negative

implications of the crisis, and try to find room for new stories, another way of thinking, and a notion of hope. It can be argued that the education system is well placed to offer both this new way of thinking and a notion of hope.

Despite the vast number of studies that focus on the socio-economic crisis in Greece, little is known about the role of teachers and education in addressing some of its devastating consequences. My book is based on a qualitative study, which gave sixteen teachers the opportunity to reflect on their experiences of the impact of the crisis on Greek society and education, and the possibilities for the future, but it goes beyond the limits of a book that presents an empirical analytic study; it explores how things might be different. In doing so, it rejects a stance of despair and instead seeks to articulate a possibility of hope and to present new frameworks for teaching and learning.

Specifically, my book draws on a research project that was conducted at the end of 2014 during my doctoral studies at the UCL Institute of Education (IoE), University College London. The main objective of this research project was to seek to recover the 'subjugated knowledges' of teachers, as well as to look for 'lines of flight' – namely, ways out of the crisis. 'Subjugated knowledges' is a term invented by Michel Foucault to describe knowledge and ways of knowing that are left out, opposed or ignored by the mainstreams of a dominant culture, and which are often located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity<sup>1</sup>. 'Line of flight' is a term coined by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*<sup>2</sup>. It designates a possibility of escape; it is that elusive moment in which change happens.

Specifically, the purpose of my research project was to learn more about teachers' experiences of the recent political and economic changes in Greece and the new challenges that stem from these, as well as teachers' perceptions of the possibilities for the future. My intention in undertaking this study was to explore how we could build on the strengths of the education system at the time in order to transform it and create a

1 M. Foucault. 2003. *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the College de France, 1975-76*. New York: Picador.

2 G. Deleuze and F. Guattari. 1984. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

different system better suited to the newly-arisen societal changes and challenging circumstances of the country. Given this, my tone may, in the passages that follow, appear critical and imperative at times – I begin from crisis and try to think about what might be done and what must not be done if we are to be able to think about education differently.

In the endeavour to, as mentioned earlier, give voice to teachers' concerns, anxieties, commitments, and hopes, my research project focused on the following questions:

- How do teachers experience the consequences of the socio-economic crisis in their everyday life and their work?
- What do teachers think are the social and political problems which underlie the current crisis?
- According to the teachers, does the Greek education system have a part to play in the reconstruction of society and political life in post-crisis Greece? If yes, what would be the most important features of this?
- According to the teachers, are there any strengths in the present education system that we can build on in order to create a system to suit the current major societal changes and face the challenging new circumstances?

## THE STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

There are two parts in the book. Part I aims to contextualise my research by furnishing the reader with the broader socio-economic context and the theoretical underpinnings of the study. More specifically, Part I integrates relevant literature and theoretical insights, and provides a synthesis of the work which has been done in the area of social crisis and educational research within the last few years.

Part I comprises four chapters. Chapter 1, 'Introduction', presents the rationale, the social context, and the conceptual-theoretical framework within which the topics and issues presented in the remaining chapters of the book are addressed. Specifically, it puts forward the view that it is not only necessary to explore thoroughly and insightfully the negative implications of the socio-economic crisis, but also vital that we learn to recognise the core values of the current era and the crucial issues that

may become opportunities – and even driving forces – for reflection and change. The starting point of this book is an ontological need for hope<sup>3</sup>, and its main aim is to deliberately seek out possibilities of hope, particularly those possibilities which are articulated by teachers, and to present new frameworks for teaching and learning for contemporary Greek education.

Chapter 2, 'Crisis', identifies and reviews relevant literature and theoretical insights in the areas of social crisis. The chapter is organised into five sections. Section one focuses on the conceptualisation of crisis and briefly discusses what the term 'crisis' suggests. Section two continues by considering a crisis as an opportunity for the opening of a 'policy window'. Section three moves on to discuss the crisis that started in 2008, pointing out that it was not simply a financial crisis but a multiple and plural crisis; beyond the concerns of finance, it is evident that democracy came under siege and citizens were gradually impoverished. Section four examines in greater detail the ongoing repercussions of the crisis in Greece today. Lastly, section five discusses the refugee crisis and its impact on Greek society and education.

Chapter 3, 'Crisis and education', focuses on the impact of the socio-economic crisis in Europe and in Greece, with particular interest in the impact of the crisis on education. The chapter is organised into three sections. The first section briefly presents education in Europe in times of crisis. Specifically, it presents how the crisis affected the educational domain in Europe (e.g. in Spain, Italy, etc.) in both direct and indirect ways. Section two moves on to present the Greek education system in more detail and look at how the socio-economic crisis impacted it. Section three discusses the possible role of education in changing the precarious post-crisis economic and political context.

Chapter 4, 'Rethinking education', makes an attempt to reconsider the system of education that exists today. The chapter is organised into three sections. Section one starts by trying to define education and to shed light on its purpose. Section two attempts to rethink education and its fundamental values and content in the political and social era found in Greece today. Finally, section three moves on to consider the kinds of

3 P. Freire. 1994. *Pedagogy of Hope*. London: Continuum.



teachers that might be sought in the context of austerity and the socio-economic crisis.

Part II reflects and supports the aims of my research project: to explore how teachers experience the political and economic changes in Greece and the new challenges that stem from them, and to learn more about how we can build on the existing strengths of the education system in order to create a system better suited to the major societal changes and challenging circumstances of the country. It also aims to underscore the role which the school and its teachers play in pioneering alternative and better futures. This part of the book is mostly for readers who are interested in empirical studies about the impact of the crisis on society and education, in teachers' perceptions, or in the design of the practicalities of a qualitative study e.g. the methodology, the method, the operational framework for the study etc.

Part II is organised into six chapters. Chapter 5, 'Research Strategy and Design', presents the research design of the study and offers a brief account of its methodological foundations and methods of data collection and analysis. It also presents the characteristics of the schools that took part in the study, outlines the rationale for their selection, and discusses the sampling procedures. This chapter is divided into six sections. Section one starts by presenting an overview of the relevant research. Section two explores the ontological and epistemological assumptions of the study. Section three discusses the research approach and the methodology. Section four describes the methods of data collection and data analysis. Section five focuses on sampling and the procedures of the fieldwork itself. Lastly, section six gives consideration to the ethical issues that arose during this research study.

Chapter 6, 'The impact of the crisis on Greek society and education', offers important insights into the profound implications of the Greek socio-economic crisis for both society and the education system in Greece, especially for teachers and students. Specifically, it presents the impact of the socio-economic crisis for Greek society as the teachers interviewed perceived it. In particular, it introduces two narratives or versions: one with an absence of future, the second with a possibility of different and better prospects. The chapter continues with the teachers' views of the impact of the socio-economic crisis on Greek education,

reporting specifically on the challenges Greek schools face in the age of austerity, and on the impact of the crisis on teachers' and students' work and well-being.

Chapter 7, 'The social and political problems behind the socio-economic crisis', provides some interesting indications of teachers' thoughts on the social and political problems that underlie the current crisis and on the possible responses that they believe necessary to address and counter them. The chapter is divided into two sections. The first section focuses on the social and political problems – pertaining to governments, the Greek people and global capitalism – which the teachers identified as being at the root of the crisis. Section two moves on to discuss the possible responses, including political change, changes in the behaviour, values and mentality of Greek people, and struggle and resistance against the policies of the recession, that teachers think Greece needs in order to fight the problems that led the country into the current socio-economic crisis.

Chapter 8, 'The role of education in the reconstruction of Greek society', examines teachers' projections for the possible role of the Greek education system in addressing some of the devastating consequences of the socio-economic crisis. In particular it presents: a) the changes to the Greek education system that teachers consider necessary in order to meet the new challenges that have arisen from the rapidly changing social and economic context, b) the skills, attitudes and values that they feel students need to be taught in response to these changes, and c) the existing strengths of the education system that can be built upon in order to create a system better suited to handling major societal changes and better able to face challenging circumstances.

Chapter 9, 'New frameworks for teaching and learning', attempts to discuss several further aspects of the analysis undertaken in chapters 6, 7 and 8, and to explore some of the possibilities that might emerge from the different version of education articulated, more or less clearly, in the data. The chapter is organised into two sections. Section one discusses the findings, relating them to the relevant studies reviewed in chapter 5 and the methodology of the study. Section two, based on the second narrative of the crisis seen in the teachers' responses – the one which is composed of new beginnings, the existence of hope, and possibilities

for a different future – and on a review of the literature, attempts to re-imagine Greek education. Using the teachers' views as a basis, this section outlines a different kind of pedagogy, with an emphasis on humanitarianism, care of the self and others, social awareness, critical citizenship, etc.

Chapter 10, 'Conclusions', concisely summarises the contribution to knowledge, methodology, policy and practice of the book. The chapter is organised into three sections. Section one reflects on the analysis and the main findings of the research project presented, and discusses the scope and some of the limitations of the study. It also attempts to explore how these limitations could be developed in new scholarship, perhaps by the readers of this book, and includes proposals for different tools and frameworks for future research. Section two presents the concluding remarks of the book. Specifically, it reflects on the theoretical framework deployed in this book and on the situation in contemporary Greece, and provides a summary of the main conclusions. Moreover, this section includes the possible implications that this book might have for education policy and future professional practice and research, and it outlines the rationale behind the proposals presented for particular policy alternatives, potential solutions or courses of policy action for education. Section three brings the book to a close with a final comment. In periods of threat and possibility, all of which affect the lives of young people, education systems must develop robust and urgent responses. Through this book, I attempt to convey a positive message, to help educators understand the issues of teaching and learning and the purpose of education itself, and to encourage the generation of practical and hopeful strategies for an alternative and better future, and the generation of a pedagogy of hope for contemporary Greek education.

This book is written for teachers, educational and social researchers, scholars, academics, stakeholders, and policymakers. It is also written for students, both undergraduate and graduate, in education, sociology of education and connected fields, since it does not assume a vast amount of prior knowledge and expertise. I believe that it will also interest educators across a wide range of disciplines/sub-disciplines, particularly those connected to sociology and policy studies, but also scholars of comparative education. Moreover, it could be relevant to courses on sociology of

education in the education departments of both Greek universities and universities in other European countries, particularly in those that find themselves in a similar socio-economic situation to Greece. The book may also be relevant for NGOs, interest groups, progressive groups, civil society groups, activist groups, and educational associations.

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■ ROBERT M. ZECKER

# A PEOPLE'S UNIVERSITY: COMMUNIST WORKERS' SCHOOLS IN AMERICA, 1930-1956

Nearly a century before the invention of rubrics and metrics, some critics of education argued public schools were designed to turn out nothing more than obedient cogs for corporate America. From the left of the classroom, workers in the orbit of the Communist Party argued that schools were agents of indoctrination, designed to instill quiescent, interchangeable workers. To counter the hegemonic message, a network of Workers' Schools for children and older comrades nurtured Americans interested in a more liberating education. Organizations such as the Slovak Workers Society had already in the 1920s established such Workers' Schools, and after its founding in 1930, the CP-backed fraternal insurance society, the International Workers Order, supported its own network of children's schools as well as urging members to further their education at the "People's Universities" such as New York's Jefferson School for Social Science or Chicago's Abraham Lincoln School. Radical workers created a counterhegemonic pedagogy disseminating knowledge of America's hidden history of activism, protest and dissent, the narrative educators largely ignored in public-school classrooms, while also valorizing the contributions of African Americans, Hispanics, Jews and other white ethnics often denigrated in the era. Dubbed "People's Universities" by proletarian educators such as the Jefferson School's directors, they helped "workers of hand and brain" "achieve that education which can enable them to change their world through ever better understanding of it."<sup>1</sup>

1 New York University, Tamiment-Wagner Labor Archives, Jefferson School of Social Sci-

The deficiencies of public education were spelled out in 1925 by Max Bedacht, in a few years general secretary of the IWO. “What is Workers’ Education?” he asked in *The Workers Monthly* before detailing the means by which “the educational machinery” created “the mentality and psychology of the masses which falls an easy victim to the guiles of the capitalist press and the preachers, which succumbs so easily to the germs of patriotic paroxysms without any attempt at resistance ...” Capitalist schools, Bedacht argued, had to give “the prospective wage-slave the intellectual requirement to make him a useful wheel in the profit mills of present day society” but not a loose wheel: “(T)he exercise of the mental faculties of the pupil present a dangerous prospect for the ruling class. Therefore this ruling class endeavors to accompany this positive education with enough hypodermic injections of intellectual poison to sterilize the minds of the pupils as much as ... possible.”<sup>2</sup>

Arguing “The Future of the Working Class Belongs to the Children Not ‘Our Educational System,’” J.W. Schiffel similarly in 1928 told readers of the Slovak Workers Society newspaper *Rovnosť ľudu*, schools “must raise the child to be obedient, and a fit tool, that is an unresisting one, for exploitation.” To counter this, the Slovak Workers established a network of Workers’ Schools that offered classes to children by day, and evening sessions for adults avid for lessons in literature, history and practical courses such as union organizing, vocabulary building and public speaking. Larger cities such as New York, Cleveland, Detroit, Philadelphia and Chicago featured several Slovak Workers’ Schools, but even smaller places such as East Akron, Youngstown and Bellaire, Ohio, had schools. Instruction remained flexible to local needs, for as *Rovnosť ľudu* argued in 1920, “It’s not necessary to put shackles on the school system. A teacher should not be bound by a strict curriculum. He should have the freedom to make changes according to his surroundings and the maturity of the pupils he is teaching, ... thus real scholars, not bound to any inflexible plan may seek ways to invent innovative teaching meth-

ence Papers, Box 3, Addenda, Course catalogue, “The Jefferson School, Winter 1950;” Box 1, Folder 5: Annual Report, 1947.

<sup>2</sup> Library of Congress, CPUSA collection, Reel 317, Delo 4242, *The Workers Monthly*, April 1925, 262-263, “What is Workers’ Education?” by Max Bedacht.

ods.” Standardized testing was not welcome at the Workers’ Schools.<sup>3</sup> Theater troupes and choruses were used as pedagogical tools to teach children the difference between capitalism and socialism through folk and working-class songs, with the workers’ academy of Chicago praised as “a rare opportunity to learn and have a bit of fun, too.” Film and painting classes were used, too, with “students taught to create living paintings.” Evidently the schools resonated with attendees, for as a Chicago writer to *Rovnost ludu* enthused, “We don’t even have to explain the meaning of our school, we’re only organizing the workers, who are eager for education, who know how to appreciate this education and who put the most weight on education, and when I had to, I’d spend my last red cent as a sacrifice for your school, even more, because school is everything to us.”<sup>4</sup> (My own grandfather, who had to quit school at sixteen but nevertheless read Chaucer for fun and often told me, “Whatever you learn, no one can take away from you,” was the kind of pupil the Workers’ Schools successfully attracted.)

With the Depression’s onset, the International Workers Order took as central to its mission offering a pedagogy that enabled worker agency. The IWO incorporated the Slovak and other ethnic fraternal societies and their schools into its program of workers’ militancy. From its founding in 1930 it created a network of Proletarian Children’s Schools, bypassing the capitalist school to factory pipeline. The IWO’s Declaration of Principles, published in September 1930 in *The Spark*, its Yiddish magazine, declared culture “a potent instrument in the hands of the bourgeoisie to enslave the toiling masses, and that when the bourgeoisie, through its schools, ... purports to ‘carry the light to the masses,’ in fact it purveys them with such information, ... that they might become faithful servants of the capitalistic order.” The IWO vowed to create schools to “educate the workers’ children in the spirit of class warfare.” Such schools were envisioned as counter-beacons to “clarify their minds, fortify their wills, strengthen their ranks, ...elevate them to the dignity

3 *Rovnost ludu*, November 12, 1928, 5, “The Future of the Working Class Belongs to the Children Not ‘Our Educational System’” by J.W. Schiffel; September 13, 1922, 2; November 2, 1921, 8; May 30, 1924, 4; September 23, 1929, 3; July 14, 1920, 6.

4 *Ibid.*, September 22, 1920, 5; January 25, 1928, 3; December 22, 1928, 2; June 8, 1921, 5.

of builders of a new society.”<sup>5</sup> The Depression was an apt moment for alternative education, as mass unemployment delegitimized capitalism and the schools that buttressed the system. In 1934 the IWO’s magazine, *The New Order*, commented on the Depression’s “shattering of illusion after illusion,” with “school books ... thrown into the limbo of fairy books. Lies, falsehoods, designs of the most hideous sort lurked in the sugared words of the books.”<sup>6</sup> By 1938, Bedacht hoped that “progressive ideas and aspirations are gradually conquering the great staff of the teachers of our children,” courtesy of his Order’s Worker’s Schools, even as he worried about “the abundant flow of reactionary poison” provided by public education.<sup>7</sup>

That poison’s antidote was offered by the Workers’ Schools. In 1934, *Rovnost’ ludu* publicized the offerings of Cleveland, highlighting the course in Political Economics, timely to many workers trying to make sense of the Depression’s devastation. “This course will allow working-class students to be educated on the ... questions which will clarify for students the picture of the workers’ movement,” the paper said. The IWO training school promised, Bedacht said, to develop young workers’ “body and head,” with summer classes at Camp Kinderland in rural New York state and the Natures’ Friend camp near Gary combining classes in “Organization, Political Economy, Cultural Work, the Negro Problem, and Trade Unions” with sports and swimming. For worker-students from industrial America, IWO schools offered some of the only recreational facilities available, as well as courses designed to demystify the rash of Hoovervilles. As war clouds threatened Europe, the Chicago Workers’ School announced in 1937 it was “offering a special course for unionists and all others who want to familiarize themselves with readings about the biggest threat of war. Courses on the foundations of political education; the Popular Front movement in France and Spain; ... the movement against war and fascism” and others were publicized. Chicago’s school two months later explained the need for its classes:

5 Cornell University, IWO supplemental collection, Box 3, “From Yiddish,” “Declaration of Principles of the International Workers Order, *The Spark*, September 1930, 1.

6 CPUSA, Reel 287, Delo 3709, *The New Order*, March 1934, 3.

7 Cornell, IWO collection, Box 1, Folder 5, minutes, plenary session, General Executive Board of the IWO, September 10 & 11, 1938, report to GEB by Bedacht.



“The working class needs an instruction and education, for right now the march is on for higher wages, better working conditions and a better world.”<sup>8</sup>

By World War II, the IWO schools were part of a network of left-wing Worker’s Schools, which served as “a people’s university,” as the Polish newspaper *Głos Ludowy* labeled Chicago’s Abraham Lincoln School. In 1942 more than 4,000 black, white and Hispanic men and women flocked to its classes, which included courses in “The People’s War; Structure of Fascism; Propaganda Analysis; Spanish; Basic English; Russian; French; Economics; Philosophy; History; Psychology; Art; Music; Writing for Short Story; Newspaper and Radio; Public Speaking; Labor Problems; History and Culture of Racial and National Groups.” Polish history and language courses were introduced during the war.<sup>9</sup> The schools’ interracialism resonated with white ethnics who knew their own Italian, Slavic and Jewish heritages were denigrated by the same segregationist politicians who oppressed blacks. Mississippi Senator Theodore Bilbo, for example, infamously insulted an Italian IWO member from Brooklyn in a letter that began “Dear Dago.”<sup>10</sup> Such schools, combining practical skills with liberationist education in subjugated people’s history and culture, were welcomed by students such as a Young Pioneer who wrote to the Slovak paper, “Away with bosses’ propaganda!”<sup>11</sup>

Schools refashioned American history into a usable past valorizing radical battlers for racial and class justice. African American, Hispanic, and white ethnic members of the IWO were tutored in these schools on the achievements of abolitionists and other activists to present workers with a past largely effaced from public school curricula. The value of ethnic and racial cultures to America was preached in Workers’ Schools, too, at a time when non-WASP cultures were denigrated. Counter-narratives of earlier liberation struggles were recast as the full flowering of America’s radical tradition. Harlem Workers’ Schools held celebrations of Toussaint L’ouverture, the liberator of Haiti, and resurrected the memory

8 *Rl*, June 20, 1934, 2; July 6, 1934, 4. *Ludový denník*, January 9, 1937, 6; March 29, 1937, 6.

9 *Ed*, January 6, 1944, 3; *Głos Ludowy*, January 15, 1944, 1 of 2<sup>nd</sup> section.

10 *GL*, September 8, 1945, 1 of 2<sup>nd</sup> section.

11 *Rl*, February 1, 1930, 4.

of radical abolitionist Frederick Douglass. “Honor your working class heroes!” attendees at a Harlem Toussaint L’Ouverture Memorial were urged, and the same message resonated in Workers’ Schools.<sup>12</sup>

After 1944 the Jefferson School in New York became perhaps the flagship Workers’ School, offering courses in African American, Latin American and U.S. labor history by scholars such as Herbert Aptheker, Elizabeth Lawson and the Foner brothers. Aptheker and Phil Foner’s resurrection of the salience of slave revolts and black abolitionists such as Douglass to America’s freedom story was a counterhegemonic pedagogy at a time when public schools persistently dismissed abolitionists as unstable, dangerously violent extremists and slavery as a benign institution. Into the 1950s New York public schools taught slavery had been beneficial to the “lesser-developed” African race.<sup>13</sup>

Such schools were the full flowering of the Communist Party’s Popular Front period, in which Party leader Earl Browder argued “Communism is Americanism updated for the twentieth century.”<sup>14</sup> The progressive strains of American history were valorized, rather than ceding patriotism to the far right. Still, the ironies of Herbert Aptheker teaching a course in “Negro Slave Revolts” at a school named after the slave owner Thomas Jefferson, should be apparent. The Jefferson School, as well as leftist newspapers such as *Głos Ludowy* publicized Frederick Douglass’ 1850s diatribe, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?,” suggesting an ambivalent embrace of patriotism on the part of the comrades.<sup>15</sup>

Other schools such as the Michigan Social Science School offered valorizing courses in African American history from visiting scholars, such as in 1949, when *Głos Ludowy* publicized Aptheker’s appearance as the featured speaker in the Detroit school’s cultural program on “The Road

12 CPUSA, Reel 139, Delo 1842, Toussaint L’Ouverture Memorial, Communist Youth League, May 20, 1929.

13 Clarence Taylor, *Reds at the Blackboard: Communism, Civil Rights, and the New York City Teachers Union* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 42, 223.

14 CPUSA, Reel 303, Delo 3983, pamphlet, “Who are the Americans?” by Earl Browder (1936.)

15 *GL*, February 16, 1952, 3 of 2<sup>nd</sup> section; Jefferson School, Box 3, Folder 2, “Negro History: Its Lessons for Our Time” by Herbert Aptheker (New York: New Century Publishers, 1956.)

to Negro Freedom.”<sup>16</sup> The Jefferson and other schools issued pamphlets based on its courses in African American history and Latin American anti-imperialism that enabled worker-students at other schools such as Newark’s Walt Whitman School to learn the story of the Amistad revolt, John Brown and other slave rebellions, or the Latin American fight against Wall Street imperialism, decades before such stories entered “mainstream” schools.<sup>17</sup>

While promotion of ethno-racial heroes might be perceived as simply self-affirmation, this history was tied to ongoing pedagogy on black liberation in both the U.S. and colonized Africa. Buried histories of L’ouverture and Douglass were resurrected as praxis to inspire transformative activism. Such freedom songs also problematized a narrative of conflict-free American “progress.” Harlem’s Frederick Douglass School as late as 1952 promised to “show the connection between juicy war profits and Jim Crow misery, and ... teach the people how to fight both.”<sup>18</sup>

The schools quickly succeeded. Already in 1931 the secretary of the IWO’s Jewish Section reported on the establishment of 80 children’s schools “in which 6,000 children are given a working class revolutionary education.” Members’ contributions to a school tax allowed the IWO “to publish some readers used for the New Project Method of education and which strengthened the ideology of the schools.”<sup>19</sup>

As in 1920s Slovak schools, amusements helped children learn class-conscious lessons. Children in IWO schools were offered “Games for Workers’ Children,” recreational pastimes to teach commitment to the

16 *GL*, June 4, 1949, 4.

17 Jefferson School, Box 2, Folder 9, “History of the American Negro People, Study Outline, 1619-1918” (1939.) New York Workers’ School, by Elizabeth Lawson; Box 2, Folder 11, Jefferson School course outline, “History of the American Negro (1526-1900).”

18 Hunter College, Institute for Puerto Rican Studies, Jesús Colón Papers, Box 14, Folder 2, Flyer, “A Call to a Conference on a Proposed New People’s School in Harlem.” January 12, 1952.

19 Wayne State University, Reuther Library, Don Binkowski Papers, Box 5, Folder 5-29, Rubin Saltzman, “The First Convention of the IWO,” *Daily Worker*, May 30, 1931, 3. The necessity of developing the schools as “centers ... for developing the class consciousness of the workers and draw(ing) them into the daily struggles” was stressed. CPUSA, Reel 247, Delo 3170, July 22, 1933, “To All the Language Bureaus,” “What Are the Tasks among the Foreign Born Workers” by F. Brown; Reel 247, Delo 3178, “The building of the International Workers Order ...,” report on work of the Jewish Bureau of the C.C. of the CUSA, October 15, 1933.

class struggle. "Use this book, Comrade leader!" the booklet's preface urged Youth section directors. "Make it a powerful weapon in the fight for the workers' children of America." The games were offered as a counter to the bosses' recreational organizations, which taught "patriotism, militarism and hatred of the working class." Proletarian games such as "Fight the NRA" and "Keep Out the Sheriff" organized playful combat against the sellouts of the New Deal or deputies looking to evict poor workers. Other games such as "Hitler's Donkey Solo," "Death to the Lynchers" and "Negro Sharecroppers are Fighters" foregrounded the IWO's anti-fascist and racial-justice campaigns. Another game, "Lenin Says," was familiar to many kids, although here Vladimir, not Simon, gave orders.<sup>20</sup>

In other cases schools were geared to adults and seen as the means to rectify Old World deficiencies. Slovaks in the IWO noted they attempted to make up for "our terrible lack of cadres by establishing schools." Public speaking and organizing skills were taught to advanced students, but "on account of the imperialistic policy of the pre-war Hungarian government, only about one of a thousand Slovaks knows the Slovak grammar." This echoed the lament of earlier Slovak Workers teachers who sniffed at the abysmal Slovak of students whose parents came from the sticks of eastern Slovakia. Consequently, the IWO in Chicago arranged courses in a Slovak grammar school for immigrants. More advanced Marxism would come later.<sup>21</sup>

As the Slovak case indicates, while the IWO preached interracialism, sometimes linguistic challenges meant particular schools were mono-ethnic or monoracial. Other times schools made concerted efforts to cross ethnic and racial lines. Courses in "Negro problems" were offered at Workers' Schools in Pittsburgh and other cities, and white as well as black workers were urged to take these courses, although it was admitted

20 Colón Papers, Box 28, Folder 1, "Games for Workers' Children" (issued jointly by the National Pioneer Council and Junior Section of the International Workers Order) (no date, 1933-35?) The Boy Scouts were frequently criticized as a reactionary organization preaching militarism and boss-centered patriotism. *RL*, November 12, 1928, 5; June 28, 1929, 4; August 24, 1929, 4; March 4, 1930, 5.

21 CPUSA, Reel 248, Delo 3188, letter, October 30, 1933, John Mackovich of the Czechoslovak Fraction to the C.C. of the CPUSA.

in one case courses were advertised as “for Negro workers,” so few whites enrolled. In other cases, however, as with the Toussaint L’Ouverture Memorial, publicity said “It is the duty of every Negro and militant white worker to join in commemoration of the heroic deeds of the Haitian revolution,” a message certainly not offered in public schools.<sup>22</sup>

Schools offered a mix of ethnic culture, training in public speaking, union organizing and worker history. The Harlem Workers’ School in 1934 noted theater was increasingly turning its attention to the “Negro problem,” and “Drama from the workers’ point of view.” Consequently, they offered classes on “Proletarian Drama,” “The Negro and the Working-Class Theater,” as well as a class on “John Henry ... Bad Negro,” an example of the left’s embrace of ethno-racial folk culture. The school also offered a course on “the history of the Negro in America from the beginnings of slavery up to the Civil War,” and “What has Capitalism Done for the Negro?”<sup>23</sup>

This mixing of progressive culture with Marxist analysis continued into the 1950s. The Jefferson School was not coy about where its ideological focus lay: The school’s capstone was the Institute of Marxist Studies,<sup>24</sup> and history classes offered a counterhegemonic analysis of workers’ militancy. But Jefferson and other schools also brought literature and art to “workers of hand and brain.” Jefferson offered a panoply of non-credit classes in art, literature, music and sculpture to workers interested in education and culture for their own sake. By 1950 it was possible for a garment worker to take classes in “Mystery Story Writing” with Dashiell Hammett of *Maltese Falcon* fame, or painting instruction with Philip Evergood or Anton Refregier. The course catalogue labeled its varied classes, “Know-how for progressive,” and argued, “Students come to the Jefferson School solely because they believe the school will help them understand the world we live in.”<sup>25</sup> Students pursuing non-credit, non-career-driven courses were the antithesis of Bedacht’s pupils as “useful

22 *ibid.*, Reel 155, Delo 2024, Negro Department CPUSA, Report to Polcom, February 4, 1930.

23 *ibid.*, Reel 283, Delo 3650, *Harlem Student Worker*, spring 1934.

24 Jefferson School, Box 2, Folder 2: “Institute of Marxist Studies,” Pamphlet on “Program of Studies,” September 1949 to June 1950.

25 *ibid.*, Box 3, Addenda, Course catalogue, “The Jefferson School, Winter 1950”

wheels.” Jefferson catered to workers interested in education for education’s sake.

Ethnic schools such as those run by the Cervantes Fraternal Society, the IWO affiliate for Puerto Rican and other Spanish-speaking members, likewise provided practical training for unionists and economics classes, but also classes on “Spanish” literature, dance and music.<sup>26</sup> In 1947, in line with the IWO’s earlier call to make Workers’ Schools into full-fledged social centers for organic, working-class intellectuals, Cervantes opened a Casa de Puerto Rico in East Harlem, with “a gym, a library of Spanish and English books, classes in English and Spanish, discussion groups, lectures, handicraft classes, glee clubs, a nurse and similar activities of interest and aid to the Puerto Rican people.” The Casa also endeavored to educate Anglos on the cultural worth and history of Puerto Ricans. Honorary chairman José Ferrer envisioned the Casa “as a Center where Americans of other origins and backgrounds may learn about Puerto Rico and her people.” Indeed, white ethnic IWO members from East Harlem such as Congressman Vito Marcantonio and Vito Magli attended events at the Casa, emblematic of the IWO’s commitment to interracialism.<sup>27</sup>

Elsewhere in the nation Jewish, Italian, and Slavic IWO members attested lodge schools offered courses and events celebrating Negro History Week, as when Chicago’s Frederick Douglass Lodge held an educational celebration of Harriet Tubman, Sojourner Truth and other black figures.<sup>28</sup> The Jefferson School organized an interracial “Freedom Frolic” during Negro History Week, featuring African drumming, calypso, theater and the singing of civil-rights songs to supplement lectures on African American history.<sup>29</sup>

At a time when *de facto* segregation reigned in many public schools, the Workers’ Schools taught and celebrated interracial Americanism. The aim of history classes and performances in integrated settings was, as Youth

26 Colón Papers, Box 18, Folder 7, “report” (in English) on Educational Work of the Spanish Section, IWO (1940.)

27 *ibid.*, Box 15, Folder 6, “Casa de Puerto Rico” (in English) sponsored by the Cervantes Fraternal Society, IWO; Plan and Tentative Budget for Casa de Puerto Rico (1947) (in English.) The Casa was typical of the IWO’s schools and educational centers in the scope of its offerings.

28 *GL*, April 18, 1942, 5.

29 *ibid.*, March 22, 1952, 4 of 2<sup>nd</sup> section.

Director Ernest Rymer put it, to learn “to appreciate the cultural contributions made to America by the various nationalities;” attendees received “the best and truest education in Americanism and character building.”<sup>30</sup> Schools claimed prominent historical figures as progressive icons; they were urged in 1936 to stress “the revolutionary historic role of Lincoln” and to “link up their present struggle with its revolutionary traditions and past” lest “fascist falsifiers” claim “all that is valuable in the historical past of the nation,” so “that the fascists may bamboozle the masses ...” Workers’ Schools embraced Lincoln, as well as “that great liberationist son of the Negro people, Frederick Douglass,” as part of a progressive American genealogy.<sup>31</sup>

This defiant counterhegemonic pedagogy continued well into the McCarthy Era. In 1952, Harlem’s Frederick Douglass Educational Center of black and Hispanic IWO lodges was “dedicated to teaching the people of Harlem – Negroes, West Indians, Puerto Ricans, and others – how to break down the ghetto walls.” The Center offered courses in the rich cultural contributions of African and Hispanic Americans, including “the Negro Woman” (taught by Claudia Jones), “the History of the Negro People for Teen-Agers,” “Culture of the Negro People,” “African Liberation Movements,” and “West Indian Liberation Movements.”<sup>32</sup>

By this time progressive schools were in the cross hairs of government red-hunters. Schools were stigmatized for preaching scientific Marxism but also racial equality. The IWO’s Jewish Children’s School of Chelsea, Massachusetts, was condemned as “the little red schoolhouse” where lessons favoring black civil rights were derided as part of “a deliberate Communist conspiracy to inflame racial and religious minorities here against the United States.” A teacher countered in a letter to a local newspaper defending the teaching of interracial democracy at the school, but local red-baiters were unmoved.<sup>33</sup> Many school boards, including New York

30 Colón Papers, Box 42, Folder 20, program/souvenir book, “I.W.O. Tenth Anniversary Celebration, N.Y., IWO. International Fiesta and Dance” (1940.)

31 CPUSA, Reel 303, Delo 3983, letter, Agitprop Commission, to All Party Press, January 9, 1936.

32 Colón Papers, Box 14, Folder 2, Flyer, Frederick Douglass Educational Center, Spring 1952.

33 IWO collection, Box 38, Folder 8, letter, July 20, 1949, I. Goldberg to Lew Marks; clippings from the *Chelsea (Massachusetts) Record*, July 14, July 15, and August 27, 1949; Box

City's, barred IWO use of public schools. "We will carry our fight for freedom of education to the people of New York until we get a reversal of this un-American procedure and resolution," the IWO vowed. "Labor and the progressive people of New York initiated the fight for free public schools and they will not allow the schools to become the private property of a few reactionary individuals who are transgressing their civic responsibilities."<sup>34</sup>

The IWO, though, soon faced even graver threats to its existence. By 1954 the IWO was dismantled, deemed a "moral and political hazard" by the New York State Insurance Department due to its designation by the attorney general as "subversive." Thus vanished the IWO schools. The Jefferson School, facing insurmountable legal bills in fighting "subversive" designation, pleaded with the public, "Don't Let McCarthyism Darken the Halls of Learning," but closed by 1956's end. Jefferson's board was "confident that the understanding and inspiration provided by the School will live on in the minds of its many thousands of students, and will continue to be reflected in their daily lives."<sup>35</sup>

Many alumni continued working for civil rights, peace and other causes, and alternative schools rose again during Mississippi Freedom Summer and other liberationist moments. Still, the momentum for radical education was forestalled by eradication of these Workers' Schools. The curriculum of dissent had to be reconnected after government suppression. Workers' Schools offer a liberating, pedagogical genealogy to counter contemporary privatized, marketized education mania. In a neo-Dickensian era where monetization has replaced much of the liberal arts, we must look to an earlier era's "people's university" for instruction.

38, Folder 9, letter to editor, *Chelsea Record*, July 20, 1949, from Jack W. Weinman, teacher, Chelsea Jewish Children's School; letter, August 24, 1949, from I. Goldberg to Dr. H.B. Steller; clipping from *Chelsea Record*, August 13, 1949, letter to editor from Harry Pasternak, Public Relations Committee, American Jewish League Against Communism, Inc.; letter to editor from Rubin Saltzman, no date (August 1949?)

34 Colón Papers, Box 19, Folder 14, *Fraternal Outlook*, January 1949.

35 Jefferson School, Box 3, Folder 1, Pamphlet, "Man's Right to Knowledge – The Case of the Jefferson School" (SACB defense pamphlet) (February 1954); Box 1, Folder 18, "Statement of the Board of Trustees of the Jefferson School of Social Science" on school's closing, November 27, 1956.



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■ VÂNIA MOTTA, MARIA CAROLINA ANDRADE

# THE EDUCATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE BOLSONARO GOVERNMENT: INTRA-BOURGEOIS DISPUTE OVER PROJECTS?

## INTRODUCTION

The article discusses the tensions waged between different fractions of capital in these three hundred days of Bolsonaro government over the definition of an educational agenda for basic education. More precisely, we are interested in the unfriendly relationship that has been established between the educational business community and the current team of the strictly state governing bodies of Brazilian education.

In previous works we analyzed the direction attributed to basic school education, from the consolidation of the neoliberal historical bloc in Brazil. We affirm that, despite the specificities of the distinct governmental educational policies implemented since the 1990's, a process of *empresariamento of education of a new type* was underway in Brazil, and that its various dimensions could be observed in the set of public policies of the last thirty years, though at some point or another it became more evident.

We demonstrate that this process has as its important milestone the creation of the *Movimento Todos pela Educação* (TPE) - All for Education Movement - in 2006 and the performance of its agents in the definition of public education policies. Moreover, despite changes in the correlation of forces fought mainly within the strict state following the coup that deposed the PT (workers party) president, the leverage of so-called educational reforms had been substantiating the *empresariamento* of a

new type rather than eliminating it. Finally, we signal that the consolidation of the *empresariamento* was consistent with the economic and social framework that had been designed since the 2015 recession.<sup>1</sup>

With the rise of the far right and the ultra-conservative-ultraliberal coalition, and based on a series of episodes further addressed, we question the direction of this *empresariamento* in the Bolsonaro government. Are we about to see a divorce between the strict state education agendas and business community? Are there, in fact, distinct fractions vying for space on the educational agenda? If so, are there any concrete differences between their proposals?

In order not to answer these questions for now, but only to indicate elements for an initial approximation, we have divided this text into three sections. Firstly, we briefly resume the concept of *empresariamento of education of a new type* and its dimensions. In the second, we mention some previous notes on the scenario in which it is consolidated and deepened. In the third part, we present a systematization of events that concern the tensions that occurred between the education business community and the group in power, as conveyed in the media and social networks. We close with some considerations to feed future analysis.

## EMPRESARIAMENTO OF EDUCATION OF A NEW TYPE

With this concept we seek to express the consolidation process of the business community<sup>2</sup> hegemony in the Brazilian public education in the last thirty years, highlighting its constitutive aspects. Based on Marx's Labor Theory of Value, Gramsci's conceptions of expanded

1 V. Motta and M.C. Andrade, *Conteúdo e forma do empresariamento da educação no tempo presente: da capitalização à subsunção ao empresariado, Anais Marx e o Marxismo 2019: marxismo sem tabus, enfrentando opressões*. Universidade Federal Fluminense, Niterói, agosto de 2019.

2 We employ *empresariado* to refer to a select group of businessmen (bankers, industrialists, farmers, financiers and their executives) who, endowed with a certain "technical and managerial capacity", assume a prestige position and, therefore, confidence in the social relationship of capitalist production. With this expression, based on the concept of organic intellectual of Gramsci's (2001), we seek to embrace the business logic - its technical capacity that penetrates all spheres of social relationship through various control mechanisms - and above all its capacity of leadership, consensus production, heavily armored by coercion.

State, apparatus devoid of hegemony and organic intellectual, and the concept of dependent capitalism by authors such as Florestan Fernandes, we address historical, structural and universal aspects of this process, matching them to the particularities of the Brazilian social formation and the neoliberal historical bloc.

In an effort to be theoretically coherent with the centrality of the structure-superstructure dialectic in our framework, we define three central dimensions of this process, namely the *commodification* of education, the *marketization* of education, and the *subsumption of education to the business community*. We approach them individually and then their reciprocal relationships, demonstrating how they feed back at the present period. Thus, we understand the educational sphere within the structure-superstructure dialectic and as an important link of this unity.

Regarding the process of *commodification of education*, we affirm that the historical and progressive subsumption of school education (as a process) to the form and logic of the commodity, including its fetishized and potentially reifying character of human relations, it was in the tendencies of the capital to subdue all forms of human existence to the value valuing process and consolidating the commercial relationship as a form of social exchange between men.

We demonstrate that, despite the historical-biased character of this process, the exacerbated suppression of the immediate use value to the worker, combined with the potentiation of this value in the capitalist perspective, was a particular characteristic of school education within the neoliberal historical bloc, as well as directly associated with changes in the labour world.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, that the deepening of commodification could not be apprehended if apart from the elements linked to the strengthening of the working class's<sup>4</sup> submission mechanisms, see the fact that the expropriation of knowledge, a characteristic of this process, also contributes to the suppression of critical thinking construction.

The second dimension we define is directly connected to the first, and

3 *ibid.*

4 V. Fontes, *Brasil e o capital imperialismo: teoria e história*, EPSJV/Editora UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro 2010.

was called the *marketization of education*. With this, we also approach the historical-biased process by which both school education, as a process, and the pedagogical tools (such as books and handouts) have been transformed into commodities themselves within the trend movement of accelerating the formation of new markets. In this context we consider again that, although the process of school education has historically been encompassed by mercantile logic, the transformation of school education into a large-scale market niche has been made a particular feature of the neoliberal historical bloc, with the consolidation of rentier hegemony. Moreover, that this could be understood in the locus of reciprocity between the countertrend measures implemented in response to the organic crisis of capital, which was consolidated in Brazil in the 1980's, and the successive legislations that regulated the conception of a "non-state public" in the following decade, when the entrepreneurial and mercantile idea of school education is transformed, for the first time in history, into one-dimensional state policy.

Linked to these two dimensions we indicate the *subsumption of education to the business community*. It is about the business hegemony, most importantly in the context of basic public education, through its mercantile-philanthropic social organizations, that is, its "private hegemony apparatus", as Gramsci defines it.

It should be emphasized that if, on the one hand, the progression of commodification and marketization contributed to the complete subsumption of education to the business community under historically determined conditions, in the other hand this subsumption itself provided a profound deepening of commodification and marketization. And that we do not disregard the historic dispute of the business community for a hegemonic pedagogical political project<sup>5</sup> nor its capability for political articulation in favor of its interests.<sup>6</sup> We understand, however, that the business community activity is politically strengthened with the TPE, since it brings together allies linked to the government and large companies and banks to succeed in the direction of public education

5 J. Rodrigues, *O moderno príncipe industrial: o pensamento pedagógico da Confederação Nacional da Indústria*, Autores associados, Campinas 1998.

6 E. Diniz, *Empresariado industrial, representação de interesses e ação política: trajetória histórica e novas configurações*, in "Revista Política e Sociedade", v. 9, n. 17 p. 101-139, out. 2010.

policies, and also mediate the implementation of the guidelines of International Organizations.

It is also worth noting that this group, while performing these functions, has never waived the mechanisms of conquest, organization and reinforcement of workers' active and passive consensus around their conceptions of education and the world, resorting to all kinds of duress and coercion, direct and indirect, subtle or violent, on those who did not consent to their measures either actively or passively.<sup>7</sup> And, in fact, the specificities of education erected under the legality of capitalism in the dependent economy are ratified, as it revitalizes and deepens structural educational duality, resistance to investment in public education, cultural backwardness, denial of inventive imagination, the massification of the peripheral-dependent type, the precarious structural conditions, the permanent heteronomy condition and others.<sup>8</sup>

In this course, we observed that, in spite of different political-partisan projects of the governments of these twenty years, this organized business community in the TPE had a strong action in the strict State scope, especially in the Ministry of Education (MEC) and in other deliberative and consultative spaces, and in the school space itself, via public-private partnerships in education networks. We conclude, then, that in the neoliberal historical bloc this hegemony apparatus built a solid entrenchment of the bourgeois State, which brought countless difficulties to the organization of the workers.

## SOME NOTES ON THE POLITICAL CONJUNCTURE

Given the above statement and the purpose of reflecting the dynamics of intra-bourgeois disputes in the Bolsonist government, we consider it important to emphasize some constitutive aspects of the neoliberal historical bloc.

7 A. Gramsci, *Cadernos do Cárcere*, volume 2, Civilização Brasileira, Rio de Janeiro 2001.

8 R. Leher, A educação no governo Lula da Silva: a ruptura que não aconteceu. In: *Os anos Lula: contribuições para um balanço crítico 2003-2010*, p. 369-411, Garamond, Rio de Janeiro 2010.

Using Gramsci<sup>9</sup> and Coutinho<sup>10</sup>, we seize neoliberalism as a counter-reform, that is, although it includes renewal, restoration is the predominant moment and mostly mystified by the “aura of sympathy” of the word reform. Precisely in this sense we understand that the *empresariamento of education of a new type* is born within the renewal of the arbitrary acts of the military-business dictatorship in the form of market dictatorship, which restores the barbaric conditions necessary for capitalist accumulation in the locus of the dependent economy.

In these terms, we also consider that in this context of counter-reform, the exercise of bourgeois hegemony is mainly based on passive consensus, which in turn ratifies the hegemony of small politics as an aspect of big politics. Given this scenario, the conditions for an ethical-political confrontation are fading, in a way that resistance prevails at the economic-state or economic-corporate levels aiming to trying to maintain universal or specific rights of professional categories and/or social groups. It is worth noting that, as far as the bowels of the ruling class are concerned, despite disputes between their different fractions for prestige, power and immediate advantages, their movement on the political scene still has as a background the intention of big politics, that is, the dominance of the underlings and the preservation of the capitalist state. None of these understandings denies the relief the workers gained in the PT government, nor could there have been a shift from the base of hegemonic activity to the active consensus of the masses. Or that they have believed in a project of national sovereignty, with a less violent capitalism and, why not, with a trajectory of conquests within the order with a view to overcoming them. However, they were concomitant with the maintenance of resistance practices to public investment in the public sphere, capitalization of the public fund, redemption to the international capital, among others. It could avail the relief to, on the one hand, disarm class enemies, mystify the restorations of the dependent economy foundations, and penetrate into common sense the values that legitimize capitalist accumulation; on the other hand, ideologically op-

9 A. Gramsci, cit.

10 C.N. Coutinho, *A hegemonia da pequena política*, In F. de Oliveira, R. Braga and C. Rizek, *Hegemonia às avessas: economia, política e cultura na era da servidão financeira*, Boitempo, São Paulo 2010.

erate the small politics to continue excluding the big politics from state life, above all by convincing the workers that the capital perversity could be contained within the order through “reforms”.<sup>11</sup>

These understandings are indispensable to comprehend the development of the education subsumption to the business community, as well as that the consolidation of its hegemony in this period it is not contingent. Based on these, it is possible to understand the movement of the business community towards: i) mediating and/or hindering the active consensus mainly of education professionals; ii) ensure the passive consensus of the masses around the narrative that the state is unable and inefficient to operate the democratization of quality education; iii) amalgamate the business logic of goals and results at low cost, even through broad control and coercive instruments. Even in the face of the increasing allocation of public resources to private sectors, the structural and teaching work precariousness, the sharp structural educational duality and the restricted access to historically accumulated knowledge by sweeping the curricula disciplines not directly useful to the market.

Not coincidentally, even in the face of these and other deleterious effects arising from and deepening the commodification and marketization of education in the neoliberal historical bloc, the working class was unable to present a robust counter-hegemonic education project. In that sense, understanding the progressive demobilization of workers requires considering not only the reliefs afforded by the economic base, but also the power of transformism and conformist measures in the PT government within the small politics.

The coup of 2016, whose crux was the celerity of fiscal adjustment, brought to power the conservative liberal right that, despite its relative success in conducting the attack on workers and maintaining the monopolist capital profits (especially of its financial fraction), remained in a constant tightrope with its leadership corruption scandals. In the meantime, of the onset of the organic crisis, the direction of *empresariamento* of new-type came to be questioned. However, despite certain mishaps,

11 M. Iasi, *O fetichismo e as formas políticas: o Estado burguês na forma burlesca*. url <<https://blogdaboitempo.com.br/2019/02/14/o-fetichismo-e-as-formaspoliticas-o-estado-burgues-na-forma-burlesca/>>, 2019.



the *empresariamento* had been going full steam ahead; not only because the reforms undertaken by the business community a few years ago were approved, but because the deepening of this process was needed for the structural, super structural and ideological cementation of the devastations called for by the capital - a task carried out *par excellence* by the business community and always with the support of international organizations.

However, the inability of the coup-plotting right wing to gain stability and legitimacy to reelect itself, the masses' disbelief about representative politics and the dissatisfaction with the intensification of the general precariousness of human existence (increase in crime, unemployment, misery, violence, brutalization and others), contributed greatly to the correlation of forces shifting towards the far right. As Iasi<sup>12</sup> points out, they have succeeded in "sticking their hatred and resentment to the workers' hatred and thus gaining mass base for their reactionary project".

Certainly, all the aspects mentioned above confirm the inexistence of any determined relationship between crisis, pauperism and class awareness, of any automaticity in the formation of the objective and subjective conditions of the revolution listed by Lenin and the power of transformism and hegemony based on passive consensus. In this sense, although Bolsonaro's election does represent the deepening of more orthodox neoliberalism and the expanded renewal of Brazilian dependence,<sup>13</sup> some of the far-right peculiarities seem to us to be of utmost importance in understanding the vicissitudes of the Bolsonaro government's educational policy.

Before we get into the tensions themselves, it is worth remembering some aspects whose systematization can be found in Iasi (2019a; 2019b): i) the far right is an instrument of the big capital, so that between them and the right there is no difference in ethical-political terms; ii) if in some way working-class submission is a historical priority of the democratic-liberal-republican right, the direction of the far right is to intensify the contradictions; iii) the *modus operandi* of ideology under

12 M. Iasi, *Olavo, a pós-modernidade e o pequeno príncipe*. url: <<https://blogdaboitempo.com.br/2019/06/13/olavo-a-pos-modernidade-e-o-pequeno-principe/>, 2019.

13 M. Pinassi, *Novo governo é renovação ampliada da dependência brasileira*. url: <<http://www.correiocidadania.com.br/politica/novo-governo-nao-e-retrocesso>>, accessed: Jan 09 2019.

hegemony from the far right is greatly inclined to irrationality and lies, which is strongly related not only to the unmasking and dismantling of neoliberal rationalism, but also to postmodernism; iv) although Bolsonaro was the choice of the ruling classes (no matter if not the first or the favorite, nor did it weigh the “partnership” with Paulo Guedes), its ineffectiveness and bizarreness has created a growing discomfort for the ruling classes because it is reaching precisely what unites them, that is, the progress of counter-reform measures; (v) Finally, that this burlesque illustrated character above all by Bolsonaro’s rudeness is the necessary form of conservation of the bourgeois state, even though more or less serious tensions arise between sectors of the ruling class which, after all, are still lacking in leadership.

### **THREE HUNDRED DAYS OF GOVERNMENT AND THE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES**

The Temer government closes its government in 2018 with the approval of the following reforms in basic education: New High School (NEM) (Law 13.415/2017), National Common Curricular Base (BNCC) for early childhood education and elementary education in 2017 and for high school in the very end of 2018, new National Curriculum Guidelines for high school (DCN-EM) (which also included distance learning at this stage of teaching) and others. Legislations governing or initiating the implementation of the NEM and BNCC were also approved: Ordinances No. 649/2018 which instituted the New High School Support Program and established guidelines and criteria for the participation of States; Ordinance No. 1.023/2018, that established the parameters for selection and evaluation of the Full-time High School Promotion Program; Ordinance No. 331/2018, which established the guidelines of the BNCC (PRO-BNCC) Implementation Support Program and the Ordinance No. 1.432/2018 (published only in 2019), which established the references for the elaboration of training itineraries in line with the new DCN-EM.

We all knew that the approval of these reforms, widely supported and/or conducted by the business community, would have different meanings depending on the composition of the educational context of the Bolsonaro government. In this sense, it is worth mentioning that

although the President had a positive nod to the business community still at the time of the campaign, receiving the businesswoman Viviane Senna and being receptive to her ideas, the first doubts about the integration of the educational business community in the Bolsonaro government emerged as part of its indication to the MEC. By the end of 2018, rumors that the nomination for the position would be Mozart Neves Ramos (current Director of Articulation and Innovation at the Ayrton Senna Institute, a member of the CNE, and undoubtedly the business community favorite choice) generated explicit opposition from the evangelical contingent. Shortly thereafter Bolsonaro tried to stifle the rumors, denying the alleged indication, to which Mozart responded by stating to the press that he was invited and it is unhappy with the President's attitude.

On January 2nd, 2019, in his inauguration speech, then-Minister of Education Vélez stated that the paths to be followed would be very close to the Partyless School and the fight against what he calls gender ideology and leftist indoctrination; that more autonomy would be given to states and municipalities, including the creation of the “education voucher”, so that families enroll their children in the private school of their choice and that he would work against illiteracy, by expanding kindergartens and preschool, by home education, the management and functioning of schools, the enrollment and completion of students at the right age and the dissemination of an agenda for promoting ethics and citizenship in the classroom.<sup>14</sup> The next day, the TPE published on its website an article calling on Brazilians to follow the changes in high school, which should reach the classrooms by 2022 at the latest. In this, he stated that, “for this to happen, the MEC must provide technical and financial support in the implementation of the changes and the education networks will be free to choose different formats that meet the local reality and the demands of young people and communities”.<sup>15</sup> Still in January, the then Minister of Education Ricardo Vélez welcomed TPE representatives and took note of the document “*Education Now!*”<sup>16</sup>,

14 Agência Senado Magazine, 2019.

15 Todos Pela Educação, O que esperar para o ensino médio? url <<https://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/conteudo/2019-o-que-esperar-para-o-ensino-medio>> , accessed 10 Oct 2019.

16 Available: [https://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/\\_uploads/\\_posts/170.pdf](https://www.todospelaeducacao.org.br/_uploads/_posts/170.pdf). Accessed: 05/03/2019.

prepared by them intended, as always, to set goals and present ways to face the (historical) problems of Brazilian education. The following month, in a message sent to Congress, Bolsonaro stated that MEC's focus on basic education would be the expansion of technical education, the militarization of schools, the fight against (supposed) indoctrination and early "sexualization" as well as that the BNCC, approved after five years of intense work by the *Common National Base Movement* business organization, would be reviewed by the new government.

By March the MEC had begun to receive robust criticism, including from the business community. At the time, the president of the National Council of Secretaries of Education (Consed) said in an interview that MEC had no command or policy for education, and they were disappointed by the lack of willingness to dialogue and the then minister's extremism.

In early April Ricardo Vélez was fired by Bolsonaro and the position was taken over by Abraham Weintraub<sup>17</sup>. According to Exame magazine (2019, s./p.), Weintraub, Bolsonaro and Onyx Lorenzoni have been close since 2017, and that he is a fan of Olavo de Carvalho's ideas. The magazine's own online edition released a video in which the minister, discussing Bolsonaro's government plan with current federal deputy Luis Philippe Bragança (PSL-SP), states: "The left enters. Shortly after it comes in, you begin to have the drug deeply penetrating into society. So this is important to see the correlation. Where the left goes, the drug goes after."<sup>18</sup>

Shortly after the appointment, TPE executive manager Priscila Cruz says Weintraub is extremely similar to Ricardo Vélez, especially with regard to his strong ideological profile and lack of educational experience. With this, the MEC would remain inert and failing to prioritize urgent educational issues. However, she considered that Weintraub's indication could be advantageous in terms of his capacity for political articulation, given his proximity to the Minister of the Civil House Onyx Lorenzoni.

17 Pension specialist and with most of his career in the financial market (including as a director of Votorantim bank), Weintraub holds a degree in economics from the University of São Paulo, a master's degree in finance administration from the Getúlio Vargas Foundation (FGV) and no PhD, although Bolsonaro opted for the vocative doctor.

18 Twenty-ninth minute of the video available in Exame Magazine (2019, s./p.).

In the midst of these clashes, it seemed that the trench of corporate hegemony private appliances in education would collapse. Its intellectuals, perplexed by the rejection of being part of this ruling group, sought from its allies, Consed and the National Union of Municipal Education Leaders (Undime) support for political strength. And a few days after Weintraub's appointment, the Mixed Parliamentary Front of Education was launched in Congress to bring parliamentarians around the priorities of basic education. The Front is comprised of Consed, Undime and corporate social organizations, and is based on the referred "*Education Now!*" and "*Learning Agenda*"<sup>19</sup> - prepared by Consed and Undime - to forward education public policies.

The following week, Priscila Cruz, Claudia Costin and Tábata Amaral discussed the directions of education at the event "*Veja Exame - 100 days of government*". In the debate, they stated that the country's educational problems have already been diagnosed by "experts" (business community leaders) and that the way to resolution is already known, but, unfortunately, political will is concentrated on controversial issues that in no way influence the educational indexes. Both obviously made clear mention of the strong ideological bias of the Bolsonaro government.

Demonstrating the dynamic character of force correlations and the power of Brazilian business community, in the same month Minister Weintraub sought Viviane Senna and Ricardo Paes, chief economist of the Ayrton Senna Institute, for a technical cooperation agreement. He then held a meeting with members of Consed, Undime, TPE, Natura Institute and others, when the minister met the documents "*Learning Agenda*" and "*Education Now*".

In June, however, the fragility of this integration of MEC with the business community, Consed and Undime became clear. On the 11th, it was announced that the municipal and state secretaries of education had decided to create a common agenda with the business community, as MEC had no longer signaled the continuity of the programs.

In July, the Ministry, apparently in a new attempt, launched the "*Na-*

19 Available: <http://www.consed.org.br/media/download/5ca6622bc9936.pdf>. Accessed: 15/06/2019.

*tional Letter of Commitment for Basic Education*”<sup>20</sup> in partnership with Consed and Undime, addressing issues of great interest to the business community. A few days after the launch, the government announced cuts in the transfer of funds to basic education, reaching programs aimed at full-time education in elementary and secondary education, kindergartens, literacy and technical education.

A few weeks after the letter’s release, Folha de São Paulo published a report entitled “Far from national polarization, states articulate educational actions among themselves”, in which representatives of the business community again criticized the prioritization of “ideological war” and stated that the vacuum left by the MEC, due to the delay in defining policies, was filled by congress and states, which gave up waiting for the MEC to take the lead in educational policy. In the same article, the role of corporate social organizations in the education of states and municipalities and in the dissemination of “good practices” and “educational policies” was highlighted, with emphasis on the Ayrton Senna Institute and the Unibanco Itaú Social Institute.

More recently, the conflict of the National Program of the Civic-Military Schools has surfaced. At the launching ceremony, he said the model should be imposed, especially for kids who “don’t know in the PISA test a simple rule of three, interpreting text, doesn’t answer basic science questions.” On the same day, business officials criticized the program and stated that there is no evidence that the presence of military personnel in the school leads to increased results, and that the choice is a huge and unforgivable mistake because it is “purely ideological and we cannot tolerate and not being outraged by this path chosen by the federal government”.<sup>21</sup>

## SOME CONSIDERATIONS TO FEED FUTURE ANALYSIS

Reflecting on the correlations of forces in a society where the particulari-

20 Available: [http://portal.mec.gov.br/images/11.07.2019\\_PPT-Cafe-da-manha-EB-convert-ed.pdf](http://portal.mec.gov.br/images/11.07.2019_PPT-Cafe-da-manha-EB-convert-ed.pdf). Accessed: 15/06/2019.

21 P. Ferreira, Especialistas em educação criticam projeto de escolas cívico-militares lançado pelo governo. url <<https://oglobo.globo.com/sociedade/educacao/especialistas-em-educacao-criticam-projeto-de-escolas-civico-militares/23929588>> , accessed 25 Sep 2019.

ties of dependent capitalism impose strong structural and political barriers, further stifled by the counter reformist specifics of the neoliberal historical bloc, is an arduous and complex task. In this sense, the need to do so in view of the correlations of groups in power within the small politics and in the context of educational policies offers no facilitator to the task, quite the contrary.

Returning to our questions about the apparent dispute or tension between the leading business of Brazilian educational politics and the current group ahead of the MEC, we cannot disregard the coalitions that orbit the education: an Olavist wing, linked to the far-right ideologue Olavo de Carvalho; a military wing, which presents itself as the society intellectual organizer at all costs and above ordinary ideological lines; a wing very close to the evangelical contingent, which although not directly part of the MEC executive team exerts strong pressure on its members and their decisions, safeguarding Christian morality, criticizing state secularism, being intolerant to the modernity of human and social relations, still governed by the orthodox neoliberal wing, whose first and last objective is the primacy of the market.

This political arrangement wages a constant internal and belligerent war of small power, characteristic of the clan that exercises the executive power. To the dismay of those who watch, this war is strongly challenged by the operative unpreparedness and the disruptive historical ignorance of Brazilian education and its dynamics.

We do not understand, however, that the process of *empresariamento* as a whole underlies this tension, as there are indications that the commodification and marketization of education will be deepened. The subsumption of education to entrepreneurship is the dimension of *empresariamento* that, in our view, underlies this conflict. And what seems central to us is the exacerbation of coercive elements in the exercise of hegemony over the working class.

It is in this sense that we need to reflect to what extent the attitude of the MEC leaders, which embrace, but certainly transcend the discursive sphere, directly challenge the work of conquest, consensus organization and the subjugation by the business community. In our view, the ethical-political issue tangent to the maintenance of conformity is the focal point of the tension of the business community. This business

community is fully aware of the danger posed by carelessness towards the conformation of workers.

From this side of the trench, it cannot be said that the intent of the big politics governs our action, because there is no concrete alternative that distances itself from re-governing the bourgeois state. It seems to us that the social revolution has become such a remote possibility that it does not even govern the movement of actors on the political scene in the same way. Precisely in this sense, in addition to the mediocrity of the great majority of bourgeois disputes in the present time, we can speak of the hegemony of the very small politics within the MEC. Certainly, the coming into power of a far-right group, articulated with the economic project of unrestricted privatization and the extermination of social protection mechanisms is a new determinant that above all exacerbates archaic elements of the Brazilian social formation, where: “dying and killing from hunger, anger and thirst are so often natural gestures”<sup>22</sup>. In this scenario of extremism, where day after day a death penalty is thrown and sparks of indignation warm hearts and minds, the only statement that can be made without the possibility of misconception is that there is no other way out: only the organization of resistance, based on ethical and political issues, can prevent the complete defeat of the working class.

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## Part III

# Critical Education, Inclusivity and Struggle for Social Justice



■ ROI SILBERBERG

# DEALING WITH RACISM IN THE CLASSROOM – A NECESSARY COMPONENT FOR TEACHER EDUCATION IN ISRAEL

## INTRODUCTION

Teachers in Israel are facing racist behavior and discourse in the classrooms. A course developed in Haifa University, in cooperation with the Association for Civil Rights, is intended to be a model for incorporating anti-racism education into teacher education programs in Israel. This article describes the structure of the course and discusses the challenges faced along the way, including insights into the experiences from delivering the course, and results of the course's evaluation.

The problem of racist behavior is wide spread within Israeli schools<sup>1 2</sup> and even received institutional recognition in the 2016 report of the Israeli State Comptroller<sup>3</sup>. The responsibility to deal with these behaviours is left in the hands of the teachers who lack appropriate training and conceptualization<sup>4 5</sup>. The need for instruction about race and racism at

1 I. Yaron and Y. Harpaz, *Scenes from school life*. Bnei Brak: Hakibbutz Hameuchad. 2015, (in Hebrew).

2 S. Hassan, *Introduction*, In *A Lesson for Life: anti-racism education from kindergarten to high school*, edited by Rivlin, N., Tel-Aviv, Israel: The association for civil rights in Israel, 2015 (In Hebrew).

3 O. Kashti, *Israel failing in coexistence, anti-racism education, state comptroller says*, "Haaretz", 2016, (September 16) Retrieved from <http://www.haaretz.com/.premium-1.742337>

4 S. Hassan, *Introduction*, In *A Lesson for Life: anti-racism education from kindergarten to high school*, edited by Rivlin, N., Tel-Aviv, Israel: The association for civil rights in Israel, 2015 (In Hebrew).

5 T. Rosenberg, *Racism and Anti-Semitism in the curriculum: Conflict and challenge of the civic education in Israel*, In *Civic education in Israel*, edited by Avnon, D., Tel Aviv, Israel: Publishing Am Hoved, 2013, (in Hebrew).

the teacher level has been discussed internationally for many years<sup>6,7</sup>. Yet, the official guidelines for teacher training institutions<sup>8</sup> do not include a requirement to teach a course on race or anti-racism education.

Within this context, the Department of Learning, Instruction and Teacher Education of Haifa University, in cooperation with the Association for Civil Rights, has planned a course focused on anti-racism education for in-training teachers. The goal of this course is to ensure that students working towards their teaching certificate would graduate with the ability to deal with expressions of racism in the classroom and understand their social context. Their pedagogical thinking should be informed by issues of race and anti-racism. In addition, graduates would be well versed in the use of anti-racist pedagogy throughout the curriculum. This article describes the structure of the course and discusses the challenges faced along the way, including insights into the experiences from delivering the course, and results of the course's evaluation.

## RACISM IN ISRAEL'S EDUCATION SYSTEM

Israeli society is diverse and includes several divided social groups. The Jewish majority group is comprised almost exclusively of people who have come from different parts of the world, or their near descendants. Dahan Kalev and Maor<sup>9</sup>, specifically highlight the cultural and material dominance of Ashkenazi Jews over Mizrahi Jews as “one of the most notable ethnic divisions within the Jewish population”. In addition, the differences and tensions between religious Jews and secular Jews are widely recognized<sup>10</sup>. The non-Jewish minority in Israel is also diverse and includes mainly the indigenous groups—defining themselves

6 K. J. Swick and M. L. Lamb, *A conceptually based social studies model for training of teachers: Emphasis on improved racial attitudes, knowledge, and activities*. Paper presented at The National Council for Social Studies, Boston, MA 1972, (November 22).

7 G. McAllister and J. J. Irvine, *Cross cultural competency and multicultural teacher education*, “Review of educational research”, 70(1), 2000, pp. 3-24.

8 T. Ariav, *The New Frameworks for Teacher Education in Israel: Rationale, Conceptual Perspectives and Implementation*. Webinar offered December 10, 2008 by the MOFET Institute.

9 H. D. Kalev and M. Maor, *Skin Color Stratification in Israel Revisited*, “Journal of Levantine Studies”, 5(1), 2015, pp. 9-33.

10 Ibid.

either as Arab, Palestinian, Druze, Bedouin, or a combination of the aforementioned categorizations. To these we should add a group of migrant workers, mostly from the “global south.” Intercultural and political enmity among all of these groups is based upon stereotypes and reinforced by relative segregation of groups from one another.<sup>11</sup>

Although the majority of schoolchildren in Israel are enrolled in the State education system, it is, to a large extent, segregated along the lines of nationality, religion, and degree of religiosity, as Jewish and Arab schoolchildren, as well as secular and religious Jews, attend different schools<sup>12</sup>. In addition, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and occupation impacts inter-group relations and especially the relations between Jews in Israel with Palestinian citizens of Israel and with Palestinians in the occupied territories. Occasionally a specific issue regarding inter-groups relations erupts and takes a dominant but temporal hold of the public sphere such the police brutality incidents against Jews of the Ethiopian community in April 2015<sup>13</sup> and the Druze protest against the Nation-State Law in August 2018<sup>14</sup>. Israel also suffers high levels of economic inequality. According to the poverty report released in 2017, 22% of its citizens are poor.

In such a complex and segregated society, the issue of racism is a prevalent problem which worries teachers. A study conducted among 860 Arab and Jewish teachers examined their positions on dealing with controversial issues in the classroom<sup>15</sup>. In ranking the topics the teachers themselves felt raise controversy in the classroom, it found that of numerous issues,

11 J. B. Walther, E. Hoter, A. Ganayem, and M. Shonfeld, *Computer-mediated communication and the reduction of prejudice: A controlled longitudinal field experiment among Jews and Arabs in Israel*, “Computers in Human Behavior”, 52, 2015, pp. 550-558.

12 A. Agbaria, A., *The New Face of Control: Arab Education under Neoliberal Policy*. In *Palestinian Citizens: Practicalities of Ethnic Privilege* (pp. 299-335). Edited by Rouhana, N., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016b.

13 T. Staff, *Ethiopian-Israeli protest against police brutality turns violent*, “Times of Israel”. 2015 (April 30), Retrieved from <https://www.timesofisrael.com/jlem-street-blocked-in-protest-over-police-brutality-against-ethiopian-born-israelis/>

14 A. Pfeffer, *Druze Rally Against Israel's Nation-state Law: 'We're Here to Tell Jews It's Patriotic to Protest'*, “Haaretz”, 2018 (August 5), Retrieved from <https://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-druze-rally-in-israel-we-re-here-to-tell-jews-it-s-patriotic-to-prot-1.6341636>

15 E. Halperin, *The attitude of teachers and parents to school discourse on controversial issues*, 2017, (In Hebrew)

the teachers ranked the issue of racism as second only to the issue of Arab-Jewish relationships, which itself is race related. While 92% of the teachers who participated in the study asserted that the topic of racism needs to be dealt with in the classroom, only 34% claimed to do so.

The problem of racism manifests in pupils' violent and exclusive behavior towards disadvantaged pupils both in the classroom and at school at large. It is also possible to see expressions of racism in the violent and hostile attitudes towards groups who are not at all present in the school environment. Such situations cause teachers to feel professionally awkward, as well as helpless and incompetent. Racism in the classroom can arise on the basis of any number of factors: nationality, ethnicity, religion, culture, visual appearance, as well as socio-economic status, or place of residence.

One example of how racism is exhibited in Israeli classrooms can be found in the writings of Yaron and Harpaz, "Scenes from School Life"<sup>16</sup>, which describes an event that took place at a high school during a bible lesson on the topic of revenge. One pupil in the lesson claimed that there is room for compassion, and as a result was nicknamed a "leftist", "a trouble maker for the Jews" and an "Amalek" (a biblical tribe hostile to the Israelites). The discussion became heated when on the one hand she called the other pupils "retarded" and on the other they attacked her by, among others things, calling her a "lover of Arabs who murdered the Fogel family" and telling her to "leave the country". The rage continued into the break, and she ran out as impassioned calls such as "death to Arabs" were heard from the classroom.

In a striking Analysis of Yaron and Harpaz's writing, Agbaria<sup>17</sup> claims that they are "suggesting that racism is fostered as an outcome of the Israeli educational system, rather than rejected as an undesired upshot. What is disturbing about Yaron and Harpaz's analysis is indeed the normality with which racial hatred and aggression toward Arabs have been accommodated in the education system as legitimate and acceptable. Most importantly, this study highlights the entanglement

16 I. Yaron, & Y. Harpaz, *Scenes from school life*. Bnei Brak: Hakibbutz Hameuchad. 2015, (in Hebrew).

17 A. Agbaria, *The 'Right' Education in Israel: Segregation, Religious Ethnonation-Alism, and Depoliticised Professionalism*, "Critical Studies in Education", 59, 2016a, pp. 18–34.



between the discourse of hate and the zealous ethno-nationalistic pathos of Jewish supremacy.” This is an example of a racist sentiment towards an “absent other”, an “other” which is not present in the classroom. This concept will be developed further in the segment discussing the pedagogical approach of the course.

## TEACHERS' DIFFICULTY IN DEALING WITH EXPRESSIONS OF RACISM

In most cases teachers avoid initiating discussions on sensitive political issues and specifically the issue of racism, because in doing so they risk being labelled leftists and facing a lack of support from the system. For instance, Halperin<sup>18</sup> found that 87% of teachers claimed that it is important to discuss relations between Jews and Arabs in the classroom. Yet, only 47% think that this is expected of them by their supervisors, and only 23% think that parents expect this of them. This avoidance also derives from a lack of suitable pedagogical tools and from a subjective experience of helplessness and failure. Kizel describes such teachers as “quickly developing a victim dialogue, one of whose expressions is civil impotence, and a safeguarding of neutrality which threatens to silence the teacher, and a non-demonstration of civil bravery in the face of severe racist expression in the classroom, “out of fear that I will become the next Adam Verta, ‘man busted’”<sup>19</sup>.

The expression “the next Adam Verta” has come to mean the “next man busted” and refers to the firing of Adam Verta, a teacher who was fired on the basis of a discussion on ethics in the IDF and the treatment of Arabs<sup>20</sup>. It is of no coincidence that political issues are shrouded in fear of dealing with racism, as the phenomenon of racism is directly tied to the relationship between groups in society and the power differences between them.

The lack of skills and tools available to educators is no coincidence either.

18 E. Halperin, *The attitude of teachers and parents to school discourse on controversial issues*, 2017, (In Hebrew)

19 A. Kizel., *Civics class, colliding narratives, and the fearing teacher*, MOFET institute journal: Research and professional development in teacher education, 54(1), 2014, pp. 6-9.

20 U. Misgav, *Israeli education minister's creed: God, the Holocaust, and the military*, “Haaretz”, 2014, (February 6), Retrieved from <http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.572715>.

The 2016 report by the state comptroller which dealt with educating for coexistence and the prevention of racism, criticized the lack of action by the Ministry of Education on the issue. Amongst other things, it was noted that educating for coexistence and the prevention of racism were not included in the agenda of the department of educator training (responsible for the regulation of teacher trainings). In addition, the few continuing education programs (trainings for in service teachers) on these issues “are transmitted randomly and with no structured plan”<sup>21</sup>.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF FACING THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM IN TEACHER EDUCATION

The role of teachers is a complex one, especially regarding issues like racism. Teacher trainings for in service teachers generally focus on the technical aspects of teaching, and programs for teacher certification do not spend enough time on pedagogical aspects, specifically on social contexts, such as learning about various communities in the society and the relationships between them. It was shown that the ways in which teachers approach an increasingly diverse student body is shaped by their personal background experiences and their teacher education programs<sup>22 23</sup>.

Skerrett<sup>24</sup> researched the multicultural and anti-racist education practices of 7 high school English teachers. She found that the participants’ teacher education programs influenced their use of multicultural education practices, but not anti-racist practices. This finding was attributed to the fact that most of the teacher education programs described did not include anti-racist curriculum in their coursework, but the multicultural education curriculum taught in the teacher education programs continued to impact the teachers’ in-service practices.

One may think this knowledge would be acquired through work

21 State Comptroller., *Education for shared life and avoidance from racism – Special oversight report*, 2016.

22 J. L. Whipp, *Developing socially just teachers: The interaction of experiences before, during, and after teacher preparation in beginning urban teachers*, “Journal of Teacher Education”, 64(5), 2013, pp. 454-467.

23 A. Skerrett, *Going the race way: Biographical influences on multicultural and antiracist English curriculum practices*, “Teaching and Teacher Education”, 24(7), 2008, pp. 1813-1826.

24 Ibid.

experience in the classroom, however in reality, the fear of dealing with these topics only reinforces the inability to respond, and pushes teachers away from this important aspect of educating. In the Israeli context, Salomon and Issawi,<sup>25</sup> in their report, which was adopted by the Israeli Ministry of Education, stress the significance of providing pedagogical skills to teachers in all frameworks, especially during their training.

Taking all this into account, the underlying theoretical assumption of planning this course was that an important part of dealing with racism is seeing the teacher as a role with special presence and responsibility towards the pupils. Equipping teachers with tools to combat racism during their training phase is significant because it is during their training that they formulate their understanding of their role as a teacher, an understanding they later strive to implement throughout their teaching careers. This understanding is their professional “ideal me”, and as such serves as a personal compass for professional development. While continuing education programs for teachers on dealing with racism are desirable, their contribution and effectiveness are dependent upon the understanding of the role of the teacher (which is developed particularly in pre-service teacher training) as broad, and inclusive of dealing with social issues in the classroom, and with the phenomenon of racism in general.

## THE ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT OF CREATING THE COURSE

Since 2010, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel has dealt extensively with the issue of education for racial tolerance, and within this framework developed a pedagogical approach for training teachers. The approach has been used in dozens of various teacher training settings, such as continuing education programs for school staff and continuing education programs for teachers of various disciplines (such as Arabic and Civics). In 2105 the pedagogical approach for anti-racism education was described and discussed in the book: *A Lesson for Life: Anti-racism Education from Kindergarten to High School*. This book was also the foundation for planning the syllabus for the course.

25 G. Salomon, & M. Issawi, *Report of the Public Committee on Developing State Policy on Education for Coexistence between Jews and Arabs in Israel*, 2009, (In Hebrew).

In 2016, at the encouragement of the head of the Department of Learning, Instruction, and Teacher Education at the University of Haifa, it was decided to make a collaborative effort to insert anti-racism education into the teacher education program of the department.

Two main points were taken into account. Firstly, teacher education programs either create one stand-alone course where race issues are discussed, or the program attempts to infuse race issues into all of their courses<sup>26 27</sup>. Secondly, student resistance to explicit discussion of diversity, especially as it pertains to race, within teacher education courses<sup>28 29</sup>. It was decided that the course would start as a pilot program that would address the double challenge of being both beneficial to teachers at the start of their career, as well as an influential model for teacher training in general.

In the 2016-17 academic year, an academic course was held as a part of the Masters program for Pedagogical Development of Educational Systems, for students who were also studying for a teaching certificate for elementary education. The course was required for first year students in the program. It included 13 students, 12 female and one male, 5 of whom were Israeli-Palestinian and 8 Israeli-Jews. An evaluation program was implemented, and in the following academic year (2017-18), the course was transformed into a mandatory course for all teaching certificate students studying in the faculty of education. The program then included 152 students, 113 female and 39 male, 81 of whom were Israeli-Palestinian and 71 Israeli-Jews.

## THE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH OF THE COURSE

The Association for Civil Rights sees racism as a threat to humanity and

26 K. D. Brown, *Breaking the cycle of Sisyphus: Social education and the acquisition of critical sociocultural knowledge about race and racism in the United States*. "The Social Studies", 102, 2011, pp. 249-255.

27 A. E. LaDuke, *Resistance and renegotiation: Preservice teacher interactions with and reactions to multicultural education course content*, "Multicultural Education", 16(3), 2009, pp. 37- 44.

28 Ibid.

29 W. S. Gershon, C. Bilinovich, & A. Peel, *Race, social studies content, and pedagogy: Wrestling through discomfort together*, "Canadian Social Studies", 44(1), 2010, pp. 29-37.

as a disaster for democracy. Hassan<sup>30</sup>, claims that in nations that nurture their democratic culture, education against racism constitutes a central component in Civil or Social Studies. Sometimes it is presented as a part of education for multi-culturalism which highlights the positive value of cultural diversity and sees in diversity a basis for growth and development. A different approach for education against racism, which stems from critical pedagogy, critiques education for multi-culturalism on account of its disregard of its own source in the very structural public and academic social discourse which itself is rooted in racism<sup>31</sup>. In other words, much of the racism that exists in society is structural, and results from unseen historical, institutional, and political influences expressed in the structural discrimination of disadvantaged populations.

For this reason, education against racism, according to the Association for Civil Rights, “isn’t satisfied by education for democratic ethics, tolerance and multiculturalism generally, but rather raises the issue of racism in society to the social and educational agenda, and teaches it in depth, both in the historical and current context of different societies, in as much as the local context”<sup>32</sup>. This approach is influenced by the critical pedagogy related to the struggles of minorities and nations against oppression, exclusion, and colonialism, and also class, feminist, gender and other struggles. According to this approach, education against racism, like all other fields of education, is political, because it promotes a social agenda of fighting racism.

Also, according to this approach, racism is an emotional-cognitive pattern which dichotomously categorizes people into good and bad based on their population group<sup>33</sup>. This pattern is a tool which enables one to quickly feel emotion towards, or assert an opinion of, someone else in circumstances of partial information. Social messages intensify and reinforce racist thought patterns and turn them into something

30 S. Hassan, *Introduction*, In *A Lesson for Life: anti-racism education from kindergarten to high school*, edited by Rivlin, N., Tel-Aviv, Israel: The association for civil rights in Israel, 2015 (*In Hebrew*).

31 *Ibid*.

32 *Ibid*.

33 M. Wexler, *Dealing with racist behaviors and statements inside the classroom*. In *A Lesson for Life: anti-racism education from kindergarten to high school*, edited by Rivlin, N., Tel-Aviv, Israel: The association for civil rights in Israel, 2015 (*In Hebrew*).

consistent, particularly concerning the other, those who are different and unknown, who are not necessarily physically present. Power dynamics and racism can be expressed towards another in any setting, including the classroom. Wexler<sup>34</sup> demonstrated that children and teens tend to maintain power dynamics that exclude others. If so, the pedagogical approach of the Association for Civil Rights, sees the classroom as a micro cosmos of society, in which there are strong and weak groups, and where mechanisms of inclusion, exclusion and the labelling of the other, and those who are different, exist. Hogg<sup>35</sup> suggests that the extent of “otherness” in a group is determined by the scope of variance from the group “prototype” which is derived from the leadership figures within it. This approach highlights the role of the teacher as a leadership role. The teacher is not just a technician who passes on information, but rather a significant figure in the shaping of pupils’ social world-views. Marcelo Wexler claims that “the teacher, as the authority figure in the classroom, has the central role of the role model. As teachers, every one of our messages, including those actions we comprehend to be insignificant in our work, are perceived, either consciously or not, by our pupils who then create their own interpretations. Furthermore, it is important as teachers, that we recognize, understand, and interpret the personal narratives of our pupils, in order to understand the source of their behaviours”<sup>36</sup>.

Shaking off racist outlooks requires working on both the emotional and rational levels. Scholarly lectures and information alone will not change pupils’ stances; people have difficulty comprehending and dealing with information that breaks or stands in opposition to their own cognitive thought patterns (which are also emotional). (Ibid.). To this end, the Association for Civil Rights developed principles of behavioural didactics as the foundation for teacher trainings. This approach is aimed

34 Ibid.

35 M. A. Hogg, M. A., *All Animals Are Equal but Some Animals Are More Equal than Others: Social Identity and Marginal Membership*. In *The social outcast: Ostracism, social exclusion, rejection, and bullying*. Edited by Williams, K. D., J. P. Forgas, & W. Von Hippel, Psychology Press, 2005.

36 M. Wexler, *Dealing with racist behaviors and statements inside the classroom*. In *A Lesson for Life: anti-racism education from kindergarten to high school*, edited by Rivlin, N., Tel-Aviv, Israel: The association for civil rights in Israel, 2015 (*In Hebrew*).

at the creation of processes leading to insight, and the teachers' choice of effective modes of actions in "real time" in the classroom. The behavioral didactic is based on:

- a) The teacher's response – the teacher must respond to, and not ignore, expressions of racism.
- b) The mapping of power dynamics – the teacher must have a clear picture of the power dynamics between the different groups in the classroom.
- c) Abstention from moralism – expressions of moralism will distance pupils, and as such teachers must abstain from them.
- d) Solidarity, not competition – the teacher will work off of cooperation and solidarity between pupils.
- e) Encouragement of dialogue between pupils – the teacher will encourage dialogue between pupils and will demonstrate a dialogical conversation through his or her own behaviour.
- f) Reflective process – the creation of insight in relation to racism and the development of awareness regarding the process of change.

These principles aid the teacher in choosing the desired response to pupils' racist behaviours, and in due course, to a change and reduction of pupils' racist viewpoints and behaviours.

It is important to note that these principles are mostly applicable when discussing racist behaviour towards a person (or group) which is present in the classroom. Mapping of power dynamics or dialogue between students are a powerful tool to address issues of racism between the students in the classroom. This is not the case when discussing racist statements towards people or groups who are not a part of the class. Such behaviour towards an "absent other" should still be responded to by the teacher while being careful not to engage in moralism. Yet, it is one of the premises of this course's approach that the preferred way to deal with racist cognitive patterns is through engaging with racism towards the "present other".

In conclusion, the pedagogical approach of the Association is a broad one which is situated within the parameters and the ideas of critical pedagogy. It maintains that teacher trainings need not focus solely on the body of knowledge of the discipline taught, or on didactic pedagogical tools regarding the teaching of disciplinary knowledge, or the treatment of

disciplinary issues in the classroom; but rather, also on the development of critical social awareness in teachers, whilst emphasizing democratic ethics and the phenomenon of racism. The behavioural didactics which were developed as part of this approach, aid teachers in translating their social awareness into suitable behaviours, and provide them with a foundation of professional self-confidence and behavioural skills to deal with complex situations regarding racism.

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION ADDRESSING THE PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH**

The Course objectives presented to the students were:

1. Analyzing the term ‘racism’, its sources, and different definitions, as a moral-social-ethical aspect in the educator’s work.
2. Investigating the various ways in which racism is likely to be expressed in the classroom. Recognition of racist expressions and the pedagogical tools for educational response, while considering the different needs and social-cultural backgrounds of pupils.
3. The development of skills for integrating education against racism in various areas of discipline, in accordance with the premise in the Ariav<sup>37</sup> framework: “A teacher is first of all an educator and only then a teacher of a specific discipline”.

In congruence with the course objectives, the following topics of study were chosen:

- a. The relationship between social-political processes and education, and the role of the teacher. According to the aforementioned approach, the central role of the teacher is to ensure that the classroom is a safe and equal space for all pupils, while taking into account the power dynamics between groups and individuals in society and in the classroom. Such a classroom constitutes a cushion for learning in general, and exhibits that racism is not predetermined, and that a non-oppressive society in which members stand in solidarity with one another is possible.

<sup>37</sup> T. Ariav, *The New Frameworks for Teacher Education in Israel: Rationale, Conceptual Perspectives and Implementation*. Webinar offered December 10, 2008 by the MOFET Institute.



b. Expressions and manifestations of racism in the classroom. Different definitions of racism were taught: the legal definition in Israel, the definition according to the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the dictionary definition, and the sociological definition. Particular emphasis was put on defining the term 'racialization' which is "the distinction between groups based on their race, or on the basis of cultural terms corresponding to race, such as: gender, nationality, place of residence, or last name"<sup>38</sup>. The learning of the terms was integrated with practical material taken from the accumulated experiences of the students and a number of discussions were held in which case studies brought by students were analysed.

c. Dealing with expressions of racism in the classroom. The principles of Wexler's Behavioural Didactics<sup>39</sup> were learned. The case studies brought by the students were processed into simulation activities in which students could experience various teacher responses. Particular emphasis was put on the experience of mapping classroom power dynamics and using it to analyse racist expression.

d. Teaching materials which are exclusive or biased, with an emphasis on mathematics and English, as case studies. Evaluation of study materials that represent a heterogeneous society, yet the studies usually represent the hegemonic group. In the case of unrepresented groups present in the classroom, the teacher will bring additional materials, change names and terms in the existing materials, and supplement that which requires supplementation. For example: If there is an Ethiopian pupil in the classroom, math problems using names, will be changed to include Ethiopian names as well.

The approach for all of the topics integrated theoretical knowledge, emotional processing, and practical tools for coping in the classroom. A significant part of the course focused on the development of lesson plans, and eventually, on the practical experience of implementing

38 Y. Shenhav, *What is racism?*, In *A Lesson for Life: anti-racism education from kindergarten to high school*, edited by Rivlin, N., Tel-Aviv, Israel: The association for civil rights in Israel, 2015 (*In Hebrew*).

39 M. Wexler, *Dealing with racist behaviors and statements inside the classroom*. In *A Lesson for Life: anti-racism education from kindergarten to high school*, edited by Rivlin, N., Tel-Aviv, Israel: The association for civil rights in Israel, 2015 (*In Hebrew*).

the lesson plans in the classroom. The lesson plans and the practical experiences were intended for the integration of the principles of dealing with racism in a content class (math, literature, etc.), and likewise in social lessons aimed at issues related to racism.

Throughout the semester a number of actions were taken to evaluate the learning process. A mid-semester evaluation discussion was held, at the end of which an evaluation questionnaire was passed out to learn about the specific units of the course. The final assignment was to write three lesson plans related to racism and to teach them in the fieldwork placements. The students summarized their fieldwork experiences in a reflection assignment.

### **DESCRIPTION OF THE FINAL ASSIGNMENT AND QUOTES FROM WITHIN THE REFLECTION ESSAYS AND EVALUATION QUESTIONNAIRES**

The final assignment was divided into several parts. The first part required students to write about the social situation in a specific classroom, including a socio-metric mapping of the class – a mapping of the relationships between pupils, and a description of different groups: which pupils are leaders, which suffer from social exclusion or bullying, as well as other social and learning factors. The intended use of this mapping was to analyze the power dynamics between groups in the classroom and to evaluate whether they are related to racism.

The second part of the assignment involved preparing three lesson plans that reflect dealing with racism specifically in the chosen class. These lesson plans could be a part of the curriculum for a certain discipline, or they could stand on their own as a social lesson. Lastly, students were asked to implement their lesson plans in the chosen classroom.

The final assignments were very varied and touched upon a variety of subjects that were discussed throughout the semester. One of the students chose a third grade class dealing with the phenomenon of bullying. Most of the bullying was carried out by two girls who were also unusual in their outward appearance. The lesson plans were prepared for the English curriculum and touched upon bullying and the acceptance of those with differences, while attempting to arouse solidarity amongst the pupils in the classroom.

Another student analysed a class in which several pupils who were not born in Israel were being excluded by the other pupils from many social activities. The lesson plans were written for the Geography curriculum and presented cultural differences between countries, the class discussion was intended to empower the pupils with knowledge about different cultures.

The evaluation questionnaire passed out to students at the end of the course, found that students were highly satisfied. Students were pleased with the theoretical deepening on the subject and from the exposure to new and interesting teaching methods. They especially noted the learning from the analysis they did of events that presented the problem of racism in schools as part of a norm. They noted the need for educational tools in such situations, and most were happy to continue for another semester and to deepen their practical knowledge.

In the semester following the course, students continued their fieldwork in the schools where they got to experience the implementation of the approaches and tools in their daily work, after which they wrote their reflections. In this way the complex connection between theory and the field was realized. Many students noted the difficulty in implementing things that theoretically and hypothetically seem right and appropriate. The reflections revealed the difficulty of teaching lessons in which the discussion is the central component and as such requires moderation skills in order to bridge between the emotional and social processes in the classroom, and the educational goals.

## CONCLUSIONS

This article considers the significance of the subject of racism in teacher trainings. Generally, it should be emphasized that a broad perspective on the role of the teacher, considering the educational role beyond the imparting of disciplinary knowledge, is important to the future of education in general and not only in the context of dealing with racism. In order to endow this view, the sociological and social aspects need to be emphasized in teacher trainings. The issue of racism especially presents a problem present in schools in all sectors of Israeli society, and as such we think that the situation necessitates such a course to be

required for students in all teacher training programs.

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■ VINCENZO CURION

# HOW CRITICAL THINKING CHANGES AT THE TIME OF THE ALGORITHMS

Many of the contemporary possibilities of information society start with algorithms, procedures that solve certain problems through a finite number of elementary, clear and unambiguous steps, in a reasonable time. Their origin dates back to ancient times when a Syrian mathematician collected and formalized procedures for the resolution of algebraic equations. Today, the importance of the algorithms has grown thanks to the availability of automatisms and mechanization that are part of our society. Computers, automatic and mechanical tools use algorithms to codify the behavior they must perform. These tools contribute to determining the quality of our life, increasingly also our social organization. It should be necessary to know algorithms, their peculiarities, because in this way, we can reach more consciousness about the reality surrounding us. Through a critical approach, we could establish if algorithms represent a threat or an opportunity for the quality of life of large sections of the population. It is important to overcome the idea that algorithms and generally all technologies are just for experts, because their action reverberates on people's lives.

To overcome this prejudice about the knowledge of algorithms, let us consider the sixties of the last century. When the programming was born and those realities that today are ICT giants took the first steps, the cultural debate in the pedagogical field, caught the instances of autonomy and emancipation and produced a series of ideas that would have created a new potential for social transformation. Models that converged in the critical pedagogy. This pedagogy developed a critical approach to society. It originated from critical thinking, a basic human ability, the



foundation for processes of adaptation and inclusion. All individuals follow these processes, since of their birth. To understand the mechanisms underlying reality and to interact rightly with them, people use critical thinking, an ability that goes beyond analysis. It includes an evaluation phase, when everyone must weigh every input, to produce a more suitable response to his social adaptation.

During the sixties and seventies of last century, the ideas of social criticism changed the structures and upsets, which appeared consolidated. Contemporary to the growth of information technology, society lived the youth protests, becoming aware of the importance of free access to information, re-evaluating individual creativity<sup>1</sup>. These facts nourished the minds and the entrepreneurial spirits of the time. They fueled speculation about mass communication, seeing in the nascent computer industry a way of expression, a way to count, to distribute knowledge, unhinging an asphyxiated social system. This contributed to redefine roles and paradigms. While entrepreneurs discovered the power of software and the Net, the critical educators began to be conscious that their action could discover social contradictions and constraints in the education field, extending the critical view to the entire social system, which generates the educational system. They took awareness of the education inscribed in the process of reproducing society as a “social relationship of power”. Subsequently, politics put to profit this social relationship. The conclusions were: 1) the center of critical pedagogy become the whole education, in particular, that part of education considered as fundamental aspect of “production and reproduction of social life”; 2) there is no society without its own pedagogy, there is no pedagogy that does not follow a social vision. Consequently, to determine the meaning of pedagogical action is impossible without reference to the concrete society reproduction process.

With this conviction, over time, critical pedagogy has raised the problem of “basic material conditions of society” that border pedagogical relations. To improve pedagogical relations it is necessary to improve the basic material conditions of society because the production mode, the

1 M.Mezza, *Algoritmi di libertà La potenza del calcolo tra dominio e conflitto*, Saggine, n. 305 2018,

society itself, the distribution of power and the domination, are central categories, which allow to set up a critical analysis of educational processes<sup>2</sup>.

Today we must realize that some alarming phenomena, such as the misinformation, the affirmation of the logic of individualization, the strength of impulsiveness, the growth of superficiality and of prejudice, dirty human relationships.

To stop them we need to reconsider the individual autonomy, the core of critical thinking. It is important to accept that some hypothesis of critical thinkers into sixties was wrong. Those activities that should have fueled the education of citizens, promoted the birth of a social awareness, that would push other people to study, to analyze and, ultimately, to become promoters of a social renewal, do not produce the right effect. The past critical thinkers vision does not happen. There has been any regeneration of social dynamics. We are witnessing to relational degradation, caused also by the confusion between the emancipation of the individual with the emancipation of the group. This misunderstanding caused the dependence, rather than the oppression and the enslavement of the individual and of the group, within an existing society that works against the individual autonomy. Today, to start to think about these problems correctly, it is necessary to admit that all the attempts to reach emancipation on a purely individual level is bound to fail. Autonomy is not the work of the “moral force of noble souls”. People must conquer autonomy in laborious processes of formation, historical and ontogenetic.

Those processes and the theoretical criticism of education are the basis of human growth, an inconclusive process, continuously under the permanent threat of social seduction strategies. The responsible people must have a permanent project for their own emancipation. Starting from these admissions, we have some chances to fight social challenges such as neoliberalism, globalization, multicultural society, isolation and “de-solidarization”, westernization in the sense of Latouche, subjugation of experience by the cultural industry and so on. These menaces have very

2 B.Armin, *“Pedagogia critica: tendenze di sviluppo e progetti per l'avvenire”*, Collana di Studi Internazionali di Scienze Filosofiche e Pedagogiche Studi pedagogici numero 1/2006

powerful weapons, capable of striking people, starving them, disrupting the social fabric.<sup>3</sup>

Between these powerful weapons, the most exploited are instruments and algorithms, which elaborate information. They manipulate daily our data that sustain the contemporary data economy, according to mathematical models, in ways that are very often unknown, based on choices of fallible human beings.

Many of these models have unfortunately codified human prejudices. Some software, that control daily our lives, contains misunderstandings and systematic errors. These bugs can be very disruptive for all.<sup>4</sup>

Data are the microelements that compose and grant us information, the resource that supports most of the opportunities of contemporary society. Goods, services and people, have corresponding information images, preserved and disseminated in the universe thanks to the technology that can allow us an almost unlimited knowledge of every single event that happens on Earth. It is the Internet Web, capable of collecting and aggregating information from everywhere. Internet Web contains an incredible amount of information, increasing continuously. Our abilities to pay attention and to respond are limited, so we cannot and should not know everything, but our choices and our actions must be free from the constraints of ignorance, guided by free will. Our choices should be ethical; they should not be harming ourselves and the other people. That is why each of us lives his own life in the tension between ignoring certain phenomena and the utopia of being able to hold infinite knowledge.

This tension justifies critical action, where the term “critical” has the meaning that Horkheimer gave it:” the theoretical effort to critically illuminate the current society in the interest of a rationally organized future society”<sup>5</sup>. That means action to protect the deepest and most extensive humanity’s interest, according to logic order criteria.

To live consciously this tension, making free and justifiable choices and actions, we must educate ourselves to critical thinking. People do not

3 B. Armin, *“Pedagogia critica: tendenze di sviluppo e progetti per l’avvenire”*, cit.

4 C. O’ Neil, *“Armi di distruzione Matematica”*, Giunti Editore SpA/ Bompiani 2016.

5 B. Armin, *“Pedagogia critica: tendenze di sviluppo e progetti per l’avvenire”*, cit.

need a simply observation upon “the world as it is”, but a critical approach that works to promote emancipation and social transformation where they are necessary. Critical education theory must nurture the sense of responsibility in the individual to meet the change challenge. It must educate people to grasp the links that support the built social structures, teaching to accept risks and opportunities of reality.

“The emancipatory approach of pedagogy could serve also to decipher the pedagogical practice of society, that is, to relocate all pedagogical measures in the context of their historical-social conditions”.<sup>6</sup> These conditions are made also by technology because every technicality is born in a historical context, often like a sediment of previous knowledge. To be focused on the historical period, helps human critical judgment to control the technology growth. To do this, people can use critical pedagogy, which develops its analyses and perspectives, starting “from the present tendencies of the social process”, from the concrete material conditions of existence and it comes to think “the idea of society as a subject”. With this approach, critical thinkers can investigate all the technicalities underlying social strategies, technological discoveries, algorithms, artificial intelligence, machine learning, Decision Support Systems, predictive algorithms and all their social, political and pedagogical effects.

Unfortunately, when we use information technologies or algorithms, two different rights are against each other.

The first is the developers’ right of intellectual property, to keep the secret, to earn money with their work. Proprietary technologies and developers’ choices made to preserve the friendly aspect, have buried any mechanism behind the interface. It makes sense to talk about a limitation of his free will, of “coercion”, for which no one claims. The same happened when the user has no choice about the instrument due to scarcity of discoveries and lack of other means.

On the other hand, people have the right to behave responsibly using any tool to avoid the side effects caused by this use, but the lack of knowledge reduces their autonomy and causes a very limited control over the operations they perform.

To operate correctly, people must use technology ethically, with a critical

6 Ibidem.

thinking learnt by a critical education. Where there are barriers or objective impediments to understanding algorithms, despite the charm of the tools and the advantages derived from their use, people should use caution, the same anyone would use in an unknown, hostile environment. Very often stories cover technology.

Let us just think about the emotional and the experience design that fueled the marketing and brand identification discourse. If these curtains fell, the user, conquering a critical knowledge, could understand the cognitive distortions induced by the use of that specific technology in that determined experience. He should recognize that no technique is neutral as it appears, but all influence the reality.

The awareness of non-neutrality could help to ensure that the user maintains the control of technology, not the other way around.

Today, the project of every object considers not only objective parameters but also subjective, parameters such as sensation, emotions, perceptions, ideas and values of the potential buyers. In this way, producers maximize the possibility to sell, while the buyers' judgment autonomy decreases dramatically, causing impulsive buys. To learn to be critic about a tool, to understand how the intelligent object actually works, which functionalities we really need, which are superfluous, is even more necessary as the object is smart and it is buy and sold in an "intelligent" process.

Experts make mathematical and statistical models to deduce important facts and trends, studying also movements, desires, and the purchasing power of people, because these elements influence people's choices, from information they consider to the questions they formulate. Analysts make predictions about people's reliability and potential as students, workers, lovers, criminals.

Although accurate, experts' analysis requires omission of important information, due to the choices on what to include, to simplify the world in a sort of small-scale version, more easily understood. Sometimes, a model simplification derives brutally, from the excessive complexity of modeling the direct data. When this happens analysts resort to vicarious data, so-called the proxy data, from which they extrapolate their knowledge base. The end users have any control over established statistical correlations derived from data or proxy data. In some cases, these statistical correlations have shown to be discriminatory and even illegal.

The simplifications create blind spots in the models, caused by the evaluations and priorities of their creators who face problems in the course of modeling. Every blind spot is like a void in a wall. It weakens the whole wall.

The models are essentially opinions rooted in mathematics. Simple models sacrifice accuracy and judgment in the name of efficiency, while the reputation of impartiality is a reflection of goals and ideologies. Another problem about models is that they have a life cycle, like all human artifacts. A birth, an evolution and a death. Models built today will not work as well tomorrow. A constant updating is necessary; otherwise, they will end up aging. What is the guarantee that the update is constantly done? What is the proof that past deviations do not weigh and affect unlucky users forever? What is the certainty that knowledge bases are update with correctly acquired data?

Finally, today we have large amounts of data available. It is undeniable that we can find almost everything in them. What are the purposes for correlating the available data?

Statisticians, when they can intervene, they do only some posteriori in a correction phase. Updates and adjustments are necessary for the creation of a “dynamic model” formalized within the organization that operates using it. For transparency, it would be necessary that the model could be transparent also outside, towards users. This is impossible. Transparency toward users will destroy the competitive advantage of the organization because it means to share to everyone else organization’s expertise.

We must therefore consider as a fact that there will always be more algorithms with hidden errors, as the result of modeling and simplification operations that are not always up to date.

Even in the age of Big Data, correct modeling remains a problem that only trained, competent and gifted human beings must solve. Since the existing society works against autonomy, people can only reach it through resistance against the social mainstream.

It is important to know how to sacrifice the aesthetics of the goods in the right measure, to distinguish when the object is useful, when it is the incomplete objectification of an answer to a deeper question of the individual. It is necessary to recognize how has been created the need for an object, the need to experience that particular service or behavior, by

news disseminated “*ad hoc*”, selected on what we have told about ourselves through our behavior in social networks - online or off line.

To stop these disruptive phenomena, it is necessary a critical theory of formation that discusses about the problems revolving around information, about the dangerous imbalance created in the relationship between users and technology.

To find countermeasures, first critical thinkers, then the whole society must accept that the fundamental transformations in the field of social policy and education reform have remained far below expectations. Progress has blocked the democratization of social relations and now we are witnessing a worrying regression of potential democrats and a deeper division of society. A different model of economic accumulation causes it. The capacity for valorization and value creation are always more dislocated in the technical-intellectual sector with systems managers that can perfect continuously their offers of services in an increasingly widespread and specific manner. To do this, they need to know better and more deeply every single person. Thus, they profile all the people through, maybe, too many processes that collect data from billions of users. These “wild aggregations” create base of knowledge that allows continuous refinement of the systems, designed to incorporate an ever-increasing amount of data, refining the analysis techniques and gaining always much more.

The autonomy of judgment exposes to a certain risk of prejudice. This risk can be reduced to a threshold of tolerance in a dialectical process between individual and reality. It is not dangerous to talk about one’s prejudice, the danger is who nurture prejudice silently, avoiding confrontation. In the case of intelligent technologies used to decide, feedbacks make the difference; but if they are provided, the operation of review them can take place not in real time, it can occur not with due discrimination, it can be organized in a non-transparent or even unjust manner.

Therefore, although the solutions that adopt artificial intelligence and machine learning are innovative, they are not free from errors. The machine performs a learning, which always comes from a programming, like a discrimination to apply on the inputs it receives. The machine does not act on this discrimination. If it did, it would mean that is able

to think about consequence like a human being. Therefore, we need the human action of the system administrator, who works to modify the parameters of discrimination.

There is much evidence of the importance of human action. From the point of view of market logic, due to the pervasiveness and engineering of the instruments, the original discourse that supported capitalism falls. Originally, it was true that “obtaining the interest of each one we obtain the common interest, because it is the result of the mediation between the interests”. With current artificial intelligence systems, it happens that “everyone’s interest is their own” until the system becomes unsustainable for everyone. It is the theoretical proof that the evaluation of the interests of others as an end in itself is not the economically convenient and sustainable solution neither for those who suffer it, nor for those who practice it. This problem, in the long term, can also negatively affect the policy.

Although a new industrial revolution is taking place, with machines able to dialogue with each other and to support work models that were once unthinkable, we are not in technocracies. Experts have estimated that ongoing wars are and will be in cyberspace, but humanity strives to maintain its central position against the fate of the planet. This means that any government, even those that are not democratic, are the prerogatives of humanity, which deal with a physiological limitation of their governmental action<sup>7</sup>.

Taking into account the fact that a government has a bi-univocal influence relationship with technology, increasing or reducing the resources available for research, productivity, competitiveness and education, in the system it manages, do people go in the direction of greater democracy? Is there a possibility to act on technology to direct its actions? Can the power of technical lobbies influence politics to direct it towards

7 Let us assume that the best form of government is the democratic one. In an interview, the Nobel Prize winner Amartya Sen, show us that the Arrow’s theorem, which has passed into the collective imagination as “the mathematical proof that democracy does not exist” derives from the fact of excluding, directly or indirectly, the use of a piece of information that a functioning democracy should take into account”. When government removes the restriction on information, and democratic procedures are broader and more permissive from the information point of view, there are no results of impossibility.



convenient choices?

In a condition of obvious information asymmetry, everyone's choices could be highly impulsive and of short duration, because there is no possibility of stable references. The lack of understanding the complexity, triggers aggression and confirms what the Nobel laureate Gary Baker calls crime "a rational behavior in a situation of uncertainty"<sup>8</sup>. Paradoxically, the predictive crime algorithms, which are using in some areas, crystallize the initial vision and trigger processes that increasingly consolidate expectations.

If a neighborhood is at risk, the raise in patrols increases the spiral of arrests also for minor problems, confirming the bad reputation. Technological discovery, which should fuel progress by acting on the causes of a problem, ends up creating discrimination and division, hiding the effects of the problem.

If we want to resist these worrying phenomena, we must hone our knowledge and technical skills. Ignorance of the mechanisms at the base of a simple web page lowers the threshold of vigilance of each reader and allows, through the mechanism of word of mouth, to transmit false news, feeding malfunctions in the network. To improve, each user will have to develop a critical eye for new tools by learning to use them, for their own emancipation.

Therefore, the learning process and critical education, the process of building critical thinking, are again central. Is anyone in the information society working on these processes of learning, of critical education with the aim of emancipating themselves from the role of "used by technology"? Theoretically yes. It is the hacker. That passionate builder and rebuilder of existing technology - circuits, programs, mechanisms - that tirelessly strives to learn to interpret technology for its own purposes, proactively, driven by the desire to unhinge a social system that, through its own technical means, transmits values and triggers inequalities. The hacker aims to emancipate himself from the succubus condition of user technology.

In perfect analogy with the objective of the theory of critical education,

8 P. Odifreddi, *Incontri con menti straordinarie*, Longanesi, TEA SpA, Mondadori SpA, 2007, p.27

ethical hackers aim at individual emancipation and the development of a strong ego, a stable and capable identity. To avoid a fall in the fictitious and autistic worlds of an experience reduced to sensations and impressions.

By working in organized, usually secret, communities of practice, hackers mature the skill and pragmatism of doing things. They gain the resilience that is lacking in other sections of the population.

These communities of practice can be the model, aimed at emancipation, of an educational style that on the one hand fully takes into account the dangers and constraints of socialization, on the other hand it allows the transition to a critical education of the person?

Could this propensity to do be medicine for the spirit? There is no definitive answer, but a reflection can be useful. Today we are still at the beginning of the study of the hikikomori phenomenon, but if we compare the hacker with the hikikomori, we see for both the omnipresence of the machine but diametrically opposed roles. The hacker is active in changing technology, gradually consolidating his identity. The hikikomori has a passive attitude towards technology, annihilating its own identity and life. Hackers work on technology while hikikomori suffer from it.

The only possible conclusion is that we need awareness, education to complexity, to achieve emancipation. If we renounce these rights and treat mathematical models, as if they were a neutral and inevitable force, like time or tides, we renounce our responsibility and our future.

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■ ANNA CUCCA

# DIGITAL LITERACY AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF CRITICAL FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

## INTRODUCTION

The advent of new technologies has profoundly transformed the face of cities in many ways: from simplifying media to improving the quality of urban life, from the immediacy of human relationships to the advent of digital natives. Not only that, the era of information has contributed to the creation of a new category of individual skills, namely digital skills, whose promotion is one of the objectives of the Digital Agenda for Italy (ADI), covered by the Europe 2020 Strategy (2010).

Specifically, the European program established the smart, sustainable and socially inclusive growth plan, based on high employment rates and supported by social and territorial cohesion. These are goals which must necessarily be translated into concrete actions, especially if we look closely at digital skills in the Italian context. Therefore, the use of Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) is a pivotal point for the development of the country, called upon to promote ever-greater levels of expertise and livability, meeting the needs of the cities and their citizens.

In Italy, the most recent data<sup>1</sup> show that, regarding the use of the internet, age is still the main discriminating factor: young people use it more

<sup>1</sup> Istat, *Cittadini, imprese e nuove tecnologie*, Roma 2016.

(over 91% of people 15-24 years old), but an increase is also significant among 60-64 year-olds (from 45.9% to 52.2%), especially among women of this age range. In general, gender differences remain strong but they are decreasing over time; the gap in favour of men was 11 percentage points in 2010, 9.2 in 2015 and 8.6 in 2016. These differences are particularly evident after 44 years of age, while among the youngest they are annulled (11-17 years old). With regard to digital skills, ISTAT data shows that the majority of users have a basic (35.1%) or low (33.3%) level.

In the current European scenario, recent socio-economic changes originating from the financial crisis (such as rising immigration flows, rising youth unemployment and increasing social inequalities) have stimulated important reflections on internal policies and in particular on those related to urbanization. Smart cities have emerged in this framework, that is, cities that respond intelligently to contingent urban issues<sup>2</sup>, with the help of modern ICT. Therefore, digital literacy is an important requirement for social inclusion, but, at the same time, it can also be a discriminating factor for those who do not actively participate in information culture.

The digital divide phenomenon, defined around the second half of the 1990s as the gap between people who have access to the internet and those who are excluded<sup>3</sup>, is now being redefined in the form of various digital divides. In other words, we have moved from the awareness of the existence of a gap in internet access, to the awareness of different gaps in the use of technology, which is even more relevant if considered in relation to gender and to the implications it may have on participatory and social processes. For all these reasons, ADI identifies women's access to new technologies as one of the most important measures for the country's growth, especially if we think of gender inequalities, which are still strong in Italy, placing women in a disadvantaged position both in terms of employment and remuneration, and in terms of protection

2 R.G. Hollands, *Will the real smart city please stand up?*, in "City", Vol. 12, 3, 2008, pp. 303-320.

3 P. Corti, C. La Capria and G. Merlo, *Dentro o fuori. Il divario sociale in internet*, Guerini e Associati, Milano 2005.

of socio-economic conditions in general<sup>4 5</sup>. Therefore, the realization of smarter cities and communities cannot ignore the consideration of women's needs, and gender mainstreaming must steer smart transformations of urban contexts<sup>6</sup>. Technological progress, networking and digitalization are powerful tools for democratization and empowerment for women, which, if adequately supported and facilitated, can be used to reduce the gender gap, not only in access to the digital field, but in all areas of the social sphere. Moreover, in this perspective, formal educational contexts play an important role in fostering inclusion and social sharing processes, starting from the overcoming of the digital divide, an indicator of inequality in relation to the level of access and use of new technologies, which particularly affects the categories more at risk of social exclusion. Decreasing the digital divide may prove to be a prerequisite to decreasing the knowledge divide and to diminishing the global social disadvantage of women, which would result in an improvement in overall quality of life<sup>7</sup>.

## WOMEN AND THE DIGITAL. AT THE ORIGIN OF THE GENDER DIGITAL DIVIDE

The androcentric vision of science has for a long time generated the idea of a presumed neutrality which, becoming embedded in Western culture, has determined the reproduction of historical dichotomies such as nature-culture, reason-sentiment, to the point of producing the power-subordination dichotomy in the relationship between genders. Such constructs have conveyed the false belief that what is scientific presents typically male canons, as it is associated with power, and what is natural has female characteristics, since it is associated with vulnerability and passivity. An awareness of such inequalities is the key to understanding how modern scientific thought has developed<sup>8</sup>. Capitalist society has

4 Istat, *UrBes 2015. Il benessere equo e sostenibile nelle città*, Roma 2015.

5 A. Barresi and G. Pultrone, *European strategies for smarter cities*, in "Tema. Journal of Land Use, Mobility and Environment", 1, 2013, pp. 61-72.

6 G. Pultrone, *Sfide di "genere" per smart cities più umane fra teoria, prassi e auspicabili scenari future*, in "Territorio della Ricerca su Insediamenti e Ambiente", 10, 2013, pp. 59-70.

7 L. Sartori, *Il divario digitale. Internet e le nuove diseguaglianze sociali*, Il Mulino, Bologna 2006.

8 J. Wajcman, *Technofeminism*, Polity Press, Oxford 2004.

exacerbated these dichotomies, in order to polarize male and female categories, by matching them to the growing split between public (working) and private (domestic) spheres. The feminine expertise in the field of the so-called STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) disciplines is still affected by the weight of the patriarchal culture that has transmitted a stereotyped education to males and females, influencing desires and preferences according to roles defined on the basis of sex<sup>9</sup>. As a result, boys and girls today find themselves choosing courses of study that they consider more akin to their own “innate” interests and inclinations. Whereas “It is the educators, and in the first place the parents, those who have the responsibility of not perpetuating a ridiculous discrimination, harmful to science and human dignity; not to remove, with their prejudices and their inadequacy, the future conditions of women from the opportunity of a fascinating career, of a great intellectual adventure and of a full and gratifying realization of oneself”<sup>10</sup>.

Actually, the Anglo-Saxon Feminist Technology Studies research line shows us that education as a cultural product has the power to influence the subject’s attitudes<sup>11 12</sup>. This body of literature, in providing a genre reading of smart cities, has contributed to the construction of a dynamic and multiple vision of feminism that has begun to look at technologies, in particular ICT (Information and Communication Technologies), as potential sources of assumption of power for women and transformation of relations between genders. In particular, the current of cyberfeminism, embodied by Donna Haraway, considers technologies, in particular digital ones, in their effects of reduction and attenuation of distinctions between male and female, giving subjects new possibilities of movement through different identities, even remaining in the anonymity or through the choice and construction of virtual, fictitious identities.

9 E. Gianini Belotti, *Dalla parte delle bambine. L'influenza dei condizionamenti sociali nella formazione del ruolo femminile nei primi anni di vita*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1973.

10 G. Lolli, *La crisalide e la farfalla. Donne e matematica*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2000.

11 D.J. Haraway, *Manifesto Cyborg. Donne, tecnologie e biopolitiche del corpo*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1995.

12 Plant S., *Zeros and Ones: Digital Women and the New Technoculture*, Fourth Estate, London 1998.

The ISTAT multi-purpose survey<sup>13</sup> provides a promising picture of female e-skills in Italy. Therefore, the gender digital divide is decreasing: if, in 2005, men who used the PC were 11.7% more than women, in the last survey the gap was reduced to 9.4% and similar data is recorded with regard to Internet connections, with a gap that has increased over the years from 10.1% to 9.5%. But it is above all among the young that the gender gap is almost completely canceled. In fact, the percentage of PC and Internet usage is higher for girls in the 11-14 age group and practically the same for boys and girls in the 15-24 age group. According to more ISTAT recent data<sup>14</sup>, this increase in female digital skills seems to be attributable to greater digital literacy and higher levels of female education.

Greater familiarity with digital environments (in other words digital fluency) is an important factor for democratization for women, as well as for self-determination and empowerment. Not only that, overcoming the gender digital divide would lead to the elimination of those forms of gender inequality in the workplace and in society. Moreover, it is important to consider in a systemic perspective the action of politics, education and families as a single large operating mechanism in order to guarantee equal opportunities in a substantial and not just a formal sense.

Therefore, by overcoming a linear logic in order to look towards a circular one, we can think of technology as neither good nor bad, and not as neutral, but complex, contemplating new kinds of relationships and involving a renewed awareness of communicative and participative processes as well as of the dynamics of power. It is necessary to overcome the presumption of a unique model for everyone which, effectively, tends toward the homologation and hierarchization of all the differences by conforming them to a dominion of one.

The spread of ICT seems to increase the power of technology to an even greater extent when, at the same time, the power of those who have the ability to exploit it grows. New technologies are not only tools

13 Istat, *Come cambia la vita delle donne 2004-2014*, Roma 2015.

14 Istat, *Cittadini, imprese e nuove tecnologie*, Roma 2016.



to use, but new processes to develop and govern<sup>15</sup>. Considering that technology and society are closely connected and technological change is determined by the social circumstances in which it occurs, feminism, from the 1970s, already denounced the invalidity of the conception of science and technology as autonomous and objective fields of knowledge, anticipating the gender perspective.

## FOR AN ACTIVE AND AWARE CITIZENSHIP. THE APPROACH OF CRITICAL FEMINIST PEDAGOGY

As stated so far, the alleged “technology neutrality”, which actually hides a male symbolic order, elaborated by men for men<sup>16</sup>, opens up a deep reflection on cyber-democracy. The network can be the place where inequalities are discovered and revealed; technological know-how, which opens the realm of knowledge, can convey plural processes of democratization if it becomes a relationship tool, without conflict among differences. To confirm this, according to several scholars<sup>17 18</sup>, the female ability to weave social ties using informatic devices is closely linked to relationship continuity and, therefore, can be used as an empowerment tool for socio-cultural development.

The perspective of critical feminist pedagogy has engaged itself precisely in decoding the implicit in the field of individual education and those assumptions that have historically relegated women to a position of subordination with respect to man in the field of knowledge, as well as with respect to the role played in society and in the profession. Furthermore, this approach aims at a rethinking of the fundamental questions of women’s subjectivity, in order to develop a critical conscience and an aware look at reality, particularly in the field of education to reduce

15 M. Vaccari, *Il farsi mondo della tecnologia IC*, in T.A. Capitani (ed.), *Un altro genere di tecnologia*, ISDR Associazione Il Secolo della rete 2008.

16 S. Turkle, *Life on the Screen: Identity in the Age of the Internet*, Simon and Schuster, New York 1995.

17 G. Cordinani, *Donne, informazione, tecnologie*, in T.A. Capitani (ed.) *Un altro genere di tecnologia*, ISDR Associazione Il Secolo della rete 2008.

18 F. Marone and V. Napolitano, *Pedagogia critica femminista e educazione transmediale*, in A. Garavaglia (a cura di), *Transmedia education. Contenuti, significati, valori*, Unicopli, Milano 2014, pp. 61-83.

inequalities.

Being an active subject means, in this sense, putting yourself within the social systems mediated by new technologies, proposing an alternative, conscious and political use.

From a gender perspective, the notion of democracy cannot be separated from the questions of gender citizenship and women's struggle against discrimination, submission and marginalization. Likewise, the use of the Internet as a space for participatory culture can constitute a support for the exercise of active citizenship in promoting awareness of one's rights<sup>19</sup>. Moreover, since the web represents a renewed way of building a public space, it is important for women to be able to live in it in order to exercise the right of digital citizenship through the expression of their intellectuality and creativity.

In this scenario, formal educational contexts play an important role on the one hand in promoting individual and collective motivation for the critical use of modern technologies, and on the other hand in strengthening the link between belonging, training and media education in order to facilitate processes of social cohesion and the exercise of an active citizenship<sup>20</sup>.

Also neurosciences have demonstrated the importance of intersubjectivity, empathy and responsible participation in new forms of digital citizenship that preserve typically human ways of thinking<sup>21</sup>. In order for the network to become a resource and not an impediment to human development, education must fulfill its transformative role. This refers to the need to define guidelines for educational interventions aimed at training the younger generations in critical and conscious thinking about the mediums they use.

It is therefore of fundamental importance to think of producing a gender information system, aimed at promoting gender salience, through women's networks. The educational and emancipatory value of the network lies not only in the opportunity it offers to create social relation-

19 F. Marone and M. Striano (eds), *Cultura postmoderna e linguaggi divergenti. Prospettive pedagogiche*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2012.

20 M. Striano, *Pratiche educative per l'inclusione sociale*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2010.

21 D. J. Siegel, *La mente relazionale. Neurobiologia dell'esperienza interpersonale*. Cortina, Milano 1999.

ships between distant women, but also in providing mentoring models and experimenting with other forms of learning in a new sense of belonging and community, increasing and enhancing the sense of active citizenship.

However though, while on the one hand the technologies appear to herald opportunities, on the other they are not exempt from the dangers of exclusion: there are many factors on the network that limit the exercise of cyberdemocracy, including the predominance of the English language in some sectors, the technological know-how, extreme visibility and risk of privacy violation<sup>22</sup>. In this context it is crucial for women to be active subjects, defenders of a “zone” that risks being re-colonized by male domination.

In conclusion, it is a question of looking at the Internet and its use with a critical and attentive eye, as a space of participatory culture and information aimed at spreading awareness of one’s rights. It is for this reason that in the pedagogical field it appears as an educational emergency to educate the new generations to a conscious and situated look, to be able to identify the dangers and challenges to be seized in this great universe which is the Internet.

## CONCLUSION

The theme of digital literacy is a priority of the European agenda for inclusion. Closely related to the ability to be part of a community, the digital one, it is configured as a facilitator or, on the contrary, as an exclusion factor for those who do not have or do not have the possibility to reach such competences, as the most disadvantaged categories of the population. Therefore, in order to guarantee equal opportunities among web citizens, the synergic action between governments and both formal and informal educational contexts is of crucial importance. At the same time, the reduction of the gender digital divide would lead in the coming years to a considerable increase in female employment in those areas still predominantly dominated by men.

Despite the number of women showing a more genuine interest in

22 R. Braidotti, *Soggetto nomade. Femminismo e crisi della modernità*, Donzelli, Roma 1994.

scientific disciplines is gradually increasing and women graduates and employed in the STEM sectors are growing, the stereotypes and prejudices are still resistant in both training and work, as well as the cultural heritage behind the under-representation of women in these areas.

Taking into account the fact that the female mainstream brings with it a wealth of knowledge and innovation for the well-being of society as a whole, the promotion and enhancement of digital skills is even more significant, for the improvement of a livability that becomes more and more digital.

For the promotion of digital equality, two themes seem fundamental and are interrelated: the first concerns the goal of breaking down barriers (internal and external to women) that prevent them from being realized even in STEM fields, starting from access to study paths and then to achieve professional success. The second factor concerns education to a different view, of which the critical feminist pedagogy has laid the foundations, to teach women to equip themselves adequately and free themselves from gender stereotypes that still limit the exercise of cyber-democracy.

In this sense education plays a fundamental role in guaranteeing equal opportunities and the exercise of active citizenship in the network by women.

In conclusion, active citizenship should be interpreted as a right that we are allowed to exercise only thanks to specific digital skills. The latter do not only concern technical aspects, but rather involve ever more force with values such as democracy, tolerance, responsibility towards the future of the community.

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■ ROSARIA CAPOBIANCO

# THE AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL WRITING AT SCHOOL IN THE LAND OF GOMORRAH

## INTRODUCTION

*Gomorra* is the place of oppression and of great contradictions, the land of discomfort and suffering described by Roberto Saviano in his famous book *Gomorra: A Personal Journey into the Violent International Empire of Naples' Organized Crime System*<sup>1</sup>, published in 2006. *Gomorra* is a realist book, in dark colors, which paints facts and scenarios of two large Italian areas, the metropolitan area of Naples and that of Caserta. Roberto Saviano's goal is to describe the decline of the city of Naples under the rule of the *Camorra*, a more powerful and violent organized crime network than the mafia. The *Camorra* is a complex international system that deals with drugs, counterfeiting, construction and toxic waste and its influence has completely transformed life in Campania, a region of southern Italy.

The strong employment crisis that has existed for many years in the Neapolitan territory has favored the loss of economic and cultural identity, creating large pockets of poverty, marginalization and economic difficulties, to which must be added the absence of values and a widespread culture of illegality that gave rise to another idea of the State, a State based on the "law of the strongest". But this is only one of the two sides of the coin, in fact Naples also has another face, that of change, that of redemption, that of hope. For years this other side of the coin has been trying to establish itself, Naples wants to change and needs to change, just as it wants to shake off this sad stereotyped

1 R. Saviano, *Gomorra: A Personal Journey into the Violent International Empire of Naples' Organized Crime System*, Mondadori, Milano 2006.

image of corruption and crime, the city of Naples needs hope and at this moment a great possibility of change for Naples is the school.

The educational project “*I tell you ...*” was born from this desire for change, from the need to start again, from the choice of to break the chains of apathy and indifference. It all started from “telling oneself”, from autobiographical narration, to offer each student an opportunity for self-determination, setting in motion not only a process of growth and evolutionary change, but above all of personal responsibility towards one’s own educational and training path.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The narrative, in particular the narration of oneself, has the power to bring each one back to one’s own identity it is clear that the story is nothing but the research that the subject makes of this identity<sup>2</sup>. “To narrate is to educate” and “to educate is to narrate” when, through the story, everyone is a promoter of change<sup>3</sup>.

Adriana Cavarero, in *Tu che mi guardi, tu che mi racconti* (trans. *You who look at me, you who tell me*), underlined the strong identity-narrative union, as for the Italian author the art of narrating has the ability and the power to bring everyone back to their own identity<sup>4</sup>. In order not to be forgotten, the subject seeks his story, he desires it because only through it can he regain the consciousness of his unique being, after all the narrative identity is constructed precisely from the set of stories that the subject reports<sup>5</sup>.

The narration is, therefore, a cognitive operation, as each autobiographical narrative oscillates between two poles: on the one hand it fixes the presentation of the self, on the other it projects itself towards the search for the self. Approaching the first pole the autobiographical narrative

2 S. Yang, *Autobiographical Writing and Identity in EFL Education*, Imprint Routledge, New York 2013.

3 D. Demetrio, *Educare è narrare. Le teorie, le pratiche, la cura*, Mimesis, Milano 2012.

4 A. Cavarero, *Tu che mi guardi, tu che mi racconti. Filosofia della narrazione*, Feltrinelli, Milano 1997.

5 P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, edited by K. McLaughlin, D. Pellauer, University Press of Chicago, Chicago 1985.



is an expression of the identity assumed by the subject in the time in which he narrates, therefore knowingly or not, who tells about himself has clear to whom he is presenting; consequently, approaching the second pole, the autobiographical narrative is, rather, something that is sought after, which is desired to emerge from a search that rejects an a priori order<sup>6</sup>. Moreover, the ability to narrate is a fundamental and irrepressible dimension of human thought, it is a mental model, that is, a way of perceiving and programming reality, making it interpreted, thus breaking up the sectorial attention to the logical and systematic aspects of the life of the mind<sup>7</sup>.

Telling stories is for Antonio Damasio not only “recording what happens in the form of brain maps”, but also “an obsession of the brain”<sup>8</sup>. If we consider the mind as something to investigate to understand the human being and his action, then it is possible to affirm that the mental structure itself cannot have only the dimension of logical and categorical processes, but must also contain a dimension that concerns the subjectivity and intentionality of each person.

Therefore, the autobiographical narrative promises to be a way to narrate identity, interpreting and reconstructing the various meanings that weave personal and collective lives. Narrative expressions derive, therefore, precisely from the subjects’ need to understand and internalize the surrounding reality through a work of interpretation, which allows them to become an integral part of reality telling it<sup>9</sup>. Moreover, in the repository of memories of autobiographical memory there are present not only “memories that constitute identity”, but also “memories that help define our individuality”<sup>10</sup>.

6 S. Yang, *Autobiographical Writing and Identity in EFL Education*, cit.

7 J. Bruner, *Actual minds, possible world*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1986; Id., *Acts of meaning*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1991; Id., *The culture of education*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1996; Id., *Making Stories. Law, Literature, Life*, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2002; Id., Bruner J., *Life as narrative*, in “*Social Research: An International Quarterly*”, 17, 3, 2004, pp. 691-710.

8 A. R. Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens. Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*, Harcourt, San Diego 1999, trans. *Emozione e coscienza*, Adelphi, Milano 2000, p. 229)

9 R. Usher, *The Story of the Self: Education, Experience and Autobiography*, in, *Biography and Education: A Reader*, edited by M. Erben, The Falmer Press, London 1998.

10 A. R. Damasio, *Emozione e coscienza*, cit., p. 269.

However, it is necessary to build a climate of trust, serenity and listening in advance, paradoxically, listening also requires a dose of courage, because opening up and receiving the other, his story, his story, carries the risk. to have to re-examine their positions and face the possibility of their own change.

Being able to create a climate of mutual acceptance among the members of a group makes everyone aware that no damage could derive from the simple fact of communicating something, which is part of one's way of being and expressing oneself. A true work of recovering pleasure in listening is set in motion, paying attention also to the inner resonances aroused by the words.

The autobiographical narrative demonstrates all its positive influence on the management of integration processes towards subjects who experience forms of hardship and lack of integration to the extent that they are, however, willing to accept the risk of vulnerability, that is, to expose themselves to the danger of describing deep parts of oneself to others that could also misrepresent or otherwise evaluate them<sup>11</sup>. It is no coincidence that prejudices are used to regulate the channel and the volume of listening and to act as a filter when an interlocutor is in front of you.

A necessary condition to be able to really listen is to be able to create inner silence: listening does not simply mean perceiving words, but rather being able to also accept the state of mind and the meaning that the narrator transmits to what he is narrating. Whoever listens in silence communicates to the other his willingness to accept all that is narrated, without judgments or advice. Instead the one who feels welcomed and listened to feels a sense of well-being and, at the same time, of inner growth.

The autobiographical reflection, capable of revealing the changes and discovering the most profound changes, therefore brings out the great transformative value of the experiences lived. It was through the narration of one's own existence that each captures in the change an element present within the course of his own history of formation and

11 S. Florio-Ruane S., J. de Tar, *Teacher Education and the Cultural Imagination. Autobiography, Conversation, and Narrative*, Routledge, New York 2001.

the role of the teacher-autobiographer, according to this perspective, is precisely that of supporting and encouraging the narrator to help him in the discovery of the educational and transformative dimension of one's existential path.

Through the autobiographical conversation a process of construction is activated, but above all a process of remodeling is activated, so as to be able to open up new horizons of life. In fact, the idea that each subject constructs of himself, as well as the "image" that everyone forms of who he really is, is based on "autobiographical memory"<sup>12</sup>. One of the models that is most representative and comprehensive of the characteristic elements of autobiographical memory is the model developed by Conway and Pleydell-Pearce, the *Self-Memory System* (SMS), in which autobiographical memories are described as dynamic and transient mental constructions, which intertwine with the semantic knowledge that the subject has of himself and with his motivational system.

We must not, however, fall into the error of thinking that the remodeling process concerns only the past that the subject has lived, since even the future, which is expected, is subjected to the remodeling process. Antonio Damasio, in fact, argues, in *Emotion and Consciousness*, that the "changes that occur in the autobiographical self in a lifetime are not only due to the conscious and unconscious remodeling of the past that has been lived, but also to the determination and remodeling of the future that is expected"<sup>13</sup>. In this regard, autobiographical writing is a process of guided distancing, in which the change of perspective of the gaze generates a global change in the writer. In this way, writing, claiming a "distance" and a "tidying up" of data (facts of reality, data from memory, data of the imagination), opens the way to re-elaborations which, deviating from the usual logical paths, put into effect new strategies of thought and action, as they determine new forms of knowledge and emotion. Autobiographical writing is a way to write about the context of a life, it is always a re-visitation, because the life to which it is supposed to refer is already a sort of narrative construct<sup>14</sup>.

12 M. Conway, C. Pleydell-Pearce, *The construction of autobiographical memories in the self-memory system*, in "Psychological Review", 107, 2000, pp. 261-288.

13 A. R. Damasio, *Emozione e coscienza*, cit., p.272.

14 F. Connelly, J. Clandinin, *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*,

Reflecting and examining the narrations of lives in the learning process is what makes narrative pedagogy a resource for explaining those narrative processes that can lead to changes and significant developments both for the individual and for the group inside a learning environment. In chapter seven of the book *Narrative Pedagogy: Life History and Learning* Goodson and Gill (2010) explain the great importance of narrative pedagogy and its relationship with the learning process<sup>15</sup>.

The narrations are important, but above all useful from a pedagogical and educational point of view, since paying attention to how the subject is told, to his cognitive and emotional procedures, allows us to gather clues that reveal much more than what the subject thinks of exposing himself. The story of oneself, supported by active listening, can stimulate and generate new questions and interpretations, favoring possible changes, the prerogative of thinking and of acting in education<sup>16</sup>.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Participants*

The project “*I tell you ...*” was attended by 183 students, aged between 11 and 14, of the First grade Secondary School, precisely in the center of Naples, a few steps from the train station. A total of 10 classes, divided as follows: 4 first classes, 3 second classes and 3 third classes, 102 females and 81 males. Classes with a strong multicultural structure, with students from the first generation of migrants and students from the last migratory flows of these years (Syria and North Africa), most were Maghreb students, the remaining part were students from Sri Lanka (11%), from Ukraine (9.2%) and China (6.5%). Next to them, the young Neapolitan students with problematic family situations, the children of the land of Gomorra, often unaware victims of a widespread illegality system.

### *Design and Procedure*

Jossey Bass, San Francisco 2000.

15 I. Goodson, S. Gill, *Narrative Pedagogy: Life History and Learning*, Peter Lang, New York 2010.

16 S. Gill, I. Goodson, *Critical Narrative as Pedagogy*, Bloomsbury, London 2013.

“*I tell you ...*” is an autobiographical writing project with a great educational value, whose purpose is not language training, in the sense that we did not want to investigate the most effective and adequate teaching methods to learn the correct and functional use of Italian language, spoken and written, but rather to foster the learning process through self-knowledge and the enhancement of the other.

The objectives of the project were many:

- reflect on themselves, on their own and on the history of others to build personal and collective well-being and build the future more consciously;
- to encourage the exploration and enhancement of one’s own history and that of others, discovering its richness, complexity and uniqueness;
- experimenting with autobiographical writing, identifying teaching methods for using the methodology at school;
- deepen the narrative interview tool for collecting life stories;
- increase self-awareness, through the knowledge of one’s own limits, of one’s resources;
- stimulate reflection on the stories of others to discover similarities, differences and creative ideas.
- define oneself and the community identity through the knowledge of shared values;
- cultivate memory and memory as a conscious approach to the historical event;
- projecting oneself and others in becoming historical or communicating with the outside world the memory that becomes conscious.

I personally conducted this project, meeting the students of the various classes, an hour a week, for a total of 33 hours for each class, (a whole school year). The first step was the knowledge of the class and the creation of a climate of trust and listening, then the next step was telling. The attention, in fact, has been directed not only to the story itself (the product), but also to telling (the process), within which the educational and heuristic potential is present.

Several meetings were necessary for a real autobiographical conversation to take place; first of all, it was necessary to prepare the place where the conversation took place, for this reason it was decided to leave the classroom assigned to the class and to occupy a classroom of the kinder-

garten, present inside the complex. The arrangement of the chairs in a circular shape was certainly the best solution to encourage conversation. The narrative circle is, in fact, the geometric form capable of preserving the spirit of oral narration, it is clearly opposed to the space-class, rigid and with barriers that favor exclusion. Once the narrative circle has been constructed, each student has been invited to tell the group the story of his name or to present himself freely following a suggested scheme. Making autobiographical conversation at school does not mean that the teacher has to position himself as the external guide of the path, but instead involves an involvement of the same in the various life stories. The teacher-autobiographer has the possibility, within the narrative circle, to understand and accept the student, without claiming to evaluate or judge him. The *conditio sine qua non* on the part of those who engage in an autobiographical conversation is obviously an attitude of availability and interest in the story of the other.

The autobiographical conversation, in fact, differs from the occasional quotation of anecdotes, as it sets *ex-ante* the objective of retracing, in depth, all or part of the life of the student. Therefore, the autobiographical conversation not only sets goals but has its own setting and methodology<sup>17</sup>. Beyond an apparent simplicity, the conversation is not so “trivial”, precisely because the construction of meanings present in the autobiographical story is re-elaborated and re-thought during each conversation. Bruner himself, in *Making stories*, underlines the difficulty of telling himself to others, saying that “telling others about themselves is therefore not a simple thing. It depends on what we think they think we should be”<sup>18</sup>.

The autobiographical conversation was started with the help of stimulus objects: I asked the students to take photos, objects, related to special and particular moments of their life to school.

Starting with these “personal solicitors”, the students began to talk about themselves. The autobiographical conversation then moved on to autobiographical writing, a slow and articulated passage, certainly not im-

17 R. Capobianco, *Educare narrando. La pedagogia narrativa tra i banchi di scuola*, Bonanno, Roma-Catania 2006.

18 J. Bruner, *Making Stories. Law, Literature, Life*, cit., p.66.

mediate, much less taken for granted, but certainly stimulating for the purposes of the training process. The link between these two moments was the narration of their own “*Box of life*”, a box made at home, researching and arranging in a personal and creative way the elements, the objects, which could connote their own personality and their own history. I showed the students a box made by me and two of their peers and “I told myself”.

In this second phase, that of autobiographical writing, the input given to the students was to write the stories that emerged during the autobiographical conversation. This phase has been called: the *Handicraft of writing*, that is an artisanal construction, therefore personal, of a free, essential writing, a writing comparable to a “shopping list”, but made up of ideas, thoughts, emotions, facts. During this phase many autobiographical writing activities were alternated to favor inclusion.

After the phase of *Handicraft of writing*, which was a playful-formative moment, we moved on to autobiographical writing: the *diary*. Through the writing of the personal diary, each was given the opportunity to recognize the sense of what he was doing and at the same time to grasp what was happening in each one. Therefore, the formative value of the diary can be grasped just under the aspect of reflexivity and self-awareness. “With the diary a material, corporeal, very intense relationship is established; often it is personalized, marked, filled with objects, residues of everyday life”<sup>19</sup>, an intimate relationship, which at the beginning embarrasses, but which then gives a sense of freedom. To those who had expressed a sense of uneasiness to write about themselves using the pen, they offered the possibility of writing through the digital writing of the computer. The class group moved into the computer room, so those who wanted (most of the students) had their own computer at their disposal to finally be able to write their thoughts.

The diary, intended as an instrument of educational intervention, can become a communication strategy, based on a need for socialization and sharing. This openness towards the outside must be facilitated by the teacher-autobiographer who must be a communication mediator, able

19 C. Benelli, *Autobiografia e storie di vita*, in C. Betti, *Adolescenti e società complessa. Proposte di intervento formativo e didattico*, Edizioni del Cerro, Pisa 2002, p.241.

to facilitate the self-reflection and learning of each student.

The autobiographical project, implemented by the diary, thus becomes an educational journey precisely through the awareness of certain aspects which, through the autobiographical narrative, the student manages to integrate into his own image, recognizing them as essential elements of his own personality.

### *Results and Discussion*

After a first phase of acquaintance with the class-group, based on the oral narration of some “strong” episodes of the life of each one, we passed to the autobiographical conversation<sup>20</sup>, and here is an avalanche of words and ungrammatical phrases, spoken in the Neapolitan dialect or in the languages of the States of origin (Maghreb, Chinese, cc.), but words of life, a life already marked by minor boys, halfway from being victims or protagonists. The oral narration, in the shape of the circle, has allowed to give birth to that educational relationship claimed by all the teachers, but certainly not realized. In fact, the narrative circle, knocking down any geometric shape that imposes a hierarchy, saw all the students sitting, for the first time, close to each other, with the teacher-autobiographer next to them.

Each student, starting from the personal wealth of knowledge and experience, told his own story, through simple episodes of life and small fragments of a recent past. Each, building his own story, has returned to the teacher-autobiographer a set of latent knowledge, to be enhanced through educational, creative and recreational methods and strategies. Retracing their experiences, each student-narrator became aware of the importance of his experiences, which constitute a cognitive baggage with a great self-teaching value. It was very useful for the student-narrator to be able to discover that he is able to educate himself and to shape himself, consolidating itself in self-training knowledge.

Therefore, the self-training of the students involved in the “*I tell you ...*” project is derived precisely from the self-recognition of life experiences, which is why it is easy to understand how biographical self-reflection, a

20 D. P. McAdams, *The Stories we live by. Personal Myths and the Making of the Self*, The Guilford Press, New York 1993.



way of learning from autobiography, allows the subject to rediscover if same through the research and analysis of aspects of the experience too often exiled into oblivion.

Excellent results achieved during the phase of the autobiographical conversation, in particular during the activity of the *Box of life*, the students, after having seen and heard the story of my box, personally built one that told of them. Having a box of memories from which to start has allowed even the most timid and least willing students to talk about themselves, to do so. It was certainly a very important personal research work with different results depending on individual maturation.

The work of personalizing each box stimulated the creativity of the students, giving rise to the creation of original and interesting boxes to look at and to discover. The narration of each individual student was recorded and became a biographical account transcribed by the conducting teacher. Interesting was the socialization and sharing of the *boxes* of the students whose family came from other nations, as it allowed to activate an *intercultural* look, that is to want to look for the things that unite us, that unite us, to search all the elements of similarity between different cultures.

In this sense the autobiographical approach helps us to create a path of encounter and confrontation, of continuous growth and discovery inside and outside of no.

The attention given to the individual events of one's own existence or to the memories of childhood or simply to facts of life or fantasy narratives, offered each student the possibility of enhancing those little things and those details which, in their emergence on the page, in their being mentioned and re-elaborated in their own words, they have been placed by writing in a perspective distance that has loaded them with a logical and existential sense. By taking a break in doing, autobiographical writing has allowed us to rearrange ideas and increase awareness of our daily actions, while at the same time keeping the memory in mind and facilitating communication to others.

In the second phase, that of autobiographical writing, the students were told to write down the stories that emerged during the autobiographical conversation, so that nothing could "block" them, much less anything unknown. Simply write, in the form of a diary, the small fragments of

their lives. And yet, immediately, a situation of suffering was revealed, voiced loudly, namely that of not wanting to write, followed by a subsequent consideration of “not knowing how to write”.

It was evident that their autobiographical writing was not limited to “not knowing what to write”, but “not knowing how to write”. They were so unaccustomed to writing, to putting their thinking on paper, using a pen, that this simple gesture upset them and was actually undermining the entire self-training process, previously implemented. Even those few students, who had previously declared, during the autobiographical conversation, to take pleasure in writing, were stuck in front of the white sheet. In fact the writing they were referring to was that of text messages with cell phones or the virtual writing of WhatsApp or Facebook, or they were referring to the “free writings” (the writing on the backpacks, on the case, on the walls of the bathrooms etc.). To try to unlock this brake they were given simple post-it notes, yellow leaflets, a small space to talk about and tell about their world. Everyone was told to write the first sentence that came to mind, then later the first memory of childhood, then the friend of the heart and so on. After briefly writing down, all the *post-it* notes were attached, from each student, to the corresponding billboard, on the walls of the classroom.

This phase, called the *Handicraft of writing*, has in fact made it possible to unblock an inhibitory situation, but above all it has transmitted a sense of confidence in the young writers in the grass. The democracy of post-it makes everyone aware of the fact that it is not necessary to be “writers” or “intellectuals” to write, everyone can write, because nobody expects to read who knows what, knowing that the type of writing of the post it is an essential, brief but immediate writing; in fact, the obligation to use few words makes you make a choice trying to write the most meaningful ones, able to tell your own thoughts. In “a few words”, thanks to the post-it notes, each gave shape to his own thoughts, making what before was “incorporeal” “corporeal”.

After the phase of *Handicraft of writing*, we moved on to autobiographical writing: the *diary*. The first delivery was very simple: the students all completed the sentence: “*Dear Prof., I want to tell you ...*”, each student, even those who, at first, appeared the most reluctant to write, told each other through this symbolic diary page.

The result obtained was immensely formative. Each evoking a fact, an episode, an anecdote has put together the parts, the events and the events of the personal experience of life, not only the discontinuities, but also the continuities, that is all those elements that unite one's own story with the stories of life of other narrators. Self-reflection has certainly come into play on this path, which in the light of lived roles, mistakes made during existence and strategies for reflection, has allowed us to give a "sense" to our personal attitude in certain situations. Through autobiographical writing, in each student a process of creation and attribution of meaning and significance was implemented, but above all each one experienced it as an opportunity for growth. Everyone, in fact, thanks to autobiographical writing, has entered into his own life, thus fulfilling a mirroring which has allowed us to consolidate the perception of our personality in the various moments of change.

At first, however, it was preferred not to make the diaries public, just to respect the intimate dimension of each student, but then the request to share the reading of their diaries was put forward by the class group.

This testimony to how much more effective and incisive it can be, for the writer, to adopt the strategy of the circulation of the diaries it is important the rereading of the own diary from other people engaged in the same context, as it is the moment in which the self becomes public through the mediation of writing. The first to re-read the diary is often its author, but subsequently it is necessary to make it read also to the others, if you do not want to reduce this activity to pure *solipsism*. In fact, autobiography could appear to be a solipsistic act, that is, as a self that questions itself and tells itself, but this would be short-sighted with respect to the true vision of ourselves that is deeply mediated by interpersonal elements, consequently the narration of themselves becomes a process of mediation.

The regenerative power of autobiographical writing has allowed these students, almost all of them, who at the beginning of the educational-didactic path were totally devoid of a future, the faculty to face changes with serenity, recognizing a self-formative value of their personal moments of growth. Therefore autobiographical writing has allowed everyone to regain possession of his formation, through the full awareness of himself and his own self, thus delineating himself as a process of self-

formation<sup>21</sup>.

In this way, autobiographical writing offered itself as a privileged instrument of knowledge, as it allowed everyone to weld, through careful meta-cognitive work, the changing fluidity, energy and variability of thought.

## CONCLUSION

It seems clear that while collecting life stories of great charm, often engaging and interesting, but certainly unique, it is not enough to read them or listen to them to understand the meaning of meaning and to focus the self-representation of the writer. If, in fact, “telling” and “telling one’s own story” is formative for those who narrate or is a path of awareness of great educational value, a diary is treated and analyzed in a formative way, but formative in a different way, as they consider a research work qualitative. And it is this, in fact, the last phase of the educational-didactic intervention, or the formative work of breaking down the story of a life story, breaking down a diary and then reassembling it, observing the elements, discussing them and then putting them back together again, thus, to a profound depth, which is at the same time not only expressible, but also documentable. A training that is born of study capable of transforming impressions into analysis and listening paths.

Many were the results achieved with this intervention: above all, while emphasizing which language training was not one of the objectives of the course, that is, we are not experimenting with more effective teaching methods to learn the correct and functional use of the written language function, it appears It is clear that the choice to think of writing as an educational resource may have had noticeable repercussions on the level of motivation for writing itself, improving the knowledge of Italian for foreign students.

Through autobiographical writing it is an offer to each one of them obstructing the behavior of self-esteem and awareness of their identity; moreover, their meta-reflexive capacity has been stimulated, accustom-

21 F. Cambi, *L'autobiografia come metodo formativo: luci e ombre*, in I. Gamelli, *Il Prisma autobiografico. Riflessi interdisciplinari del racconto di sé*, Unicopli, Milano 2003.

ing them not only to speak, but also to listen to each other and listen to others. Consequently, by reflecting in particular on their relationship with the various forms of knowledge, everyone has discovered their own personal way of learning, remembering and including.

Another objective achieved was to see a communicative modality grow, day after day, within the class-group, based on the promotion of the free circulation of ideas, of stimulating the economic response to emerging problems (problem solving), of managing the many useless conflicts, to stimulate attention and the inclusion of subjective differences, in order to discover an opportunity for growth and reflection in the class group. The path required a total “freedom” dimension, so everyone is free to tell, to write their own story, their fears, their doubts, without the judgment of others, but above all, for the first time, these students wrote their dreams for the future<sup>22</sup>. The conviction of how much the “care” of the narrative, in particular of the written one, inside the school, probably represented by an extraordinary instrument that stimulates the student in which we speak of a known freer, removing him from the possibility of caging the actions and facts in pre-established categories, guided this educational and didactic course, offered to all students an opportunity for self-determination. Confidence in the opportunity to write about oneself is allowed both throughout the foreign student and in the Neapolitan “street urchin” to enrich not only the convenience of *existing*, but above all to be the actor-protagonist of one’s life project.

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■ INNY ACCIOLY

# THE DENYING OF THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION AND VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT AGENDA: DOMINATION AND RESISTANCE IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

## INTRODUCTION

This article analyzes the relations between the denial of the right to education and human rights violations. Taking Mozambique as case study, we point out the influences of the extractive industries over education policies and the social conflicts resulting from their activities. We address: the destruction and restructuring of educational institutions according to the interests of transnational corporations; the monopoly on generating knowledge about Africa; and the private appropriation of knowledge and information by corporations and governments. We emphasize that these issues hinder people's capacity of social control over the corporations that threaten their lives. We highlight the importance of the access to scientific knowledge and information in the struggles of the grassroot movements in the country.

The purpose of this work is to analyze the relations between the denial of the right to education and human rights violations. Taking Mozambique as case study, we point out the influences of the extractive indus-



try over education policies and the social conflicts resulting from their activities. The work highlights the importance of the access to scientific knowledge and information in the struggles of the grassroots movements in the country.

The research was based on the method of historical-dialectical materialism and the framework of critical pedagogy. We carried out bibliographical research and documental analyzes<sup>1</sup>.

In Mozambique, the economy is based on extractive industry of mineral commodities, which is organized into megaprojects of development led by transnational corporations associated with local elites. Megaprojects cause numerous social and environmental damages: they operate with tax exemption<sup>2</sup>; they do not comply with regulations to hire local workers<sup>3</sup>; they promote deceleration of domestic production; prevent industrialization; cause large-scale environmental damage; promote land grabbing and removal of families from their traditional territory.

In addition, transnational corporations exert strong influence on the definition of education policies.

In Mozambique, 30% of the state budget comes from external resources of loans and grants<sup>4</sup>. The autonomy to formulate social policies is quite reduced, since public spending is guided according to donor agencies agenda, which largely follows corporate interests.

We argue that the educational agenda of transnational corporations in Mozambique promotes: the destruction and restructuring of educational institutions according to corporate interests; the monopoly in the generation of knowledge about the country; and private appropriation of knowledge and information.

The articulation of these strategies produces disastrous effects, since it removes from the population the right to access higher educational levels, above the rudimentary. By impeding the development of

1 WB, IMF, OECD, UN, Mozambican government and NGOs.

2 C. N. Castel-Branco, Refletindo Sobre Acumulação, Porosidade e Industrialização em Contexto de Economia Extrativa, in “Desafios para Moçambique”, Maputo, IESE, 2013.

3 O. Mandlate *Capacitação das Empresas Nacionais e Conteúdo Local de Megaprojectos em Moçambique*. In: BRITO, L.; CASTEL-BRANCO, C.N.; CHICHAVA, S.; FORQUILHA, S.; FRANCISCO, A. (Orgs.). *Desafios para Moçambique 2015*. Maputo: IESE, 2015.

4 República de Moçambique, Coordenação e Eficácia da Ajuda em Moçambique. Ministério da Planificação e Desenvolvimento, 2013.

scientific knowledge and its appropriation by the people, it perpetuates precarious conditions of life and impedes the sovereignty of peoples over their own destiny.

## THE DESTRUCTION AND RESTRUCTURING OF EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Mozambique was a Portuguese colony until 1975, when Mozambicans won the fight for liberation and adopted a socialist regime.

In the early 1980s, the good quality of the public health system gained recognition from the World Health Organization (WHO), the access to school was expanded and new textbooks were produced locally. Despite all its problems and criticisms, the revolutionary government of FRELIMO achieved the goal of reducing illiteracy from 94% in 1975 to 72% in 1980<sup>5</sup>. However, the policies to destabilize the socialist government led to sixteen years of civil war resulting in one million deaths (in a population of thirteen million people) and eighteen billion dollars in economic losses<sup>6</sup>. The impacts were brutal: 45% of primary schools closed, 400 teachers dead or injured; 191 rural health posts destroyed and 687 closed, affecting 46% of the public health network<sup>7</sup>.<sup>8</sup> Human and economic losses set the country in a condition of extreme poverty and dependence on external aid which was conditional on adherence to the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) reform package.

During the 1980s, the WB and IMF imposed reduction of public investment in education, adoption of school fees, prioritization of primary education in relation to secondary, reduction of teachers' wages, increase in the number of students per teacher and narrowing teacher training curriculum<sup>9</sup>. The WB also recommended that educational spending must be conducted strictly in line with market demand.

5 Republic of Mozambique, Instituto Nacional de Estatística. Relatório Final Do Inquérito ao Orçamento Familiar – IOF2014/15. Maputo 2015.

6 J. Hanlon, *Mozambique: Who calls the shots?* Indiana University Press, Bloomington (Indiana) 1991.

7 *ibid.*

8 W. Minter, *Apartheid's Contras: An Inquiry into the Roots of War in Angola and Mozambique*, Zed Books, London 1994.

9 WORLD BANK 1981, 1987, 1989.

Opposing the socialist policies, the WB discouraged investments in technological development in Africa arguing that free market would promote technology transfer.

In the 1990s, 'Education for All' (EFA) policies were criticized for draining all resources for rudimentary level of schooling promoting under-funding of higher education and research institutions. Brock-Utne<sup>10</sup> points out that EFA led to the destruction of the Institute for Curriculum Development in Mozambique.

In 2004, the WB granted loans for the primary school reform. The main actions were: formal abolition of school fees, which were still informally charged to families because of low school funding; decentralization of financial management to the level of school; restructuring of curriculum, with automatic approval<sup>11</sup>.

Problems in school infrastructure are one of the population biggest complaints. At national level, 44% of families pointed to the lack of school furniture and 29.4% complained of poor conditions of school facilities<sup>12</sup>.

Despite the curriculum with automatic approval, few students enter the upper primary school. After ten years of education reform, Mozambique had 11,735 schools offering lower primary education and only 5,377 offering upper primary<sup>13</sup>. Enrollment in the upper primary did not reach 1 million students in a population of about 29 million people, where 12 million were school age children. By 2014, the country had only 762 schools offering lower secondary education and only 342 schools offered upper secondary<sup>14</sup>.

The school shortage is added to the control of the extractive industries over educational content. In vocational education, its influence is promoted by the WB agreements.

In 2004, the vocational education reform was established by a credit

10 B. Brock-Utne, *Whose Education for All? The Recolonization of the African Mind*, Falmer Press, New York 2000.

11 L. Fox, L. Santibañez L., V Nguyen and P. André, *Education Reform in Mozambique: Lessons and Challenges*. International Bank for Reconstruction and Development / THE WORLD BANK. Washington 2012.

12 Republic of Mozambique, *ibid*.

13 UNESCO, *Relatório Anual 2015 – Moçambique*, UNESCO, Paris 2015.

14 *ibid*.

agreement with the World Bank<sup>15</sup>. According to WB documents, vocational education offered in public institutions was inefficient because it was overloaded with academic subjects and had little connections with industry.

Thus, the vocational education reform was guided by the following principles<sup>16</sup>: active participation of industry and companies in the management of vocational education institutions; standardized and result-based training system; curriculum in modules, with external evaluation; student career plan.

The illiteracy rate is around 45%<sup>17</sup>. In rural areas, where extractive industries are established, illiteracy affects 59% of population<sup>18</sup>. Mozambique is a linguistically heterogeneous country, where there are at least twenty-three different languages<sup>19</sup>. Proficiency in the official language (Portuguese) is fundamental so that citizens can understand and fight for their rights.

The restructuring of the educational system had the purpose of increasing the number of certified workers, spreading the values and behaviors required by labor market and providing them with rudimentary skills. However, the expectation of employability generated in the students is not matched. Only 12% of the population is in a salaried situation and much of the population practices subsistence farming<sup>20</sup>.

Since the land in Mozambique is state owned, subsistence farming is facing situations of great vulnerability and families are being threatened by extractive industries.

15 World Bank, Skills Development in Mozambique: Issues and Options. 2004.

16 WORLD BANK, Project Appraisal Document on A Proposed Credit in the Amount of Sdr 20.8 Million (Us\$30 Million Equivalent) to The Government of Mozambique for A Technical and Vocational Education And Training Project. February 21, 2006.

17 Republic of Mozambique, *ibid*.

18 REPÚBLICA DE MOÇAMBIQUE. Instituto Nacional de Estatística. Inquérito ao Orçamento Familiar-2014/15. Relatório do Módulo da Força de Trabalho. Maputo 2016.

19 Firmino, *A situação do português no contexto multilíngue de Moçambique*. Anais do II Simpósio Mundial de Estudos de Língua Portuguesa. A língua portuguesa: Ultrapassar fronteiras, juntar culturas. Universidade de Évora, 6 a 11 de Outubro de 2009.

20 L. Fox et al, *ibid*.

## EFFECTS OF THE MONOPOLY OF KNOWLEDGE AND INFORMATION

The barriers to school access impact national scientific production, which contributes to increase the situation of dependency. A dramatic consequence is the limited capacity of monitoring the environmental, economic and social impacts of the extractive industry.

As it can be identified, megaprojects of extractive industries do not contribute to the reduction of unemployment and poverty. Between 2003 and 2012, high GDP growth (7.5% per year) was accompanied by a reduction in per capita food production<sup>21</sup>; increased dependence on food imports; increase in the population classified below the poverty line (54.7% in 2009)<sup>22</sup>; and high unemployment rate (22.6% in 2013). Despite the high unemployment rate, megaprojects are encouraged to invest in the hiring of foreign labor<sup>23</sup>.

Marshall<sup>24</sup> states that the construction of the facilities of the Brazilian mining company Vale in Mozambique employed a large number of Philippine workers as cheap labor, as well as Brazilian workers. Thus, Mozambican workers do not benefit from the few employment opportunities and low wages granted by mining operations.

Instead of promoting development, these companies are accused of human rights violations. Some of the violations practiced by Vale are land grabbing without consulting communities, lack of transparency in actions, non-compliance with agreements such as providing access to water, fertile land, energy, compensation, transportation, health and education to resettled families<sup>25</sup>.

Another example of violation of rights is the *PROSAVANA* project, which is the result of cooperation between Mozambique, Brazil and

21 C. N. Castel-Branco, *Refletindo Sobre Acumulação, Porosidade e Industrialização em Contexto de Economia Extrativa*, in “Desafios para Moçambique”, IESE, Maputo 2013.

22 IMF, Republic of Mozambique: Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, 2011.

23 Banco Mundial, *Eliminando as Barreiras para o Desenvolvimento Inclusivo: Sumário do Relatório Econômico de Moçambique*, Banco Mundial, Washington 2010.

24 J. Marshall, *A gigante mineradora brasileira Vale: por trás da imagem de solidariedade Sul-Sul*. Tensões mundiais: Revista do Observatório das Nacionalidades, v. 10, n. 18 e 19, EdUE-CE, Fortaleza 2014.

25 Mutzenberg, *Protestos sociais em Moçambique: Uma agenda de pesquisa*. Civitas, n.1, v.14. Porto Alegre 2014.

Japan for the ‘agricultural development of Mozambique’<sup>26</sup>. Despite the governments’ promises that it would promote technology transfer that would benefit local farmers, the farmers report lack of transparency, lack of community consultation, land grabbing, intimidation and co-optation of community leaderships<sup>27</sup>.

The lack of access to information about the megaprojects is a problem largely denounced by communities. In addition, megaprojects are conducted by multinationals from different regions which imposes on the communities the need to know different languages in order to look for information.

Important documents of public interest, such as the World Bank and IMF reports, are available only in English. In a context of under-funding of universities and research institutions, the WB, IMF and OECD reports have become some of the scarce data sources on the country. They exercise, thus, monopoly on the production of knowledge.

During the ‘Permanent People’s Court’<sup>28</sup>, civil society organizations denounced that information on megaprojects is kept confidential. In Mozambique, civil society took legal action against governments evolved in *PROSAVANA* because of reluctance to provide information about the project.

The private appropriation of knowledge articulates to violations of human rights that hinder community actions in defense of their ways of life. It is a strategy of coercion exercised since colonial times and is still being implemented.

## CONCLUSION

The destruction of educational and research institutions, the private appropriation of knowledge and the monopoly over knowledge

26 Agência Brasileira De Cooperação (ABC); EMBRAPA. Documento JBPP/PCJ/008-JBM. ProSAVANA- TEC, 2011.

27 Classen, 2013; Unac and Grain, 2015; Aguiar and Pacheco, 2016.

28 Permanent Peoples’ Court. Transnational Corporations in Southern Africa. Document of the meeting of the Permanent Peoples’ Tribunal held in Johannesburg (South Africa) from 17 to 18 August 2017 to systematize community denunciations against transnational corporations in Southeast Africa. Available at: [http://aidc.org.za/download/campaign\\_to\\_dismantle\\_corporate\\_power/PPT\\_JHB\\_August-2017-Final-Version-.pdf](http://aidc.org.za/download/campaign_to_dismantle_corporate_power/PPT_JHB_August-2017-Final-Version-.pdf).

production have direct impacts on the capacity of prevention and control of diseases caused by industrial pollution of air, soil and water. The national ability to produce knowledge that contributes to improve the population quality of life becomes deeply undermined.

The lack of data on the impacts of megaprojects makes denunciations difficult and social control over public investments becomes unfeasible. In addition, the democratic possibilities of social participation in public sphere are reduced.

In Mozambique, some grassroots movements struggle against megaprojects and in defense of access to information and knowledge. Some examples are the 'International Articulation of the Affected by Vale' and the trinational articulation that generated the movement 'No to PROSAVANA'.

These resistance movements promote and share technical knowledges about the laws and the legal apparatus; they encourage systematization of traditional knowledge; they build and strength organizational strategies of struggle; and they advance in the internationalism of popular struggles. In this way, we argument that the struggles for the right to life are not dissociated from the struggles for the right to scientific knowledge and critical education.

According to critical pedagogy framework, knowledge is not neutral<sup>29</sup>. Throughout the history of humanity, scientific knowledge has been developed from innumerable forms of exploitation of the people and the environment while traditional knowledges were usurped and annihilated.

The workers' alienation from scientific knowledge and the private appropriation of knowledge by the capitalist class constitute an important way of maintaining domination.

In this sense, we defend scientific knowledge as peoples' right in the construction of critical understanding about capitalism and strengthening of resistances to this system that threatens life.

29 P. Freire, *Pedagogy of the oppressed*, Continuum, New York, 2000.

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*bique e Angola*). Missão de estudos das minorias étnicas do ultramar português. Lisboa 1958.

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■ VALENTINA PAOLA CESARANO

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISABILITY AND WORK: A META-ANALYSIS FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE CRITICAL DISABILITY STUDIES

## THE CRITICAL DISABILITIES STUDY PERSPECTIVE

To contemplate disability is to consider a politicised phenomenon framed by precarity, crisis and uncertainty. Of course, political upheaval, peripheral community participation and economic uncertainty have been an ever-present experience for the most marginalised members of society. Also, we know that many of the world's poorest are concentrated in Global South. Of the one billion disabled people across the globe, most live in the majority world<sup>1</sup>. To contemplate disability is to scrutinise inequality. Disabled people's organisations posit a simple but powerful idea: disability is a phenomenon associated with the discrimination of people with sensory, physical and cognitive impairments<sup>2</sup>. Disability is not a flaw, an individual tragedy nor a whispered recognition of another's embodied failing or a shameful family truth. Disability is a matter of public discourse and international disgrace, exemplified in the continued exclusion of impaired children from mainstream schools<sup>3</sup>, the

1 World Health Organization & World Bank, *World Report on Disability* 2011. World Health Organization. 2011 <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/44575>.

2 M. Oliver, C. Barnes, *The New Politics of Disablement*, Palgrave Macmillan, Tavistock 2011.

3 R. Slee, T. Corcoran, *Disability Studies in Education – Building Platforms to Reclaim Disability and Recognise Disablement*, In *Journal of Disability Studies in Education*, March 24,

segregation of disabled adults from employment contexts and the denial of access to basic human rights as a consequence of reducing welfare and essential services. It could be argued that research and theory on disability have never been more needed. The politics of disability continue to reveal the very conditions of inequity that blight the human condition. This is not to say that disability embodies human failing. Rather, it is to acknowledge the precarious positions occupied by disabled people in societies blighted by disablism: the exclusion of people with sensory, physical and cognitive impairments<sup>4</sup>. But, of course, disability is so much more than this. Disability politics, arts, scholarship and culture offer new ways of conceiving and living life, existing with one another and recreating communities that include, augment and emphasise the qualities we all hold as human beings. Disability is both a signifier of inequity and the promise of something new and affirmative. It is these built in contradictory qualities that have given rise to the study of disability: which forms the subject and object of disability research and scholarship. Disability studies theory has re-sited disability as an object through which to understand the workings of capitalist society, a political category around which to mobilise, a rich phenomenon produced through social and cultural practices, an identity around which to politically organize the society, a cultural script marked by processes of normalisation and an ontological experience ever shaped by a host of external factors<sup>5</sup>. This work has emerged across diverse disciplines of the arts, humanities and the social sciences – influencing the human, medical and psychological sciences – and has given rise to terminology that has trickled down into everyday parlance associated with minority, social, cultural and right models of disability. Over the last decade we have witnessed the rise of Critical Disability Studies. This interdisciplinary field has built upon the early work of disability studies and

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4 C. Thomas, *Sociologies of Disability and Illness*, Red Globe Press, United Kingdom 2007.

5 M. Oliver, *Disability, empowerment and the inclusive society*, in *Removing disabled barriers*, edited by G. Zarb, Policy Studies Institute, London, 1995; L. Davis, *Enforcing Normalcy: Disability, Deafness, and the Body*, Verso, New York, 2005; D. Mitchell, S. Snyder, *Narrative Prosthesis: Disability and the Dependencies of Discourse*, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 2007.

produced a body of contemporary knowledge that boasts sophistication and nuance. This is not to say that disability studies theory before the critical turn was basic or simplistic. What Critical Disability Studies has done is to welcome in a smorgasbord of perspectives drawn from inside and outside of the disability experience. What unites Critical Disability Studies theorists is an agreement that disabled people are undervalued and discriminated and this cannot be changed simply through liberal or neo-liberal legislation and policy.

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISABILITY AND WORK: A META-ANALYSIS

The Lisbon Memorandum states that “For most people and for most of their, independence, self-esteem and well-being are associated with paid employment, which is therefore a crucial factor in their quality of life, and employability, that is to say, the ability to find and keep a job, is therefore an essential dimension of active citizenship, but it is also the key to achieving full employment, improving Europe’s competitiveness and ensuring its prosperity in the “new economy”<sup>6</sup>. In light of this it looks interesting to explore how the scientific literature deals with the relationship between disability and work and how does scientific literature talk about disabled workers? These research questions are guided the following meta-analysis. With regard to the methodological approach, a qualitative analysis has been employed, using the Nvivo software<sup>7</sup> with the aim of exploring the corpus of scientifically selected materials in a systematic way. It was decided to carry out the analysis of the scientific literature moving in the perspective of the Grounded Theory<sup>8</sup> and the Critical Disability Studies. The analysis of the corpus of texts provided for an initial phase of open coding, analyzing the texts line by line with reference to the formula “all is data” at the base of a Grounded methodology. This coding phase led to the identification of the nodes, that is those themes, those concepts and those topics put in place by the

6 Commissione Europea, *Memorandum sull’Istruzione e la Formazione Permanente*, Bruxelles, 2000, p. 6, [http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/dg\\_postsecondaria/memorandum.pdf](http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/dg_postsecondaria/memorandum.pdf)

7 Richards L., *Using NVivo in Qualitative Research*, Sage, London 1999.

8 B. Glaser & A. Strauss, *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, Sociology Press, Mill Valley, CA 1967.

researcher, during the reading and exploration of the content of the research materials. In a subsequent step, the nodes were merged as some of them were superimposable and subsequently reduced further. In the focused coding phase, a series of macro-categories were identified through a process of re-labeling the first labels. For each macro-category the nodes that contribute to their definition have been identified. This work of classification and aggregation of the nodes for the formulation of the macro-categories was carried out with the help of the Nvivo software through the creation of Sets, intended as conceptual containers that allow to group those concepts that belong to the macro-categories enucleated through the focused coding. Below are summarized the identified macro-categories:

- The world of enterprises compared to disabled people
- The disabled worker at the center: from the condition of disability to the enhancement of skills
- The factors that influence the professional experience of people with disabilities
- The organizational characteristics
- The personal qualities of disabled workers
- The point of view of employers and colleagues.

With regard to the world of enterprises compared to disabled people, the relationship between the disability services dedicated to the job research and the human resources managers is important. The recruiting phase is critical because, given the initial availability that employers declare, there does not always seem to be as much clarity in the recruitment procedures. In particular, there are two factors that decisively influence this step: the stereotypes and prejudices of the organization; the prototype of the ideal candidate the stereotypes are linked to the condition of disability. In addition, companies tend to want to change the person to be selected, rather than offering accommodations to make the assessment. It is also important identifying the task to be assigned to the disabled worker through a job analysed<sup>9</sup>. It is necessary that employers shift attention from the condition of disability to the skill set of disabled people

9 F. Chan et al., *Demand side factors related to employment of people with disabilities: a survey of employers in the MidWest region of the United States* in *Occup Rehabil* 20: 412-419, 2010.



in terms of a specific training to improve the candidate's reading skills, so as to capture their potential and skills and the attempt to focus on individualized projects, which explore and enhance abilities and try to expand the potential of candidates is important<sup>10</sup>.

Regarding the factors that influence the professional experience of people with disabilities, legislation and organizational characteristics influence the attributes of the disabled person, those of the observer and the nature of the work. These elements, in turn, determine both the psychologist's reactions to the observer (categorization, stereotypes, expectations and affective reactions) and his expectations regarding work (possibility of contact and expected results of interaction). The combination of these factors, then, affects the treatment of disabled people and their responses both in terms of behavior and affect states<sup>11</sup>.

About the organizational characteristics it is interesting to observe that the managers of small and medium-sized enterprises are more concerned about the presence of disabled employees than those of large companies. The latter, in fact they are more accustomed to dealing with a diverse workforce; have a more solid organizational structure; they have more available tasks and are able to offer more accommodations, limiting any costs. From the studies carried out, it seems that disabled people have more chances of finding employment in the public sector, rather than in the private sector<sup>12</sup>. For example, one of the classic tasks assigned to them is that of the school assistant; in the office as back office or data entry manager or manager of administrative and commercial activities; in the production sector: to assemble parts in different materials, also using tools such as screwdrivers and pliers; in the hotel sector in order to cope with auxiliary activities, such as washing and preparation of

10 S. Angeloni, *L'aziendabilità. Il valore delle risorse disabili per l'azienda e il valore dell'azienda per le risorse disabili*, Collana di studi aziendali applicati, FrancoAngeli, Milano, 2011; S. Angeloni, *Il Disability Management Integrato. Un'analisi interdisciplinare per la valorizzazione delle persone con disabilità*, Quaderni Monografici Rirea n. 94, 2011.

11 D. L. Stone, A. Colella, *A model of factors affecting the treatment of disabled individuals in organizations*, in "Academy of Management Review", 21,199, pp. 352-401, 1996.

12 B. Hernandez B. et al, *Reflections from employers on the disabled workforce: focus groups with healthcare, hospitality and retail administrators* in "Employ REspons Rights", pp. 157-164, 2008.

ingredients, cleaning of dishes and kitchen tools<sup>13</sup>. Thus, organizational culture influences the way of people are treated; the type of work entrusted to employees and the possibilities they have of obtaining a career advancement. For these reasons it is one of the most studied elements and allows to understand how disability can be built with the workplace; it also helps assess the weight of beliefs in the opportunities offered to disabled employees<sup>14</sup>. Furthermore, investigating the organizational culture is important, because:

- it can be an obstacle to work experience: sometimes it can contribute to creating physical, behavioral and psychological barriers that affect the entry, and permanence, of new employees in the work context (Shur et al, 2005: 12-13);
- it highlights the rules for inclusion: it allows to understand which values are required for new members to be accepted within the group;
- it highlights the power structures: it allows to analyze the rules that allow individuals to obtain, maintain (or lose) power within the organization;
- it shows the reward systems within the organization: it helps to learn positively valued behaviors and those that are discouraged.

Regarding the macro-category “the personal qualities of disabled workers” this reference is influenced by the presence of two elements: the experiences that condition his attitudes and pathology and its consequences in the work environment. The disabled person often experiences an experience characterized by painful moments that which attributes to the bad will of others, to excessive claims and discrimination due to the presence of the disability. These experiences, of course, can cause anger and a sense of injustice that make them less attentive to the needs of colleagues. The type of disability is certainly the main element, investigated by numerous researches. Observers assign the worker to one

13 D. Foster, P. Fosh , *Negotiating difference: representing disabled employees in the british workplace* in British journal of industrial relations, 48(3), pp.563-567, 2010; L. Colombo (a cura di), *Siamo tutti diversamente occupabili. Strumenti e risorse per l'inserimento lavorativo di disabili*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2007.

14 B. Kirsh et al., “Best practice in occupational therapy: program characteristics that influence vocational outcomes for people with serious mental illness” in *Canadian Journal of occupational therapy*, 72, 5, pp. 265- 279, 2005.

of six categories: physical, mental, sensory diseases, learning difficulties, neurological disorders and addiction. Mental disability is what seems to have the most negative effects on job opportunities<sup>15</sup>.

About the origin of the disability, if disabled people are held responsible for their pathology, they are more likely to be considered undesirable and to elicit negative affective responses. On the contrary, instead, when the origin of the invalidating condition is considered as external to the control of the employee (multiple sclerosis or muscular dystrophy, for example) then it is even easier for this to be evaluated as courageous and highly motivated<sup>16</sup>. The duration of disability is another important factor. There are temporary or reversible pathologies (such as, for example, the breaking of a limb) and others, instead, progressive and irreversible. When the disability is progressive, chronic or incurable, the individual is classified in a negative way and this, consequently, influences his possibilities of relationship with his colleagues. It seems that the judgment is more negative when the disability is visible than when, instead, it is hidden. In this last case, in fact, he has more chances to be assigned to demanding jobs and included in the work group. Another factor is represented by the impetus: concerns the extent to which the disability condition can interfere with communication and the possibility of interacting with others. Obviously, the more disability is disruptive, the more the chances of it being seen as undesirable increase and the employee risks exclusion from informal activities. The perception of danger is also important because disability arouses different sensations both with respect to the danger of the person and to a possible risk of infection. People with mental illnesses, for example, are considered less able to complete the required tasks but also more dangerous due to the unpredictability of their reactions. Instead, those who have dependency problems, are also assessed the risks that can damage the integrity of colleagues, as well as that of the company.

With regard to the point of view of employers and colleagues, the experiences that employers have had in the past condition their attitude

15 D. Hall, *Employment and support allowance - What next?* in "Journal Of Poverty and Social Justice", 19,1, pp. 71-74,2011.

16 D. L. Stone, A. Colella A., *A model of factors affecting the treatment of disabled individuals in organizations* in *Academy of Management Review*, 21, pp. 352-401,1996.

towards new hires. For this reason, observers are divided into three large groups:

- the “favorable” ones: they face the situation using the tools and means made available by current legislation, they activate synergies between the various actors and positively welcome all the proposals that facilitate the task of the company;
- the “problematic”: do not respond adequately and struggle to decide which are the regulatory or operational paths on which to rely;
- the “irreducible”: they are opposed to any type of proposal and solution, they deny any type of contact, limiting themselves to asking: “to find the right person for that job”<sup>17</sup>.

The two main elements that can determine these experiences are the personal experiences with the disability and the proximity and frequency of contacts.

### **WHAT ARE THE CRITICAL POINTS ABOUT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DISABILITY AND WORK? AND WHAT ARE THE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES?**

This meta-analysis shows how the professional experience and the job placement of people with disabilities are mainly defined from the point of view of employers and colleagues rather than from people with disabilities. Stereotypes and prejudices also emerge which lead to building the image of the disabled person as “incapable” or capable of performing only specific tasks. Often the enterprises see the disability like a pathology and not like a life condition. A relevant contribution to the realization of the new professional subjectivity of young people with disabilities can be made by exploring the perception of their employability. The INAPP model defines employability as the intertwining of the human, social and psychological capital of the person - mediated by the situational variables - which allows the individual to place himself / herself in the labor market, with a professional project adhering to the context<sup>18</sup>. This definition supports the hypothesis that employability is

17 G. Mazzonis (a cura di), *Dal miraggio al percorso, l'integrazione lavorativa delle persone disabili. I lavoratori, le aziende, i problemi e le «soluzioni» nella pratica quotidiana*, Ed. Del Cerro. Tirrenia 2006.

18 A. Grimaldi, R. Porcelli, *Orientamento: dimensioni e strumenti per l'occupabilità: la proposta*

an individual potential that depends on personal resources and skills. In particular, INAPP has considered it essential to relate these resources to some aspects indicative of a person's ways of acting:

- job search strategies put in place;
- knowledge and use of the services available on their territory;
- social participation.

Therefore a “subjective” or dispositional measure of employability has been developed and validated that aggregates some factors emerging from the literature, such as salient<sup>19</sup> in a single index. The meta-analysis carried out calls for a reflection on the design and implementation of the professional project of people with disabilities, with specific reference to the role of guidance. One wonders, in fact, what kind of guidance should be put in place to support the thinkability of the individual life project of people with disabilities, with specific reference to the professional project and to the exploration of internal and external resources, in a systemic perspective, which contribute to the realization of this project. A possible answer could concern the declination of the guidance (in education and for training) as an educational work<sup>20</sup> meaning guidance as a process that the person puts in place to guide his relationship with training and with the work, through development, in the lifelong and lifewide dimensions of the 3B Competency recognizable as the ability to define and implement plans for life and personal projects. We could consider this competence as reflective because it supports individuals in the interpretation of their own life, giving them meaning<sup>21</sup>. Therefore, as highlighted by Grimaldi et al.<sup>22</sup> both self-orientation skills (thinking and consciously choosing one's own future), and self-design skills (life

*dell'isfol al servizio dei giovani*, in “*Osservatorio Isfol*”, IV, n. 1-2, pp. 45-63, 2014.

19 A. Grimaldi, M. A. Bosca, Porcelli R., A. Rossi, *AVO: lo strumento Isfol per l'occupabilità dei giovani. Dalle premesse culturali ai criteri generativi*, in “*Osservatorio Isfol*”, 1-2, pp. 63-86, 2015.

20 M. Striano, Orientamento per la formazione e orientamento nella formazione. In E. Frauenfelder & V. Sarracino (eds.), *L'orientamento, questioni pedagogiche*, pp. 9-23, Liguori, Napoli 2010.

21 OECD, Organisation for Economy Co-operation and Development, Annual Report. Paris 2005.

22 A. Grimaldi, R. Porcelli, A. Rossi, Orientamento: dimensioni e strumenti per l'occupabilità: la proposta dell'isfol al servizio dei giovani, “*Osservatorio Isfol*”, IV n. 1-2, pp. 45-63, 2014.

design) allow the individual to be employable, that is to say / re-present themselves in the labor market with a personal professional project adhering to the context. In this scenario, it is essential to enhance both the relationship of the person with the working world in the perspective of the Business University Cooperation, and the support for human and social development in the sense of the Capability Approach<sup>23</sup>. The capability approach aims to restore dignity to the person through the centrality of the human being. The set of individual skills is composed of opportunities, skills and their interaction with access to resources available in different contexts. Capability in Italian means ability, and it is from this concept that it develops, that is from the ability of people to be able to do or be what they wish to do or be<sup>24</sup>. Martha Nussbaum has compiled a list of fundamental capabilities, equal for all human beings, trying to overcome in this way the distinction between normal people and people with disabilities, giving everyone the same identical rights. So, if someone - whether or not has an impairment - fails to perform one of these functions, the company will have to do everything possible so that he can do it. In this sense, a person with a disability is defined as someone who has a limited capability set with respect to his or her goals, ambitions and value system. From an educational perspective, we all have the potential to decide to be what we want and the role of education is to allow the activation of this potential through the creation of a facilitating environment<sup>25</sup>. On this basis, for young people with disabilities we can hypothesize the design of an inclusive guidance format, which makes use of tools such as the ICF<sup>26</sup>, in order to explore both in a systemic perspective, both the functioning of the person according to the bio-psycho-social perspective, and the resources and barriers of the socio-cultural contexts in which the subjects will have to decline their life project, creating synergies between education, guidance and the world of work. In this perspective, guidance is placed at the service

23 A. Sen, Development as capability expansion, in *Journal of Development Planning*, 19, 41-58, 1993.

24 *Ibidem*.

25 E. Ghedin, E. Ben-essere disabili: un approccio positivo all'inclusione. Liguori Napoli.

26 WHO. World Health Organization (2001). International Classification of Functioning and Health Disabilities, World Health Organization, Geneva 2011.

of training, taking the form of an interface device between life paths, training paths and occupational paths. By supporting both the implementation of individual capacities and the development of the employability potential of young people with disabilities, guidance is thus a fundamental resource for a conscious and reflective entry into a world of work that is still too inaccessible and not inclusive. It is equally important to give voice to the abilities and attitudes of young people with disabilities, to change the discriminating view of the Other by shifting attention from the condition of disability to knowing how to do young people with disabilities. The size of the policy must recognize the central role conferred on the person with disabilities and the life project. There must be a rethinking of disability policies which, in order to increase the well-being of people with disabilities, focus attention on the opportunities and potential of these people, allowing them to expand their choices and enjoy their rights. This also contributes to enhancing the people. The differences, from this point of view, represent a wealth to be taken into due consideration and to be supported through appropriate interventions at political and social level and by educational agencies and guidance services. Rethinking disability policies implies a reorganization of the current model, involving a transition from cure to care.

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■ ANNA RUSSO

# INCLUSION AS A QUALITY FACTOR IN THE SCHOOL SYSTEM: AN INTE- GRATED DEVICE

Our analysis focuses on the process of school inclusion. The purpose of our research is to provide tools for a deep reflection aiming at improving quality levels in education. This paper highlights the importance of adapting teaching processes and classroom work to the training needs of each student regardless of gender differences, of ethnic and cultural origin and of skills.

The basic idea of our research is a school conceived as an open “learning community”, an educating community, a permanent laboratory of research, experimentation and didactic innovation, providing learning environments with devices and tools which ensure each student unlimited growth in their learning and participation. Indeed, pupils are welcomed, cared for and let grow through a structured and intentional organization, which addresses everyone with respect and ensure them the right to equal opportunities.

## INCLUSION IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXTS

School inclusion is just one of aspects leading to the full implementation of the right to education supported by the Italian Constitution. Our country, starting from the brief but essential constitutional references, has promoted an overall inclusive vision of the society and of the school in particular. By the reading of articles 2,3,34, which are concise but significant, a vision of a supportive society emerges, which accepts equality respecting diversity and a Republic that guarantees equal opportunities and removes every obstacle which can prevent the development of the

personality of every citizen. These principles assume a school open to everyone, without distinction, which is able to support, accept and enhance the special uniqueness of each person, and the development of highest and endless potentialities of multiple intelligences of human nature<sup>1</sup>.

The Italian school system has experienced growth, in an inclusive sense, both theoretically and legally. After an initial period of segregation, the process of integrating pupils with disabilities into the school was developed. Subsequently the manifesto-document of the Falucci commission of 1975 started to stimulate consciences and abolished the separated classes with L. n. 517/77. The latter was an innovative law that introduced a new concept school, a school for everyone, where words such as “carrying out individualized interventions in relation to the needs of individual students or guaranteeing forms of integration and support for disabled students” are relevant. The integration was troubled, worthy of the normative assumptions but immature in the teaching practice and of the culture of the time. Thanks to the sentence n.215 1987 and to the relative C.M. 262/88, a clear path of growth began in the inclusive direction of Italian educational institution: it stated the full and unconditional right of all pupils with disabilities to attend school.

The Magna Carta of this evolutionary path, Law 104/1992 then designated the school as an educational learning environment. It was the first legislative action of an organic nature which reorganized the previous interventions aiming at overcoming the obstacles that prevented the full development of the human potential of a person with disabilities, with particular attention to school integration.

With the so-called framework law, the legislators defined the goals to improve the quality of integration that can be summarized as follows: maximum autonomy, the right to education, overcoming exclusion, prevention and early diagnosis, recognized ability to work, right to health care, interinstitutional conventions. The guarantee of social rights such as the right to health, the right to work, trade union rights, the rights of the family, the rights associated with the environment represents an important achievement of civilization, a value in itself but at the same

1 H. Gardner, *Multiple intelligences: The theory in practice*, Basic Books, New York 1993.

time an important tool for actual enjoyment of a good life.

Social rights, in addition to widening people's profiles of freedom, represent those rights that find their justification both in the principle of solidarity and in real equality, rights designed to prevent any material or existential circumstances such as health, poverty or unemployment from impeding the full development of a person and his/her participation in social life.

The inclusive approach needs to pay attention to both the national and international regulatory framework. The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities of the United Nations in 2006, in particular, revived the need to broaden the field of research and studies to illustrate how it is possible to guarantee respect for human rights and which cultural and technical instruments must be fielded to achieve full inclusion of people with disabilities, without discrimination through equal opportunities. In fact, the condition of disability is the result of the interaction between people with impairments and behavioral and environmental barriers, which prevent their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. It is necessary that the context (environments, procedures, educational tools and aids) adapt to the specific needs of people with disabilities, through what the Convention in question defines as "reasonable accommodation". Reasonable accommodation indicates the necessary and appropriate changes and adaptations that do not impose a disproportionate or excessive burden on persons who are in a disability condition in order to guarantee their enjoyment and exercise, on an equal basis with others, of all human rights and fundamental freedoms (Art. 2).

## **RIGHTS, WELL-BEING IN TEACHING PRACTICE**

The theoretical normative achievement of inclusion in school communities requires their implementation as a cross-reference value. It is necessary to set goals, targets, rules, procedures and resources aiming to respect and enhance individual diversity, to promote coherent professional attitudes, organizational culture and participation. The interventions relate more to the system than to the person, and the training success is guaranteed through a support and assistance project, which integrates

the contribution of the different parts involved: school, family, other subjects, public and private.

The notion of SEN (in Italian BES), which appeared for the first time in England in the Warnock report (1978), suggests the need to integrate the supposed “different” pupils in the schools, through an inclusive approach based on the identification of educational goals common to all pupils regardless of their skills and disabilities. This concept is based on the innovative idea according to which differences, the supposed “normal specialty”, are a resource for education, whose enhancement requires the educational systems to identify needs and differentiate responses. The full realization of the system of “inclusive education”, therefore, does not consist in finding a place in the school to those who are representatives of some diversity, but in transforming the school system into an organization suitable for taking charge of the education of the SENs that all students can meet, helping them to neutralize particular inequalities. In this respect, the ICF model, International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, developed by the WHO in 2002 for adults and in 2007 for subjects in developmental age, represents an essential tool for the recognition of human functioning resulting in the interaction between bio-structural, environmental and psychological factors.

Inclusion is a dynamic and complex process that involves the whole school community in an educational approach based on strong ethical principles, respect for human dignity, equal opportunities, equity, the right to study and a series of fundamental values of civil life. This need is unequivocally clarified by Amartya Sen who proposes a concept of human development whose core is satisfying people’s needs and increasing human abilities. According to Sen it is fundamental to think in terms of human capability, as a person’s real freedom to promote and achieve his well-being. The Indian philosopher and economist defines development as “the process of expanding real freedoms enjoyed by human beings” and the evaluation of the state of well-being linked to the quality of their lives (Sen 2000). To achieve the individual’s well-being (for example, walking, reading, being self-confident), the person must meet contexts that really give the freedom to grow or contexts that compensate for the structural and / or functional deficits.

Humans, according to Sen, are different for three big dimensions: their

personal and structural characteristics, the external and environmental circumstances they experience and their ability to transform resources into adequate functioning to build their well-being. So human functioning must be considered as a global, systemic reality, rejecting the rigid individual-social dichotomy, because the human being is the result of the complex interaction between individual and social factors. Well-being in this sense will depend on the situations to which the individual attributes positive value and on the possibilities offered by the environment to satisfy the needs redefined by Marta Nussbaum as needs of the wider sphere of human rights. Rights are not abstract guidelines but are concrete practices in which managerial ideas must deal with the social and political conditions for their implementation.

Therefore, it is proposed to conduct a study aiming at the realization of a tool orienting school institutions and making them evolve towards the idea of an educating community in which each pupil, regardless of gender differences, of ethnic, cultural, evolutionary origin and ability, is valued, treated with respect and ensured in its right to equal opportunities and the expression of talents. In this respect, school inclusion is achieved through the construction of an inclusive system addressed to all subjects and designed (UDL) from the beginning to respond to the “different” needs of people. Over the years, the *Index for Inclusion*, a work by Tony Booth and Mel Ainscow, published in 2000 by the Center for Studies on Inclusive Education, has become reference point in the international arena for what concerns the development of inclusive design in schools. The aim of the research is to hinder the “policies of incapacitation”, oriented to the marginalization, in order to achieve a real inclusion, participation and autonomy of disabled people. The shared need, in the different areas of the planet, is surely to overcome the predominantly biomedical point of view with respect to the disabled condition, to analyze the phenomenon of disability in a global perspective, which is able to grasp the real extent of the discomfort and stigmatization, in order to promote movement, participation, accessibility and empowerment representing the common traits of the existence of disabled people. In particular, schools are called upon to develop a curriculum capable of defining specific skills at the end of their training courses, characterized by the learning targets set at national level, and prepared on the

basis of the abilities, attitudes, preferences of each student regardless of their background. Promoting the expansion of inclusion in education, a factor of quality and well-being of life, requires the school system to create an inclusive design developed through an integrated and flexible device. Valid reference tools for the construction of learning situations are UDL (Universal Design for Learning), CAF (Common Assessment Framework Education), Index for inclusion and TQM (Total Quality Management).

## CONCLUSIONS

Briefly, schools will have to be provided aggregate surveys on the level of awareness of the various factors that affect well-being at school and the real possibilities of inclusion. In this way, school policies attributable to the main educational choices can reconsider the role of inclusion as a regulating principle of the school community as a whole. As the Center for Studies on Inclusive Education points out, inclusion is what happens when “everyone feels they are appreciated and that their participation is appreciated”. The notion of inclusion recognizes that there is a risk of exclusion that must be actively prevented, and at the same time states the importance of involving all students in the creation of a truly welcoming school, also through the transformation of the curriculum and organizational strategies of the schools, which must become sensitive to the entire gradation of the differences which are present among the students.

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■ FRANCESCA BUCCINI

# WHEN DIVERSITY IS A RESOURCE?

## DIVERSITY AND CAPITALISM

During the sixties and the seventies, researchers and teachers focused on the definition of handicap. Until the mid-1960s, the approach to the question was predominantly, if not exclusively, from the viewpoint of a medical specialist: abnormality is deviance, a disease to be treated with medical– therapeutic interventions within particularly equipped facilities and, above all, taking care to keep the abnormal carefully separated from the norm-gifted to safeguard both from the traumatic impact of an interaction that would challenge the cultural patterns of that time.

This logic translated, in the scholastic field, into the development of a differential didactics activated within structures reserved exclusively for abnormal pupils, the intellectually disabled, characters and those with learning deficits, who were inserted into the so-called differential classes. The concept of difference is one of the most striking contradictions of traditional pedagogy because it is the exact opposite of the concept of integration; the choice of difference, despite the best intentions of the teachers, resulted in isolation, solitude and existential marginalization – a real ghettoization of the different pupil, with serious and permanently compromising effects on adaptation and learning. In reality, as evidenced by the pedagogical debate that began in the late sixties of the last century, the traditional boundaries between normality and abnormality are absolutely labile and approximate until, finally, they disappear completely. Consequently, every intervention technique based on differentiation, that is, on separation and isolation, must be decidedly disavowed. In its place, a different strategy of acceptance founded on the interaction between individuals must take over, with each caught in its

peculiar and unrepeatable diversity, as part of an ecological vision of the person and pedagogical relationships.

The consequence of this, which we could define as a real cultural revolution in contemporary educational psychology and sociology, was not slow to make itself felt within the schools. In 1975, with the decree leg.vo 970, also known as the Falcucci decree, differential classes were abolished in elementary schools and new forms of specialized qualification for support teachers were established. In 1977, Law 517 was approved, which introduced profound transformations in compulsory education, including the obligation to include abnormal pupils, for the first time defined as disabled, in the common classes, so as to favour – via comparison and interaction with nondisabled peers – socialization and the optimal realization of individual potential. Finally, in 1982, as a result of Law 270, access for children with disabilities was extended to state and non-state nursery schools.

In the early 70's -an Italian psychiatrist- the Basaglia wrote about the negative impact of capitalist society on people in his books "*L'istituzione negata*" and "*La maggioranza deviante*". The theory elaborated by Basaglia was simple and shocking. How disruptive and prophetic was his proposal to suppress the asylum structures, veritable infernal circles of brutalization and solitude without hope or redemption! The crazy voices and objects of power of the "deviant majority" were a category upon which the shared projections of the "sane" were built. Since Basaglia spoke of the majority, of the sane, and not of the mad, his ideas could be extended. The way mad people were treated could also apply to other minorities, particularly those who could not make their voices heard: the disabled (first the intellectually disabled, and by extension, not only them); foreigners who spoke another language and with whom mutual understanding seemed impossible; and surely even the deaf, whom the hearing majority had always called "dumb", though they had never been silent.

The madman became a ghost onto which the fears of the majority were projected, the shared construction of a difference. The need for custody, which was then a need for defense, was implemented through something very similar to a prison – a madhouse, which was a complete institution. In the capitalist society a small group of people produces and buys all

goods and services, whether a vast majority of people, such as students, old people, children, disabled people, people with mental issues, does not take place into the productive process. The paradox is in the fact that deviance, from a minority phenomenon, is transformed into a widespread, devastating condition that feeds on itself in a perverse circuit of isolation. This deviant majority is systematically denied that condition of civil representation that is condensed in the institution. Professor Basaglia says to reduce the gap between people the society must be restructured only a society that is flexible and that takes a care of diversity can guarantee equality.

To eliminate such difference from the institutions, today in Italy, the disabled are in everyone's school, the school of integration. The norms that sanction these students' access to the common classes and sections of the basic school come from a fairly simple concept: Isolation and differentiation aggravate the disadvantage that results from the disability itself; indeed, in many cases, these themselves cause a conditioning that translates, over time, into irremediable social deviance. On the contrary, inclusion in the peer group favors psychological interchange, strengthening of identity, profitable use of diversified models of behavior and adaptation, and participation in a work project that carries out – albeit in a restricted area, that of the class and the school – the equality enshrined in the Constitution. It must also be said, however, that the greatly innovative nature of Laws 517 and 270 at the civil and scholastic levels did not always find Italian schools that were prepared, or at least did they not find a generalized and qualified implementation, so insertion did not always translate into effective integration of pupils with disabilities within training processes.

In the conflict between the strong expectations aroused by the new regulations among the parents of children with disabilities and the still-fragile motivation and pedagogical–didactic attitude of the school, insertion often assumed a passive, merely formal character, seen as savage precisely because of the continued lack of any significant recovery project. It is not by chance that the 1985 programs underline the need to prevent the integration of students with disabilities into a mere socialization through presence.

The practice of purely formal insertion, lacking strong educational

motivations, did not arise from psychological insensitivity or indifference, but from the difficulty of fully implementing the innovations introduced by Laws 517 and 270, especially with regard to the conversion of education to the logic of curricular planning and organizational flexibility. The integration of different children, whatever the reason, form or incidence of their diversity, is feasible only within a training project that privileges path differentiation, providing individual roles within the project in a rational, systematic way. Only a work strategy for groups, both at teacher and student levels, only a reasoned flexibility in the management of time and space, equipment and methods, and only a shift of teaching professionalism toward the culture of specialization and scientific pedagogy can allow full implementation of integration for the recovery and adaptation of pupils with disabilities.

A decisive qualitative leap was represented by the approval, in 1992, of framework Law 104, which set rules by which all individuals, groups and institutions were bound to abide. The person with a disability has inalienable subjective rights, and it is the task of civil society and its institutions to protect and promote these at all levels through the elimination of cultural, psychological and regulatory barriers, even before physical and architectural ones, which, by inhibiting the full personal, emotional, social and professional fulfilment of people with disabilities, deprive them of effective civil equality. In this sense, Law 104 starts with the important distinction between deficit and disability: The former consists of a clinically ascertainable functional impairment, while the latter depends on the degree of psychological and operational subordination that falls upon the disabled when, for objective and structural reasons, they are prevented from exercising their rights–duties. This is a very important distinction because it places us before the reality that has so far been little or not at all accepted: the disabled person can take an active part in social life and in the production of goods and services if placed in a position to do so, having available facilities, equipment, working conditions, study and assistance appropriate to the person's special needs. Today, when we talk about inclusion and being included, we mean a way of living together, based on the belief that each individual has value and belongs in the community.

This new vision of diversity led to many national and international laws,

and in education to what Dario Ianes calls inclusive education. By the time- with the laws and pedagogical researches – disability has been protected, and new processes of inclusion started. By the time- with the laws and pedagogical researches – disability has been protected, and new processes of inclusion started<sup>1</sup>.

Disability tend to be misconfused and considered the cause of isolation and exclusion, because of its effects on people: limits, difficulties, pains. Can the diversity itself help people with diversity?

The experience and life example of people who overcame disability and have seen it as an opportunity, a chance to strive for more, can support and help other differently abled people?

Differences in the school are a resource, but their potential as a resource, an advantage and a benefit must be built. It must be actively sought and not taken for granted or merely invoked ideologically or emotionally. Inclusion helps us to better understand the difference between teaching and learning and between education and education, allows us to better understand various individual differences, highlighting the plurality of languages, the meaning of the body and the various modes of communication, thought and learning. Inclusion is not a burden. It is a competitive advantage for the quality of the school that allows us to understand human reality by recognizing its most intricate complexity. Just imagine how complex and varied today's classes are compared to those of the past due to the presence of students with certified disabilities, specific learning disabilities (DSA), psychosocial difficulties and/or family problems or complex behaviors to manage, as well as foreign students. Inclusion is the only catalyst for change to make teaching, school work, the emotional connections of relationships and learning more meaningful. The incessant search for quality in inclusion is the search for quality in daily schooling for all students. The "different" student questions every day and seeks quality every day. It is precisely the students' differences that become a resource, promoting processes of change and methodological/didactic and structural innovation that lead to quality schools and educational success for all.

<sup>1</sup> D. Ianes, *La Speciale normalità Strategie di integrazione e inclusione per le disabilità e i Bisogni Educativi Speciali*, Erickson 2006.

## THE “GIFT” OF DIVERSITY: TEMPLE GRANDIN AND DONNA WILLIAMS

Temple Grandin is a professor of animal sciences at Colorado State University and a breeder of breeds studied as a result of her research on the behavior of cattle. Grandin was diagnosed with autism in the late 40s, at a time when very little was known about the syndrome. The symptoms of autism include the inability to speak, destructive behavior, reluctance to hug others and the compulsion to use an object, such as a spinning top.

Thanks to a “heroic” mother, who motivated her by not isolating her (“she let me do the autistic an hour a day rest of the day was structured and overworked”), and to the high school science teacher who was able to develop her potential, Grandin has become a successful person. She told of being hypersensitive to noise and other sensory stimuli and feeling the need to transform everything into visual images. According to Grandin, her success as a designer is due to her autistic condition. Because of this condition, she manages to dwell on very minute details and is able to use visual memory as if it were an audio-visual medium, mentally experimenting with the different solutions that could be adopted. In this way, she can also foresee the sensations that the animals would experience when the equipment is used. In addition to the role of professor, Grandin is known for her studies on animals, which led her to design the Hug Machine (also known as the Hug Box or Squeeze Machine) at the age of 18. The autistic subject to overcome his/her affective and emotionally expressive deficit through the simulation of an embrace and the resulting proactive sensation that occurs.

The idea came to her after observing the calming effect that touch had on animals about to be visited or vaccinated by a veterinarian. She conducted an experiment using a similar tool on autistic children, and she discovered that, in that condition, the child let himself/herself be embraced. That is why she called it the Hug Machine.

Grandin also noted that there are innate differences in the circuits, which would explain the discrepancies in skills and deficiencies. For example, she has a hyperconnected visual cortex, linked to my immense visual memory and my skill in art and design. However, her amygdala, the

part that processes fear, is much larger than normal. Grandin explained: “And there are sounds, like the buzzing of electric towels or airport alarms, that cause me panic attacks”.

According to Grandin, sensory research is another promising, but little explored territory. This field of research has provided evidence showing that autistic people are much more connected with the outside world than they appear to be or than people assume.

Grandin noted that many children do not tolerate being in environments such as malls, restaurants or supermarkets because they are hypersensitive to visual or auditory stimuli. Their neuronal system is overloaded and all sensations become painfully intense. There is too much information. Grandin believes that, to help autistic children, the most important thing is to intervene early. Thus, she insists that children must be forced to leave their comfort zone at least 20 hours a week: “We need to work on deficits as much as on strengths. Get them out, become responsible, prepare them for adult life. Children are sponges: “their database must be filled with experience web pages” (Grandin, 2014)

Donna Williams’ book, *My and Their Autism* (1998) is an autobiography of a high-functioning autistic person who was diagnosed in adulthood. Williams expresses herself through her personal experience indicating the peculiarities of her autism and those of others with autism. Thus, from the first pages of her book, she explains how she expresses herself, contrary to stereotypes, labels and false myths, because there are many types of autism and because applying a common label to the condition does not necessarily mean that all people with autism share the same mechanisms. In fact, innate and culturally learned factors contribute to the definition of personality and to the development of the psychophysical characteristics of each person; therefore, it is possible to find oneself in front of individuals that have an apparently milder form of autism who still experience discomfort. Moreover, it is likely to think that there are people who present a moderate degree of autism but without the difficulties that would be expected. Autism is a condition that is experienced differently by each individual. Williams writes that she was a child who not only did not understand the world, its meaning and meaning, but who could not even stand it. She urges professionals and families to eliminate the stress that children with



autism experience resulting from emotional and biochemical overload. Thus, it is important to remember that the difficulty in quickly accessing information, together with other factors, such as hypersensitivity to light or chemical intolerances, often produces effects that can range from intense emotional discharges to the inability to modulate the action; it can also lead to difficulty in elaborating on physical sensations, up to a possible deficit of elaboration of the emotional meaning. All this can result in unexplained excesses, obsessional rituals, anxiety or even avoidance—especially in very young children. It is also prudent to understand that, very often, some bizarre manifestations are actually attempts, sometimes even effective, to adapt. It is fundamental that interlocutors understand this so the appropriate interventions can be implemented.

Being equipped with inefficient processing, Williams tells us, does not mean being incomplete or unsuitable; it only means having to apply better adaptive strategies.

## CONCLUSION

In recent years, the powerful emergence of what has come to be called critical disability studies (CDS) has added new force to the theoretical impetus already at the heart of the social model, taking it in innovative directions that challenge not simply existing doxa about the nature of disability, but questions of embodiment, identity and agency as they affect all living beings: insofar as each of us, however we are embodied, is complicit in the construction and maintenance of normative assumptions, it challenges every one of us to rethink the relations between disabled and non-disabled designations – not just ethically as has long been the demand, but ontologically, right at the heart of the whole question of self and other.

The individual who lives well his social/relational dimension is aware of himself and of others, is accustomed to dealing with others with an “equal” attitude without thinking of prevaricate over others and without fearing that others can prevaricate over he is a person who knows how to adapt well to circumstances, who knows what is worth, who feels well integrated without homologation, who always succeeds

in being up to the situation, who knows how to take responsibility, is interested in others and respects the rights and freedoms, is tolerant, collaborates with others, is authentic and honest in attitudes and behaviors, who thinks not so much in terms of “I” but in terms of “we”. It is the school’s task to create the conditions so that even parents and adults who generally revolve around it can grow and mature in this perspective; these conditions coincide with the quality of the relational climate that the teachers will know and will want to arouse in the classes and in the school. In this sense, a strategy of involvement and sharing based on the stimulation of people’s critical and creative attitudes is the privileged vehicle for a socialization lived in the perspective of democratic coexistence. The most relevant aspect of this strategy is the establishment of mixed work and research groups of a non-directive nature, based on the recognition also of parents as subjects of education and education, on trust in their progressive self-government capacity. The school can effectively constitute an environment for promoting democratic coexistence if the teachers dynamically and positively resolve the conciliation of freedom and authority; when authority is configured as authoritativeness and not as authoritarianism, individual freedom is not repressed but enhanced and results in conscious growth of each and every one.

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