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EDITORIAL

The purpose of this special issue of *Bajo Palabra. Journal of Philosophy*, dedicated to the philosophy of education, is to provide a platform for discussion, reflection and the exchange of scientific articles dealing with philosophical ideas related to education from a theoretical and practical perspective, and the different lines of research that are at the very roots of the discipline of the philosophy of education.

As with any foundational project, we must briefly review its origins. This project was born in 2010 within the *Philosophy of Education Research Seminar*, which has been held without interruption every school Wednesday in the *London Institute of Education* since its inauguration by Richard S. Peters in 1962, and is currently coordinated by Paul Standish. One of the reasons that made this special issue possible was the meeting of the three guest editors and me in one of these seminars. The result of this collaboration was that it became possible to start the project of this issue, creating a national and international forum in which a broad perspective on the current state of the subject could be recreated, developed and even improved. Participation and dialogue among philosophers and theorists of education that come together in this volume, working in different contexts, is certainly an integrationist mosaic of the traditions of philosophy of education. This offers to the reader a comprehensive point of view that places him in the international context of the discipline, providing some keys with which to think about the fundamental issues, expressions and problems in education.

Since the philosophy of education lies at the very roots of classical philosophy and is studied in the works of the most renowned philosophers, the management team of the magazine considers it crucial to give it its own space. Hence in this presentation we announced the upcoming introduction of a new section dedicated to the area of Philosophy of Education, which will become part of the thematic sections that *Bajo Palabra. Journal of Philosophy* has been collecting in the summary of the former volumes. The new section of Philosophy of Education will publish articles that represent a wide variety of philosophical traditions, from the study of fundamental philosophical issues related to education, to specifically critical papers committed to current education practice or policy from a philosophical approach. The aim is to promote rigorous thinking on educational matters and to identify and critique the ideological forces shaping education today. When continuing the work that our ancestors once developed, the analysis also remains committed to the exploration of our educational background and the no less necessary task of equipping our context —characterised by the amount and immediacy of changes, not without its contradictions— with an instrument that allows broad reflection and takes into consideration the ethical, political, aesthetic and epistemological dimensions of the theory of education.

The new section of Philosophy of Education inaugurated here is, of course, open to contributions and we invite professionals and students to send us articles, reviews and information to be published in the forthcoming issues (the publication procedures can be found at the end of this volume) or to submit your work in paper format if you wish to participate in the 1st Bajo Palabra-UAM International Philosophy Conference: "Reflections for a pluralistic world"; more information at: <http://conferencebajopalabra.wordpress.com/>, which is expected to foster the exchange of knowledge through the discussion of research and reflection on practice. We hope that professors and scholars continue to find the journal an attractive forum for philosophical discussion that can motivate and interest a wide variety of readers.

Delia Manzanero

Coordinator of Bajo Palabra Philosophical Association

INTRODUCTION

Building Bridges within the Field of Philosophy of Education*

Construyendo puentes en el campo de la filosofía de la educación

Marina SCHWIMMER¹, Bianca THOILLIEZ² and John TILLSON³

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Resumen:

En este ensayo, introducimos los diferentes contenidos de los que se ocupa este número monográfico dedicado a la filosofía de la educación que edita *Bajo Palabra. Revista de Filosofía*. El proyecto pretende introducir la filosofía de la educación como una nueva sección en esta publicación y dar a conocer en el ámbito de trabajo más estrictamente filosófico qué temáticas y aproximaciones circulan en el área de la filosofía de la

* We would very much like to thank the editorial board of *Bajo Palabra. Revista de Filosofía*, and especially the head director, Delia Manzanero, for their kind invitation to edit this special issue devoted to philosophy of education. We also warmly wish to thank all the institutions which have made this project possible: research project I+D+I EDU2010-17367 “Origen y desarrollo del conocimiento teórico de la educación en España” directed by Teresa Rabazas; Centre de Recherche Interuniversitaire sur la Formation de la Profession Enseignante (CRIFPE); Programme de doctorat en sciences humaines appliquées de l’Université de Montréal; Laboratorio de Ideas y Estudios Pedagógicos (LIEP); and Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

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educación. Se ha buscado, además, establecer el perfil de la filosofía de la educación con respecto, en primer lugar, a los trabajos que se han venido haciendo en su nombre y, en segundo lugar, a lo que queda aún por hacer. Estas preguntas son respondidas por los diferentes colaboradores a lo largo de tres secciones. En la primera se ofrecen diferentes visiones de lo que es la filosofía de la educación, en la segunda se presentan varios trabajos representativos de lo que se está investigando actualmente en la filosofía de la educación y en la tercera, se ofrecen tres reseñaciones críticas sobre publicaciones recientemente aparecidas en tres contextos lingüísticos diferentes relativas a la filosofía de la educación. Esperamos que los lectores de este número monográfico, disfruten de la riqueza de pensamiento y las inesperadas relaciones que aparecen cuando se inicia una conversación en el campo de la filosofía de la educación

Palabras clave: Filosofía de la educación, área de conocimiento, líneas temáticas, enfoques filosóficos.

Abstract:

In this paper we introduce this special issue of *Bajo Palabra. Journal of Philosophy*, devoted to philosophy of education. The project marks the introduction of philosophy of education as a new section within the *Bajo Palabra*, and aims to present to a broader philosophical audience those themes and approaches which are circulating within the field of philosophy of education. It has been our intention to raise the profile of philosophy of education in respect of both the work which has been done and is being done in its name on the one hand and the work that ought to be done in its name on the other. Happily, these intentions have been addressed by the various contributors. We have arranged the contents of this edition into three sections. The first offers different visions of what the philosophy of education is and ought to be, the second presents several papers which are representative of what is currently being investigated in the philosophy of education, and the third offers three book reviews of recent introductions to the philosophy of education, each from a different linguistic context. We hope readers of the present volume will be stimulated to further reflection by the fruitful thoughts and unexpected relations that emerge when a conversation within the field of philosophy of education starts up.

Keywords: Philosophy of education, area of knowledge, research lines, philosophical approaches.

1. Introduction

This special issue of *Bajo Palabra* is devoted to the field of philosophy of education. This field is very often described as one of the applied areas of philosophy. However, even though education can be located at the very heart of what means to be and to become an individual person, there are very few philosophy departments in which educational processes are attended to, discussed and researched. Rather, most academic philosophical inquiry regarding educational issues takes place in faculties of education. Gradually however, through timid advances, with ups and downs, it appears that philosophy of education has grown as rather an autonomous academic field within pedagogical research. In effect, today the field has its own academic stars, its own journals, and its own national and international conferences, discontinuous from the rest of philosophy. Most faculties of education still hire professors from the field to teach courses and supervise post-graduate students. Some faculties even have departments in the field of philosophy of education; these, however, are often administratively linked to other, related disciplines such as sociology of education and history of education.

Notwithstanding philosophy of education's growth, these efforts to shape it into a solid and coherent field seem more and more useless, as faculties of education are more and more dismissive of the importance of philosophy of education within their walls. We find different examples of this in the different geographical contexts in which we currently work: increasing closure of philosophy of education post-graduate programs; lack of study of philosophy in teacher education programs; misrepresentation of philosophical inquiry within educational research projects due to the difficulty of securing funding for theoretical research. Actually, in spite of the many problems the field can find in developing and transmitting its interests through our campuses, philosophy of education still interests both students and academics from faculties of education. We believe it could also stimulate the interest of students and academics from faculties of philosophy, into whose hands this volume will hopefully come. So partly as an expression of this belief, and partly as a reaction to the aforementioned situation, we have here sought to provide a platform where professors and students from many different geographical contexts and philosophical perspectives, may share their current research interests and express their views of the field, of where it seems to be going and where next it ought to go.

The "method" we followed to make that platform possible was very simple: We thought the best way to help the field organize itself is to let it speak, with its many different voices. The rich variety that we have tried to include in this issue has been organized it into three parts: 1) Raising philosophy of education's profile; 2) Current lines of work in philosophy of education; 3) Book reviews of three recent introductions to the field.

2. Raising philosophy of education's profile

The first section consists of short essays written by some prominent academic philosophers of education, in which they were invited to describe their personal understanding of the field. Rather than provide statistical accounts of academic positions and student uptake for philosophy of education in university departments or in teacher education, they have tried to account of the subject in more perspectival terms. They were asked to write short pieces of about 500 words in response to three guiding

questions: (1) What is philosophy of education? (2) What is happening in the field now and where is it going? (3) What is its rationale and what kind of work ought it to do?

We warmly thank the following people for kindly agreeing to contribute their views: Fernando Bárcena (Spain); João Boavida (Portugal); Silvio Gallo (Brazil); Gonzalo Jover (Spain); Denis Kambouchner (France); Jan Masschelein (Belgium); Bruce Maxwell (Canada); Andrés Mejía (Colombia); Paul Standish (United Kingdom); Barbara Thayer-Bacon (United States) and John White (United Kingdom). What came out is the enormous diversity of their perspectives and terms in which they couch them. For the purpose of maximising their audience, we have translated into English those which were not written in that language.

The first three authors, Fernando Bárcena, Jan Masschelein and Paul Standish, discuss philosophy of education as somewhat epistemologically autonomous and producing original ways of thinking, each offer a rather existential conception of the field. The next two authors, Silvio Gallo and Denis Kambouchner, describe critically the field of philosophy of education in relation to their own geographical context, Brazil and France, and point towards new fruitful directions accordingly. The next three, João Boavida, Barbara Thayer Bacon and Gonzalo Jover, all offer engaging accounts of the useful role of philosophy for reflecting on the norms and practices of teaching and translating them in a practical language. In a similar way, the last three contributors of this section, Andrés Mejía, Bruce Maxwell and John White, discuss the crucial role of philosophy of education to critically appraise and meaningfully influence educational practices and policies.

To start with one of the most critical voices present in this section, Fernando Bárcena begins by problematizing the question “what is philosophy of education?” itself. He answers that the field in question has more to do with what he calls a “poetic production” focused on studying the specificity of those moment-events of becoming where education comes to be present. Thus philosophy of education should be developed as is an essay (through exercises of thinking) about what subjects involved in educational acts experience within them, an essay that would seek to do justice to “the complexity of reality” by the articulation of speculative thinking and daily experiences. Jan Masschelein’s contribution can be seen to take a similar approach. Against the traditional-critical way of doing philosophy of education, Masschelein invites us to consider education from within the ascetic tradition. From this view, philosophical inquiry devoted to educational issues should take the form of Arendtian exercises of thought, of “open existential questions” for what, in the present time, it could mean to educate, to be an adult, to be a child, to raise a school, and so on, in order to reinvent their meaning, and reconnect with what “a truly human life” is. Paul Standish also discusses the existential aspects of teaching and learning experiences. He contends that philosophy of education is at the very heart of traditional philosophy, especially when it comes to reflect on “philosophy as a way of life”. Although Standish does recognize the epistemological influence of the professionalization and establishment of philosophy of education, he rejects relations of opposition, application, and ramification between the philosophical tradition, or the practical educative arena, and the field of philosophy of education. On the contrary, he advocates a truthful and engaged inquiry within the field of philosophy of education as the best way to contribute both to education and philosophy.

Beginning with a description of how philosophy of education has been academically established in Brazil, Silvio Gallo presents his personal account of what ought to become of the field in the near future. In the early 90's, Brazilian philosophers of education sought to produce ever purer philosophical research so as to consolidate both the identity and the professionalization of their field. This epistemological approach, mainly focused on the study of philosophical authors, has proved to be effective. However, Gallo thinks that the field is living in "a decisive moment", and would enhance its creativity and productivity by moving away from an author-based philosophy. Then Denis Kambouchner offers us a critical account of what is currently being done in philosophy of education. He sees this field as a "normal discipline" in which it is rare to find novel results, and that is, nowadays, too interested in fashionable insights produced outside the field. Thus, Kambouchner calls for a new epistemological "gesture" that would mediate between contemporary conditions of education and the richness of our classic philosophical tradition. That will turn philosophers of education's interest from, the current "*name-dropping* competition" which he claims that it has become, into more solid and refined philosophical constructions.

On João Boavida's account, it is "the analysis of what education is today, and the awareness of its major problems, especially at the level of principles and purposes" that justifies, the existence of philosophy of education. Its relevance among sociological or empirical approaches to the study of education consists in its capacity to establish the normative features of pedagogical processes. When, as is the case, education is understood as a process of transformation for "the better", there is always an important philosophical work to do. Barbara Thayer Bacon offers us an interesting first-person approach to the proposed questions. As a philosopher she did not engage in philosophy of education until she became a mother and began to worry about her children's education. She is sure that there is a future for the field since she knows "societies will always have the need to renew themselves and pass on their knowledge to their young". Since, like many other philosophers of education, Bacon is involved with teacher training programmes; she argues that her job is that of a translator of philosophical ideas, the deepest possible ones, for improving teachers' practices. For his part, Gonzalo Jover considers a central educational preoccupation the teacher-pupil's "peculiar relation of mediation". In the course of that mediation, he claims, it is the former who projects the world to the latter, but the centre of attention should be the latter and not either the teacher or the object of transmission. Jover calls attention to some of the risks of too circumscribed a conception of philosophy of education focused around the question "what is philosophy?" instead of the more crucial question, "what is education?". He recommends that the field engage with the task of shedding light on action, and not to delight in its own self-contemplation.

Following a similar line of argument, Andrés Mejía recommends a progressive pragmatization of philosophy of education, in order to, firstly, bring it closer to contemporary educational issues and, secondly, to influence decision-making processes affecting education. However he asks us not to forget the relevance of the more traditional role of philosophy of education; that is to question by systematic reflection, the "meaning, sense, importance, significance, relevance, purpose, [and] the ought-to-be" as well as "topics, concepts, issues and programs" that have to do with education. As for Bruce Maxwell, he thinks that philosophy of education offers a unique perspective on educational policy, research and practice, that of the "professional critic". Philosophy of education is foundational, (in asking basic questions about values and meaning), humane (in helping us to know how to live well), and promiscuous (in being intrinsically open to philosophical inquiry). This activity "pervades [the] educationalist's work" as it questions what is normally taken for granted about education. He states that "when informed,

insightful, constructive and humane, the interrogation of what we think we know about education is valued in practice and policy circles”. Lastly, John White sees a different scenario to the one pictured by Andrés Mejía. Looking at the last fifty years of dynamics within the field of philosophy of education, he observes that it first operated as a “handmaiden to public education systems”. That role basically consisted, he says, in bringing light to current educational problems so as to help teachers in schools, parents in homes and policymakers in government. White notices, as Gonzalo Jover also pointed out, a certain degree of self-contemplation in current philosophy of education debates, one exemplified in a particular philosophers-based approach. However, he contends that those new lines of research and the internationalization which they have brought to the field, have contributed to its enrichment.

3. Current lines of work in philosophy of education

The second part comprises 13 articles on a wide variety of topics, from a wide variety of philosophical perspectives. As well as the editors, the authors come from various geographical contexts, thus providing an interesting cross-section of the possibilities being explored within the field. We must admit however, that there is a strong presence of continental and critical approaches. We are sorry that our call for papers did not attract many researchers of a more analytical kind.

The contributions reveal three main approaches of inquiry in the field of philosophy of education. 1) Critical perspectives on contemporary educational policies and practices. 2) Epistemological reflections on the nature of knowledge and education. 3) Educational relevance of major philosophers.

3.1. Critical perspectives on educational policies and practices

One role of philosophy of education is certainly to question the meaning and legitimacy of contemporary educational practices and policies. Researchers in education are usually concerned with questions of efficiency regarding specific classroom practices or institutional settings, which are, needless to say, very legitimate concerns. However, the stance of the philosopher of education is more often the one of the sceptic. The authors in this section examine modern, educational realities such as the penetration of entrepreneurial world into schools, reductive conceptions of achievement, weak intercultural policies, and conservative practices with a critical distance.

Florelle D’Hoest analyses the film *Le fils* by French directors Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne so as to help rethink education in terms of “critical balances”. The film serves as pretext and context for a fruitful conversation between some philosophers, writers and fictional characters. D’Hoest argues that in terms of learning experiences, trying to eliminate distances and difficulties as the ones confronted by the characters of *Le fils*, implies instituting a new kind of distance between the subject and his own personal experiences. We should not see distances in educational relationships as a problem which we must confront by abolishing, decreasing, or enhancing these distances, but by choosing the best possible place in which to situate ourselves within the relationship itself, looking for the critical balance at every unique event. Sometimes, what happens to us is so unexpected that we are forced to give unique responses. That can be also be the case in educational situations.

Tom Falk reflects on the meaning of ‘academic achievement’ in popular educational rhetoric today. Since the early 19th century, he shows, Western cultural critics have identified an irrational pursuit of success as a major ingredient of the modern malaise. His article examines the way in which that irrational pursuit infuses the institution of the school and blinds our culture to the urgent task of formulating worthy educational aims.

Alberto Sánchez Rojo examines recent policies promoting interculturalism in schools. His article points out a contradiction regarding the way diversity is conceived in recent Spanish legislation on intercultural education. More precisely, interculturalism is presented in the relevant Spanish legislation, as a strategy of “attention to diversity” where the diverse ones are the others; the strangers, the group of people displaced from the “common way of life”. Taking up Raimon Panikkar’s ideas, he shows the possibility of a new way of responding to multiculturalism at schools, in which nobody would be rejected and everyone would be truly “welcome”.

Victoria Vázquez Verdera and Inmaculada López Francés defend an ethic of care as a tool to question traditional practices in school. They present “caring pedagogy” as an innovative philosophical and educational perspective that proposes creating a curriculum without the bias of sexist dichotomies. The basic trend of this approach implies the fact of acknowledging the need for interdependence and emotional bonds as part of human life and moral identity. To that end, Victoria and Inmaculada propose that educational systems should include curricular content which teach the value and practice of caring as a public good.

3.2. Epistemological reflections on the nature of knowledge in education

Some very interesting research being done in philosophy of education is epistemological. Philosophers interested in epistemology ask themselves questions like “What is knowledge?” and “How does knowledge develop?” However, because education is first and foremost a practice, philosophy in this field very often unfolds with a practical stance. Knowledge, in education, cannot be seen as a simply detached phenomenon. Very arguably, the teacher always teaches a situated knowledge, which is not purely descriptive and objective, but presupposes specific forms of life. His major role is to bring the learner into knowledge, into the human world of meaning and thus, into a particular way of living. As contributors to this issue (namely Paul Standish and Koichiro Misawa) have argued, the very nature of education makes it philosophically interesting.

In a more historical approach, Ángel Casado Marcos de León presents the Spanish journal *Revista de Pedagogía* as a salient example of “epistemological collaboration” between philosophy and theory of education with the practice of teaching. Though it was a “pedagogical” publication, founded in 1922 by Lorenzo Luzuriaga, for an audience of professional educators, the “philosophical perspective” was acknowledged as an indispensable dimension in educational theory and practice at that time. The significant presence of well-known Spanish and non-Spanish philosophers as habitual collaborators constitutes an exemplary collaboration between theoretical and practical dimensions of inquiry.

Kevin Currie-Knight argues that despite the many differences between Michael Oakeshott and John Dewey, these two thinkers offer very similar visions of how education should operate. By way of their parallel critiques of Rationalism, both thinkers advocated similar methods of active education. Dewey and Oakeshott's similar educational views problematize two oft-heard associations: first, that active pedagogical methods are exclusive to leftward political advocacy, and second, that liberal education correlates with the advocacy of passive, book-centred pedagogy.

Koichiro Misawa observes that philosophy of education is less well regarded and appreciated than any other philosophical discipline. His article critically analyses Wilfred Carr's attempt to address this situation, which urges that the discipline take a new shape which is different in character from academic disciplines. Misawa's central argument is that the social and educational nature of knowledge forms the centrepiece of philosophical enquiry into human knowledge.

3.3. Educational relevance of major philosophers for education

Although, philosophy of education seeks recognition as a distinct and autonomous field, it would evidently be nothing without the inheritance of traditional philosophy reflection on the educational possibilities offered by the philosophers of the past, or present.

Michael Dwyer, Yasushi Maruyama and Haroldo Fontaine examine some projects for philosophers of education found in the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger. The authors consider these thinkers' projects—viz., Wittgenstein's method of *Übersicht* and Heidegger's *solicitude* and *deconstruction of the history of ontology*—as being of particular importance to philosophy of education. Their promise lies in opening channels of communication and creating the possibility for dialogue.

Jordi García Farrero draws on the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Jean-Jacques Rousseau to establish a suggestive relation between biographical-educational processes and the physical-philosophical movement of walking. His purpose is to vindicate the act of walking as a genuine intellectual adventure and also an opportunity to initiate a self-educational and autobiographical process. Both philosophers were enthusiastic walkers and the action of walking nurtured, in ways which Farrero explores, their philosophical work and their self-understanding. Farrero ends by outlining the possibility of an "autobiographical pedagogy".

Anna Kouppanou argues that technology, through its manifold and ubiquitous nature, constantly re-enters and reshapes our experiences, thoughts and modes of learning. Philosophy of technology can offer us an enhanced sensitivity to this matter. However, as a field it has many different perspectives to offer. She presents some of these perspectives, but argues that Heidegger's philosophy of technology, one which is considered 'essentialist', brings a special philosophical depth to the discussion concerning learners and the world from which they learn.

Miriam Prieto Egidio presents Rousseau's approach to education as taking identification with the suffering of others to be the way to building a good-compassionate relationship. However, Egidio shows that compassion, understood in Rouseaunian terms, does not necessarily lead to the recognition of otherness, but may in fact contribute to its denial. For true recognition to be achieved, she thinks that compassion must be mediated by distance, and this distance arises from identifying the suffering other not with oneself, but with others who are close to us and who act as mediators and add the distance we need for the other's suffering not to nullify any chance of action. Thus an exploration of the possibilities for compassion in the educational relationship could be a path to full recognition of otherness and more authentic relationship with others.

Ana Sánchez-Gey Venegas brings us a highly instructive view of what some of the most salient Spanish philosophers of last 20th Century thought when they turned their attention towards education. The three masters of contemporary Spanish philosophy, whom she discusses, are Miguel de Unamuno, José Ortega y Gasset, and María Zambrano. In all three authors, Venegas observes an appreciation of the educational sense of philosophy and a concern for experience-based knowledge. In her analysis, she introduces the most outstanding contributions each author made to the philosophy of education.

4. Book reviews of three recent introductions to the field

This section is devoted to reviews of recent important books published on the philosophy of education in France, Spain and the United-Kingdom. Continuing with the "methodology" employed to help the field organize itself, we wanted to show not only what salient professors think about philosophy of education, or what researchers are currently interested in, but to let the field speak through its publications. So we decided to work on the review of three salient books of philosophy of education lately published in French, Spanish and English editions.

The first, reviewed by Marina Schwimmer, is *Relativisme et Éducation* (Relativism and Education), published in 2008 in Paris at L'Harmattan, and edited by Anne-Marie Drouin-Hans. The different contributions within it reflect on the fact that education seems to be touched by relativism both in practices and inquiry about its foundations and aims. It questions the possibility of a theory where everything would have the same ethical or epistemological value. In this book, different philosophers specializing in education, relate educational issues to current conceptual debates. Their aim is not to give warnings to educators, because that would presuppose theoretical solutions' having already being decisively established. Rather, their aim is to examine what happens to education when it comes to confront the fragility of certitudes. 'In what sense is a post-modern education possible?' and 'How should we understand concepts of truth, universals, interpretation, culture, or freedom?', amongst many other, related questions, are raised in the book.

The second, reviewed by Bianca Thoilliez, is the volume devoted to philosophy of education of the Iberoamerican Encyclopedia of Philosophy. The book *Filosofía de la Educación* (Philosophy of Education) was published as well in 2008 in Madrid at Trotta, and edited by Professor Guillermo Hoyos Vasquez. The book offers readers a journey passing through different philosophy of education paradigms, paying attention to current educational issues. The variety of topics is large: the validity of thinking about

education in terms of classic *paideia* or liberal education, Anarquist approaches to education of the last two centuries in Spanish-speaking contexts, the challenges of new technologies of information, moral education and human rights education, critics of communicative-instrumental aspects of language in learning situations, and more.

The third, reviewed by John Tillson, is *The Philosophy of Education. An Introduction*, published in 2010 in London by Continuum, and edited by Richard Bailey. It is presented as essential reading for education students and for trainee teachers on undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. Its different contributions are presented as appealing to practising teachers and educationalists who would like to engage with philosophical approaches to contemporary educational issues. Each chapter focuses on a particular area of debate and explains the main concepts and arguments found in it. The book's aim is to engage the reader critically and actively with the text and the issues which it discusses. Furthermore, the book guides the reader towards further readings and suggests next steps and more challenging sources of counter-pointed arguments.

We find the reading of these three books shows interesting common points and objects of reflection, and a large variety of positions defended. Since they are salient, collective publications, the voices of many authors currently writing and publishing in our three languages would thus be present in this special issue.

5. Building bridges

Bridges are structures built to span obstacles such as rivers, valleys, and roads, for the purpose of providing passage over these. Designs of bridges vary depending on the particularities of their function, the nature of the terrain where bridges are constructed, the material used to make them and the funds available to build them. Addressing the debate of what an academic discipline is or what an area of knowledge is, goes far beyond the aspirations of this special issue, despite a real need for clarification. What we have tried to do here is to enhance the communication between philosophers of education working in different contexts, and with a broader audience of readers, interested in other branches of philosophy.

By allowing the philosophy of education to speak in its many and diverse voices, this special issue surely testifies to the disagreement on fundamental questions to be found between practitioners. Qua philosophy however, disagreement on fundamentals should not surprise or discourage practitioners or others interested in the field, for educators cannot evade the philosophical significance and presuppositions of their practice by merely ignoring them, and the contested nature of fundamentals does not render them unimportant. The philosophy of education is not of a piece with 'big science', in which large numbers of individuals must agree on fundamental questions in order to proceed with a joint research. Rather, philosophy of education develops as a conversation between many disagreeing parties, in which each participant's presuppositions are more fully uncovered and their beliefs more clearly articulated. We must not take this to be a bleak picture however, for it is precisely from the emergence of disagreement, through speaking, arguing and listening – in forms such as this present volume – that bridges can be built between islands of thought and practice.

Building these bridges represents an exercise of productive conversational relationships that are plotted along the various contributions, with all its convergences and many differences. The juxtaposition of different traditions in the philosophy of education presented in the issue can contribute to develop a wider perspective on the general state and direction of the field. We hope readers of the present special issue will take advantage of the fruitful thoughts that emerge when philosophers of education start up a conversation and will contribute their own voices to it.

RAISING
PHILOSOPHY OF
EDUCATION'S
PROFILE

Philosophy of Education, the Production of the Presence and the Poetic Distance

Filosofía de la educación, producción de la presencia y distancia poética

Fernando BÁRCENA¹

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The history of philosophy of education is like a *Bildungsroman*, and that could perhaps explain why questions such as “*What is the philosophy of education?*” assume an ontological dimension that isn’t suited to the experience, specific to it, of *becoming*. The subject would not improve by adding to this question a hermeneutic one: *what does it mean?*, which would bind it to a matter of mere production of interpretations. If the first question is dominated by an *essentialist* invocation, the second one connects the discipline to the universalist pretension of interpretation. What it’s gained in “meaning” is lost in “sense”, and the relationship with the world based on the *production of presence* is eventually forgotten. The term presence here means a spatio-temporal relationship with the world: what becomes “present” is a kind of *poetic production* (*poïesis*) with which we become present, tangible, in what we think and what we do.

I interrogate philosophy of education as something that has to do, not with essence or logical meaning, but with the “experience-sense”. And this implies a poetic question (neither ontological nor hermeneutic): *How do I make myself present to what I do and what I think?* Just as in literature it is possible to tell stories constituted of mere coincidences and

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unintended effects, without incurring the absent vulgarity of a guiding narrative idea, it could also be possible in the field of philosophy of education to produce thoughts not from a reason detached from the “events” (*événements*), that make us think, but from concrete experiences that reflect the changes in which we are immersed. Then the purpose of philosophizing about education would not be the pretension to *change* what is there, but to learn to look at what we already see *without really realizing*: paying attention by becoming present to reality. This assumption may require a writing style that considers the event not just as another *case*, but as a unique opportunity to think *singularly* about what in the given field escapes the established frameworks of explanation. I speak of the *essay*, and the essayist vocation of philosophy of education also affecting thinking. I refer to those Arendtian *exercises of thinking* which search for a benefit in *how* to think in the open breach between the past and the future. These exercises do not come from a resigned weakness, but from an effort to enable an *intermediate space* between human finitude and its endless thirst for knowledge. The essay is set in a way that seeks to do justice to *the complexity of reality*, articulating speculation and everyday experience. It is from ordinary places that the demanding task that is assigned to a philosophy of education begins: the development of concepts. As Deleuze said, the concept does not tell the essence, but the event. Thinking would be an opening up to what makes us think, to everything that reveals itself discontinuous in the educational experience. Such a philosophizing would not establish a protective distance before reality –which we think at the cost of staying away from–, but a *poetic distance*, which is always a corporal relation: *embodied knowledge*. It is the distance that we always take to see what is there. A chosen distance. Because nor from the *too-near* neither from the *too-far*, do we see or know anything

Philosophy of Education

Filosofía de la educación

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1. Philosophy of education is both a kind of reflection on education in its current state, as well as the projection of an already perfected conception of education within a rational frame of interpretation.

In the first sense, it reveals the guiding role of education; it discusses what education *must be* based on principles and ends that are translated into rules. In the second, it is primarily based on analysis of what education *is*.

Both perspectives are legitimate and necessary and, although inverse, interact. I can think of what education should be -from the perspective of some worldview-, and guide it towards ends which are consistent with this perspective. But the sociological analysis of educational phenomena, the investigation of how education is in reality, is also necessary. And why is it so? To find out main themes, weaknesses, inconsistencies, that is, points where one could intervene by introducing the rationalization that any activity requires.

2. Both views are controversial –one theorizes about what (and how) education should be, the other analyzes and rationalizes what it really is; one establishes value judgments, the other reality judgments. This opposition explains, somehow the confusing situation of philosophy of education. Because today it is an unrewarding task to tell educators what,

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Note from the Guest Editors: We many thanks Professor Fernando Bárcena for his kind Portuguese-Spanish translation of Boavida's work that made possible this present English version.

from a philosophical point of view, education should be; educators do not recognize the authority of philosophy on this point. However, philosophers, in the current critical situation, have no very confident ideas in this respect. On the other hand, to start from educational practices with the intention of improving them through rationalization, also presents its theoretical difficulties. In fact, this perspective implies the former and so faces the same difficulties. On top of that, within the dominant scientific paradigm, educational research cares little for the philosophical kind of thinking and its educational effectiveness.

3. Asking about the meaning or evolution of philosophy of education raises the question of what it serves. It is thus necessary to know what are the major problems faced by education nowadays. This, implying certain analysis, forces to do philosophy of education showing its usefulness, since the disorientation within practices and the dissolving of convictions are obvious. This being so, someone has to guide and give strength to this action because individuals and societies can not dispense with education nor live with confusing, even contradictory forms of education. Educational research does not solve the problems of educational principles and purposes, without which there is no education. All education presupposes and requires an answer to these two questions, but these responses are now weakened. How are we to break out of this circle?

The weakening of normative education research and enhanced value of sociological education research leads us more towards a scientific and sociological educational theory than towards philosophy, understood as a foundation based on a worldview. The rules and prescriptions are weakened by the social destruction resulting from the collapse of the forces of modernity. But, as it is evident today that there is a lack of philosophical thought in education policy, sooner or later philosophy will advance. Because education is a process of transformation for the better (if it was not it would not be education), this deficit must be overcome by strong and mobilizable educational ideas, which only philosophical work can provide.

Therefore, the analysis of what education is today, and the awareness of its major problems, especially at the level of principles and purposes, force us to turn to philosophy. And it is the growing strength of the problem that will force philosophy to reorganize the educational intention, integrating, however, scientific contributions that never cease to come forth. To predict the future of philosophy of education we should know where the weaknesses of current education are pointing. It is in this way that philosophy will have to move forward, since only she can solve the problem.

Philosophy of Education in Brazil

La filosofía de la educación en Brasil

Silvio GALLO¹

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In this short essay, I briefly explore the constitution of philosophy of education as a discipline in Brazil during recent decades. I do it from the perspective which understands a philosophy of education as a conceptual creation and as a confrontation with problems arising within the field of education.

What is philosophy of education? Philosophy of education can be taken as an activity of creating concepts in the problematic field of education. If concepts, as Deleuze and Guattari said, are created from problems, education presents us with the problems, while philosophy offers us the tools to think about them.

What is happening in the field now? Mapping the constitution of philosophy of education as a disciplinary field in Brazil, we can see that it has consolidated its position over the last decades. A consolidation in which the *Associação Nacional de Pós-Graduação e Pesquisa em Educação* (ANPEd, Research Group on Philosophy of Education of the National Association of Postgraduate Studies and Research in Education) played an important role. In the 1970's, with the increased creation of graduate programs in education (a movement that began in the previous decade), philosophy of education emerged as one of the most important and prolific areas of educational research. However it suffered from a lack of identity, since everything that could not be "classified" within the traditional areas of education was categorized as "philosophy of education". In the 1980's, there was a strong Marxist influence in the Brazilian educational thinking, especially with what that had to do with the search for a critical education, which could face the military dictatorship of the time. At the same time, two other strands in the philosophy of education

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came to prominence. On the one hand, a philosophy of education critical of domination and exploitation, heavily influenced by Gramsci, and on the other hand, a philosophy of education of the oppressed, headed by Freire, consolidated their positions. There was also at that time a strong presence of studies interested in the trends and currents of thought that had been present throughout the national history of education. Between 1990 and 2010, we have seen a huge diversification of the research topics, as a consequence of taking into consideration different philosophical perspectives to contribute in the reflection of educational problems.

Where is it going? The diversification of the research topics brought a concern about philosophy of education's identity, as well as a concern for not returning to the 1970's situation, when everything could be identified as a work of philosophy of education. One of the ways to ensure both the identity and the consolidation of the disciplinary field was to get closer to pure philosophical research. In Brazil, this type of research is closely related to the history of philosophy and the study of philosophical authors. The disciplinary field strengthened, defending much more strongly its specificity, largely based on the study of authors. Today, as heirs of this process of constitution and consolidation the field experienced in recent decades, we are living a decisive moment. It is in our hands to develop the creative potential of the concept of philosophy of education, allowing it to move forward and be productive, or if not, to attend to its progressive closure and depreciation, as a result of having been dedicated solely to the reproduction of philosophy.

Philosophy of Education in a Critical Position

La filosofía de la educación en una posición crítica

Denis KAMBOUCHNER¹

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Philosophy of education has, in many countries, and especially in America, assured place in, but at the same time is limited to, academic life: it constitutes a mandatory or optional subject matter in teacher training programs, in graduate programs, pedagogical institutes, or university departments of “education”.

In these programs, philosophy of education is concerned with fixed and traditional objects: educational ends, activity related to the development of the child, curriculum conception, ethics, citizenship education, etc. A certain space is naturally devoted to the history of pedagogical ideas, from Antiquity to Dewey’s democratic education, including the Humanism of the Enlightenment or Rousseau’s negative education.

Even more than other specialties (metaphysics, logic, political philosophy), philosophy of education exists as a *normal* discipline, in the sense of what Thomas Kuhn has called a “normal science” in his seminal work (*The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 1962).

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The adjective first means that in the realm of this discipline, we work at responding to institutional demands, which maintain research and teachers' sayings in rather defined frames (in this respect, even vague discourses and slogans can remain "normal"). But "normal discipline" also means that striking novelty is rare, inexistent or in part artificial, and that in regards to other research or intellectual streams, this discipline is in a situation of heterogeneity. In what gets published as philosophy of education, references to large theories produced outside the field (often those feeding the public debate of the moment) are, as a matter of fact, a standard feature and can descend into a *name-dropping* competition. In France for example, where philosophy of education only has a very modest presence as an academic field, it is very hard to quote recent contributions Marcel Gauchet, who participates of a much wider reflection on the present of the democratic demand.

There are two types of reasons for this situation.

On the one hand, the massification of educational systems have brought schooling as well as broader educational problems, to a degree of complexity never encountered before. Montaigne designated the "institution of kids" as "the most difficult of the humane sciences": the progress of science only added to this difficulty.

On the other hand, this massification was accompanied, almost everywhere, by a depreciation of the work of teachers: in the academic field, reflections in education did not gain more prestige. Although we know better than ever to what extent the destiny of societies is linked to the performances and characteristics of their educational systems, it is as if the conditions of schooling or more generally of education, were considered by the best minds as either despairing subjects, or as not worth any of their efforts.

The problem is thus: which questions should philosophy of education concentrate on in order to demonstrate its aptitude to answer to contemporary demands, and doing so, to conquer the part of well needed recognition so enormously lacking nowadays?

What is criticized in many parts of the world is a so-called loss of efficiency or effectiveness in teaching. Its causes can be multiple: poor school structures, weight of family and social suffering, bad curriculum organization, insufficient attention to learning difficulties, shortage of qualified teachers, but also students' scepticism towards studies, distrustful attitude towards the institution and adults in general, power of group logics, impact of new technologies on students' attention, feeling of the obsolescence of "classic" school values, etc.

These diverse aspects of what must be named, with prudence, a historical crisis of the form of schooling are too often studied in a segmented way. It would be more appropriate not to try to unite them in a totalizing analysis, but to address each one with the concern of highlighting their relation to the others. But lacking in the usual approaches to these phenomena is also a certain form of boldness in the conception and discussion of new rules, adjusted to the present reality.

We must say "in the *discussion* of new rules", and not only in their conception, because the philosophical dimension of a process relies on the methodical character of a discussion. But imagination is here necessary, and we suggest that it can and must be articulated to a confrontation of the present with the past – a past that is not simply one of the schooling institutions, but one of the great texts on education.

One could, for example, read the pedagogical writings of Erasmus, the treatise, *Liberal Education of Children* (1529) or the *De ratione studii* [Study plan] (1512). These texts present an intensive literary educational model where the preceptor teaches in a soft and playful atmosphere. This private education, influenced by the idea that “almost all that seems worthy of being known” has been written in ancient languages, is very far from us. However, besides the legitimate promotion of softness and play, the idea of a preparation to the knowledge of things through the knowledge of words is not one that can be swept away either.

From the classical age, the drifts and limits of a pedagogy founded on books have been systematically brought to the fore: this does not mean that the ideal of the humanist culture has been, as it were, integrally “deconstructed”. Instead of borrowing a purely adaptative model of education from contemporary psychology, philosophy of education must meditate on the destiny of more ancient models and in doing so, determine what actuality and validity they have kept. This does not refer only to the relation that contemporary education, despite its particular aims, keeps with certain forms of tradition: it refers to the relation that philosophical reflection must keep with the most solid and refined intellectual constructions produced in the field. Although the gap between classical models and actual conditions of contemporary pedagogical activity may have widened to an abyss, there still remain from these models sufficient substance and authority to guide the pedagogical thought, i.e. precisely to make it determine, in a new environment, what can be preserved and diffused from an ancient impulse.

To care for an impulse that will be renewed only through its own remembrance, is what we call today “giving meaning back” to practices in danger of losing their own. Which program could stand out more and concentrate in itself more on all of the dimensions of philosophy? As for the many problems such a gesture will encounter, it is only once the necessity of this gesture has been recognized that the many problems it will create can be distinguished.

Philosophy or Education?

¿Filosofía o educación?

Gonzalo JOVER¹

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Philosophy of Education is a discipline that arose historically in the context of the endeavor to turn education into an object of scientific, rigorous knowledge. The main question that it should address is thus not “What is philosophy?” but rather, “What is education?” When the start is the first question, the discourse tends to focus too narrowly in on itself, on the problems of philosophers. The second question was the starting point for the movement that has done the most to consolidate this form of knowledge: the school promoted by R.S. Peters and his followers.

The first question often leads Philosophy of Education down a rabbit-hole by acknowledging the impossibility of ever finding a final and definitive fundament that gives meaning to education, an activity replete with contingency. The perception of this apparent failure may give rise to two equally unappealing ways out for education. One is to hide behind the alleged neutrality of a technological discourse that pushes aside any questions on the aims of education. The other way out is to retreat into a total skepticism from which any educational intent becomes suspect.

Especially at a time when the predominating discourse is that of performativity, there needs to be a return to education itself, in a kind of phenomenological U-turn. At this turn, education is discovered to be a form of relating with the other and with others. In contrast to the Herbartian attempt of constructing the pedagogical knowledge over the idea of a general aim of education, Dilthey stated that “die Wissenschaft der Pädagogik ... nur beginnen mit der Deskription des Erziehers in seinem Verhältnis zum Zögling” [“the science of pedagogy ... only begins with the description of educators in their relationships with the pupil”] (W. Dilthey: *Grundlinien eines Systems der Pädagogik*, 1884-1894).

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Education is a peculiar relationship of mediation between object and subject. It consists in projecting the world for the learner, but it is the latter, not the former, who defines the center of attention. This is why someone can be an excellent chemist or musician and yet be a complete failure as a chemistry or music educator. For a musician, the most important thing is, as it should be, the performance of the musical piece (the object). When that musician acts with educational purpose, the point of interest shifts, or should shift. Music education takes on meaning insofar as it in some way involves an increase in value in the person being taught (the subject), even if that means having to do without the exactness of artistic performance.

The contingent nature of the criteria on the increasing in value must not turn into a paralyzing condition. John Dewey said that Philosophy of Education “means the necessity of the introduction of a new order of conceptions leading to new modes of practice” (J. Dewey: *Experience and Education*, 1938). Philosophy of Education helps to see education as a deep, multi-dimensional reality, historical and ideological, not to delight in its contemplation, or in its negation, but rather to shed light on action. There is no possibility of delay when the starting question is education. The urgency of the task of educating obliges us to deal with uncertainty head-on, to acknowledge that “we should not look for skyhooks, but only for footholds” (R. Rorty: *Objectivity, Relativism and Truth*, 1991).

Philosophy of Education

Filosofía de la educación

Jan MASSCHELEIN¹

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A dominant practice of philosophy of education conceives of it as a kind of supplementary inquiry or meta-reflection that regards educational research and practice itself as an *object of knowledge*. It is a critical philosophy of education either in the Kantian tradition, focusing on the internal and external conditions (relating to critical theory, sociology of knowledge, ethics of science) for the valid production of knowledge on the field of education, or more in the hermeneutic-practical or Aristotelean tradition, trying to understand practices and qualifying them through (historical) contextualisations (sketching horizons of meaning referring to traditions, languages, cultures,...). This kind of philosophical work is based upon or oriented towards knowledge about the rules and limits, the conditions and criteria, the concepts and arguments, the presuppositions and assumptions that have to be taken into account for valid knowledge production, for the justification of claims and interpretations (and actions based on them). It conceives of itself as being “foundational” or “general” and always seems to operate *in the name of* some authority: reason (in all its varieties: communicative, universal, theoretical, practical reason, etc.), truth, justice, democracy or even the academic discipline itself. This kind of philosophical work belongs to a tradition that conceives of the work of philosophy as a work of judgment, ordering, justification, selection, clarification of concepts, interpretation, explication (sometimes exegesis) and is in this sense “critical” as it is in one way or another oriented towards validity claims (either ethical/normative or epistemological). This means that *it puts reality* (educational research and theory, educational policy and practice) *to the test* of its own thinking (theory, concepts, knowledge): the test of argumentative logic, of

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interpretative procedures/criteria, of norms or principles (of theoretical or practical reason), of theoretical systems or philosophies (either deductively or analytically constructed). Its truth-telling has something either of a demonstration (it wants to teach something), or of a judgement (separation between valid/not-valid; right/wrong, etc.) or of a de-mystification (revealing what is underlying or supposed i.e. denouncing illusions). Its writings and utterances are disciplined and in an “addressed” language: defining the public that lacks enlightenment i.e. appropriate knowledge.

Besides this critical tradition there exists another, admittedly marginal, tradition in philosophy, which we can call the *ascetic* (or existentially oriented) tradition. In this tradition, the work of philosophy is in the first place a work on the self i.e. *putting oneself to the test of contemporary reality*, implying an enlightenment not of others but of one-self, however of one-self not as subject of knowledge but as subject of action. This putting one-self to test is, therefore, an exercise—“ascetic” coming from “askesis” meaning in the first place exercise and not self-denial—in the context of self-formation and self-education: it seeks to transform or modify one’s mode of being and how one lives the present (see e.g. Foucault, Wittgenstein, Cavell). This exercise, which has been described by various authors as an “*exercise of/in thought*” (Arendt), can be conceived as a *public gesture* or a way to make things public and as a condition for a truth-telling that is illuminating and inspiring (offering not in the first place knowledge or judgements, but experience), that is operating in one’s own name and warranted by the actual life of the speaker, and not by its method or foundation. Taking Arendt’s description in the preface to her book “Between Past and Future” as starting point we can, thus, conceive of philosophy of education as “exercises in thought” being mainly experiments arising out of the actuality of incidents, and having the form of essays in which one’s presence in the present is at stake in view of literally illuminating that present, of moving in that present and of inspiring words with a renewed meaning (inspiring life in that present). Philosophy (of education) thus understood as exercise can be educational in three senses. First as a kind of investigation or research that implies a bringing into play (putting to the test) of the researcher herself i.e. implying a self-education as “work on the self”. But philosophy as an essay is as well a public gesture and therefore also educational in the sense that it can have a meaning for others who are invited to share the experience and constitute a public (i.e. to put themselves to the test and not to receive a teaching). And lastly, such philosophy can be educational in the sense that the present which is at stake (and is investigated) is the educational present. Concerning precisely this present, I believe, that what is important today is to make the questions: “what is education”, “what is adulthood”, “what is a child”, “what is a university”, “what is a school”, “what is a family”, “what is an asylum”, “what is a teacher”, “what is a student”, etc. into “*real questions*” i.e. into matters of concern (matters that make us think i.e. make us trying to move in the gap between past and future) into “common” issues. This implies that these “what” questions are no questions for definitions or atemporal essences, but open existential questions for what it could mean to educate, to be an adult, etc, for reinventing their meaning, reinventing a truly human life. Things take their course, transformations are going on, and all kinds of forces work. The point is not to forget oneself as the point where and through which the forces work and where and through which “insight in the game of forces that constitute our existence” can be gained, but also where and through which they are splitted up and broken. That is why we need to put ourselves to the test of contemporary reality.

Philosophy of Education Interrogates what we Think we Know about Education

***La filosofía de la educación interroga lo que
creemos saber sobre la educación***

Bruce MAXWELL¹

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Philosophy of education is a specialized area of educational inquiry which provides a unique perspective on educational policy, research and practice: that of the professional critic. This reflective stance has three characteristic features. First, it is foundational. It asks basic questions about the meaning, value and limits of knowledge. So, for example, a philosopher wonders not about how dyslexic children learn but investigates the criteria practitioners use to diagnose dyslexia. Second, it is humane. This interest in basic questions is not idle speculation and it does not relish scepticism. Philosophers think that understanding the world truthfully can help us sort out how to live well. An appreciation of the value of reading complements knowledge about how to teach reading. Only the former shows how we can use reading to enrich human beings' lives. Third, philosophy is promiscuous. All domains of knowledge are open to philosophical scrutiny. Philosophy of education's legitimacy as a branch of modern philosophy derives from being foundational, humane reflection brought to the domain of education.

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Philosophical activity, in this sense, pervades educationalists' work. Whenever a teacher wonders why he is teaching what he is teaching, whenever an educational scientist questions the validity of a methodological tool, whenever a committee member doubts the fairness of a policy proposal, philosophy is being done. Yet it is also true that, as an academic activity, philosophy is less a body of specialized knowledge within education than an interrogation of what we think we know about education. One does not learn philosophy. One learns to philosophize. So how can the philosophy of education, a specialized discipline with little specialized knowledge of its own, contribute to policy and practice?

Each of the several approaches that belong to contemporary educational philosophy makes a distinctive contribution to policy, research and practice. Some philosophers of education work as historians of ideas. They are concerned with how thinkers of the past shed light on contemporary problems in education. John Dewey, for instance, wrote extensively on the merits of community schools at a time, like now, when mass migration seemed to threaten social cohesion. Others philosophers of education are applied ethicists. Their writings speak to difficult social issues that involve young people's well-being and which often require a judicious response on the part of adults. The off-label use of medications to improve academic performance, the presence of open religious symbols in schools, and the sexualisation of children are some of these. Still others continue, in the tradition of conceptual analysis, to challenge the language of policy and practice in education. Is the idea of "learning to learn" coherent? What is positive about "positive" emotions and relationships? Language always leads educational discourse to some extent. But language can impede sound decision making when the thinking behind it is vague, ambiguous or incoherent. Lastly, some philosophers of education reflect on the educational sciences. Their enquiries typically focus on theory and methodology: the conceptualization of core constructs, the application and transfer of basic psychological research to education, the evaluative dimension inherent in the phenomena that educational scientists normally study (e.g., "effective" class management, "healthy" social development, "successful" adaptation), epistemological biases dictated by particular research methods, and so on.

The philosophy of education's distinctive contribution to practice, research and policy, then, resides less in its critical stance as such than in its professionalism. When informed, insightful, constructive and humane, the interrogation of what we think we know about education is valued in practice and policy circles. Yet the urgency of helping children learn, negotiating regulatory decisions, and acquiring new scientific knowledge often leaves little time for it. Educational philosophers are the only players in the field whose professional activities do not constrain such reflection. On the contrary, it is precisely their specialization to dwell on philosophical problems in education and to treat them with the sustained attention they deserve.

Philosophy of Education and its Role in Current Times

La filosofía de la educación y su papel en la actualidad

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Some areas in the field of education are defined by the *topics* they refer to: for example, didactics of mathematics, theories of learning, and new technologies in education among many others. The philosophy of education can be better understood as an *approach* to the study of education; as a particular way of tackling it. Thus, nothing prevents it from dealing with the didactics of mathematics, theories of learning, or new technologies in education.

Now, what is this characteristic approach of philosophy of education? It is difficult to obtain a clear and uncontroversial account, but some things can be said about it in order to distinguish it from other approaches. Here I will mention two that I consider important nowadays. The first one is that it usually uses systematic reflection rather than direct empirical contact with its object of study. This does not mean that it never uses empirical observations to help with the formulation of an argument. However, unlike a scientific approach to education, these empirical observations are usually used as illustrations instead of being evidence or ultimate criteria for judging a conclusion.

Another characteristic of philosophy of education is that it allows itself to study questions about meaning, sense, importance, significance, relevance, purpose, the ought-to-be, and so on, about topics, concepts, issues and programs in education. For example: What is critical thinking? What vision of democracy should we adopt in civic education

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programs? What should be the role of parents within the educational community? What is an educated person? Let us notice that we do not yet know how empirical observations could help us answer these questions, and this is one reason why educational sciences have ignored them. But then there is a crucial problem here: the fact that questions about meaning and what ought to be are difficult to study does not mean it is not important to address them, especially in an applied field. Therefore, philosophy of education finds here an irreplaceable role, which is one of critic, of consciousness, destabilizing, but also of openness to new possibilities and new understandings.

Today it seems to me there is an attempt, although not necessarily widespread, of pragmatizing philosophy of education: of bringing it closer to educational issues that are in vogue, as well as to decision makers in this domain. This trend could be a reaction to the loss of influence that philosophy of education has been suffering for decades, being displaced by scientific approaches, particularly the quantitative one of an experimental or quasi-experimental nature. In my opinion, it is necessary that the philosophy of education address issues that are important for policymakers and practitioners. However, it must also not lose sight of its role, albeit an uncomfortable one, which consists in questioning the purposes we set for education and the ways we understand its issues.

The Philosophy of Education, and the Education of Philosophy

La filosofía de la educación y la educación de la filosofía

Paul STANDISH¹

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It is not uncommon to find philosophers and others sometimes puzzled about what the philosophy of education is. But what exactly is the puzzle? Questions about teaching and learning are at the heart of philosophy, and this can be seen at least as far back as Plato. In epistemology and ethics, for example, the concern is not only with the nature of knowledge or the good, but with how we come to know, how we enter into the good life. So too, any approach to more metaphysical questions, any phenomenology, must understand the human being as dynamically related to the environment, in ways that cannot be characterised adequately in causal terms but that must have recourse to the development of meaning and culture: human beings are not born conferring meaning on the world; they require initiation into a culture, which in turn depends upon what they creatively add; this is no less than the way the world is.

The philosophy of education is not then a branch of philosophy, on a par, say, with the philosophy of science or of law. The fairly clearly circumscribed reach of these branches, and to some extent their methods and approaches, are distinct from those of other branches. In the philosophy of education, by contrast, there is no branch of philosophy that is not relevant in some way: philosophy of science has a bearing, at the very least, on the teaching and substance of science within the curriculum; philosophy

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of law pertains to legal issues surrounding, say, compulsory schooling or the independence of universities, as well as to the notions of citizenship into which young people are to be inducted.

Nor is the philosophy of education well understood as philosophy “applied”. There is a problem generally with the idea of applied philosophy, apt as this is to reinforce instrumental reason: so understood, philosophy is a more or less self-contained regime of thought but one that can be put to work as a technical means of solving problems. The professionalization of philosophy has fostered the first assumption; the rise of technology has naturalised the second. But this flies in the face of Aristotelian practical reason, the sense of wisdom in action, and it quite misses that powerful current in our inheritance of what has been called “philosophy as a way of life”. Now this is pertinent to education for three reasons. If the practical questions facing the teacher or policy-maker are pursued far enough, they involve a professional challenge whose philosophical force is scarcely registered in purely scholarly enquiry. If the experience of the classroom is adequately acknowledged, this will reveal an existential exposure that teacher education all too often denies. And to the extent that a developing and questioning sense of what the good life amounts to must characterise a liberal education (at least), this invites this broader pursuit of philosophy into the curriculum itself.

The establishment of the philosophy of education within the academy has made a powerful contribution to thinking about policy, practice, and institutions, especially as these have become powerful organs of the state, and it has served as a vital countervailing force to the empiricism of the age. Yet the disciplinary map can seem somewhat different outside the Anglophone world. In German traditions, enquiry into education necessarily involves thinking of a philosophical kind, where philosophy is understood as less clearly separated from other disciplines in the humanities, and where the *Geisteswissenschaften* offer something culturally richer, more hermeneutic, and less anxiously constrained methodologically than what tends to pass under the name of “social science”.

Hence, it is a disciplinarily porous, existentially engaged, methodologically non-anxious commitment to philosophy that can best inform education. Enquiry such as this enhances philosophy itself.

Philosophy of Education?

¿Filosofía de la educación?

Barbara J. THAYER-BACON¹

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I am a philosopher by nature. I have been in love with ideas and the search for wisdom for as long as I can remember. I love to debate and discuss ideas, and analyze global as well as local events. I will be doing philosophy until I die. It still surprises me that someone is willing to pay for me to do something I would be doing anyway! I am grateful. I don't think philosophy is ever going to stop being needed, although I certainly can see there are times when it is more or less valued in societies. Currently we seem to live in times when it is less valued, as science holds the upper hand. But, the need for philosophy is not going to go away. As long as there are issues and concerns that philosophers can help us sort out, possible solutions philosophers can help us imagine, and theoretical arguments that need to be made to justify decisions we must make and actions we must take, philosophy is going to be there. Thus, I am not worried about philosophy's future.

Connecting philosophy to education did not happen for me until I became a parent. When I started to worry about my own children's education, that is when I realized there is a whole world of educational issues to which philosophy makes a contribution. Again, I am not worried about philosophy of education's future, as I know societies will always have the need to renew themselves and pass on their knowledge to their young. Our ability to educate our young is something that makes us unique, as humans. Philosophers of education help us think about what we should teach our children about beauty, goodness, fairness, justice, and truths, and how we should teach these. Teachers are faced with philosophical issues every day that they teach. It's unavoidable. I try to help them understand the issues and the resources that are there to aid them. I serve as a translator of

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deep philosophical ideas, so that those ideas are assessable to teachers, as fellow philosophers, who can then use the ideas to help them think through their daily dilemmas, and make decisions based on constructive thinking rather than just “past experiences”. Philosophy can help us articulate our vision of what we want to aim for, and help us figure out how to get there. Philosophers of education are poets, prophets, and soothsayers who encourage us to imagine the possibilities of a better world and give us the tools we need to critique what exists and help us get there. My doctoral students in philosophy of education may have to find ways to adapt and take jobs in educational policy, curriculum development, comparative or international education, or as community organizers, for we live in times where there are fewer philosophers being hired to teach in colleges of education. This is a tragedy for our current times that philosophy is so little valued, but philosophers of education will always be needed.

Philosophy of Education as Public Servant

La filosofía de la educación como servicio público

John WHITE¹

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Philosophy of education explores philosophical issues arising in education. There is no shortage of these. Educational goals are a good starting place. What should parents, teachers and others involved in upbringing and formal education be aiming at? Developing moral sensibility? A broad understanding of the major fields of knowledge? Preparation for citizenship? Helping the learner towards a fulfilling life? Induction into the world of work? What priorities should there be among such aims?

Sorting out the issues these questions raise takes one into familiar territory in general philosophy: into, for instance, rival views about the nature of morality, knowledge and understanding, democracy, personal well-being. But the special expertise of the philosopher of education is in applying these ideas sensitively to education. This presupposes a good understanding of background realities, whether of classroom life, child-rearing, administrative and political arrangements, or relevant sociological and historical phenomena.

Similar points apply to other topics than aims. These include ways of realising aims – methods of upbringing and teaching, aspects of the curriculum, whole school processes, assessment, teacher education, school leadership; the distribution of educational goods and issues of equality; the nature of the learner, including his or her intelligence, emotional life, motivation, imagination, concept-acquisition, thinking skills. Political

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philosophy, the philosophy of mind, and epistemology are, with ethics, the major areas of general philosophy to which philosophy of education returns again and again. Aesthetics, philosophy of religion and other 'philosophies of' come into their own especially, but not only, when applied to work in specific curriculum areas.

For the last fifty years, the chief role of philosophy of education has been as handmaiden to public education systems, as well as family education, bringing clarity and wisdom to the issues that abound in them. In the earlier part of this period, its main clients were school teachers, student teachers, and policy makers. While policy critique remains buoyant, work with the first two of these groups has become less salient in Britain and other countries, owing to policy moves to focus teachers' attention more on immediate tasks and less on reflection about wider issues.

Perhaps partly for this reason, some of those working in the field have turned to other tasks. These have often been of a scholarly and more inward-looking nature, often concentrating on the ideas of particular philosophers, not least from the continent of Europe, and making thinner connexions than used to be made with the on-going world of education.

The last two decades have also seen work in the field expanding beyond its former heartlands in North America, Britain, Australasia and South Africa to cover, now, the whole globe, not least countries in South and East Asia like China, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan, as well as continental Europe.

While this has exacerbated the trend towards inwardness, and turned philosophy of education further away from its older, 'handmaiden', role in local education systems, the new international links have also helped educational reformers and policy critics within the discipline to share ideas they can apply to their own national contexts.

CURRENT LINES OF WORK IN PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION

Filosofía y Educación en España: Luzuriaga y la *Revista de Pedagogía*

Philosophy and education in Spain: Luzuriaga and the Revista de Pedagogía

Ángel CASADO MARCOS DE LEÓN¹

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Resumen:

La *Revista de Pedagogía*, fundada en 1922 por Lorenzo Luzuriaga, es una excelente atalaya para analizar la relación entre filosofía y educación en España. Aunque era una publicación “pedagógica”, dirigida a los profesionales de la enseñanza, no por ello descuida la “perspectiva filosófica” como dimensión indispensable en la teoría y la práctica educativas. La significativa presencia de conocidos filósofos españoles y extranjeros como colaboradores habituales, constituye una muestra ejemplar de interés y colaboración entre ambos campos.

Palabras clave: Filosofía de la educación, Historia de la Filosofía española, Lorenzo Luzuriaga, Revista de Pedagogía.

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Abstract:

The *Revista de Pedagogía*, founded in 1922 by Lorenzo Luzuriaga, is an excellent watchtower for analyzing the relation between philosophy and education in Spain. Though it was a “pedagogical” publication, directed the professionals of the education, not for it he neglects the “philosophical perspective” as indispensable dimension in the educational theory and the practice. The significant presence of well-known Spanish and foreign philosophers as habitual collaborators constitutes an exemplary sample of interest and collaboration between both fields.

Keywords: Philosophy of education, History of Spanish philosophy, Lorenzo Luzuriaga, *Revista de Pedagogía*.

1. Luzuriaga: contexto histórico y trayectoria profesional

En los últimos años del siglo XIX y primeros del XX, la mayor parte de las iniciativas pedagógicas que se producen en España están promovidas básicamente por personalidades ligadas al proyecto ideológico-educativo de la *Institución Libre de Enseñanza*. Nacida en 1876, a raíz de la “segunda cuestión universitaria”, y nutrida del pensamiento krausista y liberal de sus fundadores, se planteó desde su nacimiento el “cultivo y propagación de la ciencia”, esgrimiendo como armas principales el recurso a la razón y la libertad de conciencia, que se proyectan en un liberalismo con un claro afán de transformación social². Tanto Giner de los Ríos, fundador y “alma” de la Institución, como Manuel B. Cossío, que le sucedió al frente de la misma en 1915, prestaron una decidida atención a la educación como elemento civilizador y cultural, postulando la *formación integral* de la persona.

Las propuestas de la ILE tuvieron amplia resonancia en la situación de la enseñanza en todo el país, que saltó a primer plano como consecuencia del “Desastre” de 1898 y el consiguiente debate sobre responsabilidades. En un panorama de honda preocupación por la decadencia de la vida española, el espíritu crítico de la generación finisecular cristaliza en el deseo de modernizar a España sin violencia, de curar “los males de la Patria”, por utilizar el título de la obra de Mallada; por todas partes cobra fuerza la necesidad de una profunda reforma o *regeneración* del país, que lo salve del estado de postración en que se encuentra.

Entre otras cosas, los sucesos del 98 son también una dramática llamada de atención hacia la desastrosa situación de la enseñanza y la cultura en nuestro país, sobre la base de una convicción, compartida por regeneracionistas e institucionistas: la redención sólo podía venir a través de la educación. En amplios sectores de la vida política española empieza a considerarse por primera vez la educación como una de las funciones esenciales del Estado³.

² En el número de homenaje a Cossío, con motivo de su muerte, la *Revista de Pedagogía* recogía unas palabras de Unamuno, en las que subraya el espíritu “liberal” de la ILE: “Ya no volveré a poder remontarme de cuando en cuando, en íntima y cordial conversación, con Cossío a las fuentes del genuino y noble liberalismo español. El de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza” (*Revista de Pedagogía*, num. 165, septiembre 1935, p. 441).

³ “La formación de una inteligencia nacional que nutriera a las élites y sacara de su postración a las masas originó una auténtica carrera por la instrucción pública, que no había dispuesto de ministerio hasta 1900” (García Cortazar, F., *Historia de España*, Barcelona, Planeta, 2002, p. 229).

La cruzada en favor de la cultura y la educación en nuestro país tendrá en Lorenzo Luzuriaga (Valdepeñas, 1889-Buenos Aires, 1959) un decidido valedor. Tras estudiar en la Escuela Normal Central, se matricula como alumno libre en la cátedra de Filosofía del Derecho de Giner, donde entra en contacto con personalidades de la ILE, en cuya biblioteca y ambiente se formó intelectualmente. En 1909 ingresa en la Escuela Superior del Magisterio, donde conoce a Ortega, que había sido nombrado profesor de Psicología, Lógica y Ética. Licenciado en 1912, accede a la Inspección de Primera Enseñanza en Ginzó de Limia (Orense), y más tarde en Guadalajara; en 1913 la Junta para Ampliación de Estudios le beca para estudiar dos años en Alemania, aunque debe regresar a España al estallar la I Guerra Mundial. En 1915, es nombrado Inspector “agregado” al *Museo Pedagógico Nacional*, como encargado de las publicaciones. Allí trabaja con su director, Manuel B. Cossío, y contacta con profesores ligados a la ILE: Domingo Barnés, Rafael Altamira, Luis Simarro, Américo Castro, Ortega...⁴

Impulsor de publicaciones periódicas, Luzuriaga colabora en diferentes diarios y revistas: *BILE*, *El Socialista*, y en otros órganos de prensa y revistas especializadas. En el *BILE* publica buena parte de los trabajos que luego editará como libros (Publicaciones del Museo Pedagógico): *La enseñanza primaria en el extranjero* (1915); *La preparación de los maestros* (1918); *El analfabetismo en España* (1919); *La escuela unificada* (1922); *Las Escuelas Nuevas*, (1923); *Escuelas Activas* (1925); *La Educación Nueva* (1927), etc.

Su obra en España se resume en un permanente esfuerzo por implantar su propuesta de una *escuela única, activa, pública y laica*, que a su juicio responde a una aspiración “pedagógico-social”. En *La escuela unificada* (1922) y *La escuela única* (1931), define la “escuela única” como “la organización unitaria de las instituciones educativas de un pueblo, de suerte que éstas sean accesibles a todos sus miembros según sus aptitudes y vocaciones, y no según su situación económica, social y confesional”⁵.

En 1933 pasa a la Secretaría Técnica del Ministerio de Instrucción Pública y Bellas Artes, actividad que comparte con la de profesor en la *Sección de Pedagogía* de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Madrid, creada en 1932. A poco de iniciarse la Guerra Civil, sale exiliado para Londres, pasando luego a Glasgow; más tarde, requerido por G^a Morente y Amado Alonso, se traslada a Tucumán (Argentina). En 1944 pasa a la Universidad de Buenos Aires como profesor de Pedagogía; dirige la Biblioteca Pedagógica de la Editorial Losada, contribuyendo a difundir en América la obra de Dewey, Messer, Dilthey, Kilpatrick, Bühler, Millot, Spranger, Claparède, Nohl...

Durante el exilio (1936-1959), si bien en circunstancias muy diferentes, continúa su actividad como docente e investigador. Funda la revista *Realidad* (1947-1949), dirigida por el filósofo Francisco Romero, de la que fueron consejeros Francisco Ayala, Eduardo Mallea, Julio Rey Pastor, y colaboradores, Corpus Barga, Ferrater Mora, José Gaos, Pedro Salinas, Claudio Sánchez-Albornoz, etc. Títulos de esta época son: *La pedagogía contemporánea* (1942); *La escuela nueva pública* (1948); *Historia de la educación y de la pedagogía* (1951), dedicada a su maestro Manuel Bartolomé Cossío; *Pedagogía social y política*, (1954); *Antología pedagógica* (1956), dedicada a Ortega y Gasset; *La Institución*

⁴ Luzuriaga siempre recordará con cariño la extraordinaria labor del “Señor Cossío”: “Desde su cuarto en el Museo Pedagógico, modesto como él mismo, se han inspirado las mejoras que ha experimentado en los últimos cuarenta años anteriores a 1939 la enseñanza española” (*La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y la educación en España*, Buenos Aires, Losada, 1957, p. 122).

⁵ La Constitución de 1931, en su artº. 48, recogía dos de sus propuestas: “El servicio de la cultura es atribución esencial del Estado y lo prestará mediante instituciones educativas enlazadas por el sistema de la escuela unificada”.

Libre de Enseñanza y la Educación en España (1957), etc. Muere en Buenos Aires, el 23 de diciembre de 1959; el reconocimiento internacional llegaría sobre todo a partir de su etapa como publicista en la Editorial Losada y como profesor en la Universidad de Buenos Aires.

2. Las innovaciones educativas de la ILE y otros influjos

Claro exponente de los intelectuales de principios del siglo XX, por su formación y dedicación, Luzuriaga pertenece al grupo de intelectuales y políticos de la “generación de 1914” –entre ellos, los “nietos espirituales de Giner”: Américo Castro, Luzuriaga, Marañón, G^a Morente, Jiménez Fraud...-, que tanta importancia tendrá en el acontecer histórico inmediato. Socio fundador de la “Liga de Educación Política”, auspiciada por Ortega y Azaña, fue también miembro de la “Escuela Nueva”, de Núñez Arenas, creada en 1911.

La intervención de Luzuriaga en el proceso de renovación de la enseñanza pública en España, coincide con la apertura Europa propiciada por la Junta para la Ampliación de Estudios y otras fundaciones auspiciadas por la ILE. Diversas circunstancias le llevan a vivir de cerca gran parte de las realizaciones educativas de su tiempo, la llamada 3^a fase del “institucionismo” (Escuela Superior del Magisterio, Residencia de Estudiantes, Centro de Estudios Históricos, Instituto-Escuela, etc.), cuya importante labor glosará en 1933;

“En España, por ejemplo, mucho antes de que adviniera –con la colaboración de todos- la República existía ya un fuerte movimiento pedagógico que lo inician y lo mantienen durante largos años los hombres de la institución Libre de Enseñanza –D. Francisco Giner y el señor Cossío especialmente-; que se prosigue con el Museo Pedagógico y con las creaciones educativas de la Junta para ampliación de estudios, -Residencia de Estudiantes, Instituto Escuela— que se extiende a algunas escuelas nuevas públicas –Escuela Cervantes, de Madrid; Baixeiras, de Barcelona- y que halla su expresión última en el movimiento de la educación nueva y de la escuela activa, al desarrollo del cual han contribuido bastante los colaboradores de esta Revista y de sus publicaciones”⁶.

El influjo de la ILE era patente en todas estas instituciones, como hacían notar sus adversarios; pero había algo más: lo que Luis de Zulueta llama “Institución difusa”, que Luzuriaga expone con claridad:

“Aún más que sobre las ideas y las instituciones, la influencia de la ILE fue mayor en las personas, en los jóvenes. La Institución, en efecto, había creado o contribuido a crear en la juventud española una nueva ‘forma de vida’, un tipo humano diferente del que se existía anteriormente. Este estilo de vida no se da naturalmente íntegro en la realidad social, pero se le podía reconocer en gran parte de sus componentes espirituales”⁷.

En su análisis de las ideas pedagógicas de la ILE, que él considera en línea con las propuestas europeas más innovadoras, Luzuriaga destaca la búsqueda de un ideal armonioso, que integraba la educación intelectual, física, estética, religiosa (respeto a las creencias), y todas estas dimensiones en el sentido de una educación moral que formase seres humanos íntegros. En *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y la educación en España* (1957), dedicada “A la memoria de la beneméritos fundadores de la ILE”, la describe como “una institución ejemplar, única en España y quizá en la Europa de su tiempo”. La Institución, escribe en otro lugar, “realizó en los sesenta años de su existencia la labor más seria y profunda que se ha llevado a cabo en la cultura y en la educación española durante los últimos tiempos”⁸.

⁶ Luzuriaga, L., *Revista de Pedagogía*, núm. 137, mayo 1933, pp. 231-232.

⁷ Luzuriaga, L., *La Institución Libre de Enseñanza y la educación en España*, op. cit., p. 211.

⁸ Luzuriaga, L., *La educación de nuestro tiempo*, Buenos Aires, Losada, 1966 (3^a ed.), p. 123.

Las referencias elogiosas de Luzuriaga a la labor de Giner y de la ILE se remontan a su época en el diario *El Sol*, donde dirigía la página de “Pedagogía e Instrucción Pública”, que aparecía los lunes. Así, con ocasión del debate suscitado en torno a la autonomía universitaria, recuerda la labor realizada al respecto por los hombres de la ILE: “Esta empresa de liberalización –fruto postrero de la actuación de algunos de los más nobles espíritus de nuestro país, como D. Francisco Giner y la generación krausista...”⁹.

También en la *Revista de Pedagogía* abundan las referencias a la valiosa labor de la ILE, con pasajes significativos en diferentes números; aunque no siempre llevan firma, no es aventurado suponer la pluma de Luzuriaga en todos o casi todos:

“...Pero es que en España misma el renacimiento de la educación y de la pedagogía tiene el mismo origen: en los profesores krausistas, que a partir del año 70 difundieron entre nosotros la pedagogía europea y crearon una propia, y de los que los más relevantes son D. Francisco Giner y D. Manuel B. Cossío. En una u otra forma, la pedagogía y la educación española más serias proceden de este movimiento”¹⁰.

En noviembre de 1926, con ocasión de cumplirse los cincuenta años del nacimiento de la ILE, la *Revista* incluye un amplio comentario, del que entresacamos algunos párrafos:

“El 29 de octubre último ha cumplido la Institución Libre de Enseñanza cincuenta años. Esta fecha y esta institución no pueden ser ajenos a todos los que nos dedicamos a la enseñanza en España. La Institución Libre ha sido, en efecto, durante ese medio siglo el verdadero alto horno donde se han fundido los ideales de la educación española; de ella han irradiado en una u otra forma las reformas pedagógicas más importantes que se han introducido en nuestra Instrucción Pública, y, lo que es más importante, el espíritu que vivifica internamente las mejores escuelas y centros educativos españoles [...] Gracias a la Institución y gracias, sobre todo, a D. Francisco Giner, ha sido posible el actual movimiento pedagógico de España y la misma existencia de esta *Revista de Pedagogía*”¹¹.

Junto a la influencia de la ILE, hay que destacar el peso del magisterio de Ortega y Gasset en Luzuriaga: ambos coinciden en la Escuela Superior del Magisterio, en 1909: “Desde entonces [escribe el propio Luzuriaga] he permanecido en relación intelectual y amistosa con él, hasta que el exilio nos separó en 1936, aunque pude volver a verle ocasionalmente más tarde. Pero su persona y sus ideas han estado siempre presentes en mí, como sin duda ha ocurrido a todos los que tuvimos el privilegio de conocerle y tratarle”; más adelante, habla de Ortega como “mi maestro y amigo de toda la vida”¹². Una afinidad a la que sin duda no es ajeno el hecho de que ambos se nutran del “mismo manantial de entusiasmo”, como Ortega dice de Giner en su necrológica. La confluencia de intereses y preocupaciones de ambos, iniciada en la Escuela Superior del Magisterio, sigue en la “Liga de Educación Política” (1913) y se extiende a otras “fundaciones” orteguianas: *España* (1915); *El Sol* (1917-1922), etc. Hay también cierto paralelismo entre las “empresas” de ambos: *Revista de Pedagogía* (1922) y *Revista de Occidente* (1923), como ventanas abiertas a las corrientes más novedosas del momento, incluyendo la publicación de las obras de mayor relieve y actualidad en los respectivos ámbitos.

⁹ Luzuriaga, L., La autonomía universitaria, *El Sol*, núm. 134, 15-4-1918.

¹⁰ Luzuriaga, L., El estudio universitario de la pedagogía, *Revista de Pedagogía*, núm. 50, febrero 1926, p. 273.

¹¹ “El cincuentenario de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza”, *Revista de Pedagogía*, núm. 59, noviembre 1926, pp. 510-512.

¹² “Las fundaciones de Ortega y Gasset”, en *Homenaje a Ortega y Gasset*, Universidad de Caracas, 1958, p. 33.

Luzuriaga es asimismo uno de los jóvenes de la ILE que no sólo divulgaron las ideas y métodos institucionistas, sino que sintieron la llamada de la acción política. Puede decirse que en él se da la concordancia entre la influencia institucionista y los criterios socialistas para la reforma educativa de España. El XI Congreso del PSOE (Madrid, 1918) aprueba la ponencia “Bases para un programa de Instrucción Pública”, presentada por la “Escuela Nueva”, de la que era autor L. Luzuriaga, según su propia declaración¹³. A partir de 1921 se aparta de la política y concentra su actividad en la fundación de la *Revista de Pedagogía*. Sus dos cargos más cercanos a su actuación política fueron técnicos: Miembro del Consejo Nacional de Cultura y Oficial de la Secretaría Técnica del Ministerio de Instrucción Pública.

La articulación de la escuela pública en la obra de Luzuriaga se expone en dos importantes monografías: *Bases para un anteproyecto de Ley de Instrucción Pública inspiradas en la idea de escuela única* (reedición y puesta al día de su obra de 1918), e *Ideas para una reforma constitucional de la educación pública*, ambas publicadas en 1931; algunos pasajes evidencian el influjo “liberal” de la ILE:

“La educación, en todos sus grados y manifestaciones, es una función eminentemente pública (...)

El Estado, como representante máximo de la vida nacional, es el llamado a realizarla (...) La educación es también una función social (...) Las instituciones pedagógicas pueden y deben educar política, social, económica y religiosamente capacitando para participar en las actividades esenciales de la vida humana. Pero careciendo el ser juvenil de capacidad crítica suficiente, no se deben imponer las normas o fines concretos de un partido, una clase, una profesión o una iglesia determinados”¹⁴.

3. Filosofía y educación en la *Revista de Pedagogía*

En 1922 Luzuriaga funda la *Revista de Pedagogía*, obra mancomunada con su esposa, M^a Luisa Navarro. Se publicaron 175 números, entre enero de 1922 y julio de 1936¹⁵, con tiradas respetables (4.000 ejemplares en septiembre de 1933), que se distribuían por España, Europa e Hispanoamérica¹⁶. A esta labor de difusión siguió la colección de “Publicaciones de la Revista de Pedagogía”, con obras de destacados autores españoles y extranjeros, muchas de ellas traducidas por primera vez al castellano (65 títulos en el catálogo de 1936).

La amplia nómina de colaboradores es realmente asombrosa¹⁷: conocidas figuras políticas (José Vasconcelos, ex-ministro de Instrucción Pública de México; Fernando de los Ríos, Ministro de Instrucción Pública de España, o Anatole de Monzie, Ministro de Educación Nacional de Francia) y destacados especialistas españoles y extranjeros, alternan

¹³ Cfr. *BILE*, núm. 705, 1918, pp. 359-363. El prof. H. Barreiro no exagera la destacar “el papel de enlace que desempeñaría Luzuriaga entre la herencia de la Institución Libre de Enseñanza y las tareas concretas de la Segunda República” (Introducción a Luzuriaga, L., *La escuela única*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 2001, p. 16).

¹⁴ Luzuriaga, L., “Ideas para una reforma constitucional de la Educación Pública”, *Revista de Pedagogía*, núm. 112, abril 1931, p.145.

¹⁵ Un primer intento de continuidad tuvo lugar en Barcelona, en febrero de 1938, con la *Revista de Pedagogía. Órgano teórico de la FETE* (Año XVII, núm. 176), en la que participan algunos antiguos colaboradores. Según mis datos, esta publicación se mantuvo hasta octubre de 1938 (Cfr. Mérida Nicolich, E. *Una alternativa de reforma pedagógica: La Revista de Pedagogía (1922-1936)*, Pamplona, Ed. EUNSA, 1983).

¹⁶ En la revista publicaron trabajos numerosos autores hispanoamericanos: J. Vasconcelos, A. Nieto Caballero, Blas S. Genovese, Francisco Romero, Gabriela Mistral, Juan Mantovani, etc.

¹⁷ Junto a Luzuriaga (director), figuraban como *redactores*: Américo Castro, Dantín Cereceda, García Morente, J. Xirau, L. Zulueta, etc.; y como *colaboradores*: P. Bovet, E. Claparède, R. Cousinet, O. Decroly, Ad. Ferrière, G. Kerschensteiner, O. Lipmann, M^a Montessori, T.H. Simon, J. Vasconcelos, F. Watson, G. Wyneken, Kilpatrick, Krieck, Lombardo-Radice, Messer, P. Oestreich, Piaget, etc....

con profesionales de la enseñanza: inspectores de Primera Enseñanza, profesores de Escuelas Normales Profesores de Instituto y del Instituto-Escuela, maestros y Directores escolares, solidarios siempre con los objetivos de la Revista, proclamados desde el primer momento:

“La REVISTA DE PEDAGOGÍA aspira a reflejar el movimiento pedagógico contemporáneo y, en la medida de sus fuerzas, a contribuir a su desarrollo. Dotada de la amplitud de espíritu que requiere el estudio científico, está alejada de toda parcialidad y exclusivismo, e inspirada en el sentido unitario de la obra educativa, dirige su atención a los problemas de todos los grados de la enseñanza”.

La formación recibida en la ILE, su paso por Alemania y el magisterio de Ortega, son factores que ayudan a explicar la especial sensibilidad “filosófica” de Luzuriaga, de la que ya había dado pruebas en las hojas de “Pedagogía e Instrucción Pública” de *El Sol*¹⁸. Desde esa perspectiva, la *Revista de Pedagogía*, una de las más prestigiosas de España y Europa¹⁹, constituye una excelente atalaya a la hora de analizar el binomio filosofía-educación en España, así como su significación en el panorama cultural de nuestro país. Aunque la publicación iba dirigida a los profesionales de la enseñanza, no por ello descuida la *perspectiva filosófica*, desde una especie de “acuerdo institucional” no explícito: la necesidad del pensamiento filosófico para entender y acometer la problemática educativa. El número de trabajos “filosóficos” publicados en la revista, así como la presencia de figuras destacadas de la filosofía española y europea como colaboradores habituales, constituyen un ejemplo de “sintonía” entre ambos campos, que no se ha vuelto a dar en España.

Junto a los artículos específicos, que comentamos más adelante, en la publicación hay numerosos ejemplos indicativos de esa especial atención a la filosofía, entre ellos:

- *Referencias a la vinculación filosofía-pedagogía*. En el núm. 4 (abril, 1922), una reseña sin firma de la revista *Pedagogía y Filosofía* (*Allgemeine Deutsche Lehrerzeitung*, Berlín, 13 enero 1922) resume la tesis de R. EUCKEN sobre la relación pedagogía-filosofía, y añade unas palabras de Kart Stumpf:

“La pedagogía científica presupone la ética y la psicología: la primera, como la exposición, fundada histórica y culturalmente, de los verdaderos fines vitales humanos; la segunda, como teoría de las disposiciones y sus diferencias, así como de las leyes del desarrollo psíquico. Estos dos fundamentos de la pedagogía están comprendidos desde la época clásica en la filosofía, y no es de desear que ocurra de otro modo. Algunos quieren arrancar la psicología de la filosofía, pero es muy dudoso que lleguen a conseguirlo. La ética, desde luego, queda en el hogar paterno. Por esto no veo cómo puede ser estudiada una pedagogía científica de otro modo que como una disciplina filosófica”²⁰.

- *Las informaciones sobre el estudio universitario de la pedagogía*, que la Revista defendió desde el primer momento, pero nunca en términos de tensión o alejamiento de la filosofía. Lo demuestra la forma en que, una vez creada la *Sección de Pedagogía* en la Universidad de Madrid, se puntualiza quiénes deberían encargarse de esos estudios:

¹⁸ En el número de 3-6-1918, se comenta la aparición de *La filosofía de Kant. Una introducción a la filosofía*, de D. Manuel G. Morente, elogiando el rigor y claridad de la obra: “Por eso nos permitimos recomendarlo a los maestros y en general a todos los educadores; por eso, y porque no podemos olvidar que la suerte de la pedagogía ha estado íntimamente unida, desde Platón a nuestro tiempo (Natorp, Giner, Dewey, etc.) a la filosofía. Y es manifiesto que sin conocimiento de ésta, como de su complemento indispensable para nosotros, la psicología, no llegaremos a tener una completa teoría de la educación, ni aún una educación misma”.

¹⁹ En 1927, la *Revista de Pedagogía* fue designada como órgano oficial en España de la “Liga Internacional de Educación Nueva”, y el propio Luzuriaga, miembro del Comité Ejecutivo de la misma.

²⁰ *Revista de Pedagogía*, núm. 4, abril 1922, p. 158.

“Nuestra campaña de más de veinte años ha tenido por fruto la creación de la Sección de Pedagogía en la Universidad en Madrid [...] Nosotros habíamos pensado que de ellos [los estudios pedagógicos] se encargaran las personalidades más salientes de España en el orden filosófico y pedagógico, y si esto no fuera posible que se trajera del extranjero a algunos de los que con mayor éxito se dedican a estos estudios. Desgraciadamente no ha ocurrido así...”²¹.

- *La amplitud con que informa sobre conferencias y actividades de destacados filósofos:* Unamuno, Gentile, Ortega, Piaget, Francisco Romero, Kilpatrick, Dewey.... Reportajes y páginas especiales dedicadas a centenarios y conmemoraciones de personajes relevantes: homenaje a Luis Vives celebrado en la Universidad de Oxford (junio 1925); el cuadernillo especial dedicado al centenario de Goethe (abril 1932); el trabajo “Erasmus. En el IV centenario de su muerte”, del Dr. Wylly Moog (julio 1936), etc. No deja de ser sintomático, por ejemplo, que la nueva sección “Cursos y conferencias” (núm. 135, marzo 1933), se inaugure con el resumen de las dos primeras conferencias del curso de Ortega: “Ideas en torno a las generaciones decisivas en la evolución del pensamiento europeo (Sobre la época de Galileo, 1550-1650)”. Una nota a pie de página informa que la sección estaría dedicada a “publicar extractos de los cursos y conferencias más importantes y *más relacionados con nuestros estudios*. Empezamos por el importante curso que, inaugurando la “Cátedra Valdecilla” de la Universidad Central, ha empezado a dar semanalmente el ilustre pensador Sr. Ortega y Gasset, y que como todos los suyos han conquistado en seguida la atención de las gentes más selectas. Los extractos que publicamos hoy y que continuaremos en números sucesivos son debidos a la Srta. María Zambrano, profesora ayudante de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras de la Universidad de Madrid”²².

Ese interés por lo filosófico explica igualmente la extensión concedida al curso de Ortega, cuyos extractos aparecen en seis números sucesivos (marzo-agosto, 1933), con un total de 52 páginas, *circunstancia no igualada en ningún otro caso*. El tono y rigor de los mismos –factor decisivo en la atención que les concede la revista- puede apreciarse en el párrafo final dedicado a la segunda conferencia del ciclo. Tras una rigurosa y cuidada reseña de las palabras de Ortega sobre el tema de las generaciones, M^a Zambrano comenta:

“Y termina la conferencia en este punto central, verdadera clave del método histórico que ha fecundado toda la obra de Ortega, que la ha llenado de espléndidos descubrimientos; cambios sutiles y profundos que se escapaban de las anchas mallas con que el historiador profesional pretendía captar el fluir rítmico de la historia. La vida transcurre, se sucede a sí misma, pero con un ritmo que la ordena, que le da sentido y por lo tanto hace posible que se la entienda. Y este ritmo de la historia, hasta ahora inescrutado, es una más de las verdades prisioneras que Ortega ha libertado del oscuro silencio. Ahora, ante nosotros va a pasar la historia de Europa, vista a través de este nuevo microscopio para el tiempo. Esperemos las futuras conferencias”²³.

En la sección “Cursos y conferencias” tendrán cabida asimismo amplios extractos de cursos impartidos por diferentes filósofos españoles y extranjeros:

- “La filosofía actual”, de Francisco Romero. Reproduce las “consideraciones preliminares” de dicho curso que puede servir de introducción a la filosofía contemporánea” (Núms.152, 153, 155, agosto, septiembre y noviembre 1934).

²¹ *Revista de Pedagogía*, núm. 130, octubre 1932, p. 472.

²² *Revista de Pedagogía*, núm. 135, marzo 1933, p. 133 (el subrayado es nuestro)

²³ *Ibidem*. p. 139. Cfr. Zambrano, M.: *Extractos del curso de Ortega sobre Galileo (1933)*, ed. de Ángel Casado, Valencia, Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, 2005.

- “El futuro del liberalismo”, por John Dewey. Conferencia dada en la XXIV Asamblea anual de la ‘American Philosophical Association’, celebrada en la Universidad de Nueva York, el 28 de dic. 1934. (Núm. 159, marzo 1935).
- “Un mensaje a los niños de España”: Reproduce el mensaje que Don Miguel de Unamuno, “en nombre de S.E. el presidente de la República, ha leído el día de Reyes en la fiesta infantil celebrada en Salamanca, para regalar juguetes a los niños (Núm. 157, enero 1935)”²⁴.
- “La psicología de los psicólogos”, por el Dr. Michotte. Conferencia en la Universidad Internacional de Verano de Santander, verano de 1935 (Núm. 168, dic. 1935).
- “Las categorías psicológicas”: Extractos de las conferencias de Manuel G^a Morente en la Universidad Internacional de Verano de Santander, en 1933, firmados por Regina Lago, profesora de Normal (núms. 142, 143 y 144, oct., nov. dic. 1933).

Los ejemplos reseñados, a los que podrían añadirse otros más, indicativos del interés de la *Revista de Pedagogía* hacia las cuestiones filosóficas, prueban de forma fehaciente lo que señalábamos al principio: la atención “institucional” de la *Revista de Pedagogía* hacia la filosofía, como una dimensión ineludible en educación y en los estudios pedagógicos.

En ese marco, hay que destacar, además, un segundo e importante aspecto para el tema que nos ocupa: la colaboración habitual en la revista de destacados filósofos españoles, muchos de ellos vinculados a la ILE, que aportan textos de gran interés sobre cuestiones filosóficas y educativas, y son una prueba evidente de la vinculación entre filosofía y pedagogía en la España del primer tercio del s. XX. La sola mención de sus nombres es ya un dato destacable en sí mismo: Ortega, Zulueta, Zaragüeta, G^a Morente, Zubiri, Gaos, Xirau, M^a Zambrano... No es preciso subrayar que en esa nómina de colaboradores figuran los filósofos que forman el núcleo de la “Escuela de Madrid”, constituida en torno a Ortega, que expresa el interés y atención de la revista hacia la tarea de renovación cultural y filosófica llevada a cabo por Ortega. Su presencia en una revista “pedagógica”, no podría explicarse sin atender a la riqueza y vitalidad de la cultura española del momento; y tampoco sin el espíritu de tolerancia –“aleación de humildad y firmes convicciones”- que impregnaba el “estilo” de Giner.

Algunos de estos autores sólo publicaron un artículo en la Revista: Ortega y Gasset (“Pedagogía y anacronismo”, núm. 13, enero 1923)²⁵; Juan Zaragüeta (“Voluntad y aprendizaje”, núms. 38 y 39, 1925); Xavier Zubiri (“Filosofía del ejemplo”, núm. 55, 1926); José Gaos (“Las ciencias teóricas y las ciencias normativas según Husserl”, núm. 103, 1930); María Zambrano (“Sobre una educación para la libertad”, núm. 156, 1934). Otros, en cambio, tienen una amplia y continuada participación en la revista, entre ellos: Luis de Zulueta y Escolano, que publica siete trabajos, desde “La vela en el horizonte. Una

²⁴ El núm. 119 (nov. 1931), incluye un comentario a propósito del “desdén” de Unamuno hacia la pedagogía: “Sin querer entablar una polémica con tan gran maestro, sólo hemos de decir que los estudios pedagógicos vienen siendo cultivados desde hace siglos por los más excelsos profesores universitarios. No tenemos que citar más que los nombres de Kant, Fichte, Herbart, Dilthey, Simmel y Natorp para ver cómo estas grandes figuras del pensamiento europeo no han desdeñado explicar pedagogía en sus cátedras universitarias. Quisiéramos que el Sr. Unamuno hubiera adoptado igual actitud, tanto más cuanto que su labor como profesor y rector ha sido siempre más pedagógica que otra cosa” (pp. 521-522).

²⁵ Aunque Ortega sólo publicó el artículo citado, en la revista hay amplias referencias a los trabajos del filósofo madrileño, “acaso el más grande pensador de España en la hora actual”: núm 15 (marzo 1923), reproduce algunos pasajes ‘El tema de nuestro tiempo’; los ya citados extractos de M^a Zambrano del Curso sobre Galileo (marzo-agosto 1933); “Socialización del hombre”, que abre el núm. 111 (nov. 1934, pp. 481-484), etc.

pedagogía más moderna” (enero 1922), hasta “Cossío, artista de la educación”, que aparece en septiembre de 1935. Manuel García Morente tiene seis trabajos, publicados entre febrero de 1922 (“La pedagogía de Ortega y Gasset”) y enero de 1936 (“Virtudes y vicios de la profesión docente”); finalmente, Joaquín Xirau, fundador del “Seminario Universitario de Pedagogía” de la Universidad de Barcelona, que es el autor más prolífico, con 18 artículos, publicados entre abril de 1923 (“Pedagogía y practicismo”, que se inscribe en la órbita de la fenomenología) y junio de 1935 (“La formación universitaria del Magisterio”).

Los trabajos citados, muchos de ellos de actualidad indudable, dejan entrever, no sólo la “receptividad filosófica” de los responsables de la revista, sino también la “sensibilidad” de los filósofos hacia las cuestiones educativas. En conjunto, tanto por el número y calidad de los trabajos, como por el prestigio de los autores, constituyen sin duda una aportación ciertamente significativa en el panorama de la filosofía española del momento²⁶.

5. Consideraciones finales

La colaboración habitual de filósofos españoles y extranjeros en la *Revista de Pedagogía*, tal como se indica en las páginas anteriores, expresión de su compromiso con las propuestas de renovación y mejora de la educación, es buena prueba del interés y mutua colaboración entre profesionales de ambos campos. Desde la *Revista de Pedagogía*, en efecto, se insiste en la necesidad del pensamiento filosófico como fundamento indispensable para la teoría y la práctica educativas. Y ello, porque, desde el primer momento, queda claro que no se trata sólo de reformar y mejorar los *procedimientos* o las *técnicas*, sino sobre todo de penetrar los grandes *principios* (filosóficos, científicos, didácticos...) que les sirven de soporte, como la vía más apropiada en la consideración teórica de la realidad educativa, contribuyendo a una visión más global e integradora del hecho educativo, sus interrelaciones y las profundas implicaciones humanas que lleva consigo.

Puede concluirse, por tanto, que los pedagogos son conscientes del papel de la filosofía, junto a otras disciplinas científicas y didácticas, como vía para profundizar en la compleja pluralidad del fenómeno educativo. Los filósofos, por su parte, sin poner en duda el carácter autónomo y la peculiaridad científica de la pedagogía, reafirman vigorosamente su derecho a reflexionar sobre la realidad educativa, con vistas a esclarecer los fundamentos axiológicos y los problemas epistemológicos y éticos que subyacen en nuestra cultura.

Cabe señalar, finalmente –y no es su menor acierto–, que la *Revista de Pedagogía* fue capaz de brindar indicaciones y reflexiones útiles para filósofos y pedagogos, así como también para maestros y profesores en general, ayudándoles en la búsqueda siempre azarosa de una mayor conciencia de las raíces “humanas” de su actividad cotidiana.

²⁶ Vid. Casado, A. y Sánchez-Gey, J., *Filósofos españoles en la Revista de Pedagogía (1922-1936)*. Tenerife, Idea, 2007.

“The [Other] Half of Knowledge”: John Dewey, Michael Oakeshott, and Parallel Critiques of Rationalism in Education

***“La [otra] mitad del conocimiento”: John Dewey,
Michael Oakeshott y críticas paralelas del
racionalismo en educación***

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Resumen:

En este ensayo, mantengo que a pesar de las muchas diferencias que existen entre Michael Oakeshott y John Dewey, los dos pensadores ofrecen visiones muy similares de cómo debería funcionar la educación. Por medio de sus críticas paralelas al racionalismo, ambos pensadores defendieron métodos similares de educación activa. Las similares visiones que Dewey y Oakeshott tenían sobre la educación, complejiza dos asociaciones que se escuchan a menudo: que los métodos de la pedagogía activa se relacionan exclusivamente con las políticas de la izquierda, y que la educación liberal tiene relación con el apoyo a una pedagogía pasiva y centrada en el libro.

Palabras clave: Racionalismo, pedagógica activa, juicio, educación liberal.

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Abstract:

In this paper, I argue that despite the many differences between Michael Oakeshott and John Dewey, these two thinkers offer very similar visions of how education should operate. By way of their parallel critiques of Rationalism, both thinkers advocated similar methods of active education. Dewey and Oakeshott's similar educational views complexify two often-heard associations: that active pedagogical methods are exclusive with leftward political advocacy, and that liberal education correlates with advocacy of passive, book-centered pedagogy.

Keywords: Rationalism, active pedagogy, judgment, liberal education.

1. Introduction

Seldom are the philosophers John Dewey (1859–1952) and Michael Oakeshott (1901–1990) mentioned together or compared to one another. Where Dewey was a democratic socialist, Oakeshott was, depending on the interpreter, either a classical liberal² or a conservative.³ When talking about their philosophies of education, a comparison is equally unlikely. John Dewey is much talked about as an important progenitor of progressive and child-centered education. Michael Oakeshott, on the other hand, is discussed, when at all, as an expositor of a more traditional, subject-centered, liberal education.

For all of their differences, however, Dewey and Oakeshott shared a very similar view of what was wrong with the then-dominant passive models of education, what made these models wrong, and the active model they should be replaced with. First, Dewey and Oakeshott similarly critique what I will call "Rationalism"—the notion that action requires only a rote, or near-rote, application of solid rules, derived by reason, to like situations. Both thinkers, in describing what it is to act, lay much emphasis on the role of judgment (which they both write cannot be broken down into rules).

From here, both Dewey and Oakeshott write, in different ways and using different vocabulary, in support of a constructivist approach to education. Both thinkers stress the importance of not only factual knowledge but also knowledge of how to act intelligently (requiring judgment). Both philosophers see education as something best done via guided practice, for in order for the student to know how to act, she must (if the awkward phrase will be excused) practice acting.

While these two thinkers are rightly seen as opposites in political philosophy, their similar advocacies of an active pedagogy is unique because it is sometimes thought that such a position tends to be exclusive to a leftward persuasion.⁴ Conversely, some associate the advocacy of a more conservative liberal arts curriculum (which Oakeshott advocated) with the advocacy of a passive, book-centered, pedagogy.⁵

² Gray, J., *Post-Liberalism: Studies in Political Thought*, London, Routledge, 1996, pp. 40–47.

³ Rayner, J., The Legend of Oakeshott's Conservatism: Sceptical Philosophy and Limited Politics, *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, 18(2), 1985, pp. 313–338.

⁴ Because many advocates of progressive educational methods have been of a politically leftward persuasion, the pedagogy of active learning has often come to be associated with leftward politics. See, for instance: Ravitch, D., *Left Back: A Century of Failed School Reform*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 2000, pp. 208–238.

⁵ Ravitch, *Left Back*, op. cit., pp. 284–322.

It should be noted that the goal of this paper is to compare (and to some degree, explain) elements of Dewey's and Oakeshott's philosophies, rather than defend them. In this paper, I approach the philosophies sympathetically, rather than critically, in order to understand them and their relation to each other.

2. Key Differences Between Dewey and Oakeshott

As mentioned, what makes some of the parallels between Dewey and Oakeshott surprising is the fact that their philosophies – particularly social and political – are so different. Before entering into analysis of the pedagogical similarities between Dewey and Oakeshott, it may be instructive to briefly review several of the important differences between them.

First, in reading the works of Dewey and Oakeshott, one notices an overall difference in temperament. Dewey's work often exhibits great enthusiasm for the scientific method and an optimism toward change and flux.⁶ In line with much political progressivism at the turn of the 20th century, Dewey sought to apply the scientific method to pressing social problems of the day in order that society could be improved via intelligent piecemeal reform.⁷

Oakeshott, on the other hand, illustrates a conservative temperament that “delight[s] in what is present rather than what was or what may be.”⁸ While Oakeshott recognizes the need for change and flux, his work is generally more pessimistic than Dewey's with regard to the potential for reform efforts to lead to social improvement.

This difference in temperament manifests itself in very different political visions. In books like *Individualism Old and New*,⁹ Dewey argued for a social order containing elements of democratic socialism. Dewey argued that the “old,” laissez-faire form of individualism was too atomistic and needed to be supplemented by a recognition of social interconnectedness. Dewey's political order sought to foster a democratic interconnectedness amongst the polity.

The “old” individualism that Dewey objected to is, to some degree, found in Oakeshott. Essays like “The Masses in Representative Democracy” and “The Political Economy of Freedom”¹⁰ make clear not only Oakeshott's methodological individualism, but his overall antipathy to political collectivism of the kind Dewey endorsed.

Lastly, Dewey and Oakeshott's divergent political temperaments led to very different views toward the school's proper relation to society. Dewey's writings advocate that schools be used democratically as institutions that prepare students to help solve pressing social problems.¹¹ Oakeshott advocated that schools *not* concern themselves with current social problems, but to teach students to “becom[e] aware of a so-called cultural inheritance” in order to “understand some of its specific invitations.”¹² In other words, where Dewey wanted schools to be an engine of social cohesion by fostering students who could think about current social problems, Oakeshott saw schools as engines of individuals whose individuality was based on a solid understanding of the past.

⁶ See, for instance: Dewey, J., *The Influence of Darwin on Philosophy, and Other Essays in Contemporary Thought*, New York, Henry Holt, 1910.

⁷ Ryan, A., *John Dewey and the High Tide of American Liberalism*, New York, W.W. Norton & Co., 1997

⁸ Oakeshott, M., *Rationalism in Politics and Other Essays*, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 1991.

⁹ Dewey, J., *Individualism Old and New*, Amherst, Prometheus Books, 1999

¹⁰ Oakeshott, M., *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., pp. 363-407

¹¹ Dewey, J., *Democracy and Education [EPUB edition]*, Salt Lake City, Gutenberg Project E-books, 2008.

¹² Oakeshott, M., *The Voice of Liberal Learning*, Indianapolis, Liberty Fund, 2001, p. 17.

3. Dewey and Oakeshott as Critics of Rationalism

While Dewey and Oakeshott exhibited marked differences in social and political temperament, their divergent philosophies are undergirded by very similar critiques of Rationalism. Dewey devoted two books—*Reconstruction in Philosophy*¹³ and *The Quest for Certainty*¹⁴—to critiquing the rationalistic tendencies of his predecessors. Oakeshott's most popular essay—"Rationalism in Politics"¹⁵—is devoted to critiquing Rationalism, which he devoted several other essays to as well. This common critique of Rationalism is important for understanding both thinkers' views on why education must be an active process of student participation rather than a passive process of facts and rules conveyed from active teacher to passive student.

By Rationalism, both thinkers meant very similar things: the tendency to view Reason as a fixed and exalted thing that, when applied to concrete affairs, obviates the need for improvisational or in-the-act judgment or discretion. For Dewey, the rationalistic tendency of the philosopher leads her to "produce an overdeveloped attachment to system for its own sake, and an over-pretentious claim to certainty."¹⁶ Dewey lamented that so much philosophy had "arrogated to itself the office of demonstrating the existence of a transcendent, absolute or inner reality and of revealing to man the nature and feature of this ultimate and higher reality."¹⁷

Likewise, Oakeshott describes the Rationalist thus: "At bottom, he stands (he always stands) for independence of mind on all occasions, for thought free from obligation to any authority save the authority of 'reason.' . . . Moreover, he is fortified by a belief in a 'reason' common to all mankind, a common power of rational consideration, which is the ground and inspiration of argument."¹⁸

For both authors, then, Rationalism is the quest for a philosophical system of Reason that stands above (or can be formulated without appeal to) context.¹⁹ For Dewey, Rationalism could best be seen in Platonistic philosophers like Spinoza (and to some degree Kant), in their arguments that "that ultimate reality [decipherable by reason] is the measure of perfection and the norm for human activity."²⁰ For Oakeshott, the Rationalist is best seen in the philosopher of the enlightenment, who holds things like natural rights, supposed "laws" of human progress, and other *a priori* abstract principles to somehow "exist" (rather than being historically contingent ideas emerging as a product of human interactions).²¹ For both Dewey and Oakeshott, then, Rationalism was an adherence to the belief that there is a rational order that transcends contingency and context, and that this is discoverable by *a priori* reason.²²

¹³ Dewey, J., *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, New York, Henry Holt, 1920.

¹⁴ Dewey, J., *The Quest for Certainty*, New York: Minton, Balch, 1929.

¹⁵ Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit.

¹⁶ Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 21. Oakeshott also suggests that Rationalism's appeal is "its appearance of both beginning and ending with certainty." Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., p. 17.

¹⁷ Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., p. 23.

¹⁸ Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., p. 8.

¹⁹ Dewey's Rationalist is committed to demonstrating a "transcendent" reality; Oakeshott's Rationalist "always stands" for reason free from context. Both of these imply that the Rationalist quests for something *above* human context.

²⁰ Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, op. cit., p. 54.

²¹ Tseng, R., *The Sceptical Idealist: Michael Oakeshott as a Critic of the Enlightenment*, Thorverton, Imprint Academic, 2003.

²² There are, to be sure, differences between Dewey's and Oakeshott's portrait of Rationalism, such as Dewey's suggestion that the Rationalist is unjustly bound to tradition where Oakeshott suggests that the

Dewey's above-cited books both aim to convince readers that reason is fully human; neither certainty nor fixity can arise from the use of reason because humans are neither omniscient nor static. Since this is so, viewing reason as a faculty somehow immune from or above context (which imperfect humans can channel but is not itself imperfect) is a fallacy. Instead, seeing reason as a human tool that provides "[c]oncrete suggestions arising from past experience, developed and matured in the light of needs and deficiencies of the present, employed as aims and methods of specific reconstruction, and tested by success or failure in accomplishing this task of readjustment, [must] suffice."²³ In other words, reason may give us suggestions on how to act based on past experience, but it does not obviate the need for intelligence in employment or judgment and modification in light of consequences.

Already, we can see that Dewey is very cognizant of the large role of human judgment in human conduct and that this account is wholly missing from the Rationalist conception of how reason operates. Oakeshott is even more explicit in this recognition. He suggests that there are two kinds of knowledge involved in human action:

"The first sort of knowledge I will call technical knowledge or knowledge of technique. In every art and science, and in every practical activity, a technique is involved. In many activities this technical knowledge is formulated into rules which are, or may be, deliberately learned, remembered, and as we say, put into practice; but whether or not it is, or has been, precisely formulated, its chief characteristic is that it is susceptible of precise formulation. . . . The second sort of knowledge I will call practical, because it exists only in use, is not reflective and (unlike technique) cannot be formulated in rules. This does not mean, however, that it is an esoteric sort of knowledge. It only means that the method by which it may be shared and becomes common knowledge is not the method of formulated doctrine"²⁴.

For Oakeshott, all activity involves both technical and practical knowledge. When driving a car, we utilize the technical knowledge of how (mechanically) to handle the car and abide by the rules of the road, and the practical knowledge of judging when to merge into the next lane, predict the actions of other drivers, and use observation and remembrance of past experience to keep alert for dangers. The former can be taught (by reading a driver's manual or learning how to handle the vehicle). The latter, however, is a matter of practical knowledge—knowledge gained by acquiring judgment that cannot be reduced to a set of fixed rules, but must be, to at least some degree, improvised.

Oakeshott writes of practical knowledge as distinct from technical knowledge in the fact that "the method by which it may be shared and becomes common knowledge is not the method of formulated doctrine."²⁵ How is it shared? Practical knowledge can only be shared by observation and experience. In order to acquire and hone the kind of knowledge that allows judgment in action, one must observe others acting and practice acting oneself.²⁶ Practical knowledge is the kind of "tacit" knowledge acquired from human experience that has not been reduced to a formula. One should, of course, study examples of judgments that have been made in the past (this is where the study of history, philosophy, science, and the like comes in), but, in the end, one must also see concrete examples of judgment being applied to real situations and practice judging in real situations.

Rationalist is not attuned enough to tradition. These differences, while certainly interesting, are beyond the scope of the present article. Here, we will focus only on the similarities in the two thinkers' conception of Rationalism.

²³ Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 95.

²⁴ Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., p. 12.

²⁵ Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., p. 95.

²⁶ Oakeshott is not suggesting that one cannot act until one observes others acting (for to observe is itself an act). Rather, acting gets better through observation of experienced actors and subsequent guided practice.

Oakeshott goes on to write, "Rationalism is the assertion that what I have called practical knowledge is not knowledge at all, the assertion that, properly speaking, there is no knowledge which is not technical knowledge."²⁷ Why would the rationalist miss the existence and necessity of practical knowledge? Because she seeks guidance in Reason of a kind thought to be unfettered by contextualized, prejudiced, mundane, and difficult to unqualifiedly generalize as human experience. "The heart of the matter," wrote Oakeshott, "is the pre-occupation of the Rationalist with certainty."²⁸

Here, the parallel with Dewey becomes very clear. Dewey also explains the Rationalist's motive as a quest for certainty and explainable thus: "Man's distrust of himself has caused him to desire to get beyond and above himself; in pure knowledge he has thought he could attain this self-transcendence."²⁹ For both thinkers, Rationalists were Rationalists because they saw reason as something that could be free from human imperfection and fallibility.

It should be stressed that neither Dewey nor Oakeshott are skeptical of reason itself. Dewey, the pragmatist, sees reason as a human-made tool that, however fallible and contextual, helps humans act in ways that help them attain their ends. Oakeshott, as we have seen, does not deny that technical knowledge is a kind of knowledge or that it is necessary for action. Rather, both Dewey and Oakeshott argue against a misconstrual of what reasoning and acting entail: they entail practical judgment every bit as much as abstract rules.

Dewey and Oakeshott do disagree when speculating as to what motivates the Rationalist. Dewey argues that Rationalism stems from attempts of classical conservative philosophers to exposit a "rational justification of things that had been previously accepted because of their emotional congeniality and social prestige."³⁰ Oakeshott argues quite the opposite: that the Rationalist looks to reason in order to liberate humans from tradition: "Much of his political activity consists in bringing the social, political, legal, and institutional inheritance of his society before the tribunal of his intellect: and the rest is rational administration."³¹

Likely, this has to do with the difference in Dewey's and Oakeshott's political temperaments. Dewey's philosophy is shot through with the idea of change and flux, and he viewed Rationalism as the obstacle to it. Oakeshott, on the other hand, expressed (in his essay "On Being Conservative") a "prefer[ence for] the familiar to the unfamiliar . . . the tried to the untried."³²

Whatever their disagreements, Dewey and Oakeshott agreed that Rationalism is an obstacle to action because it discounts the necessity of human judgment in the equation. Human judgment, being an example of practical knowledge, is not the kind of knowledge that can be taught by learning or divining rules, but must be learned through observation and practice. This greatly influences their views on education, and particularly their equal distaste for passive, rather than active, learning.

²⁷ Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., p. 15.

²⁸ Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁹ Dewey, *The Quest for Certainty*, op. cit., p. 7.

³⁰ Dewey, *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, op. cit., p. 20.

³¹ Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., p. 8.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 408.

4. Critique of Rationalism as Critique of Educational Trends

For both Dewey and Oakeshott, the proper aim of education is to produce the ability to act intelligently, which requires guided practice. For both thinkers, this involves the integration of both information (Oakeshott's *technical knowledge*) and judgment (Oakeshott's *practical knowledge*). Both thinkers were highly critical of education that failed to cultivate both of these types of knowledge, and both reserved their strongest criticism for systems of education of a Rationalist sort—those that confused “education” with “the imparting of technical knowledge.”

It is precisely this confusion that leads Dewey to reject traditional methods of education. For him, education is about producing experiences in the child that induce growth and hopefully lead to future growth-inducing experiences. Consequently, “[a]ny experience is mis-educative that has the effect of arresting or distorting the growth of further experience.” Growth, for Dewey, is much more than the knowing of a new fact or thing that one did not know before. “An experience may increase a person’s automatic skill in a particular direction and yet tend to land him in a groove or rut.”³³

An important part of what Dewey recognizes as “educative experience” was that it cultivates a habit of reflective judgment. For Dewey, the problem with “traditional” methods of education was not that they didn’t provide experience for students, but that “the experiences which were had, by pupils and teachers alike, were largely of a wrong kind.”³⁴ “How many [students] acquired special skills,” Dewey asks rhetorically, “by means of automatic drill so that their powers of judgment and capacity to act intelligently in new situations was limited”?³⁵ Thus, “traditional” education is capable of producing experience that could nurture students’ technical knowledge, but often neglected creating experience that nurtured practical knowledge.

Interestingly, Dewey also criticizes *progressive* education along similar lines. As the teacher’s job is to create experiences that would lead students to grow, Dewey warns progressive educators about the dangers of *unstructured* experience. Judgment, after all, is a skill that must be *cultivated*, and lack of structure leaves judgment equally undeveloped as a structure that emphasizes only technical knowledge.³⁶

Oakeshott is equally hard on visions of education that put focus only, or mainly, on the acquisition of technical knowledge. Even though Oakeshott is often seen as a conservative, he is no friend to traditional “bookish” methods of education—education that focuses only or primarily on “the half of knowledge which can be learnt from books when they are used as cribs.”³⁷ As with Dewey, teaching fact and technique may be education of a certain limited kind but “[w]hat is required in addition to information is knowledge which enables us to interpret it, to decide upon its relevance, to recognize what rules to apply and to discover what action permitted by the rules should, in the circumstances, be performed.”³⁸

5. Critiquing Rationalism Leads to Advocacy of Active Pedagogical Methods

If judgment, or practical activity, is a necessary part of education, and if it is a part that can’t be reduced to articulable rules and formulae, how does it get taught? How does something that cannot be conveyed by symbolic representation get passed from teacher to

³³ Dewey, J., *Experience and Education [Sony EPUB Edition]*, New York, Simon & Schuster, 1983, p. 19.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 20.

³⁵ *Idem.*

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

³⁷ Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., p. 38.

³⁸ Oakeshott, *The Voice of Liberal Learning*, op. cit., p. 50.

student? As both Dewey and Oakeshott recognize that cultivating judgment is an essential component of a good education, they both see the need for education to be active – for it to afford students opportunities to practice acting. While one can learn facts in a passive fashion, this is not the case for judgment. Judgment must be learned, or refined, only by watching examples of others employing judgment and practicing one's own judgment. This, however, is an active process: it requires an active engagement because it requires reflection on what one has seen and immersion in similar activity.

Is it circular, though, to say that judgment can only be learned or refined by engaging in acts of judgment? Doesn't a thing have to be learned *before* it can be engaged in? This is not circular for Dewey, who sees the faculty of judgment as one of several "native capacities" that school cannot create, but can only nurture, in students.³⁹ To Dewey, it would have been erroneous to suggest that we can have *any* experience without exercising judgment. When we see a wagon, for instance, we do not simply see the raw sensation, but we use judgment to recognize it as a wagon, rather than as a mess of sense data. When we see an event, we do not just see the raw sense data, but we construct a story to explain what that data is. Judgment, in other words, is a native capacity that humans use automatically.⁴⁰

Even though judgment is a native faculty, Dewey stresses that this faculty needs to be cultivated and can be cultivated through guided practice. The more it is worked on in school, the more refined the ability to employ judgment becomes. This is one reason Dewey stressed the use in school of real, or authentic, problems designed to get students actively thinking. This way, students acquire not only factual and technical knowledge but also a strong ability to employ judgment.

"As a consequence of the absence of the materials and occupations which generate real problems, the pupil's problems are not his; or, rather, they are his only as a pupil, not as a human being. . . *The type of judgment formed by these devices is not a desirable addition to character.* If these statements give too highly colored a picture of usual school methods, the exaggeration may at least serve to illustrate the point: the need of active pursuits, involving the use of material to accomplish purposes, if there are to be situations which normally generate problems occasioning thoughtful inquiry."⁴¹

Simply put, an individual can learn to improve thinking only by thinking. One can only teach thinking by getting students to actively think. Learning is an active process, and activity is made all the more necessary because, as we've seen earlier, Dewey, like Oakeshott, believed that learning to think is not reducible to teaching a set of rules. It must be engaged in to be understood.

While Dewey's advocacy of active learning in order to sharpen judgment is well known, some may be surprised to hear Oakeshott put in this category. Oakeshott carries a reputation of a conservative, and it is often tempting to believe he is a defender of the "traditional" methods of education that Dewey rejected. A closer look, though, shows us that Oakeshott hinted strongly at a belief in active learning. Oakeshott very firmly believed that education should lead to not just the ability to know but also the ability to understand, think about, and do. All of these things require judgment and all of them, for Oakeshott, required active participation and activity.

³⁹ Dewey, *Experience and Education*, op. cit., p. 36.

⁴⁰ Dewey, *Democracy and Education*, op. cit., pp. 115–116.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 126, italics added.

The importance of engagement in activity for Oakeshott's theory of education stemmed from his recognition of the mind as inseparable from the knowledge that constitutes it.

"You do not first have a mind, which acquires a filling of ideas and then makes distinctions between true and false, right and wrong, reasonable and unreasonable, and then, as a third step, causes activity. Properly speaking the mind has no existence apart from or in advance of these and other acquisitions"⁴².

Like Dewey's view that all experience involves thinking and judgment, Oakeshott sees mental activity not as something apart from experience, but as something that is inseparable from experience. Thinking—the "mak[ing of] distinctions between true, and false," etc.—is a natural part of experience. As such, the learning of judgment, for Oakeshott, required active methods of instruction similar to those advocated by Dewey that demand activity on the part of the student.

"[W]e are apt to believe that in order to teach an activity it is necessary to have converted our knowledge if it into a set of propositions . . . and that in order to learn an activity we must begin with such propositions. It would be foolish, of course, to deny that this device has a pedagogical value. But it must be observed that, not only are these rules, etc., these propositions about the activity, an abridgment of the teacher's concrete knowledge of the activity . . . but learning them is never more than the meanest part of education in an activity. . . . To work alongside a practiced scientist or craftsman is an opportunity not only to learn the rules, but to acquire also a direct knowledge of how he sets about his business . . . and until this is acquired nothing of great value has been learned"⁴³.

As Oakeshott very much believed that the proper end of education was "education in activities" (speaking, writing, thinking within various disciplines), the teacher, then, does not only impart information but also models conduct and assists the student in practicing conduct.⁴⁴

We can see, then, that both Dewey and Oakeshott advocated for the kind of education that teaches judgment and practice as much as the learning of facts, rules, and technical knowledge. Both of them recognized that in order to teach such inarticulable things as judgment and practice, something more than Oakeshott's above-quoted "convert[ing] . . . knowledge into a set of propositions" is needed: the learner cannot learn judgment in the same way she learns fact x or rule y. Thus, both Dewey and Oakeshott advocate an active learning environment where the learner is immersed into the world of practice as opposed to being the passive recipient of knowledge.

6. Conclusion

Despite their differences in political philosophy, Dewey and Oakeshott maintained very similar positions with regards to pedagogy: both were critics of Rationalism; both advocated schools that taught students not only information and technical knowledge but also judgment and practical knowledge, which led both to critique certain educational trends of their day; and both thinkers advocated a type of active learning where the student participates in learning by being immersed in the world of practice.

⁴² Oakeshott, *Rationalism in Politics*, op. cit., p. 109.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 111–112, italics added).

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 59–60.

I have tried to show not only that these three beliefs were consistent between the two thinkers, but also that they are consistent among themselves. That is, a critique of Rationalism that sees error in stripping reason of contextual judgment as its aid is exactly the type of starting point that would lead one to criticize the educational institutions that one believes operate with, and perhaps perpetuate, this error. Likewise, if one believes that schools should teach judgment and practice as well as facts and rules, one may very well go on to advocate a type of active learning where students must learn these types of things (which are not as articulable as facts and rules, and often need to be learned by immersion in practice).

Despite these similarities, Dewey and Oakeshott still came to different conclusions about the most appropriate curriculum. Dewey championed progressive education, while Oakeshott advocated liberal education. If Dewey and Oakeshott agreed on the importance of moving beyond a Rationalistic approach in the schools and active pedagogical methods, then why do they wind up with divergent conceptions of what children should learn (academically speaking)?

Oakeshott was a self-proclaimed conservative in temperament who wrote that the primary business of schools is to educate students into their cultural inheritance—to equip them with the languages created by their forebears so that they can participate in life. Dewey, by contrast, was a democratic socialist who believed that the schools should equip students with the ability to deal with or solve the social problems that would confront them when they graduated.

Thus the differences between Dewey and Oakeshott were over curricular, rather than pedagogical, concerns. This is interesting because it is often thought that liberal and progressive education are pedagogically incompatible. By way of curriculum, this may be true *curricularly*, as progressive education stresses a curriculum determined by relevance to the individual and her environment. Liberal education, on the other hand, tends to stress a “cultural literacy” curriculum that, as Oakeshott writes, initiates the individual into her cultural inheritance. The former, concerned with the present and future, often stresses change, where the latter, concerned with learning from the past and present, tends to stress continuity. But as this paper hopefully shows, there need not be disagreement between progressive and liberal education over what *types* of knowledge schools teach (facts and technique or judgment and practice) or on the pedagogical model best suited to teach those types of knowledge (passive or active). In the age of standardization and increased reliance on standardized tests⁴⁵, recognizing that two very distinct thinkers—“progressive” Dewey and “conservative” Oakeshott—stood together in advocating that schools teach students to think and act via active engagement, rather than passive conveyance of Rationalistic information, should not be overlooked.

⁴⁵ It has often been argued that increasing standardized testing increases reliance on (to use Oakeshott’s term) technical knowledge. This, in turn, leads teachers to use more teacher-centered methods of instruction. See, for instance: Jones, M. G., Jones, B. D., and Hargrove, T., *The Unintended Consequences of High-Stakes Testing*, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield, 2003.

Cierta Experiencia de la Distancia en Educación: sobre “El hijo” de los Dardenne

Experiencing distance in education: on “The Son” by the Dardennes

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Resumen:

En este artículo, propongo reflexionar sobre el concepto de distancia desde la filosofía de la educación y en el escenario la película “El hijo” de Jean-Pierre y Luc Dardenne. Ésta nos servirá de pretexto y contexto para una conversación entre algunos filósofos, escritores y personajes de ficción. El objetivo de este trabajo no será dar *una respuesta* a la pregunta por la distancia –entre profesor y alumno, ignorancia y saber–, sino mostrar cómo dicha pregunta emerge en la experiencia y necesita actualizarse desde cada acontecimiento.

Palabras clave: Experiencia, distancia, educación, hermanos Dardenne.

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Abstract:

In this article, I suggest thinking about the concept of distance from the philosophy of education and in the setting of Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne's film "The Son". This serves as pretext and context for a conversation between some philosophers, writers and fictional characters. The objective of this work will not be to give *an answer* to the question regarding distance —between master and apprentice, ignorance and knowledge, etc., but to show how this question emerges in experience and needs updating from every event.

Keywords: Experience, distance, education, brothers Dardenne.

1. Preámbulos. La educación como experiencia

No parece posible pensar sobre pedagogía sin tratar de decir cómo es y cómo debería ser el mundo educativo. Este es, según autores de referencia como Moore, Hirst o Peters², el papel de la teoría de la educación, que parte de una realidad a concebir en términos educativos y para la cual se programan, normativamente, y bajo cierta necesidad de control de lo que se intenta provocar en otro, proyectos de mejora a llevar a cabo en la práctica. Algunos filósofos de la educación³ creen, sin embargo, que esta forma de pensar la educación —inspiradas en las ideas de normatividad y control— la reducen a un experimento (*experimentum*) que ha vuelto imposible seguir pensando pedagógicamente ciertas categorías.

La educación, planteada como experimento, minimiza las condiciones de aparición del *acontecimiento*. Veremos que esta dimensión es fundamental para volver a ensayar esas palabras con las que nombramos y pensamos el mundo educativo. Una de estas palabras es "distancia": la distancia entre el profesor y el alumno, entre la ignorancia y el saber, entre el alumno, el profesor y el objeto recorrido en la situación de aprendizaje. Aquí, no se tratará todavía de definir, *normativamente*, ni cómo es la distancia, ni cómo debería ser, sino de poner en movimiento dicho concepto, para evitar que se nos deshaga en la boca como un hongo podrido⁴. Sólo podremos plantear esta puesta en movimiento desde la experiencia del acontecimiento, que vuelve precario el equilibrio entre las palabras y las cosas, exigiendo a educadores y pensadores de la educación una gestión que no anticipa, sino que tiene que ser inventada en y para cada caso. El cine de los hermanos Dardenne nos ayudará a pensar esta gestión desde un enfoque que trata de estar a la altura del acontecimiento. Si recurro a estos cineastas es porque lo que me interesa es partir de ellos —y también usarlos— para pensar algo que, no siendo algo que propiamente les pertenezca (una determinada reflexión pedagógica), sin embargo no podría yo pensarla, como pretendo, sin su ayuda.⁵

² Moore, T. W., *Introducción a la filosofía de la educación*, México, Trillas, 2009; y Hirst, P. y Peters, R.S. (1998) *Education and philosophy, Philosophy of education*, vol. I, London and New-York, Routledge, 1998, pp. 27-38.

³ Pienso, en particular —y sobre todo en relación a lo que digo inmediatamente a continuación— en Larrosa, J., *Experiencia y alteridad en educación, Experiencia y alteridad en educación*, Buenos Aires, Homo Sapiens, 2009; en general, éste sería un enfoque compartido por muchos pensadores sensibles a la filosofía del acontecimiento (Foucault, Deleuze, Arendt, Lévinas).

⁴ "[...] las palabras abstractas, de las cuales la lengua por ley natural debe hacer uso para sacar a la luz del día juicios de cualquier clase, se me desmigajaban en la boca igual que hongos podridos." Von Hofmannsthal, H., *Una carta*, Valencia, Pre-textos, 2008, p.126.

⁵ Recurro aquí a una reflexión de Jódar, F., *Salir del escolarismo, Alteraciones pedagógicas. Educación y*

2. La pasividad y los hermanos Dardenne

Si Platón viviese todavía, los cineastas estarían excluidos de su República, como lo fueron en su día los dramaturgos, actores y demás artistas. El cine es una gran ilusión que nada tiene que ver con el conocimiento; *ver* no es *conocer*⁶. Por si fuera poco, el cine fomenta y depende de la *pasividad* de un público que, mientras permanece sentado en su butaca, no está actuando⁷. El teatro moderno quiso ver un problema de distancia entre el espectador, y el conocimiento y la acción, e intentó solucionarlo cambiando las piezas de lugar. Brecht supuso una primera inversión: ocultar el sentido de la obra para que el espectador pudiera salir de su letargo y hacerse hermeneuta. El gesto de Artaud borró las fronteras entre actor y espectador: éste tenía que salirse del puro mirar para empezar a actuar. Para Brecht, el espectador tenía que tomar más distancia; al contrario, Artaud quiso suprimir la distancia entre el actor y el espectador. En realidad, a pesar de haber invertido el orden de la jerarquía, los dos polos de la moderna reforma del teatro⁸ seguían luchando contra el mismo mal: la pasividad.

Sin embargo, si optamos ahora por la butaca, es porque mirar es también una acción que confirma o transforma esta distribución de las posiciones: “El espectador también actúa, como el alumno o el sabio [savant]. Él observa, selecciona, compara, interpreta⁹”. Esa acción tiene un acentuado componente *pasivo*: “Contra todos los discursos que halagan y venden la imagen interactiva: el elogio a la pasividad. Ser pasivo hasta el punto de sentir la llamada, de dejarse llevar, de perderse, de no saber ya dónde estoy, quién soy”¹⁰. La pasividad sería, entonces, la que permite la radical *experiencia* –no el experimento¹¹.

El cine instala un tiempo y un espacio propios que salen al encuentro de la experiencia. No obstante, como dice Luc Dardenne, nuestra época sufre de problemas respiratorios que estorban la experiencia; en cierta medida, nos hemos vuelto impermeables a la realidad. Nos cuesta ver, sentir, decir las cosas. De ahí que los hermanos Dardenne traten de romper ese orden: “Agujerear la esfera estética”¹².

políticas de la experiencia, Barcelona, Laertes, 2007, p. 61.

⁶ Aquí nos limitamos a señalar las deficiencias del Arte desde el punto de vista del espectador, pero no olvidamos que el primer crimen lo comete el artista: copiando la realidad, es decir, desde un punto de vista platónico, alejándose de la verdad, engañando. La responsabilidad en el engaño es doble: la ilusión es creada por el artista y buscada y asumida por su público.

⁷ “Or, disent les accusateurs, c’est un mal que d’être spectateur, pour deux raisons. Premièrement regarder est le contraire de connaître. Le spectateur se tient en face d’une apparence en ignorant le processus de production de cette apparence ou la réalité qu’elle recouvre. Deuxièmement, c’est le contraire d’agir. La spectatrice demeure immobile à sa place, passive. Être spectateur, c’est être séparé tout à la fois de la capacité de connaître et du pouvoir d’agir.” Rancière, J., *Le spectateur émancipé*, Paris, La fabrique, 2008, p. 8

⁸ *Ibíd.*, p.15.

⁹ *Ibíd.*, p.19.

¹⁰ Dardenne, L., *Detrás de nuestras imágenes. El niño, el hijo*, Madrid, Plot, 2005, p. 55.

¹¹ “La experiencia, a diferencia del experimento, no puede planificarse al modo técnico. [...] no es un camino hacia el objetivo pre-visto, hacia una meta que se conoce de antemano, sino que es una apertura hacia lo desconocido, hacia lo que no es posible anticipar y pre-ver.” Larrosa, *Experiencia y alteridad en educación*, op. cit., p. 27.

¹² Dardenne, L., op. cit., p. 51.

3. Un escenario para el acontecimiento

El cine de los hermanos belgas supone un soplo de aire para nuestros tiempos asfixiados. Es difícil meterse en un cine que ha decidido no manejar los códigos, pero, si nos llega a tocar, es como si —y empleo aquí una imagen de Hannah Arendt— nos golpeará un fuerte viento que se levantó de repente.

“Estos pensamientos congelados, parece decir Sócrates, son tan cómodos que podemos valernos de ellos mientras dormimos; pero si el viento del pensamiento, que ahora soplaré en vosotros, os saca del sueño y os deja totalmente despiertos y vivos, entonces os daréis cuenta de que nada os queda en las manos sino perplejidades, y que lo máximo que podéis hacer es compartirlas los unos con los otros”¹³.

La auténtica experiencia requiere una parada por parte del sujeto que se *ex-pone*. A lo que se “*ex-pone*” es al viento del pensar, que levanta todo lo que creíamos creer y ya no podemos seguir creyendo; su fuerza lo arrastra todo. Si algo queda son las perplejidades intangibles levantadas por el pensar, perplejidades que añaden a nuestra detención una parálisis suplementaria. Su aire ha descongelado palabras de nuestro lenguaje, y con esto, todo el saber que decimos a través de éstas¹⁴.

Los Dardenne no explican, y tampoco narran. Su cámara registra cuerpos en tensión, rostros que se encaran, voces y silencios que chocan, espaldas que corren, nucas que sudan, respiraciones entrecortadas. De estos choques nacen auténticas preguntas; no las que necesitamos formular para convertir una hipótesis en teoría, sino perplejidades que irrumpen sin más y que reclaman una atención total e inmediata. Pues lo que la cámara intenta captar metiéndose radicalmente en él es el acontecimiento, es decir, “lo que nos permite hacer una experiencia”¹⁵. ¿Cómo gestionar el choque? Ninguna regla puede aplicarse en semejante situación. El acontecimiento es una novedad radical¹⁶ que rompe con todo lo anterior. Nuestro lenguaje se descongela, nuestro saber se evapora, nuestra acción se paraliza. El acontecimiento es un punto de no retorno; hay que empezar algo, desde cero, y desde ahí ensayar las palabras otra vez¹⁷.

Si los Dardenne no explican, su intención tampoco es brechtiana. No se trata de oscurecer algo que habría que desvelar mediante interpretación; es que no hay nada que explicar. Las películas de los Dardenne son como pequeños laboratorios¹⁸ donde se ensayan las preguntas; ellos mismos se ponen a prueba exponiendo su forma de pensar al acontecimiento¹⁹. El cine de los Dardenne descongela palabras y las ensaya: ¿qué significa ser padre?, ¿ser hijo?; ¿qué quiere decir educar?, ¿devenir adulto?, ¿ser niño?

¹³ Arendt, H., El pensar y las reflexiones morales, *De la historia a la acción*, Barcelona, Paidós, 1995, p.125.

¹⁴ *Ibíd.*, p. 122.

¹⁵ Bárcena, F. y Vilela, E., Acontecimiento, *Dicionário de Filosofia da Educação*, Porto, Porto Editora, 2006, p.18.

¹⁶ *Ibíd.*, p. 15

¹⁷ “We have to try the words and the verbs again” Masschelein, J., The discourse of the learning society and the loss of childhood, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 35(1), 2001, p.12.

¹⁸ “Not to see what we think, but to think what we see”, *Ibíd.*, p. 13

¹⁹ *Ibíd.*, p. 12

4. Cómo ensayar de nuevo las palabras. “El hijo”

Resonancias de martillo y la nuca de Olivier; así empieza *El hijo*: sin preámbulos. La cámara ya estaba en marcha antes de que nosotros estuviéramos presentes; la encontramos moviéndose, buscando su sitio, pegándose a los personajes. Es una cámara inquieta; rechaza deliberadamente instalarse en la posición de un ojo de Dios que lo vería todo desde el no-lugar que supone el encontrarse fuera de algo. Adivinamos –porque esta cámara esconde más que revela– que Olivier estaba leyendo una hoja antes de quedarse atrapado, tan atrapado que no se entera del ruido anormal que empieza a emitir una máquina del taller. Los chicos le llaman, la conexión de Olivier consigo mismo se interrumpe tan rápidamente como apareció. La urgencia de la situación le mete otra vez en su papel de profesor –Olivier enseña el oficio de carpintero en un centro de reinserción social de Bélgica. La mujer que –suponemos– le había tendido la hoja y sigue esperando una respuesta, le pregunta: “¿Lo vas a coger? – No puedo, ya tengo bastante con cuatro.”

Un poco más tarde, entenderemos que había llegado un chico al centro con intención de aprender carpintería: Francis. No comprendemos todavía por qué Olivier se paraliza antes de dar su respuesta, y aún menos por qué, habiéndole rechazado, empieza a espiar al chico a escondidas. De repente, y sin haber interactuado con el chico, Olivier cambia de opinión –o sea, que toma otra decisión; anuncia a la dirección del centro que, si Francis quiere todavía, puede entrar en carpintería. Un Olivier al borde de un ataque de nervios se acerca al chico, al que encuentra dormido en un banco del vestuario. Esta tensa situación inaugura la relación entre Olivier, el profesor, y Francis, su alumno. No hemos reparado todavía en todo lo que entra en el juego de esta relación: ¿Qué clase de profesor será Olivier para Francis? ¿Cómo será el alumno Francis para Olivier? Para pensarlo, habrá que penetrar en ese acontecimiento que supone la *aparición* de Francis en la vida de Olivier, acontecimiento en la medida en que remite a *eso que le pasó* a Olivier tiempo atrás.

Francis ya había irrumpido en la vida de Olivier: asesinó a su hijo cinco años antes de su inserción en el centro. Olivier sólo conocía su nombre, y no había contado con la posibilidad de convertirse algún día en su profesor. El nombre de Francis en la hoja choca con un pasado demasiado presente; eso es lo que acontece. Una novedad con múltiples ramificaciones: Francis ha salido de la cárcel, está libre, tiene que hacer algo de su vida, y no sólo decide aprender carpintería para salir del pozo, sino que, de todos los profesores de carpintería, Francis tuvo que caer en manos de Olivier. Pero Francis ignora que Olivier *es* Olivier hasta el final de la película, mientras éste lo sabe todo desde el principio de la cinta. No sabemos por qué Olivier decide embarcarse en esta aventura; no lo sabemos ni nosotros, ni Olivier, ni su ex mujer²⁰. Por lo que cuenta Luc Dardenne en *Detrás de nuestras imágenes*, él y su hermano tampoco lo saben.

Olivier no sabe dónde se ha metido, pero algo está haciendo: *gestionar* el acontecimiento, es decir, hacerlo suyo. ¿Cómo? Con *gestos*. Los gestos técnicos del oficio que enseña a Francis, pero no sólo: acercarse y alejarse a Francis, colarse en su casa, llevarle un sábado por la mañana a reconocer maderas, invitarle a comer y de repente pagar por separado, etc. Estos gestos que tratan de ajustar la distancia delatan que Olivier *está buscando algo*.

²⁰ Hay una escena terrible en la que Magali –la ex mujer de Olivier– se acaba desmayando al ver a Olivier y Francis juntos. Ella no soporta la idea de que Olivier le esté dando clase al chico que les ha destrozado; quiere saber qué está ocurriendo: “¿Quién te crees que eres? Nadie haría eso... - Lo sé... - Entonces, ¿por qué lo haces? - No lo sé...”.

Cada uno de los encuentros entre Olivier y Francis son puntos entre caminos que se cruzan en una aventura común, y esa aventura es profundamente pedagógica. Las cuestiones estrictamente educativas se entremezclan con otras, y todas son gestionadas de tal forma que ambos personajes van creciendo a lo largo de la película. Olivier y Francis crecen porque hacen bailar las distancias²¹: la distancia entre el profesor y el alumno, el padre sin hijo y el hijo sin padre, la víctima y el asesino, el adulto y el niño. Estas categorías no encierran en ningún momento a ambos personajes, porque se están poniendo a prueba. Prueban las palabras, a ver cómo les sienta cada una de ellas. Mueven sus cuerpos, los hacen chocar, se paran y se preguntan: ¿Cómo no matar a Francis?, ¿querrá Olivier ser mi tutor?, ¿podré ver un hijo en Francis, el hijo sin padre que me convirtió en padre sin hijo?, ¿cómo hacer de Francis un carpintero?, ¿quiero realmente ayudar al asesino de mi hijo?, etc.

Las preguntas se suceden y acumulan a lo largo de la película, sin alcanzar una respuesta definitiva. Y es que esas preguntas no están hechas *para* contestar; son perplejidades que tanto Olivier como Francis van encontrándose por el camino, obligándoles a pararse y tomar aire de vez en cuando. Para ponerse en marcha otra vez. En realidad, el único gran interrogante es: ¿Por qué?; es decir: ¿Qué está buscando Olivier?

5. Un sólo método: echar a andar

« En el año 1818, Joseph Jacotot, lector de literatura francesa en la Universidad de Lovaina, tuvo una aventura intelectual²²»; así empieza a contar Rancière la experiencia del maestro Jacotot. Él también sabía que estaba haciendo algo que nadie haría: dar clase en francés a alumnos holandeses sin poder pasar por un idioma común. Tampoco sabía por qué lo hacía, pero hizo algo: puso un objeto entre él y ellos, el *Telémaco* en edición bilingüe. No importa tanto lo que hizo, sino *cómo* lo hizo. Rancière habla de *aventura*: Jacotot echó a andar por sitios donde nadie se metería, sin saber muy bien dónde llegaría. Pero no importa, porque “quién busca, siempre encuentra”²³. Lo que importa es *encontrar algo*, no importa el qué.²⁴ La actitud de Jacotot y la de los Dardenne es la misma: no hagamos la película antes de hacerla, *ya veremos* qué (nos) pasa en el rodaje. Con el mismo espíritu camina Olivier: a la buena ventura.

¿Qué encontró Jacotot por el camino? Su propio desplazamiento: de maestro sabio a maestro ignorante. La sorpresa fue que sus alumnos *se habían enseñado a sí mismos* a leer y hablar en francés, prescindiendo de sus sabios consejos y explicaciones²⁵. Lo que hizo fue poner entre ellos la materialidad del libro, y les dijo: “Cuéntame lo que ves”. La limitación lingüística eliminó las explicaciones, y suspendió la distancia (im)puesta por la palabra del maestro. No se eliminó la distancia; se *ensayó*²⁶.

²¹ Del mismo modo crece la Alicia literaria de Lewis Carroll: *deviene* más grande de lo que fue y más pequeña de lo que será, y eso simultáneamente, en los dos sentidos. Alicia crece en otro tiempo que pone en movimiento las distancias; éste tiempo es el del *devenir*. Deleuze, G., *Logique du sens*, Paris, Minuit, 1969, p.8.

²² Rancière, J., *El maestro ignorante*, Barcelona, Laertes, 2002, p.9.

²³ *Ibíd.*, p.48.

²⁴ A la pedagogía, como saber de la educación, debido a su carácter fuertemente normativo, en el sentido en que le resulta impensable una educación que no busque la mejora del educando —lo que implica conceder gran importancia al valor humanizador de lo que se transmite— le cuesta pensar en una situación, como pedagógicamente válida, como ésta, en la que tan importante como el *qué* (siempre reducido a un determinado contenido) es la experiencia de poder aventurarse a buscarlo en el seno de una relación educativa, que no anticipa sus resultados.

²⁵ *Ibíd.*, p.12.

²⁶ “Desafíos que no conciernen a nadie se descubren de pronto en el azar de una consecuencia que no

Las barreras que se levantan y se caen marcan el ritmo de aprendizaje; ahí está la distancia que se ensaya. No esa distancia no-decida que, entre el alumno ignorante y el maestro sabio, mengua o aumenta con las explicaciones, sino aquella que se va ajustando a sí misma en la experiencia –siempre singular– del aprendiz.

“¿Cómo introduce la madre, dentro del cuerpo de su hijo (de su sin-habla) la lengua materna? La supone en el niño al que hipnotiza [...]. Suponiendo que comprendemos el lenguaje, lo comprendemos. [...] Ese don asiduo obliga al niño al devolverle a su madre el don que le otorga. De repente, está investido; de repente, habla”²⁷.

La madre le habla al niño, al infante –el que no sabe hablar– *como si* pudiese hacerlo; *le supone capaz* de hacerlo. Todos aprendimos la lengua materna, todos aprendimos a andar de la misma forma: sin explicación, pero sí con invitación.²⁸ Balbuceamos y nos caímos; emitimos primera palabra y dimos el primer paso –ambos henchidos de pasión y deseo: la pasión porosa que recibe la llamada, y el deseo que se mueve para contestarle.

Lo que descubre Jacotot es la presencia del deseo –la voluntad para Rancière– en todo aprendizaje. La experiencia le llevó a descongelar la jerarquía entre una inteligencia superior y otra inferior que coloca al maestro en el saber y al alumno en la ignorancia. Inteligencia, sólo hay una: la nacida del deseo, que tensa todo nuestro cuerpo y le incita a desplazarse²⁹. De ahí la buena nueva de Rancière: si bien no todas las *manifestaciones* de la inteligencia son iguales, sí lo son todas las inteligencias³⁰. El otro elemento señalado es la llamada hacia la cual se tensa el deseo, la *invitación* para echar a andar. La madre dice, “ven”; Jacotot, “leed y contadme”; Olivier, “subid a la escalera”; el fantasma del padre de Hamlet dice “escucha y véngame”³¹.

Y es que el aprendiz es también un *heredero*. Heredar no exige rechazar o aceptar algo en bloque, sino que demanda exponerse a ese algo que ha irrumpido por sorpresa y del cual tenemos que hacernos cargo.³²

habíamos buscado. Eso es aprender. Caen las barreras, y al caer, desaparecen las distancias. Eso es aprender. La oscuridad del bosque se desvanece. Aumenta el recorrido del viaje.” Quignard, P., *Vida Secreta*, Espasa, Madrid, 2004, p.18.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p.93.

²⁸ Un punto de vista alternativo puede verse en: Meirieu, P., *Joseph Jacotot. Peut-on enseigner sans savoir?*, Paris, PEMF, 2001.

²⁹ Ese deseo del aprendiz se ve reflejado en el concepto de *maternaje* de Barthes: “Para explicar este término, tan impreciso para el discurso pedagógico habitual, el autor recurre a la imagen de una madre enseñando a caminar a su hijo. Cuando un niño está aprendiendo a andar, la madre ni discurrese ni se pone a hacer demostraciones; no enseña –teoriza– el modo de andar ni se pone a andar delante del niño. Hace otra cosa distinta: retrocede de espaldas, se coloca en cuclillas y llama al niño, le incita, le provoca, tejiéndose entre ambos el invisible hilo del deseo, sobre el que el niño se apoya para correr hacia los brazos de la madre”, Martínez Bonafé, J., “Ausencias, insuficiencias y emergencias en la educación actual”, *Didáctica general. La práctica de la enseñanza en educación infantil, primaria y secundaria*, Madrid, Mc Graw-Hill, 2008, p. 39.

³⁰ Rancière, El maestro ignorante, op. cit., p.41.

³¹ Shakespeare, W., *Hamlet*, Paris, Folio, 2004, p. 88.

³² Como no me puedo extender, como desearía, en esta idea, me he de limitar a apuntar una interesante reflexión de Jacques Derrida en una entrevista concedida a Élisabeth Roudinesco, en la que señala que todo heredero siempre ha de responder a una especie de exhortación contradictoria: “La necesidad de ser fiel a la herencia para reinterpretarla y reafirmarla interminablemente”. Es decir: recibir lo que es más grande que uno y, al mismo tiempo, preferir, elegir, escoger. Por eso, “el concepto de responsabilidad no tiene el menor sentido fuera de una experiencia de la herencia”. Derrida, J., Escoger su herencia, *Y mañana, qué...*, México, F.C.E., 2009, p. 13.

6. Lo que acontece es un rostro

En enero del año 1996, los Dardenne acaban de rodar *La Promesa*, y Luc escribe: “Emmanuel Lévinas ha muerto durante nuestro rodaje. La película le debe mucho a la lectura de sus libros. A su interpretación del cara a cara, del rostro como primer discurso”³³.

Más tarde, Luc cita a Lévinas: “La ética es óptica”. La óptica forma un triángulo entre el punto de vista —el nuestro—, el punto que vemos —el otro— y el punto de Infinitud que se sitúa más allá de lo que podemos ver. El encuentro ético se produce cuando estoy cara a cara con el otro, porque sólo la mirada puede, en un instante, juntarme a mí, a *Autrui* y al Infinito que hace que el Otro sea radicalmente otro. Para Lévinas, lo estético y lo ético están en conflicto. El rostro surge como *epifanía*, como acontecimiento, como aparición que remite a una trascendencia; pero la visión no es el canal de lo ético. El rostro *no se deja ver*; habla un lenguaje sin palabras, es el primer discurso. Las imágenes de los Dardenne quieren reflejar ese conflicto³⁴. Su cine está pensado como vía para una experiencia ética —la epifanía del rostro— a través de canales estéticos —las imágenes en la pantalla. Los hermanos Dardenne no quieren pintar la vida, sino hacer una pintura viviente³⁵; esto implica que la cámara tiene que perseguir al objeto que está grabando hasta casi fundirse con él. Entonces, habrá puntos de no-visión —esto no ocurriría desde el punto de vista externo del Ojo de Dios— y esa dialéctica entre lo que se esconde y lo que se revela es lo que permitirá hacer aparecer lo ético en una pantalla de cine.

Al principio de la película, Olivier rechaza a Francis por posible carga de trabajo. Pero entenderemos más tarde que lo que le pasa a Olivier es que no puede ver a Francis; es decir, que *no puede ni verle*³⁶. El recorrido es largo y discontinuo. La posibilidad del encuentro con el otro paraliza a Olivier, que empieza por algo más sencillo y menos arriesgado: ver sin ser visto. Es ese *no poder ni verle* —paradójicamente— que llevará los personajes al cara a cara de la última escena de la película.

³³ Dardenne, op. cit., p.54

³⁴ Mélon, M-E., Between ethics and aesthetics: the thinking of Emmanuel Lévinas in the cinema of Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne, *Film as ‘exercice of thought’ and ‘public gesture’*, Workshop Leuven 2-4 February, 2010, p. 7.

³⁵ Dardenne, op. cit., p.105.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

7. Olivier y Francis: el ensayo de la distancia

Hay muchas escenas donde Olivier y Francis chocan; ensayan la distancia que hay entre ellos, tratan de ajustarla. Sólo en el último choque llegarán a *encontrarse*. Cuando Olivier enseña a Francis a construir su caja de herramientas, ésta pone la distancia entre ellos, y ellos van ajustando esa distancia a través de los gestos del trabajo. La escena del parking es otro de los momentos significativos de la película. Francis admira a Olivier porque pudo medir a ojo su estatura; Olivier le contesta que medir forma parte de su trabajo. Entonces Francis le pide que mida algunas distancias: ¿Cuánto hay del coche a mi pie? ¿Y cuánto hay de mi pie a tu pie? Francis le está diciendo: Olivier, mide la distancia que nos une y nos separa. ¿Cuál es esa distancia? En la escena de las escaleras en el patio, la distancia entre Olivier y Francis varía a un ritmo vertiginoso. Al principio, Olivier va llamando a cada uno de sus aprendices para que cojan la madera y se coloquen frente a su escalera. Francis sube la escalera pero pierde el equilibrio. Olivier empieza a gritarle. Francis está a punto de caer, Olivier interviene físicamente; se pega a la escalera, y al cuerpo de su alumno. Los cuerpos chocan, y entonces, Olivier grita: “¡Suéltame, suéltame!”. El ejercicio acaba con la brusca retirada de los dos cuerpos de la escalera.

Francis quiere acercarse a Olivier, tanto que llega a pedirle que sea su tutor; Olivier se paraliza, porque no sabe calcular esa distancia. Y es que ese tipo de distancias repelen al cálculo; en la experiencia, las distancias bailan al ritmo del choque. Lo mismo descubrió Jacotot-Rancière: no hay sólo posturas de ignorancia y saber en el aprendizaje, sino barreras contra las cuales chocamos y que van cayendo. La única distancia educativa es la que se da desplazándose; no se puede *pre-decir*³⁷.

8. Educación y experiencia. Un aprendizaje de la distancia

Foucault describe el acontecimiento como algo que irrumpe en un juego de fuerzas y que hace estallar, al aparecer, cierto juego de lenguaje ya establecido³⁸. El acontecimiento es del orden del azar, de la suerte, de lo que (nos) toca. Olivier no puede *pre-ver*, ni controlar, que Francis llegará al centro; tampoco espera la visita de su ex mujer. Estos dos acontecimientos rompen un orden de cosas, una relación de fuerzas, un juego de lenguaje. Olivier choca con algo, como quien choca con un árbol que no había (pre)visto, y se paraliza. Esa parálisis tiene que ver con la dominación que se relaja, que no supone otra cosa que la descongelación lingüística que señalábamos más arriba.

Con la parálisis, viene el silencio, detrás del cual adivinamos el peso del secreto: “El pensamiento implica el secreto. El secreto, el alejamiento, el *para sus adentros* es la condición para poder pensar”³⁹. El acontecimiento irrumpe con tanta fuerza que instala, en un primer momento, un lapso de silencio, de secreto. No es sosiego, sino todo lo contrario; el acontecimiento añade inquietud a la existencia, profunda y auténtica inquietud. Lo que hay que hacer es echar a andar: nuestro movimiento irá colocando las cosas, en el ir y volver, en el andar y desandar.

³⁷ La distancia educativa: la que *da de sí*; la que, como un tejido, se extiende, se expande.

³⁸ « Événement: il faut entendre par là non pas une décision, un traité, un règne ou une bataille, mais un rapport de forces qui s'inverse, un pouvoir confisqué, un vocabulaire repris et retourné contre ses utilisateurs, une domination qui s'affaiblit, se détend, s'empoisonne elle-même, une autre qui fait son entrée, masquée. » Foucault, M., Nietzsche, la généalogie, l'histoire, *Dits et écrits*, vol. 2, Paris, Gallimard, 2001, p.148

³⁹ Quignard, op. cit., p. 133.

Porque el acontecimiento abre una brecha en ese camino: la brecha del pensar. Los silencios que preceden y trabajan los gestos de Olivier son pensativos, y pertenecen a otro tiempo: “La hendidura entre pasado y futuro sólo se abre en la reflexión, cuyo objeto es lo que está ausente –ya sea porque ha desaparecido, o por no aparecer todavía.”⁴⁰

Desconectar de lo dado para conectar con uno mismo y poder *pensar* esa realidad: es la invitación de Arendt, de los Dardenne, de Jacotot-Rancière. El poso de perplejidades que nos deja la experiencia educativa siempre podrá tratar de recuperarse discursivamente en preguntas que le surgen a uno –a Olivier, a Jacotot, a cualquiera que se exponga– pero son de todos: ¿Se vengará Olivier de Francis?, ¿Cómo convertirse en su profesor?, ¿Qué es un profesor?, ¿Qué es un alumno?, ¿Qué distancias existen en la educación?, ¿Cómo hablar de ellas?, ¿Cómo saber cuál es la distancia adecuada? El cine de los Dardenne nos anima a no desechar ninguna posibilidad, a no empobrecer nuestra experiencia. Una película como *El hijo* ayuda a pensar la educación como experiencia; como dice Maaschelein, necesitamos recurrir a este tipo de obras-laboratorio para airear la filosofía de la educación⁴¹.

Lo que se ha tratado de hacer visible aquí no es sólo que la educación es experiencia, sino que toda experiencia puede tener algo de educativo⁴², en la medida en que el sujeto de la experiencia es el que se expone a la realidad para chocar con ella y transformarse. Querer suprimir la distancia del aprendizaje –como Brecht y Artaud quisieron suprimirla en el teatro– supone frenar el desplazamiento del sujeto e instalar otra distancia, esta vez entre el sujeto y su experiencia. Los cuerpos de Olivier y Francis chocan en la escalera; gracias a esos choques, podrán encontrarse en la distancia adecuada. Ésa es la cuestión: ni suprimir, ni poner, ni disminuir, ni aumentar la distancia. Lo que importa es *poder elegir* la distancia, y esto sólo puede hacerlo el sujeto que se desplaza y también deja que algo, o alguien, le descoloque. Quien busca, encuentra. Quien choca, encontrará la distancia adecuada. No para todos los casos, sino en cada caso.

⁴⁰ Arendt, H., *La vida del espíritu*, Barcelona, Paidós, 2002, p. 236.

⁴¹ “And that is what a laboratory is about: it is *the place (space/time) to try*, the space/time of putting one’s thinking to the test of reality (*the place of the attempt and the essay*) and it is the place of making something appear as such, making it present, making it public” Maaschelein, J., On fieldwork in philosophy and the actual need for laboratories. A proposal and invitation, *Film as ‘exercise of thought’ and ‘public gesture’*, Workshop Leuven 2-4 February 2010, p.12.

⁴² Jugamos aquí con el vocablo latino *educere*, que significa sacar afuera.

Philosophy of Education for the 21st Century: The Projects of Heidegger and Wittgenstein

Filosofía de la educación para el siglo XX: los proyectos de Heidegger y Wittgenstein

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Resumen:

Basándose en una redefinición de la filosofía que relega las preocupaciones epistemológicas a un asunto menor que es mejor abandonar, este ensayo examina las principales funciones y proyectos que los filósofos de la educación encontraron en Ludwig Wittgenstein y en Martin Heidegger. Sus proyectos –como el método de *Übersicht* de Wittgenstein y la *solicitud* y la *deconstrucción de la historia de la ontología* de Heidegger– son de especial importancia para la filosofía de la educación. Su promesa consiste en la apertura de canales de comunicación y en la creación de la posibilidad para dialogar.

Palabras clave: *Übersicht*, *Ser y Tiempo*, filosofía de la educación, *solicitud*, *deconstrucción*, *historia de la ontología*.

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Abstract:

Based on a redefinition of philosophy that relegates epistemological concerns to those of a minor issue best left alone, this essay examines the major roles and projects for philosophers of education found in Ludwig Wittgenstein and Martin Heidegger. Their projects—viz., Wittgenstein's method of *Übersicht* and Heidegger's *solicitude* and *deconstruction of the history of ontology*—are of particular importance to philosophy of education. Their promise lies in opening channels of communication and creating the possibility for dialogue.

Keywords: *Übersicht*, *Sein und Zeit*, philosophy of education, solicitude, deconstruction, history of ontology.

1. Introduction

In the 20th century, there was a decided change in the direction of philosophy—indeed, a revolution: epistemology, understood as the search for ultimate Truth, and which had largely ruled the day for the last 2,500 years, was abandoned. By the search for 'ultimate Truth' we mean the quest to find an absolutely certain and immovable foundation upon which to base any and all claims 'to know' anything whatsoever. Kurt Gödel, Ludwig Wittgenstein, and Martin Heidegger were the three principal architects of this revolution, i.e., they abandoned said search because they considered it impossible to complete. Their work is significant for educational practice because it enables teachers and students to engage in a form of critical thinking, which we discuss below, that creates the possibility for elevating one's consciousness above Tradition.⁴

Gödel's *incompleteness theorems* put the final nails in the coffin of the search for ultimate Truth and buried it. His work belongs to the branch of mathematics known as *set theory*, which "studies the properties of sets, [which are] fundamental objects used to define all other concepts in mathematics."⁵ In short, *set theory* is foundational for mathematics. His work was a response to Bertrand Russell's and Alfred North Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica*, which was

"[T]he most nearly (but, as Gödel showed, by no means entirely) successful attempt to establish axioms that would provide a rigorous basis for all mathematics.... [Gödel showed] that within any rigidly logical mathematical system there are propositions (or questions) that cannot be proved or disproved on the basis of the axioms within that system, and that, therefore, it is uncertain that the basic axioms of arithmetic will not give rise to contradictions".⁶

⁴ "Tradition" is "a morality, a mode of living tried and *proved* by long experience and testing, at length enters consciousness as a law, as *dominating*— And therewith the entire group of related values and states enters into it: it becomes venerable, unassailable, holy, true; it is part of its development that its origin should be forgotten— That is a sign it has become master— Exactly the same thing could have happened with the [Aristotelian] categories of reason" Nietzsche, F., *The Will to Power*, trans. W. Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale, New York, Vintage Books, 1968, pp. 277-278. On page 43 of *Being and Time*, in the first paragraph, it is clear that Heidegger inherited this problematic for his fundamental ontology—indeed, for *Being and Time*—from the just-quoted fragment, viz., p. 514.

⁵ Wright, J., ed., *The New York Times Guide to Essential Knowledge*, New York, St. Martin's Press, 2004, p. 393.

⁶ Gödel, K., *Encyclopædia Britannica, Ultimate Reference Suite*, Chicago, Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011.

As we have said, *set theory* is foundational for mathematics. The foundations of mathematics is

“[T]he study of the logical and philosophical basis of mathematics, including whether the axioms of a given system ensure its completeness and its consistency. Because mathematics has served as a model for rational inquiry in the West [including the quest for ultimate Truth, as we have called it] and is used extensively in the sciences, foundational studies have far-reaching consequences for the reliability and extensibility of rational thought itself”.⁷

Because Gödel showed that the axioms of any given mathematical system *cannot* ensure its completeness and its consistency, and thus that the foundations of mathematics are unreliable and of limited extensibility—i.e., when considered against the criterion of providing absolute certainty—and because such foundations, and hence mathematics in general, has served as a model for rational inquiry, which includes inquiry into the possibility of attaining ultimate Truth, then it follows that inquiry into the possibility of attaining ultimate Truth is also unreliable and of limited extensibility, or as we stated above, impossible to complete. Gödel’s work in the foundations of mathematical logic beyond this point, though interesting, is irrelevant for our present concerns.

Wittgenstein and Heidegger also insisted that the traditional epistemological concerns were misguided because they cannot be answered. In the analytic tradition, Wittgenstein insisted that we have been bewitched by the logic of our language and have been led down the wrong path, which has led us to ask the wrong questions. In the phenomenological tradition, Heidegger pointed to the impossibility of accomplishing the task set up by Husserl’s phenomenological method because bracketing off one’s subjectivity presupposes that one understands the extent to which Tradition has comprised it. In the process of explaining why and how this is impossible, Heidegger made it clear that the epistemological questions that drove Husserl fade into the background, and other questions rise to the forefront. In Heidegger’s words, such questions fade for the following reasons:

“When Dasein directs itself towards something and grasps it, it does not somehow first get out of an inner sphere in which it has been proximally encapsulated, but its primary kind of Being is such that it is always ‘outside’ alongside the entity to be known, and determines its character; but even in this ‘Being-outside’ alongside the object, Dasein is still ‘inside’, if we understand this in the correct sense; that is to say, it is itself ‘inside’ as a Being-in-the-world which knows. And furthermore, the perceiving of what is known is not a process of returning with one’s booty to the ‘cabinet’ of consciousness after one has gone out and grasped it; even in perceiving, retaining, and preserving, the Dasein which knows *remains outside*, and it does so as Dasein. If I ‘merely’ know ... about some way in which the Being of entities is interconnected, if I ‘only’ represent them, if I ‘do no more’ than ‘think’ about them, I am no less alongside the entities outside in the world than when I *originally* grasp them”.⁸

⁷ Foundations of Mathematics, *Encyclopædia Britannica, Ultimate Reference Suite*, Chicago, Encyclopædia Britannica, 2011.

⁸ Heidegger, M., *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, New York, Harper and Row, 1962, pp. 89-90.

In another context in which Heidegger discusses the extent to which Reality—and thus the Real—is independent of consciousness, he says the following:

“The possibility of an adequate ontological analysis of Reality depends upon how far *that of which* the Real is to be thus independent—how far *that which* is to be transcended—has *itself* been clarified with regard to its *Being*. Only thus can even the kind of Being which belongs to transcendence be ontologically grasped.... These investigations ... *take precedence over* any possible ontological question about Reality.... The ‘scandal of philosophy’ is not that [the proof confirming the connection between the ‘in me’ and the ‘outside of me’] has yet to be given, but that *such proofs are expected and attempted again and again*. Such expectations, aims, and demands arise from an ontologically inadequate way of starting with *something* of such a character that independently of it and ‘outside’ of it a ‘world’ is to be proved as present-at-hand. It is not that the proofs are inadequate, but that the kind of Being of the entity which does the proving and makes requests for proofs has *not been made definite enough*. This is why a demonstration that two things which are present-at-hand are necessarily present-at-hand together, can give rise to the illusion that something has been proved, or even can be proved, about Dasein as Being-in-the-world. If Dasein is understood correctly, it defies such proofs, because, in its Being, it already is what subsequent proofs deem necessary to demonstrate for it.... The pursuit of such proofs presupposes an inappropriate *formulation of the question*.... Our task is not to prove that an ‘external world’ is present-at-hand or to show how it is present-at-hand, but to point out why Dasein, as Being-in-the-world, has the tendency to bury the ‘external world’ in nullity ‘epistemologically’ before going on to prove it.... Our discussion of the unexpressed presuppositions of attempts to solve the problem of Reality in ways which are just ‘epistemological’, shows that this problem must be taken back, as an ontological one, into the existential analytic of Dasein”.⁹

Prior to this revolution, the epistemological questions, “What do we know?” and “How do we know it?” ruled the day. These questions demanded answers that were absolutely certain. Looking back to the 20th century, we can see that many philosophers abandoned the search for absolute certainty, and turned toward pragmatism. Their turn notwithstanding, their questions generally remained the same, i.e., they did not stop asking epistemological questions. What changed were the standards of acceptable answers, as illustrated by Dewey’s *warranted assertability*.¹⁰ Because they did not stop asking epistemological questions, we see their turn toward pragmatism as a mistake. What happens as a result of this revolution and where philosophy can go after it is something we do not think has been fully appreciated by the philosophic community specifically, nor by the rest of the intellectual community generally.

Wittgenstein and Heidegger insisted that we cease to ask epistemological questions. What they advocated is *not* a turn toward pragmatism, but rather that we simply ask *different questions*. The questions that replace epistemological ones are, ‘How does human consciousness develop, and how does it apprehend its environment?’ These are questions about education, as we discuss below, and philosophers of education are in many ways uniquely suited to answer them. While some readers may object that developmental psychology and/or cognitive science is/are better suited than philosophy of education to answer these questions, we would remind them that philosophy is the history of developmental psychology and cognitive science, which is to say that philosophy is the

⁹ Ibid, pp. 246, 249, 250, 251, 252.

¹⁰ For an overview of Dewey’s work, and to learn about the place of *warranted assertability* within it, readers may visit: John Dewey (1859—1952), *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, accessed January 23, 2011, <http://www.iep.utm.edu/dewey/>

source of the problems Gödel, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger tried to dissolve. Hence, it is likely that philosophers of education, by virtue of having been trained in philosophy, are more familiar with it than developmental psychologists and cognitive scientists, and thus it is likely that they are better suited to inquire into the source of the problems that contemporary educational theory and practice has inherited from philosophy. In short, it is likely that philosophers of education are better suited than developmental psychologists and cognitive scientists to undertake the deconstruction of the history of ontology—an issue that we discuss below. Now, we will proceed to illustrate some of the programs, projects, and problems which are of specific interest to philosophy of education as laid out in the works of Wittgenstein and Heidegger.

2. Wittgenstein's Philosophy as Therapeutic Practice

Ludwig Wittgenstein is one of the most influential philosophers in the twentieth century. His two main books, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) and *Philosophical Investigations* (1953), are counted as classics of modern philosophy. Despite the popularity of his writings, Wittgenstein has been misunderstood, or at least interpreted in quite different ways. Many labels are used to describe him: e.g., behaviorist, positivist, skeptic, naturalist, and anti-realist. Whether or not interpreters agree about Wittgenstein's philosophy, they tend to interpret him according to their perspectives.

What allows this multiplicity of interpretations? First, he did not publish any philosophical books after the *Tractatus*. Positivists ignored the mystical part of the *Tractatus*, which led to their line of interpretation. His later philosophy, on the other hand, spread out only through those who attended his lectures in Cambridge University. Although many of Wittgenstein's writings were published after his death and are now available, most of them were written as notes and remarks that, in his opinion, did not yet deserve to be published as a book. Secondly, his approaches to language are so different between the early and later philosophies that scholars hardly find any continuity between them. Thirdly, his writing style leaves his work vague. Most of his work consists of aphorisms and segments, an important part of the *Tractatus* is not written on purpose, and the *Investigations* is filled with examples and questions, which readers are expected to answer. His writing style, and therefore the multiplicity of interpretations, is carefully chosen to serve the aim of his philosophy. We shall discuss the aim of his philosophy in order to understand this.

Wittgenstein had difficulty publishing the *Tractatus*. After three publishers turned down his request, Wittgenstein wrote to Ludwig von Ficker, the editor of *Der Brenner*, and asked about the possibility of publishing it. In the letter, Wittgenstein explained to von Ficker, who did not know much about philosophy and logic, the point of the work:

“The point of the book is ethical. I once wanted to give a few words in the foreword which now actually are not in it, which, however, I'll write to you now because they might be a key for you: I wanted to write that my work consists of two parts: of the one which is here, and of everything which I have *not* written. And precisely this second part is the important one. For the Ethical is delimited from within, as it were, by my book; and I'm convinced that, *strictly* speaking, it can ONLY be delimited in this way”.¹¹

¹¹ Wittgenstein, L., Letters to Ludwig von Ficker, *Wittgenstein: Sources and Perspectives*, ed. C. G. Luckhardt, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1979, pp. 94-5.

The *Tractatus* is relatively short, having only seventy-four pages. It mostly talks about the logical structure of the world and language. But, according to Wittgenstein, the main part is not written. It is important that the Ethical is delimited by not being written. Why did he, then, not write the main part? How could he delimit the Ethical by not writing it? Wittgenstein also recommended that the editor should read its foreword and conclusion. He wrote in the foreword:

“The book deals with the problems of philosophy, and shows, I believe, that the reason why these problems are posed is that the logic of our language is misunderstood. The whole sense of the book might be summed up in the following words: what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence”.¹²

Wittgenstein writes a similar expression in the conclusion: “What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence.”¹³ The reason why the main part was not written is that it is not to be said but to be **shown**. He thought that by talking about only what one can talk about, he could delimit and at the same time show what cannot be talked about. “Thus the aim of the book,” he continued in the foreword, “is to draw a limit to . . . the expression of thoughts.” The aim of the *Tractatus* is to show the limit of language clearly, and to distinguish what may be said from what may not.

Here, Wittgenstein gives philosophy a new role. As we quoted above, he found the origin of philosophical problems in our misunderstandings of the logic of our ordinary language. For example, the word ‘is’ can be used as a copula, a sign for identity, or an expression for existence.¹⁴ When we misconceive the use of our language because of such superficial similarities, misunderstandings occur. He assigns philosophy a specific task of clarifying propositions and removing confusions by logical analysis. He characterized philosophy in contrast to the natural sciences:

- 4.11 The totality of true propositions is the whole of natural science.
- 4.111 Philosophy is not one of the natural sciences.
- 4.112 Philosophy aims at the logical clarification of thoughts.
 - Philosophy is not a body of doctrine but an activity.
 - A philosophical work consists essentially of elucidations.
 - Philosophy does not result in ‘philosophical propositions,’ but rather in the clarification of propositions.
 - Without philosophy, thoughts are, as it were, cloudy and indistinct: its task is to make them clear and to give them sharp boundaries.

While the propositions of the natural sciences are either true or false and talk about the world, philosophy does not say anything about the world, but rather serves to clarify propositions. To do so, philosophy may produce pseudo-propositions, which cannot be either true or false, but rather nonsensical¹⁵ (he calls such propositions elucidations). Such results, as doctrines, cannot be philosophy in the Tractarian sense because the elucidating

¹² Wittgenstein, L., *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, trans. D. Pears and B. F. McGuinness, London, Routledge, 1961, p. 3 (abbreviation: TLP. A number after a comma indicates page number; a number after abbreviation indicates section number).

¹³ Wittgenstein, TLP 7.

¹⁴ Wittgenstein, TLP 3.324.

¹⁵ Wittgenstein, TLP 6.54.

action is essential. Explaining clearly what can be said, philosophy draws the limits of expressions of thoughts and shows what cannot be said. For the earlier Wittgenstein, this is the only correct method of philosophy.

- 6.53 The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e., propositions of natural science—i.e., something that has nothing to do with philosophy—and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. Although it would not be satisfying to the other person—he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy—*this* method would be the only strictly correct one.

Although Wittgenstein once believed that there is only one correct method of philosophy, he questioned the idea in his later period. In *Philosophical Investigations*, he wrote:

“To say ‘This combination of words makes no sense’ excludes it from the sphere of language and thereby bounds the domain of language. But when one draws a boundary it may be for various kinds of reasons [. . .] So if I draw a boundary line that is not yet to say what I am drawing it for”.¹⁶

Removing nonsensical propositions and delimiting expressions of thoughts was the only philosophical method that Wittgenstein took to be right in the *Tractatus*. The later Wittgenstein admits, however, that the *Tractatus* has not yet achieved its task with that method. There is nothing wrong with the method itself. But drawing a boundary line can be used for various purposes. “If I surround an area with a fence or a line or otherwise,” for example, “the purpose may be to prevent someone from getting in or out; but it may also be part of a game and the players be supposed, say, to jump over the boundary; or it may shew where the property of one man ends and that of another begins; and so on.”¹⁷ Merely drawing a line between what can and cannot be said, one may not yet have accomplished what one wants to do. Wittgenstein recognized that he was wrong to believe that this one method resolved all philosophical confusions essentially. Did the later Wittgenstein, then, change his philosophy entirely? The answer is ‘no.’ He still thought that philosophy differs from the sciences. It is not a body of doctrine, but an *activity*. Philosophy’s task is still clarification, and philosophy does not *tell* but *shows* a right way.¹⁸ What he changed is his idea of what a philosophical method should be and how it works.

Removing nonsensical propositions is no longer philosophy’s *only* correct method, but is rather *one* of them. “There is not *a* philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies.”¹⁹ It is important that he characterizes philosophical methods as therapeutic. Philosophy is seen as an activity of curing philosophical disease.²⁰ The therapeutic treatment of philosophical problems is carried out through grammatical clarification. This clarification removes philosophical confusions, which occur when one is held captive by a certain philosophical picture. Thus, the task of philosophy—in the later

¹⁶ Wittgenstein, L., *Philosophical Investigations*, 2d ed., trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, Oxford, Blackwell, 1958, sections 309 and 499 (abbreviation: PI).

¹⁷ Wittgenstein, PI 499.

¹⁸ Wittgenstein, PI 89-133; especially 90, 109 and 133.

¹⁹ Wittgenstein, PI 133.

²⁰ Wittgenstein, PI 593.

Wittgenstein's sense—is to set philosophers free from the philosophical pictures that hold them captive, as if philosophy cures their illness. What is wrong with the earlier Wittgenstein is, as he states,²¹ that he himself was held captive by a picture concerning the general form of propositions, and that he could not see any other functions of language. “A picture held us captive. And we could not get outside it, for it lay in our language and language seemed to repeat it to us inexorably.”²² Thus, for the later Wittgenstein, “Philosophy is a battle against the bewitchment of our intelligence by means of language.”²³

Although Wittgenstein's concern is language, we should take it seriously when he states that language is the main part of forms of life. “And to imagine a language means to imagine a form of life.”²⁴ He is very critical about the poverty of imagination used when considering different cultures. Wittgenstein criticizes Frazer because he interpreted customs of primitive people within the framework of his own culture and considered them stupid:

“The very idea of wanting to explain a practice—for example, the killing of the priest-king—seems wrong to me. All that Frazer does is to make them plausible to people who think as he does. It is very remarkable that in the final analysis all these practices are presented as, so to speak, pieces of stupidity. But it will never be plausible to say that mankind does all that out of sheer stupidity.”²⁵

“What a narrow spiritual life on Frazer's part! As a result: how impossible it was for him to conceive of a life different from that of the England of his time!

Frazer cannot imagine a priest who is not basically a present-day English parson with the same stupidity and dullness”.²⁶

Rather than taking a scientific approach, Wittgenstein recommends that we undertake *Übersicht* (or overview²⁷) in order to understand different cultures:

“And so the chorus points to a secret law,” one feels like saying to Frazer's collection of facts. I *can* represent this law, this idea, by means of an evolutionary hypothesis, or also, analogously to the schema of a plant, by means of the schema of a religious ceremony, but also by means of the arrangement of its factual content alone, in a ‘perspicuous’ (*übersichtliche*) representation. The concept of perspicuous representation is of fundamental importance for us. It denotes the form of our representation, the way we see things”.²⁸

The key to release us from a captive picture is our ability to see or even invent a link between something familiar and something strange:

“A main source of our failure to understand is that we do not *command a clear view* (*übersehen*) of the use of our words. Our grammar is lacking in this sort of perspicuity (*Übersichtlichkeit*). A perspicuous representation produces just that understanding which consists in ‘seeing connection’. Hence the importance of finding and inventing *intermediate cases*”.²⁹

²¹ Wittgenstein, PI 114.

²² Wittgenstein, PI 115.

²³ Wittgenstein, PI 109.

²⁴ Wittgenstein, PI 19.

²⁵ Wittgenstein, L., Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*, *Philosophical Occasions 1912-1951*, ed. J. C. Klagge and A. Nordmann, Indianapolis and Cambridge, Hackett, 1993, 133 (abbreviation: PO).

²⁶ Wittgenstein, PO 125.

²⁷ Interpreters of Wittgenstein have had difficulties in translating the cognates of *Übersicht* into English, which has been translated as ‘survey,’ ‘surview,’ ‘bird's eye view,’ ‘synoptic view,’ or ‘perspicuity’ as well.

²⁸ Wittgenstein, PO 133.

²⁹ Wittgenstein, PI 122.

Again, there is more than one method for curing philosophical illness: describing how we use words, asking how we teach and learn words, inventing fictional language games, and so on. These methods help us to get a clear view of the use of our words and understand what is wrong with them. “This entanglement in our rules is what we want to understand (i.e., get a clear view of)”.³⁰ The clarification as *Übersicht* is more than removing nonsensical propositions. It is expected to cause changing attitudes, freeing oneself from the old view, or seeing the world differently.

Wittgenstein teaches a skill or technique to make oneself free from captive pictures: “what mattered about his work was not its specific results, but its new way of philosophizing, a method or skill, which would enable us to fend for ourselves.”³¹ There is no longer the single right way of seeing the world. Philosophy never offers the only correct view of the world. Instead, it teaches the technique with which one releases oneself from a captive picture. He writes, “What is your aim in philosophy? To shew the fly the way out of the fly-bottle”.³²

The specific projects resulting from Wittgenstein’s view of philosophy are many, but of those the following are of special interest to philosophers of education. We should help to show those who are captured in a logically closed system a way out by explaining that other views are also possible. This would also be the case for those with closed minds, or who are trapped in an outdated view. Such are those who are satisfied with themselves and think that they do not need to learn anything new. It is they, however, who stand to learn how to make something familiar strange in order to begin to abandon an outdated view.³³ For example, *An Education* (2009), a film directed by Lone Scherfig, depicts several scenes within a traditional classroom, the like in which many, if not most readers have been formally educated: e.g., desks in neat rows where students are expected to sit; the teacher’s desk situated across from them; a blackboard; and other schoolroom paraphernalia. This film also depicts several scenes without this place—e.g., in a concert hall, a jazz bar, a hotel room, domestic spaces, etc.—where the main character receives an informal, though (arguably) no less valuable education. A professor of education could use this film with pre-service teachers who, like our readers, have likely been formally educated in traditional classrooms, and thus who are familiar with them, to discuss what may be strange notions of what an ‘education’ entails. Through such an exercise, a teacher may render strange what students have otherwise presumed is familiar, and thereby expand their notions of ‘education.’ The point here is not to demonstrate that their views are necessarily incorrect and that these other views are true, but simply that there may be other perspectives worthy of consideration.

³⁰ Wittgenstein, PI 125.

³¹ Glock, H. J., *A Wittgenstein Dictionary*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1996, p. 292.

³² Wittgenstein, PI 309.

³³ We hope that readers will understand our meaning here by way of an example drawn from the arts—in particular, the film *An Education* (2009), directed by Lone Scherfig. This film depicts several scenes within a traditional classroom, the like in which most readers (we would venture to say) have been formally educated: e.g., desks in neat rows where students are expected to sit; the teacher’s desk situated across from them; a blackboard; and other schoolroom paraphernalia. This film also depicts several scenes without this place—e.g., in a concert hall, a jazz bar, a hotel room, domestic spaces, etc.—where the main character receives an informal, though (arguably) no less valuable education. A teacher could use this film with pre-service teachers who, like our readers, have likely been formally educated in traditional classrooms, and thus who are familiar with them, to discuss what may be strange notions of what an “education” entails. Through such an exercise, a teacher may render strange what students have otherwise presumed is familiar, and thereby expand their notions of “education”.

3. Heidegger's Philosophy as Striving toward Authenticity

Heidegger was also concerned about how people become trapped within a particular worldview, and he expressed his concern in *Being and Time*. Its accessibility is enhanced if readers understand that Heidegger speaks with many different voices throughout the text, and learn to identify each in their turn.³⁴ For our purposes, we will limit ourselves to two: Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein*, and his deconstruction of Western intellectual history. *Dasein* is Heidegger's term for that which is common to all human existence. His analysis of it is the primary task of *Being and Time*, and has the effect of correcting/replacing Aristotle's analysis of human nature in terms of *categories*.

3.1. Solitude

Heidegger's analysis of *Dasein* revolves around the notion of *authenticity*. The problem of authenticity—i.e., the central problem of *Being and Time*—is a problem of education, but Heidegger did not explore the educational aspects of this issue. It can be understood in the following way. When one tries to follow a moral rule, one must apply it to unique situations. Such situations will have similarities and differences with and from previous ones, and to the extent that the differences are significant, one must interpret the rule in order to apply it correctly. This is exactly what cannot be done unless one understands the basis, or the ground for the rule. Only if the ground for the rule has become one's own—i.e., only if one has come to the rule as the conclusion of long thought and experiential process—is one in a position to interpret the rule properly. Exactly to the extent that *Dasein* exists without a ground of its own it exists inauthentically, and to the extent that it has made that ground its own, it exists authentically.

As *Dasein* struggles to make a ground of its own—i.e., as it works to lay down a basis of understanding upon which its authentic existence will rest—it interacts with the world in two different ways, which fall under the general heading of *care*: *concern* and *solicitude*. *Dasein* exhibits concern when it interacts with entities that are not *Dasein*. The type of care that *Dasein* exhibits towards others of its own kind, other *Daseins*, is *solicitude*. We may think of education as a form of what Heidegger called *solicitude*. We will discuss the two extremes of positive *solicitude* here, *leaping in* and *leaping ahead*, as these apply to education and teaching.

On the one hand, a teacher may ignore her students' concern with particular objects and ideas and *leap in* for them, effectively expelling them from the ground they could otherwise claim as their own. When they return, they find it has been colonized by Tradition. Without an understanding of its primordial sources (i.e., as a mode of living that emerged in a particular place at a particular time, and was expressed in a particular manner), most students become dependent upon and dominated by Tradition's claim that the issues they raise have been settled once and for all. This approach to education destroys learning, for it denies students the opportunity to face novel situations, to weigh their relative similarities and dissimilarities with previous situations, and to decide whether Tradition's scripted answers should be accepted, modified, or rejected.

³⁴ One will also occasionally find Heidegger critiquing and correcting Husserl's phenomenological method. However, there is one overriding voice that is always present in *Being and Time*, and that is Heidegger engaging Aristotle in discussion.

On the other hand, a teacher may *leap ahead* of her students by understanding their own individual ground and aspirations. Effectively, the teacher prepares the ground for them by introducing novel situations and gauging her students' comprehension of them, and by getting out of their way so they themselves may choose whether, and if so the extent to which Tradition is useful in facilitating interpretation, and ultimately assimilation. In *leaping ahead*, the teacher is intervening in the *process* of interpretation, not in guaranteeing its results.

Let's take what we consider to be a common dictum of contemporary education as an example, while citing a historical event to illustrate our point. Students cannot genuinely accept a rule such as, "Thou shalt respect cultures different from thine own," unless two conditions are met. First, they must have a ground of their own from which to accept, revise, or reject it; and second, they must understand the ground upon which the rule rests. If the first condition is not met, then students cannot choose to accept, revise, or reject said rule. If the first condition is met but the second is not, then they may seek for its ground, modify it if found, or abandon the search altogether. This is where teaching shades into persuasion—not persuasion to accept the rule, but persuasion to consider, learn, and understand it.

If at the beginning of the lesson it is already the case that the students have a ground of their own upon which to stand, then the rest of the lesson becomes easier to teach in the way we desire, but it is not hopeless without this being the case. If the students lack a ground of their own, then teaching in the way we desire is the first step towards helping them to build it. Teaching in the traditional way, the teacher would predetermine that students' accurate reproduction of the rule in an assignment would constitute a correct understanding of it. If, as is generally the case, the students are aware that such a pre-determination has been made and their adherence thereto determines their passing or failing, then the conditions exist for the students to acquiesce to Tradition's prescriptions, and thus to exist inauthentically. In such cases, the teacher supposes that students have both understood the rule and have chosen it for themselves, when in fact they have made no such choice. What they have done is little more than to memorize a rule that they have agreed to try to follow blindly.

As disturbing as it may seem on the surface, we insist on a different course, one that provides a space in which students may choose to respect other cultures on their own, or in any given case choose not to do so. We believe, and will endeavor to demonstrate below, that when in the process of building a ground of their own, students come to ask why they should respect other cultures, and we as teachers leap ahead of them and provide opportunities for their choices to emerge. We believe they will themselves choose to respect other cultures, insofar as they share the same ground as their own. Only by having a ground of their own, and only by understanding Tradition's primordial sources—viz., self-preservation—can students choose at all and not fall prey to what Tradition asserts to be self-evident. In short, what we are advocating is not a goal or a destination, but rather a *process* of self-authentication.

Let's suppose we are Heideggerian high school teachers who leap ahead of our students. Our subject is Modern European History, and our topic is the treatment of Jews and Muslims in Spain under the Inquisition. Shunning the possibility of merely telling our students that disrespecting cultures other than their own is wrong, we would together consider some of the potential consequences of such treatment. In leaping ahead of them, we may present the following points to them: the presence of large numbers of Muslims and Jews made Spain the only multiethnic and multireligious country in

Western Europe at the dawn of the 15th century. In effect, what the Inquisition mounted against them amounted to crown-sanctioned intolerance, spying, torture, theft, expulsion, and extermination. Its Jewish victims totaled nearly 200,000, and nearly 300,000 Moors suffered as well. What the Catholic monarchs apparently failed to consider was their identity beyond being mere so-called infidels. Importantly, Jews were essential members of the merchant and financial class. They were also administrators of the state, which included the affairs of colonial management. In their absence, not only did state administration suffer, but also much domestic and foreign policy financing was left in the hands of South German and Genoese creditors, which encumbered their future revenues with alien interests. Moreover, the expulsion of the Muslims hurt many urban creditors to whom they were indebted. Combined with the exorbitant price of trying to convert heretics on both sides of the pond, while also failing to develop domestic investment in infrastructure and industry, Spain was incapable of maintaining its geopolitical stature.

In light of the foregoing example, what reasonable conclusions may we expect our students to reach regarding observing respect for cultures unlike their own? If they admit that the United States, like 15th century Spain, is a multiethnic and multireligious nation whose subgroups are critical to its cultural and economic life, we may help them to reach the conclusion that crippling our nation's capacity to profitably conduct internal and external trade would have deleterious effects on their ability to thrive. In short, we believe that self-interest (individually and collectively) would compel them to infer that individuals, regardless of their differences, need each other to flourish. More generally, if students cannot find it in their hearts to love or celebrate others' uniqueness, then students may at least come to respect others' indispensable contributions to our nation. Anything short of this ethical approach to instruction would run the risk of crippling our students' critical faculties and thereby of preventing them from growing to responsibly exercise their rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We would expect our students to arrive at these conclusions, but other possibilities exist. There are no guarantees here and we will not try to veil this fact.

3.2. Deconstruction of the History of Ontology

Deconstructivism is a term which is likely familiar to the reader. It is closely allied with the writings of Jacques Derrida, wherein it signifies a position of extreme criticism bordering and sometimes running over into skepticism, and as such the meaning is almost completely negative. Yet the term's contemporary usage originates with Heidegger. When Heidegger uses the phrase, it points toward two different projects, one narrow and the other broad, each of which are positive at their core in potential outcome. The point of each is to discover or rediscover the basis for Tradition. The narrower of these is something that must be done by each of us individually. Seen in this way, it is an extension of what we have discussed above when we spoke of authenticity and the attempt to build a ground of one's own.

The second of these projects, the broader, is the one of interest to us here, for it points to a role specifically suited to philosophers of education. Heidegger involves himself in this task in many of his writings (e.g., *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, and others), but it is as a philosopher who goes back and examines the history of philosophy, finds mistakes that have been made, and opportunities missed, and original meanings that have been distorted. As philosophers of

education, our task would be to undertake similar investigations in the history of philosophy as they have influenced educational theory and practice. One might also see this as an attempt to discover those unspoken and sometimes forgotten assumptions upon which our current theories rest, with the point being to reexamine these as to their current validity. One need but look at the three most prominent names in the history of education—Plato, Locke, and Dewey—to realize that all three were philosophers, and thus are subjects of study uniquely suited to our talents. These are but three examples of where such studies might go. Many others are possible. It is not necessary that such examinations be limited to studying key figures. Instead, one may look at the basis of educational theories, concepts, categories, or most anything else.

One such project, in which the authors of this paper are personally involved, is to reexamine Aristotle's picture of how the human brain works—i.e., of how it learns—and then to trace the influence of this picture (which is considerable) through the writings of Aquinas, Locke, Kant, and finally to 20th century writers such as Dewey,³⁵ Piaget, the Behaviorists, and others. What we are doing is trying to understand how our view of education would change in light of the substantial alterations of Aristotle's picture that are present in Heidegger's revision, and then to correlate this with our current knowledge of the brain that comes from the neurosciences.

As we stated above, Heidegger opens the door to these investigations and points the way. While he was aware of the application to the educational arena, he left this work to others to carry out. It is also important to remember that for Heidegger, as it is for us, the move to deconstruct is a positive one, which will normally (but not necessarily) yield a positive result.

4. Conclusion

Discussions of the turn toward pragmatism dominate philosophy in the later part of the 20th century, and continue to the present day. In light of this, we need to be very clear about what we are saying here. What we are advocating is that philosophers, as well as philosophers of education, need to cease asking the standard epistemological questions, regardless of whether their answers are claiming to be absolutely true, or just provisionally so. The questions themselves need to change. Certainly, this does not give us leave to once again seek for ultimate Truth. Our answers cannot now nor will they ever reach that standard.

We have tried to identify a variety of roles and projects in which a philosopher of education may be profitably involved. In sum, according to Wittgenstein, a philosopher of education may profitably undertake logical analyses of propositions in order to clarify them; draw the limits of expression; dissolve, if not eliminate, confusion from communication; set other philosophers (and students) free from philosophical (or outdated) pictures that hold them captive; describe how we use words, and ask how we teach and learn them; strive to change philosophers' (and students') attitudes; and to see the world through a variety of language games. According to Heidegger, a philosopher of education may profitably undertake to help other philosophers (and students) to interpret and apply

³⁵ One of the authors of this paper recently defended a dissertation in which he discusses the influence of Aristotle's picture on Kant's transcendental philosophy, on Dewey's notion of the essence of morality, and on how Heidegger may have corrected them all.

moral rules correctly to help them decide whether Tradition's scripted answers to their moral questions should be accepted, modified, or rejected; and deconstruct the history of ontology for two reasons: a) for the sake of helping others to live authentically; and b) for the sake of discovering how conceptual mistakes in said history have (and do) influence contemporary educational theory and practice. Indeed, both Wittgenstein and Heidegger, though in different ways, suggest how teachers may open their students' minds to see the world through an unfamiliar lens. Both insist that no one position or perspective is necessarily better than another, thus increasing the possibilities for dialogue—the furtherance thereof being our fundamental concern.

Middle-Class Curriculum and the Failure of “Achievement”

El currículo de clase media y el fracaso del “logro”

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Resumen:

Uno oye a menudo la frase “logro escolar” repetirse como un mantra en la retórica educativa actual. Sin embargo, QUÉ es lo que precisamente hay que lograr raramente se aclara. El “logro” se ha convertido en un fin en sí mismo. Desde los inicios del siglo XIX, los críticos de la cultura occidental han identificado esta búsqueda irracional del éxito como uno de los principales ingredientes del malestar moderno. Este ensayo examina la manera en la que esta búsqueda irracional infunde la institución escolar y ciega nuestra cultura frente a la urgente tarea de formular buenos fines educativos. Aunque el criticismo del ensayo emana principalmente desde el sistema educativo de los Estados Unidos, críticas similares pueden aplicarse a occidente y al mundo moderno.

Palabras clave: Modernidad, crítica cultural, rendimiento académico.

Abstract:

One hears the phrase “academic achievement” repeated mantra-like in popular educational rhetoric today. However, precisely WHAT is to be achieved is rarely if ever made clear. “Achievement” has become an end in itself. Since the early 19th century, Western cultural critics have identified this irrational pursuit of success as a major ingredient of the modern malaise. This essay examines the way in which that irrational pursuit infuses the institution of the school and blinds our culture to the urgent task of

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formulating worthy educational aims. Although the essay's criticism emanates principally from the education system of the United States, similar criticisms may apply to the expanse of the western and modern world.

Keywords: Modernity, cultural criticism, academic achievement.

1. Introduction

I have titled this paper “Middle-Class Curriculum and the Failure of ‘Achievement’” as a critique of modern, middle-class educational values. While my criticisms focus specifically upon the education system of the United States, those conditions, situations, habits, and mentalities being criticized emanate from a cultural history that is shared by many modern and western nations. The “failure of achievement” may express itself in various ways amongst a diversity of the world's cultures and nonetheless share an essential *geist*, or spirit.

Let me say up-front that I am not against students learning. In fact it may be a tautology to say that public schools, in their task to deliver on the hopes and promises of education, are dreadfully underachieving. Test scores are too low, too many students fail to graduate, and too many who do graduate cannot properly read or write.² Moreover, there is a preponderance of adults in the United States—all products of its education system—who are incapable of recognizing the difference between fact and myth and are therefore woefully susceptible to the appeals of propaganda and fear mongering.³ Although today's world demands that we educate ourselves as never before, I will argue that the popular mantra of “academic achievement”, both lay and professional, has become the clarion call of an irrational pursuit of achievement as an end in itself. This blinds American culture to its urgent task of reflecting upon proper and worthy educational aims.

2. What “achievement” means

As it is uttered in common parlance, the term ‘educational achievement’ carries with it heavy undertones of modern, middle-class values. Although the term ‘middle-class’ can be used in a variety of ways, I will employ it much in the same manner that Marx did; referring to the mid-level professional class living within a capitalist state.⁴ According to Marx, what was most peculiar to this new, bourgeois middle-class was the fact that its traditional moral and ethical ecology had largely been transformed into a bureaucratic and commodity-based mode of relation. Capital, in the form of money, concealed the social

² For example, the United States 2007-2008 average freshman graduation rate for minorities—Blacks, Hispanics, and Native Americans included—stood below 65%. Rampell, C., Graduation Rates by State and Race, *New York Times*, 2/06/2010:

<http://economix.blogs.nytimes.com/2010/06/02/graduation-rates-by-state-and-race/>.

³ In the 2008 United States federal elections, the candidate spending the most money on their campaign won office in more than 9 out of 10 races, including the Presidency. This is not a new trend by any means. Its implication is that citizens vote for candidates, not necessarily based on their merit, but on the candidate's propagandized message and image. Quite literally, political offices may be bought. The average price tag for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives in 2008 was just over \$1 million. Source: “Money Wins Presidency and 9 out of 10 Congressional Offices in Priciest U.S. Election Ever”, *Open Secrets Center for Responsive Politics*, November 5/11/ 2008:

<http://www.opensecrets.org/news/2008/11/money-wins-white-house-and.html>.

⁴ *Encyclopedia of Marxism*, <http://www.marxists.org/glossary/terms/>.

nature of economic relationships. Drawn away from traditional community networks to new laboring jobs in the cities, strangers related to each other, not *qua persons*, but *qua impersonal roles*, such as employee and employer, manager and laborer. Within this new dynamic even such sacred things as conscience, honor, and dignity became salable by their holders as commodities.⁵

Perhaps the richest resource available for gaining a true feel and appreciation for the early 19th-century movement toward bourgeois culture is the literature of its time, written by those who experienced it most viscerally. During the early 19th century, the genre of literary Realism developed as an attempt to accurately portray the emerging reality of bourgeois culture and society.⁶ Although this genre's artists typically wrote "fiction" stories, they were attempting to capture—if only in metaphor—the true feel of their time and place.⁷ What we see in their writings is a world in which notions of 'success' have become detached from traditional moral and ethical valuations of life.

Still, the disciplined social scientist might say that literature is hopelessly subjective and therefore a flawed "method" of analyzing cultural history. Authors inject their own personalities, eccentricities, and biases into their work. Their plots and characters correlate to nothing that actually happened in the real world. Such an objective-minded social scientist would be mistaken, however. The goal of historical scholarship is not to see history from a god's-eye-view. There is no way to see the world but through human eyes—we hope that the pen of the artist can disrupt the ordinariness into which our daily affairs are sunken and reveal to us what has always been present, albeit unseen. In an obituary following the death of Richard Milhous Nixon, the 37th President of the United States, the journalist Hunter Thompson typed the following words regarding objectivity in journalism:

"Some people will say that words like scum and rotten are wrong for Objective Journalism—which is true, but they miss the point. It was the built-in blind spots of the Objective rules and dogma that allowed Nixon to slither into the White House in the first place. He looked so good on paper that you could almost vote for him sight unseen. He seemed so all-American, so much like Horatio Alger, that he was able to slip through the cracks of Objective Journalism. You had to get Subjective to see Nixon clearly, and the shock of recognition was often painful"⁸.

Although Thompson always saw Nixon as a "monster straight out of Grendel," Nixon appealed to the objective-minded news media as a sort of American hero, an honest and virtuous man of common stock who had overcome the odds to achieve great success in life.⁹ He won his 1972 bid for re-election by a landslide margin.¹⁰ Early into Nixon's second term in office, he was exposed by the Watergate scandal as a criminal who had lied to the American people and attempted to cheat the electoral system.¹¹ The unfolding of his

⁵ Harvey, D., *The Limits to Capital*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1982, 1-34.

⁶ Kramer, L. The Novel as Art and Social Criticism, *European Thought and Culture in the 19th Century* [mp3 audio lecture], The Teaching Company, 2001.

⁷ Some philosophers, Richard Rorty foremost amongst them, treat literature as primary source material for "doing philosophy". Good literature is good metaphor and, according to Rorty, the most worthwhile sort of philosophy is that which gives us good metaphors with which to think and live. Human beings are metaphor machines. See: Rorty, R., *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1979.

⁸ Thompson, H., He Was a Crook, *Rolling Stone*, 16/06/1994, pp. 42-44. Note: Horatio Alger was an author of fictional stories that characterized the prototypical American Dream: honest, hard-working folks who rose "from rags to riches."

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Nixon carried 49 out of 50 states in the election. See: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_States_presidential_election,_1972

¹¹ Nixon, a Republican President, was tied to the agents who broke into the (opposing political party) Democratic National Committee headquarters at the Watergate Hotel in 1972. Several of Nixon's administration

presidency sowed seeds of deep suspicion in the public mind which are still evident today. The point of Thompson's quote is that the author must transcend the standard rules of 'objectivity' in order to reveal what is unseen, yet present and felt.

The French Realist authors Stendhal and Honore de Balzac portrayed a form of cultural decline attendant to the eclipse of aristocratic society. According to Balzac, as prospects for social mobility improved in France, folks turned the time and energy that they had once devoted to intellectual development toward jobs and money-making. The salons, which had formerly served as epicenters for the exchange of important ideas, became instead venues for gossip and social climbing. This was a culture that had become obsessed only with wealth and social status. Honest, moral values seem to have disappeared from the lives of the author's characters.¹²

In his intensely psychological 1830 novel, *The Red and the Black*, Stendhal sought to encapsulate the modern bourgeois condition in his main character, Julien Sorel. Although born into a working-class family, Sorel has ambition to climb the social ladder and live as an aristocrat. Sadly, this ambition ends up corrupting all of his life's passions and commitments. After seeking and finally winning the affection of two aristocratic women, his desire for status compels him to control and subjugate those women, treating them as means to the end of his social advance. Toward the conclusion of the novel, Sorel attempts to murder the lover who dared to thwart his aspirations. He is tried in court, found guilty, and guillotined. For Stendhal, Sorel represents a great and novel dilemma in modern bourgeois society: the prospect of winning power, position, and influence, albeit at the cost of love and honor. Stendhal saw an early 19th-century French culture faced with losing its core values and meanings, its traditional moral, religious, and artistic valuations of life. *The Red and the Black*, subtitled "A Chronicle of 1830", closes with Sorel's rumination over how hollow his life had become and how impoverished his ideal of "doing well" had really been.¹³ Recall that this novel and the entire literary genre with which it was associated were attempts by artists to describe reality, the world and its people as they actually and truly were. Thus far I have been speaking of the emergence of bourgeois, middle-class culture and its criticisms in Europe. Although similar cultural processes affected the United States, they did so within a unique context, producing distinctive middle-class values.

The American Dream of rising from rags to riches was once epitomized in the historical character of Benjamin Franklin. Young Ben Franklin is the prototypically practical man, singularly devoted to the pursuit of material success in life. Born into a family of modest means, Franklin disciplined his character into near-puritanical form, excising all distractions and vices, calculating efficiency and effectiveness into each hour of his day.¹⁴ One can imagine him as the inspiration for Thomas Huxley's description of the ideally educated man, which he penned in 1868:

"That man, I think, has had a liberal education who has been so trained in his youth that his body is the ready servant of his will, and does with ease and pleasure all the work, that as a mechanism, it is capable of; whose intellect is a clear, cold, logic engine, with all the parts of equal strength, and in smooth working order; ready like a steam engine to be turned to any kind of work..."¹⁵

officials were tried, convicted, and incarcerated as a result of the criminal activity. The incident led to Nixon's resignation. See: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watergate>

¹² Kramer, op. cit.

¹³ Stendhal, G. *The Red and the Black: A Chronicle of 1830*, New York, E.P. Dutton & Co., 1916.

¹⁴ See: Hollinger, D., and Capper, C., *The American Intellectual Tradition: Volume I, 1630-1865*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 99-112.

¹⁵ See: McLuhan, M., *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1965, p. 172.

By his forty-second birthday, Franklin had retired from a successful and lucrative career in the printing industry. The rest of his life he devoted to noble leisure: philosophy, science, and diplomacy. Although Franklin's character is undoubtedly admirable, the eventual transportation of his all-American values into the bourgeois culture and industrial economy of the next century would contribute significantly to the disenchantment of the modern world.¹⁶

It is important to recognize that Franklin lived in a time and place that knew neither the large-scale industrial economies of the next century nor their attendant bourgeois culture. The early, pre-industrial economies of the colonial era remained predominantly local in nature and daily business transactions typically involved face-to-face elements of personal interaction. That is, one most often knew with whom one was dealing and also knew where that person lived and slept at night. The virtue of such small-town economics was that business relationships could remain a part of the moral and ethical ecology of local community life. When doing business with one's neighbors, despite whatever measure of success an individual may achieve, that individual remained socially and economically dependent upon the welfare and wellbeing of the entire community. Under these circumstances, the maintenance of personal reputation remained vital to one's livelihood. However, by the nature of the new industrial economy, it became increasingly possible—and often probable—for business to transcend local economies and their attendant moral and ethical ecologies. Individuals began to achieve 'success' independent of—even at the expense of—the 'success' of the community.¹⁷

In his novel, *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg*, Mark Twain wrote of a stranger who descends upon a "morally incorruptible" small town carrying a sack of gold coins. As Twain tells it, this gold presents to the town couples the possibility of becoming sufficiently wealthy so as to escape economic interdependence with their neighbors and thus to escape involvement in the town's moral and ethical ecology.¹⁸ Tremendous individual wealth makes the maintenance of personal reputation seem an unnecessary burden. One could, if one wanted, live irresponsibly and despicably without suffering any of the traditional consequences. Metaphorically, the sack of gold represents the threat that the new 20th-century scales of economy posed to traditional ways of life. This new industrial economy disconnected professional lives from traditional moral and ethical dimensions of community life, while at the same time leaving the culture invested with Franklin's old valuation of the assiduous pursuit of success. Said differently, social and economic ambitions, for-all-practical-purposes, separated themselves from morality and ethics as they had previously been understood. The man who swindles old widows out of their lives' savings during the week, yet who sleeps well and finds acceptance as a brother in Christ at church on Sunday, is a distinctly modern archetype.

¹⁶ Modern 'disenchantment' has been articulated in a variety of ways. For a satisfactory treatment, see: Bellah, et al., *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1985. This team of authors articulates the way in which the modern person is pulled between two opposing forces: on one side, a longing for community and social attachment; on the other side, a cultural nexus that assaults social and community ties by compelling an atomistic individualism.

¹⁷ McWilliams, M. C., *American Political Thought since the Civil War: Progressivism*, Twain's 'The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg' [mp3 audio lecture], Haverford College, 9/02/2005: www.haverford.edu/pols/faculty/mcwilliams/pols268/.

¹⁸ Twain, M., *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg: And Other Stories and Essays*, New York, Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1900.

From the 1950's onward, American education, as well as American culture at large, has been plagued by an ascetic pursuit of success that is divorced from traditional social-moral-ethical responsibility and divorced from old European intellectualism. During the 1980's, the trend of adorning one's automobile with bumper stickers reading, "My Child Is an Honor Student at _____ Middle School", began to spread. Having a child on the honor roll became one way for parents to publicly display to others that *their* child was better than, or at least as good as, the other kids in the neighborhood. *Note bene*: The school honor roll does not symbolize some commonly-understood attainment of knowledge or wisdom. Simply, it means that the student has performed well relative to other students within an institution. It was not the content of achievement, but achievement-in-and-of-itself that had come to matter and be so proudly displayed by middle-class parents. Certainly this same cultural attitude toward 'academic achievement' buoyed energetic public reception of the 1983 *Nation at Risk* report.¹⁹

In 1983, Ronald Reagan's Secretary of Education, Terrell Bell, issued the *Nation at Risk* report, which charged that American education had fallen behind the rest of the world. He went so far as to claim that American schools had become so pathetic that the country would consider it an act of war had they been imposed upon us by another nation. Bell specifically identified commerce, industry, science, and technology as the areas in which American innovation had been flagging. Nevertheless, it was not the specific manner or way in which American education had 'fallen behind' the rest of the world that caused such a stir. By invoking war and international competition, the Administration had employed a powerful rhetorical tool to stimulate American culture's drive for success, no matter what that success specifically entailed. Since that time nearly thirty years ago, it has become difficult to avoid hearing in popular discourse how far America has fallen behind countries such as China and Denmark in terms of educational 'achievement'.²⁰ Few Americans care that the mathematics and science skills being compared represent a very small slice of what accounts for a properly educated person. We do not compare artistic and social skills, for example, things which are terribly important although not easily amenable to measurement. The basic fallacy of 'academic achievement' as iterated in American culture today is that it accepts unquestioningly the content and parameters of 'success' as defined by narrow political interests. Although Americans are determined to win the educational race, we maintain a disinterested agnosticism regarding its destination.

There is a scene from John Irving's 1989 novel, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, which captures in metaphor American culture's irrational pursuit of achievement. Living in Canada as an American ex-patriot, John, the story's narrator, encounters a car full of Americans who are lost and trying to find a nearby church. Miscommunication ensues, resulting in the flustered mother of the family treating John as if he were an idiot. Insulted, John feigns that he has no idea where the church is. So the car drives on in the wrong direction. The narrator comments about the family that, "[t]heir plans were certainly unclear, but they exhibited an exemplary American firmness."²¹ Unsure of where it is headed, American education drives on.

¹⁹ The report is available online at:
http://datacenter.spps.org/sites/2259653e-ffb3-45ba-8fd6-04a024ecf7a4/uploads/SOTW_A_Nation_at_Risk_1983.pdf.

²⁰ The American schools are often blamed for the country's economic troubles. The strongest message from the current Obama Administration concerning the aims and purposes of education is that schools must prepare students for competition in the global economy.

See: <http://www.whitehouse.gov/issues/education/educate-innovate>.

²¹ Irving, J., *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, New York, William Morrow and Company, 1989, pp. 323-324.

What is true for public K-12 education is also true for colleges and universities. During the 1960's economists first statistically and theoretically linked higher education to American middle-class ascendance. Although the "democratization" of colleges and universities that occurred in the sixties is certainly laudable in that it granted increased access to previously marginalized groups, higher education came in effect during this time to be colonized by a new brand of bourgeois, middle-class student who sought neither intellectual growth nor social change, but a credential as guaranteed access to future income and social status. In becoming largely a means to the end of getting money, the content and character of higher education changed significantly. By the 1970's, proportions of students studying the humanities had dropped precipitously while business and accounting enrollments had ballooned.²² From 1971 to 2001, the Higher Education Research Institute identified marked shifts in students' stated reasons for attending college. In 1971, the top three answers given as reasons for going to college included: "to help others who are in difficulty", "to become an authority in my field", and "to keep up to date on politics." By 2001, "being very well-off financially" topped the list.²³ Today's college students hear the question asked by their relatives, "what are you going to do with your degree?" as a euphemism for, "how are you going to use your degree to get money?" Few persons in the United States, including countless university faculty, can even begin to talk about higher education as anything other than preparation for a career, a means to the end of attaining individual 'success' as measured by wealth and social status.

3. Unmotivated to "achieve"

Student motivation is perhaps the single greatest topic of educational research today. Schools typically treat unmotivated and underachieving students as pathological; and to a considerable extent they may be absolutely right. Many students are indeed lazy and lacking in healthy, middle-class work ethics. These students could stand to benefit from a militaristic-style education that compels them to develop better habits and mentalities. Yet, we might also do well to take some unmotivated and underachieving students seriously, as individuals who reject the horizons of achievement handed down to them by their school and society, and as cultural critics who only lack the more sophisticated powers of articulation wielded by great writers.²⁴ These students may "act out" in school because they lack the language with which to give expression to their malaise.

It is almost a normative practice in American culture for a child to answer "nothing" to the parent's question, "What did you learn in school today?" Consider that this is an instructed matter, something that a child must learn as an appropriate answer to the question. How would a child learn this? Undoubtedly it is learned from the parents who return home from work every day looking tired and defeated and having nothing interesting to report. The undeniable fact is that most of the jobs in our economy are depressingly dull and monotonous. Children pick up on this. They pick up on the notion that the hours between 9am and 5pm are the hours when the spirit dies. Moreover, they sense that their schooling is preparing them to enter this soul-crushing workaday world. A young woman

²² Harrington, M., Education and Social Change, *The First Theodore Brameld Annual Lecture*, lost citation.

²³ Donoghue, F., *The Last Professors: The Corporate University and the Fate of the Humanities*, New York, Fordham University Press, 2008, p. 91.

²⁴ See: McDermott, R., Inarticulateness, in *Linguistics in Context: Connecting Observation and Understanding*, ed. D. Tannen, Norwood, Alex Publishing Corporation, 1988, pp. 37-68.

who listens to political speeches or who reads any state board of regents' report on education will know that the principal aim of her schooling is to fit her into a slot in the economy, whether it be as a scientist, engineer, corporate executive, or fast food cashier.²⁵ It behooves us to consider whether modern education embodies Julien Sorel's attitude toward life and to ponder the extent to which, in the *geist* of Twain's *The Man that Corrupted Hadleyburg*, education has become divorced from the moral and ethical ecologies of healthy social life. At its worst, the American Dream that is sold through our schools now amounts to the dim hope of attaining sufficient wealth so that one may live as irresponsibly and despicably as one wants without suffering any consequences.

Despite what detractors may say, American culture can be impressively self-critical. Criticisms of the hollowness of bourgeois, middle-class life abound in the American film industry—including criticisms aimed at adolescence and the institution of the school. Take, for example, any Hollywood movie ever made in the past half century about a suburban, middle-class high school. Adolescents who struggle against a banal and hollow suburban culture almost unerringly assume the role of the hero while adults and conformist students who value narrow-minded academic achievement play the parts of the boobs and villains. Ultimately, the film's protagonist must quest to realize his or her true identity amidst a stultifying culture of popularity and conformity. As Robert Bullman points out in his book, *Hollywood Goes to High School*, there are movies made which do not fit this cookie-cutter plot—such movies do not, however, sell tickets. American audiences prefer stories whose suburban, middle-class heroes ultimately succeed in life by rejecting academic achievement and the culture of the school.²⁶ I suggest that the Hollywood high school film genre criticizes not just American schools, but American culture at large.

When first released in 1969, the film *The Graduate* proved a smash hit with audiences. Essentially this was a story about a prodigal son, played by Dustin Hoffman, who returns home from Berkeley, California as a college graduate, but rejects the life horizons of wealth, status, and career success that he has inherited from his parents. There is a scene in which a family friend encourages the protagonist to go into the plastics business. The word 'plastic' is symbolic here, meaning 'inauthentic' or 'false'. The whole scheme of life's value, meaning, and purpose expressed by this older generation strikes Hoffman's character as 'plastic'. To follow the family friend's advice would amount to spiritual suicide. More recently, the 1999 films *Office Space* and *Fight Club* tell the same story, albeit without making reference to schools. *Office Space*, a Hollywood spinoff of the daily Dilbert cartoons, parodies the banality and sorrow of modern office culture. Faced with a growing nihilistic psychosis regarding his life and career, the film's protagonist heals himself by giving up entirely the idea of "being a good employee": coming to work when he feels like it, ignoring his boss, and inciting his office-mates to steal from the company. Ironically, management recognizes his new nonchalant attitude as a mark of leadership, promoting him while at the same time laying off his hard-working colleagues. The whole idea of "being a good employee" is exposed as a scam and a farce. Similarly, the film *Fight Club* depicts the bourgeois workaday world as an empty and meaningless theater in which men and women spend at least eight hours of their days doing things for which they have absolutely no interest, in order only to make enough money to purchase things which they do not need

²⁵ See: Ohio Board of Regents, *Third Report on the Condition of Higher Education in Ohio*, March, 2010: <http://www.uso.edu/downloads/reports/ConditionReport-3.pdf>.

²⁶ Bullman, R., *Hollywood Goes to High School: Cinema, Schools, and American Culture*, New York, Worth Publishers, 2005. As an exemplary Hollywood film in this genre, see: *The Breakfast Club*, directed by John Hughes, Universal Studios, 1985.

and do not really want. The hero character of *Fight Club* breaks out of his morbid life by blowing up his apartment together with all the material possessions he had spent years toiling to accumulate. The fighting in the film is merely a way of disconnecting from the shallow pretentiousness of the modern world and reconnecting to one's authentic self.

I suspect that there is a reason why each of these films criticizing modern bourgeois life has attracted large audiences. Likely it is the same reason that the Realist novels of the mid-19th century attained lasting distinction. Audiences find humor in these stories because they are true, at least in some significant way. As Mohammad Ali once said, "My way of joking is to tell the truth. That's the funniest joke in the world."²⁷ Americans take courage from characters who suggest that it is possible to reject bourgeois society's middling measures of success and create more vibrant and meaningful life horizons of our own. Brad Pitt's character in *Fight Club* affirms our lurking sentiment when he addresses the audience to say, "You're not your job. You're not how much money you have in the bank. You're not the car you drive. You're not your fucking khakis."²⁸ We feel that there must be something more to life than this.²⁹ Nevertheless, many of us who instinctively reject the morbidity depicted in these films continue to live it out in our daily lives at work and school, "under the illusion that [we] are contributing to a free society."³⁰

4. Conclusion

There is a scene in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman* where Biff Loman says to his mother, "I can't take hold, mom. I can't take hold of some kind of life." Here Biff succinctly expresses the modern identity crisis: despite "doing well" we lack the sense of satisfaction that one would expect to accompany success. It is the very notion of 'success' in the modern form that lacks grounding in traditional and meaningful valuations of life. The resulting identity crisis is not merely psychological, but educational. We have imported the factory personnel department into our schools and suburbs.³¹

Still, this is not to say that lack of motivation to excel academically is an inherently good thing. As mentioned before, some students are indeed lazy and lacking in healthy, middle-class work ethics. We all know someone in our lives who could benefit from the motivation, structure, and discipline provided by the Marine Corps. Young students, for their own good, certainly need motivation, structure, and discipline. The challenge to educators is to recognize the difference between an unhealthy lack of motivation and the student who has good reason not to be motivated—whose rejection of 'academic achievement' offers inarticulate cultural criticism in its dismissal of bourgeois society's impoverished horizons of 'achievement'.

²⁷ Thompson, H., *The Great Shark Hunt: Strange Tales from a Strange Time (Gonzo Papers Volume One)*, New York, Ballantine Books, 1992, p. 565.

²⁸ *Fight Club*, directed by David Fincher, 20th Century Fox, 1999.

²⁹ Although professional philosophers tend to shy away from serious philosophical treatment of Hollywood movies, Stanley Cavell has consistently expressed belief in their philosophical import. He asserts that people are often interested in popular films for good reasons: they puzzle, provoke, and inspire us. The special job of the philosopher, says Cavell, is to "think undistractedly about [this stuff that] we can't help thinking about" Cavell, S., *Philosophy and Film Criticism, Conversations with History*, Berkeley, Institute of International Studies, 2002, p. 4: <http://globetrotter.berkeley.edu/people2/Cavell/cavell-con0.html>.

³⁰ Bellah, et al., op. cit., p. 210.

³¹ Benne, K., *Education in the Quest for Identity and Community, The Boyd H. Bode Memorial Lectures*, Columbus, Ohio State University Publications Office, 1961, p. 36.

While it is certainly beyond the purview of schools to cure the modern malaise, one worthy and attainable aim of education may be to help young boys and girls develop a more sophisticated articulation of the cultural situation in which they find themselves; in essence, to help them discover the cultural waters of meaning into which they are born and the horizons of life's meaning, purpose, and value which they inherit.³² This would entail a trained capacity to recognize some Hollywood films and works of literature not simply as diversions, but as critical cultural texts whose worlds and characters are real, at least in some significant way. Such a capacity would likely tame rather than increase our power.³³ It could never fit within the parameters of academic achievement as currently defined because its benefits cannot be easily measured and scaled. Rather, the advantage of this sort of education might present itself in the long run as a culture that is better able to understand itself and more adept at recognizing the difference between fact and myth. Yet as long as our educational institutions continue to compel the blind pursuit of achievement in the educational rat race to the top without stopping to consider *what* is being achieved, and as long as faculty in our colleges of education continue to give courage and aid to the rhetoric of achievement merely for the sake of furthering their own careers, we will continue not only to fall short of, but actually to work against the sort of rigorous and robust education that we so badly need.

³² The term "modern malaise" is illustrated extensively by Charles Taylor. While I do not mean to borrow the term's literal meaning from him, my use here carries with it the same spirit or general sense. Summarily, Taylor sees the modern, industrialized world as fostering three malaises: 1) individualism, 2) intensified instrumental reason (particularly troubling in regards to social relationships), and 3) loss of freedom. Together, these contribute to the "disenchantment" of the modern world. See: Taylor, C., *The Ethics of Authenticity*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 2003.

³³ See: Hook, S., *Education and the Taming of Power*, La Salle, Open Court Publishing Company, 1973.

Caminar y Autobiografía: Jean-Jacques Rousseau y Friedrich Nietzsche

Walking and autobiography: Jean-Jacques Rousseau and Friedrich Nietzsche

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Resumen:

El presente trabajo tiene el propósito de reivindicar el acto de caminar como una verdadera aventura intelectual y, asimismo, una oportunidad de iniciar un proceso auto-formativo y autobiográfico. Cabe mencionar que este artículo, por un lado, identificará la forma de transitar de dos grandes paseantes como fueron Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) o Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Y, por otro, se presentará –a través de los estudios del profesor italiano Duccio Demetrio– la posibilidad de una pedagogía autobiográfica.

Palabras clave: Caminar, auto-formación, identidad, autobiografía, Nietzsche, Rousseau, Duccio Demetrio.

Abstract:

The purpose of this paper is to vindicate the act of walking as a genuine intellectual adventure and also an opportunity to initiate a self-educational and autobiographical process. The paper will begin by identifying two great walkers: Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) and Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). It will then use studies of the Italian professor Duccio Demetrio to present the possibility of an autobiographical pedagogy.

Keywords: To walk, self-education, identity, autobiography, Nietzsche, Rousseau, Duccio Demetrio.

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1. Introducción

Teniendo en cuenta que, en los días presentes, el acto de caminar fue reducido a un simple movimiento que sólo tiene que servir para desplazarnos de un lugar a otro, el siguiente artículo pretende tratar sobre el acto de caminar como categoría, es decir, como entidad que tiene sentido por sí sola ya que «*marcher n'est pas un sport*»². Es, por eso, que realizaremos dos paseos con dos filósofos muy habituados a dicha actividad durante su andadura vital y que, al mismo tiempo, nos dibujan una forma de circular más filosófica: Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778) y Friedrich Nietzsche (1844-1900). Aunque para todos los seres humanos caminar consiste en hacer la misma actividad motora, en el caso de Rousseau, desplazarse tomará el nombre de *paseo romántico* y, en Nietzsche, de *peregrinaje errante*³. A pesar de sus grandes diferencias epistemológicas, ambos demostrarán que caminando siempre se piensa mejor y de manera más profunda, más preocupada en el devenir de la humanidad. O –como intentará descubrir este trabajo– también ayuda a exaltar, componer, imaginar y descubrir la propia vida.

Estudiar, pensar o escribir acerca del hecho de ir andando de un lugar a otro podría considerarse una aventura insignificante. Y, más aún, si tenemos en consideración su nula dificultad y enorme cotidianidad. No obstante, no conviene olvidar la tradición de caminantes que atesoran todos los pueblos que habitan en este planeta y que, posiblemente, es una de las pocas acciones que podemos realizar con nuestro cuerpo sin la ayuda de ningún artefacto prefabricado⁴. Es bien cierto que la lentitud de nuestros pasos siempre estará más acorde con nuestro organismo que la rapidez e inmediatez que nos ofrecen los medios tecnológicos y mecánicos de transporte contemporáneos.

Sin embargo, el uso mayoritario actual de caminar es uno de los principales motivos que la percepción de este movimiento haya quedado un poco desdibujada respecto a su origen. La situación es tan distinta que, incluso, puede parecer que caminar y pensamiento ya no concentran ningún tipo de correspondencias, como demuestra el hecho que la velocidad y la inmediatez han hecho posible que las flores, al borde del camino, ya son más bien unas rayas rojas y blancas⁵. Por tanto, tomando en consideración el *modus vivendi* presente, podemos apreciar que pasear –transformado en una actividad cosificada– ha quedado supeditado a objetivos y discursos ajenos –como el médico (ejercicio visto para bajar peso o reafirmar los músculos) o el del ocio (otra actividad para que sea más llevadero el fin de semana)– que se postulan de mayor importancia que el mismo acto en cuestión y, de esta manera, todo posible proceso de auto-formación queda relegado en un plano poco relevante o marginal.

Es cierto que caminar no tiene ninguna propiedad que la convierta en un acontecimiento excepcional. Todo lo contrario. Es una actividad llena de normalidad y, sobre todo, de inconsciencia. Raramente somos conscientes de todos los mecanismos que se despiertan cuando nuestro aparato motor está en pleno rendimiento. A diferencia de los niños, que hacen suyo el desplazamiento a través del juego y el invento de historias, los adultos caminamos sin darnos cuenta que lo estamos haciendo y que están sucediendo hechos bien interesantes en nuestro interior. El destino cobra más importancia que el trayecto.

² Gros, F., *Marcher, une philosophie*, Paris, Carnets nord, 2009, p. 8.

³ Véase: Morey, M., *Camino de Santiago*. México D. F., Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1987, p. 112.

⁴ Tampoco podemos dejar en el tintero los dos eventos que se han celebrado recientemente acerca de este tema en Barcelona: *Caminar. Reflexions, divagacions, accions pedestres* en el Centre de Cultura Contemporània de Barcelona (del 06-04-2010 al 25-05-2010) y *El viatge com a forma simbólica* en la Universitat Pompeu Fabra (del 13-10-2010 al 17-11-2010).

⁵ Gawoll, H. J., El paseo. Ensayo sobre la anticuada usanza del andar, *Revista de Occidente*, 1994, pp. 83-100.

A pesar de todo, con la voluntad de reivindicar la condición humana y sus posibilidades, este trabajo abordará el hecho de caminar como construcción y expresión autobiográfica. Pasear se convertiría en una rotunda afirmación de humanidad. Como podremos ver, Rousseau y Nietzsche, a través de *deambulatio per amoena loca*, tratarán de cimentar su vida. Pese a sus antagónicas deducciones finales escritas en sus últimas obras, ambos encontrarán esa *voz interior necesaria* para descubrir las misiones de su existencia porque caminando –sin prisas ni destino, escuchando nuestro ser y midiendo las cosas con nuestro cuerpo– se pone en marcha la actividad mental. El cometido del filósofo de Ginebra será la justificación de su persona y la defensa de una Ilustración más romántica y naturalista y, el del autor de *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883-1885), dar a conocer la doctrina del Eterno retorno para que erija el *Übermensch*.

Para finalizar esta presentación, sólo queríamos añadir que este trabajo nace con el afán de estudiar e interesarse en minucias porque habitualmente ha conducido a grandes cosas en la Filosofía de la Educación. Parafraseando a Ludwig Wittgenstein (1889-1951), la tesis de fondo de este trabajo podría ser la misma pregunta que dicho autor se formula en sus diarios: *¿cómo se camina por esta vida?* Con el propósito de intentar contestar esta pregunta, presentamos un trabajo de raíz analógica⁶ que mostrará, por un lado, como los pasos de Rousseau nos llevarán hasta una figura que mezclará el *homo viator* y el *homo natural* y, por otro, los del pensador alemán, a uno muy diferente que pondrá las bases del hombre de la Posmodernidad. Cabe mencionar que sus obras autobiográficas fueron modeladas en las principales investigaciones de este campo⁷. En definitiva -como sucede con otros poetas, filósofos o pedagogos⁸– sus experiencias hacen posible que los paseos matutinos o vespertinos se conviertan en expresiones complementemente subjetivas, autobiográficas.

2. Las promenades de Rousseau: Rememoración y complacencia en el Yo

“Pues habiendo formado el proyecto de describir el estado habitual de mi alma en la posición más extraña en que mortal alguno podrá encontrarse nunca, no he visto manera más simple y más segura de ejecutar esta empresa que llevar un registro fiel de mis paseos solitarios y de las ensoñaciones que los llenan cuando dejo mi cabeza enteramente libre y a mis ideas seguir su inclinación sin resistencia ni traba. Esas horas de soledad y meditación son las únicas del día en que soy yo plenamente y para mí sin distracción ni obstáculo, y en que verdaderamente puedo decir que soy lo que la naturaleza ha querido”⁹.

⁶ Una buena muestra de esta última tesis la encontramos en el siguiente ensayo: Ansell-Pearson, K., *Nietzsche contra Rousseau*, New York y Melbourne, Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 263; o en el siguiente artículo: Ginzo, A., Nietzsche, Rousseau y el mundo moderno, *Estudios filosóficos en Instituto Superior de Filosofía de Valladolid*, 1991, pp. 7-53.

⁷ De los estudios de Autobiografía y formación, podríamos destacar las siguientes obras: Cambi, F., *L'autobiografía como método formativo*, Roma, GLF Laterza, 2002, p. 146; Dominicé, P., *L'histoire de vie comme processus de formation*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 1990, p. 255; y, asimismo, Nóvoa, A., O método (auto)biográfico na encruzilhada dos caminhos (e descaminhos) da formação dos adultos, *Revista Portuguesa de Educação em Universidade do Minho*, 1988, pp. 7-20.

⁸ A modo de ejemplo, destacaría Aristóteles y sus alumnos llamados peripatéticos; los paseos de Sócrates por dentro y fuera de los muros de la ciudad; los estoicos: la caminata diaria de Kant por Königsberg; el *Philosophenweg* de Heidelberg; los trayectos de Hölderlin y Charles Baudelaire y, como no, los *flâneurs* de París.

⁹ Rousseau, J. J., *Las ensoñaciones del paseante solitario*, Madrid, Alianza, 2008, p. 33.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau siempre fue un gran caminante. Por muchos, es considerado uno de los primeros que practicó este ejercicio durante su época ya que sus contemporáneos – los ilustrados– habitualmente preferían circular en carrozas de caballos durante sus desplazamientos. De cualquier modo, queríamos especificar que, cuando hablamos de los paseos románticos de nuestro caminante moderno, nos referimos exclusivamente a los que realizó durante el último periodo de su vida (1776-1778), cuando escribió sus obras autobiográficas. Por consiguiente, lo vivido años anteriores y la singularidad de ese momento – caracterizado por ese delirio persecutorio– condicionará mucho a dicha actividad atribuyéndola un valor esencialmente romántico: el retorno a la naturaleza, a lo originario. Rousseau –inspirador del movimiento romántico– trazó la figura de un caminante pacífico que ha conseguido huir de la ciudad, de las responsabilidades para estar exclusivamente con él mismo y sus preocupaciones. De esta manera, tal y como anteriormente hizo San Agustín (354-430) cuando se hundía el Imperio romano, el pedagogo moderno recuperó el arte de confesarse públicamente: *Les Confessions* (1782-1789). En esta obra de obligada referencia en el género autobiográfico, presta atención a los recuerdos concentrados entre su nacimiento y la edad de 54 años para que finalmente aflore el hombre real o el autor consideró en relación a esta categoría. Por eso, «con Rousseau, más que con un género autobiográfico, nos encontramos con un género filosófico-narrativo, ideal para conocer la psicología del autor (el personaje principal) y sus mensajes existenciales»¹⁰.

Leyendo la obra *Les Confessions* o el tercer paseo de *Les Rêveries du promeneur solitaire* (1782), podríamos dividir la vida del pensador de Ginebra en tres etapas. En primer lugar, encontramos su infancia y juventud. A pesar de la muerte prematura de su madre, Rousseau siempre tuvo un muy buen recuerdo de esa época gracias, en parte, a su manera de rememorar los tiempos pretéritos: idealizándolos. Buena prueba de ello es cuando recuerda su estancia en Les Charmettes con la Madame De Warens en sus memorias. Luego, llegó el momento que conoció y se introduzco en los entornos de los ilustrados como copista de música. Es decir, cuando su destino fue arrojado en el torrente del mundo¹¹. Con el traslado de Les Charmettes a París, Rousseau vivió un periodo más formal y académico, que comenzó con las visitas semanales que hacía a Diderot (1713-1784) cuando estaba encarcelado en el Castillo de Vincennes¹². Los últimos años de su vida, en los cuales el pedagogo ilustrado transitó por las cercanías de París y de los Alpes, se iniciaron cuando el filósofo de Ginebra rompió con los enciclopedistas provocando terribles consecuencias para su existencia vital: el exilio, la persecución, la soledad y la marginación. Es posible que los quehaceres de Voltaire (1694-1778) tuvieran su importancia en este desenlace tan trágico convirtiendo a Rousseau, en *el horror de la raza humana*¹³.

Así pues, estos paseos rousseauianos se realizaron justo en el momento en que nuestro pensador del siglo XVIII se ve obligado a *someter su interior a un examen severo*¹⁴ y, como anuncia en las primeras páginas de *Les Confessions*, preguntarse quién es verdaderamente. En sus obras autobiográficas, el caminante moderno rememora su pasado con el propósito de presentarse tal como es porque, ya sea verdad o producto de su

¹⁰ Demetrio, D., *Escribirse. La autobiografía como curación de uno mismo*, Barcelona, Paidós, 1999, p. 129.

¹¹ Rousseau, Las ensoñaciones, op. cit., p. 50.

¹² Para ilustrar mejor esta última idea, es preciso no olvidar que su obra *Discours sur les sciences et les arts* (1750) fue pensada en una de sus caminatas hacia Vincennes. En sus memorias explicita que durante esa época tuvo una visión repentina de todas las contradicciones del sistema social, la cual también provocará su *distanciamiento progresivo* con Diderot y consecuentemente, con los enciclopedistas.

¹³ Rousseau, Las ensoñaciones, op. cit., p. 24.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51

obsesión, tiene la certeza que su verdadera imagen está siendo deformada. Aterrado por su situación, desnudará su alma ante el lector llevando «un registro fiel de mis paseos solitarios y de las ensoñaciones que los llenan cuando dejo mi cabeza enteramente libre y a mis ideas seguir su inclinación sin resistencia ni traba»¹⁵.

Pero, ¿cómo fueron realmente estos *promenades* que le llevaron hasta el Romanticismo, auto-análisis y auto-justificación? ¿De qué manera se realizaron para que Rousseau los convirtiera en una experiencia tan auto-complaciente afirmando que «yo, sólo yo»¹⁶? Destacaría, entre otras, dos elementos: la extrema soledad y la atracción por la naturaleza. Como buen nostálgico, Jean-Jacques Rousseau siempre caminó solo, como si estuviera auto-exiliado de las ciudades y de los aparatos sociales. Nunca se dejó acompañar por otra persona y, de esta manera, también planteó uno de los axiomas del Romanticismo: el eterno yo frente a la multitud, siempre representada de manera hostil y así, convirtiéndose héroe de sí mismo. A pesar de todo, esa reflexión personal de su vida también le llevará a atormentarse con el recuerdo de sus *adversarios*. Aún así, con este movimiento tan solitario, el autor de *l'Émile, ou De l'éducation* (1762) encontró la situación ideal para pensar sobre su situación presente, criticar el devenir de las sociedades y sobretodo, reflexionar sobre su persona. Es el inicio del caminar subjetivo.

Por último, la naturaleza –la única maestra de su discípulo *Émile*– siempre interrumpió sus paseos, como demuestran las grandes descripciones paisajistas¹⁷ que pueblan sus obras autobiográficas. Surge el *hombre natural*, de talante imaginativo y sensible. Por eso, para Rousseau, caminar es el marco perfecto para ejecutar la actividad de herborizar. En otras palabras, pasea para gozar del descubrimiento y la recolección de plantas de las cercanías de París, la Isla de Saint Pierre o del lago de Bienne. Y será a través de la Botánica –“estudio de un solitario ocioso y perezoso”¹⁸–, que nuestro pensador encontrará el refugio ideal para olvidarse de sus *enemigos* y donde soñará en la purificación de su alma viciada. Sólo faltaría que sus lectores acepten su desafío y, convertidos en jueces, le absuelvan de las críticas formuladas por los ilustrados y los enciclopedistas.

3. El peregrinaje de Nietzsche: *Llegar a ser lo que se es*

“*Estar sentado* el menor tiempo posible; no prestar fe a ningún pensamiento que no haya nacido al aire libre y pudiendo nosotros movernos con libertad, -a ningún pensamiento en el cual no celebren una fiesta también los músculos”¹⁹.

Es conocido que, para Friedrich Nietzsche, «*la vida sin música no es más que un error, una fatigosa necesidad, un exilio*»²⁰ pero leyendo su biografía –a través de los brillantes trabajos de Curt Paul Janz, Werner Ross o Rüdiger Safranski– o su brillante autobiografía también podríamos decir una cosa parecida en relación con la acción del caminar. Un buen ejemplo sería la misma elaboración de la obra *Zaratustra*²¹.

¹⁵ *Ibíd.*, p. 33.

¹⁶ Rousseau, J. J., *Las Confesiones*, Madrid, Alianza, 2007, p. 29.

¹⁷ En el quinto paseo de su obra *Las ensoñaciones del paseante solitario*, el pensador de Ginebra retrata – de una manera muy bucólica – la isla de Saint Pierre (lago de Bienne, Suiza). Desde ahí, olvidará “las persecuciones de los hombres, sus ultrajes y todos los males con que han pagado mi tierno y sincero apego hacia ellos”, Rousseau, *Las ensoñaciones*, op. cit., p. 131.

¹⁸ Rousseau, J. J., *Emilio*, o *De la educación*, Madrid, Alianza, 2003, p. 139.

¹⁹ Nietzsche, F., *Ecce homo: Como se llega a ser lo que se es*, Madrid, Alianza, 1971, p. 39.

²⁰ Morey, M., *Friedrich Nietzsche, una biografía*, Castelldefels, Archipiélago, 1993, p. 16.

²¹ Nietzsche, *Ecce homo*, op cit., p. 95.

De la misma forma que hicimos con Rousseau, diríamos que el peregrinaje nietzscheano se produce durante un momento muy concreto de su existencia: la llamada etapa errante (1879-1888), la cual viene precedida por dos acontecimientos muy importantes: la amistad rota con Richard Wagner (1876) y el abandono definitivo de la Universidad de Basilea (1879). No obstante, esta nueva existencia nómada fue *ensayada* en Villa Rubinacci (Sorrento) durante el año de permiso que disfrutó de la Universidad (1876-1877). Junto a su amigo Paul Rée (1849-1901), el joven alumno Albert Brenner y Malwida von Meysenbug (1816-1903), fundó la *Comunidad de los espíritus libres*. Fueron días de descanso, paseos, camaradería; los cuales, volvieron a despertarle el sueño de fundar una *escuela de educadores, université libre* o una *academia de amigos*, como sucedió anteriormente con Pinder, Gustav Krug en el año 1860 con la fundación de la pequeña asociación *Germania*²².

Tanto la ruptura con Richard Wagner –producida justo el momento en que se inauguraba el prestigioso Festival de Bayreuth (1876)– como la renuncia a la cátedra de Filología de la Universidad de Basilea representan el fin de una época y el inicio de una bien diferente, que terminaría con el final de su vida lúcida: la locura. Con estas premisas, Friedrich Nietzsche comenzó una nueva etapa de su vida –la más dura pero más auténtica– con el propósito de «buscar lugares que, tanto climática como paisajísticamente, actuaran en el exterior sobre él como tranquilizadores y de los que pudiera esperarse así un cierto sosiego para su espíritu y para su organismo»²³. Es la época que también se lo conoce como un *fugitivus errans*. Después de un doloroso invierno en Naumburg (1879), el filósofo alemán se preparó para iniciar su nueva andadura de múltiples viajes y de hospedajes diversos. Fue una *errancia* solitaria y enfermiza pero, aún así, encontró tres lugares (la costa genovesa, Sils-María y Turín) que le dieron la oportunidad de desarrollar su obra y convertir su existencia, en una experiencia más llevadera y caracterizada por la enorme producción intelectual²⁴.

Es posible que el paseo donde le asaltó la *doctrina del eterno retorno*²⁵ resuma muy bien esta existencia errante de Friedrich Nietzsche y al mismo tiempo, la manera de plantear su autobiografía ya que no hay manera de disociar la vida y la obra del pensador alemán. De ahí que podamos divisar la figura de un filósofo que, durante la gestación de sus ideas, se deja despeinar por el viento y pensar se convierte en un *acto de alta intensidad emocional*²⁶. La vida, que cobra todo su protagonismo en sus obras, se convierte en material apto para el desarrollo del pensamiento. Nietzsche siempre habitó con la máxima de que *la vida es el medio del conocimiento*²⁷ y entendió la filosofía, «como una actitud espiritual, una tarea, una vivencia, que lo llenaba completamente y comprendía en sí, diluía, abarcaba,

²² Véase: Janz, C. P., *Friedrich Nietzsche. Los diez años de Basilea (1869-1879)*, Madrid, Alianza Editorial, 1978, pp. 77-78.

²³ Janz, op. cit., p. 16.

²⁴ A partir de la segunda mitad de la década del siglo XIX y después de la gestación de su libro más importante *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1883-1885), publicó en poco tiempo obras tan importantes para su filosofía como: *Jenseits von und Böse* (1886), *Zur Genealogie der Moral* (1887); *Götzen-Dämmerung oder Wie man mit dem Hammer philosophiert* (1888), *Ecce homo: Wie man wird, was man ist* (1888) y *Der Antichrist* (1888).

²⁵ En una de sus estancias en Sils-María, mientras reposaba de un largo paseo en la piedra Surlej – situada al borde del lago de Silvaplana –, apareció como una ráfaga dicha fábula metafísica y moral que el autor esperaba des del inicio de su peregrinaje errático. Como es sabido, la *doctrina del eterno retorno* es la aceptación que cada instante que hemos vivido tendremos que volver a vivirlo muchas veces, eternamente. Dada la magnitud de la efeméride, Nietzsche se tomó su tiempo para anunciarlo, escribirlo.

²⁶ Safranski, R., *Nietzsche. Biografía de su pensamiento*, Barcelona, 2009, p. 192.

²⁷ Nietzsche, F., *El paseante y su sombra*, Madrid, Siruela, 2003, p. 234

todo saber meramente particular»²⁸. Por tanto, la gestación de sus ideas se produjo lejos de gabinetes o despachos racionalistas y sistemáticos, dando relevancia a paraderos tan sorprendentes como la piedra de Surlej para la historia de la filosofía y asimismo, el propio cuerpo del pensador que, hasta esa fecha, recibía bien poca consideración²⁹.

Dicho lo anterior, el suceso de la piedra –que le conmovió y trastornó en lo más hondo– podría considerarse la gran revelación que todo *peregrino* está esperando durante su travesía. Es la razón que pone en marcha un viaje de esta índole. Y, así, también reaccionó el propio Nietzsche – como demuestran las anotaciones de esos días: «¡Seis mil pies sobre el mar y mucho más elevado todavía sobre todas las cosas humanas!» –pero con la disimilitud, tal como anuncia en *Ecce homo: Wie man wird, was man ist* (1888)³⁰, que no le ofreció paz interior. Ante la poca audiencia que tenía su doctrina, le embargó de espanto y lentamente y se fue cercando al abismo hasta que éste, lo dominó en la ciudad italiana de Turín (1889). De igual forma que Rousseau, Nietzsche –con el convencimiento de que nadie de su patria podía entenderle– también siempre fue un caminante solitario a partir de 1879, con la excepción de los cuidados a distancia en forma de correspondencia o visitas esporádicas de Peter Gast (1854-1918) y Franz Overbeeck (1837-1905)³¹. Nietzsche –como su Zarathustra– no encontró oídos para su doctrina del eterno retorno ni para su dictum de Píndaro: *llegar a ser lo que se es*³².

Entonces, ¿con qué fin escribió *Ecce homo: Wie man wird, was man ist*? ¿Por qué decidió escribir acerca de su vida y obra cuando él no pudo disfrutar de compañía en sus travesías? Friedrich Nietzsche –con esta demostración existencial– quiso compartir sus experiencias singulares porque él tenía ansia de encontrar a los de su especie. En contraposición al *espíritu de rebaño* contemporáneo, escribió para personas con deseo de cultivarse y tuviesen anhelo de grandeza. En definitiva, «*nesse texto autobiográfico, apresentar-se a comprovaçao existencial de uma existência autônoma. Ele não só proclamou a vinda do super-homem. Em outras palavras, ele indicou o caminho concreto para atingir a suprema liberdade*»³³.

¿Y cómo se consigue esta *suprema liberdade*? Nuevamente el peregrinaje nietzscheano tomará concepciones pedagógicas y éticas y, la máxima finalidad de su caminata subjetiva y vivencial será –tal como adelanta el título de este pequeño apartado y el subtítulo de *Ecce homo– llegar a ser lo que se es*. Por consiguiente, el autor de *Also sprach Zarathustra* también *pondrá en marcha* su “ser” para que transite del configurado a través de la historia, cultura y el *error original* a uno que sea libre, que responda a su naturaleza y sobretodo, que no sea confundido como otro. O sea; hablar, escribir, actuar, ser con autoría y, al mismo tiempo, con voluntad de iniciar una transvaloración de los valores.

²⁸ Janz, op. cit., p. 130.

²⁹ La creación del libro *El paseante y su sombra*, que fue “pensado mientras paseaba, y esquematizado con lápiz en seis pequeños cuadernos” (Morey, op. cit., p. 59), evidencia muy bien esta última idea. Considerando “la sombra es tan necesaria como la luz” (Nietzsche, *El paseante*, op. cit., p. 12), teje – por primera vez – un total de 350 aforismos donde evoca múltiples preocupaciones y pensamientos. Cabe subrayar que con el uso de este redactado, el cual sería el resultante lógico del proceso de inspiración que estoy tratando, opta por una metodología menos sistemática y más vivencial que obliga al lector a un pensamiento más crítico y profundo.

³⁰ Nietzsche, *Ecce homo*, op. cit., p. 93.

³¹ Con relación a sus recuerdos, pueden consultarse en: Overbeck, F., *La vida arrebatada de Friedrich Nietzsche*, Madrid, Errata naturae, 2009, p. 128.

³² Véase: Píndaro, *Odas y fragmentos olímpicas; Píticas; Nemeas; Istmicas; Fragmentos*, Madrid, Gredos, 1996. Concretamente dentro de la Pítica II, Epode 3º.

³³ Barrenechea, M. A., *Nietzsche e a liberdade*, Rio de Janeiro, 7 letras, 2008, p. 133.

Haciendo caso al profesor Jorge Larrosa, la frase de Pindaro aparece hasta cuatro veces a lo largo de su vasta obra. En primer lugar, es en la tercera intempestiva estableciendo «*uma oposição entre o homem como animal gregário, homogêneo, maciço, intercambiável, exterior, e o homem como ser singular, heterogêneo, particular, único, interior*»³⁴. Luego, llegaría el turno en la *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (1882) que es tratada como un *dictum da consciência*. Después, también aparece en *Also sprach Zarathustra* «*a partir da reformulação do destino do próprio Zarathustra como “profeta do eterno retorno”*» y también, «*a partir da instauração de uma nova relação com os homens*»³⁵. Por último, como es lógico, en *Ecce homo: Wie man wird, was man ist* –que relata su propio itinerario hasta su propio ser– detalla las dos reglas que necesita este proceso: «*tem que se saber perder o tempo, vagabundear, não se esforçar por nada concreto, não se propor a uma finalidade, não aspirar a nada determinado*» y por último, «*utilizar mestres, porém como pedras da sorte, como pretextos para a experimentação de si, que se tem de saber abandonar a tempo*»³⁶.

Pero, ¿qué significa para el oído más fino del Occidente, como diría Lezama, *llegar a ser lo que se es*? ¿Cómo dar con la auténtica respuesta a este asunto?³⁷ El pensador alemán –siempre ocupado y destinado a representar grandes tareas³⁸– resolverá, una vez más, esta cuestión prefiriendo los caminos tortuosos y por consiguiente, el planteamiento de grandes cometidos: «*es preciso comenzar a cambiar lo aprendido*»³⁹. Para el filósofo intempestivo, *llegar a ser lo que se es* se convertirá en una lucha de uno mismo ya que veía, en el dominio de sí mismo, su cualidad más poderosa porque le alejaba del prototipo de hombre construido desde la cultura moral del Occidente y poseía la suprema finura para percibir todos los signos de instintos sanos⁴⁰. Entonces, desde esta filosofía, que no hace diferencias entre pensamiento y vivencias, descubrirse a sí mismo se convertirá en la tarea principal y su razón de ser y, al mismo tiempo, la gran ocupación y preocupación de las caminatas autobiográficas de dicho pensador.

4. Consideraciones finales: hacia una pedagogía autobiográfica⁴¹

En resumen, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, en su libro *Les Confessions* y, a través de sus paseos románticos y autobiográficos, recordará todos los acontecimientos de su pasado con los propósitos de presentar a los lectores la que él considera su verdadera identidad y, asimismo, llevar a la práctica el gravado del Templo de Delfos: «*gnosi seauton*». En cambio, el *peregrinaje* de Friedrich Nietzsche– plasmado, entre otras, en la obra *Ecce*

³⁴ Larrosa, J., *Nietzsche & a Educação*, Belo Horizonte, Autêntica, 2009, p. 49.

³⁵ *Ibíd.*, p. 61.

³⁶ *Ibíd.*, p. 65.

³⁷ Nietzsche, *Ecce homo*, op cit., p. 50.

³⁸ *Ibíd.*, p. 53.

³⁹ *Ídem*.

⁴⁰ *Ibíd.*, p. 52.

⁴¹ Cabe destacar que este último apartado y, por consiguiente, este campo de la filosofía de la educación, será tratado bajo el punto de vista de Ducío Demetrio ya que, como también sucede en este artículo, trabaja tanto el acto de caminar como la autobiografía desde la Pedagogía. Sin embargo, entre otros, no podemos olvidar estudios tan importantes en nuestro país como las siguientes: Gil Cantero, F., Educación y narrativa: la práctica de la autobiografía en la educación, *Revista Interuniversitaria de Teoría de la Educación*, 9, 1997, pp. 115-136; Gil Cantero, F., Las bases teóricas de las narraciones autobiográficas de los docentes, *Revista Interuniversitaria de Teoría de la Educación*, 11, 1999, pp. 159-181; Larrosa, J., *Narrativa, identidad y desidentificación*, Barcelona, Publicaciones Universidad de Barcelona, 1994; o Puig Rovira, J. M., Notas para un estudio sobre los usos de la escritura autobiográfica en educación, *Pad'e*, 3(1), 1993, pp. 153-162.

homo: Wie man wird, was man ist –muestra la *grandeza* de una experiencia propia de un hombre singular y único. No obstante, en ningún momento, es representada como una lección teórica para justificarse o rendir cuentas a nadie sino, como toda su basta obra, sólo tiene la meta –de igual forma que su andadura vital– de pensar diferente, de preguntarnos sobre nosotros mismos.

Por consiguiente, diríamos que el mero acto de caminar no tendría de considerarse como una actividad banal, superficial o de poca entidad. Tanto puede convertirse en una expresión estética, un método de reivindicación personal y social dada la coyuntura actual dominada por la rapidez e inmediatez o, como vimos con estos dos paseos presentados que nos llevaron a sitios tan diferentes en el pensamiento filosófico, la posibilidad de reconstruir, re-pensar la vida de uno mismo. Una creación literaria en movimiento que coincide con la representación de uno mismo ya que el acto de pasear –delatando nuestra imagen⁴²– invita a parar el tiempo *cronológico* y, re-leer nuestro ser y nuestra existencia en un constante diálogo introspectivo.

Llegados a este punto, creemos que ya podemos anunciar que –a través del acto de poner un pie detrás del otro y, así, sucesivamente– es bien factible que se genere la situación idónea para que aparezcan, parafraseando a Duccio Demetrio, *pensamientos autobiográficos*. En este encuentro con uno mismo que, al fin y al cabo, representa andar, es cuando nos aproximamos al pasado y empezamos una narración –en primera persona, sin duda– sobre lo que vivimos con la siguiente y relevante consecuencia: «*Nos hacemos cargo de nosotros mismos y asumimos la responsabilidad de todo lo que hemos sido y hemos hecho y que, llegados a este punto, no podemos sino aceptar*»⁴³.

Así pues, transitar y elaborar pensamientos autobiográficos podrían estar unidos por la idea de emprender un pequeño viaje auto-formativo tal y como nos recuerda, salvando diferencias notables como las edades de los individuos que llevan a cabo la correspondiente aventura, el género literario llamado *Bildungsroman*⁴⁴. Eso sí, tal vez la primera actividad tendría más relación con el exterior –como mostró, por ejemplo, Rousseau con las descripciones que hizo de los paisajes que conocía– y, la otra, con el interior del sujeto. No obstante, es bien cierto que cuando caminamos y escrutamos el pasado para saber quiénes somos esta división ya queda mucho más desdibujada y sus hipotéticas fronteras no son tan claras como puede parecer cuando ni estamos en movimiento ni revistando nuestra vida. En definitiva, podríamos decir que el sujeto ocupado en estos dos menesteres sería un gimnasta total, haciendo trabajar todos los músculos posibles, sin ni una excepción.

Otra idea que queríamos comentar era la de la curación ya que el profesor Demetrio, en cuanto a la autobiografía, nos dice lo siguiente: «el imaginario autobiográfico facilita la escritura personal; por el otro, darse cuenta de que podemos manipular a placer nuestra existencia también resulta alentador. En este caso, la curación es muy antigua y más que conocida: cada autobiográfico, celebre o modesto y según las circunstancias, se ha imaginado a sí mismo del mejor o del peor modo posible, o bien en su mediocridad»⁴⁵. Pensamos que una buena caminata también puede reunir esta propiedad y también, por eso, es fácil encontrar propaganda o páginas webs que hablan del acto de caminar como un

⁴² Así como, recordar que Eneas reconoce a su madre Venus por su formar de caminar o que Zarathustra también es reconocido por su forma de caminar: danzando.

⁴³ Demetrio, Escribirse, op. cit., p.13.

⁴⁴ Entre otras, podríamos destacar las siguientes obras: Goethe, J. W., *Los años de aprendizaje de Wilhelm Meister*, Madrid, Cátedra, 2000, p. 696; Hölderlin, F., *Hiperión o el eremita en Grecia*, Madrid, Gredos, 2003, p. 279; o Walser, R., *Jacob von Gunten*, Madrid, Siruela, 1998, p. 156.

⁴⁵ Demetrio, Escribirse, op. cit., p.52.

ejercicio para controlar la ansiedad o mejorar la circulación sanguínea. Pero el matiz es muy diferente. Creemos que Rousseau y Nietzsche plantean otros tipos de curaciones y, según nuestro punto de vista, más sugerentes porque van unidos a la auto-formación, la Pedagogía y no aspectos tan minúsculos como pueden ser los ya citados. En definitiva, trataron de aliviar a toda su persona y no una parte de ella a través de una determinada técnica. Como ya hemos visto, para el autor de *l'Émile, ou De l'éducation*, su remedio fue la Botánica y, para el *fugitivus errans*, el descubrimiento de sus verdades: la doctrina del eterno retorno y el *Übermensch*.

No hay duda, pues, que el acto de transitar y el de mirar la vida a posteriori guardan bastantes similitudes desde una perspectiva pedagógica. Con el propósito de ir finalizando este trabajo, citaremos tres aspectos más que consideramos que son fundamentales. En primer lugar, diríamos que las dos actividades forman parte de la familia de la autoformación o, como diría el profesor Demetrio, *self-service educacional*. Ni una de las dos necesita maestro ni instituciones que custodien este proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje. Por consiguiente, aunque Nietzsche siempre reivindicó la idea que cuando salía a pasear siempre lo hacía acompañado de los clásicos, podríamos concluir que, en un primer momento, es una educación bastante individualista. Por eso, esta formación tan autónoma consiste en «aprender a reflexionar con y sobre uno mismo, promover los propios talentos y adquirir lo antes posible una independencia individual y creativa»⁴⁶. Luego, destacaríamos su cotidianidad. Ambas, pueden desarrollarse en cualquier momento (día y noche) y lugar (montaña, ciudad). No precisan de grandes estructuras. Eso sí, siempre será fundamental una determinada manera de estar del caminante⁴⁷ y del pensamiento autobiográfico⁴⁸. Como sucede con toda experiencia que lo es realmente. En último término, subrayamos que los dos quehaceres brindan la oportunidad de preguntarnos sobre el devenir de nuestra vida y, asimismo, sobre la humanidad. He aquí, cuando tenemos que recuperar la concepción del tiempo en la Grecia clásica: *Khrónos* (momentos con pasado y futuro y, condicionado por las agujas del reloj), *Kairós* (oportunidad que funciona en contraposición del primer Dios-tiempo) y *aión* (instantes de experiencia y acontecimiento). Así pues, la temporalidad del sujeto que camina y piensa sobre su pasado es, sin lugar a dudas, aiónica porque uno de sus secretos es: «*une approche lente des paysages qui les rend progressivement familiers*»⁴⁹.

Por tanto, rememorar caminado o caminar rememorando, que al fin y al cabo tratan de lo mismo (la experiencia de vivir), forman parte de una «metodología humanista y activista que merece todos los respetos. Se vincula con la tradición pedagógica antigua y contemporánea que privilegia el contacto directo con las cosas y con los demás, el aprendizaje de la experiencia, el diálogo no simulado sino real, el conflicto como momento inevitable del acuerdo y la mediación plurilateral y el favorecimiento de una maduración simultánea de la mente y el cuerpo»⁵⁰.

⁴⁶ *Ibíd.*, p. 154.

⁴⁷ Un ejemplo podría ser la particular “Teoría del andar” de Honoré de Balzac (1799-1850) en: *Dime cómo andas, te drogas, vistes y comes... y te diré quién eres*, Barcelona, 1998, Tusquets, p. 155. Y, también, en: Cuesta Salvador, M., *Honoré de Balzac: La Teoría del Andar*, Valladolid, Agora para la educación física y el deporte en Foro para la Educación Física, la Actividad Física Recreativa y el Deporte de Castilla y León, 2003, pp. 165-174.

⁴⁸ En cuanto los requisitos para poder desarrollar correctamente unas elucubraciones de este tipo, el ya citado profesor italiano nos dice, entre otras, que el sujeto tiene que hacer el esfuerzo de separarse del mundo y darle una entidad al yo. Demetrio, Escribirse, op. cit., p. 60.

⁴⁹ Gros, op. cit, p. 54.

⁵⁰ Demetrio, Escribirse, op. cit., p. 182.

Learning about Learning through Technology

Aprendiendo sobre el aprendizaje a través de la tecnología

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Resumen:

La tecnología, por medio de su naturaleza múltiple y ubicua, penetra y da forma constantemente a nuestras experiencias, pensamientos y modos de aprender. La filosofía de la tecnología puede ofrecernos una mayor sensibilidad en esta cuestión. Sin embargo, como área tiene muchas perspectivas diferentes que ofrecer. En este artículo, presentaré algunas de estas perspectivas pero mantendré que la filosofía de la tecnología de Heidegger que es considerada como “esencialista” aporta una especial profundidad filosófica a la discusión acerca de los aprendices y el mundo desde el cual aprenden.

Palabras clave: Tecnología, instrumentalismo, esencialismo, Heidegger, aprendizaje, fenomenología.

Abstract:

Technology, through its manifold and ubiquitous nature, constantly re-enters and reshapes our experiences, thoughts and modes of learning. Philosophy of technology can offer us an enhanced sensitivity to this matter. However, as a field it has many different perspectives to offer. In this paper, I will present some of these perspectives but I will argue that Heidegger’s philosophy of technology that is considered “essentialist” brings a special philosophical depth to the discussion concerning learners and the world from which they learn.

Keywords: Technology, instrumentalism, essentialism, Heidegger, learning, phenomenology.

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1. Introduction

In his paper *Towards Philosophy of Technology in Education: Mapping the Field* Michael A. Peters makes the case for a new critical perspective in education by means of technology.² The perspective alone could be taken as yet another proof of technology's persistent tendency to force things to conform to its own measure, but in this paper, I will argue, that this danger can be avoided only when we give the complicated relationship between technology, society, learning and thinking the serious philosophical scrutiny it deserves. Peters, in fact, supports that this theoretical perspective

“promises the possibility of an understanding of technology that maybe important not only to public policy but also in helping to conceptualize intellectual approaches to the study of technology and, indeed, to shaping new fields of knowledge and research. These approaches to the study of technology, clearly, have a significant role to play in curricularizing technology in all levels. Philosophy of technology may also have a role to play in relation not only to structuring a largely disparate and inchoate field but also more directly in teaching and learning about technology”³.

Philosophy of technology could be even more a promising theoretical perspective in education, since it can reorient our attention to fundamental questions regarding the nature of education as a unique sphere of existence that presupposes openness to human potentiality as opposed to the closeness of other alternatives like the ‘knowledge economy’. It can also invite the re-examination of what it means to be an entity that connects to the world through learning. All these matters can bring to the front an idea that is quite forgotten, that is, education relies on metaphysical constructions – weather we like it or not – that presuppose what is a human being, what is a world and what is their connection. In fact, according to Michael Bonnett

(a) it is (education) rooted in certain fundamental concepts which are deeply metaphysical;

(b) its interpretation of these creates a certain underlying reality in which it operates;

(c) it invites pupils to participate in certain understandings of the ‘real’ world.⁴

These metaphysical assumptions enter our theories and practices in education. When for example we assume that we need more ‘learning-materials’ for teaching we are already working within a metaphysical framework that understands learning as the employment of tools and teaching as the forming of learning-matters. This, however, already presupposes either that knowledge is something that the subject constructs as an object and that production is the paradigm of learning or that knowledge is what we get when we represent the ‘world out there’.

This situation, however, becomes now even more complicated since the ‘world out there’ is changing more rapidly while new technologies transform our life-world, reality and space. The way these concepts are disputed in the face of their current respective ones such as digital world, virtual reality and cyberspace point to the fact that technological artefacts do not enter our lives as an ordinary collection of things. On the contrary, their influence is way deeper because of the way they extract from us new responses and ways of existence. Hannah Arendt makes a convincing case of how things behave. She says:

² Peters, A. M., *Towards Philosophy of Technology in Education: Mapping the Field*, *The International Handbook of Virtual Learning Environments*, Netherlands, Springer, 2006, pp. 95-116.

³ Ibid., p. 96.

⁴ Bonnett, M., *Environmental Concern and the Metaphysics of Education*, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 34, 4, 2000, pp. 591-602.

“The human condition comprehends more than the conditions under which life has been given to man. Men are conditioned beings because everything they come in contact with turns immediately into a condition of their existence. The world in which the *vita activa* spends itself consists of things produced by human activities; but the things that owe their existence exclusively to men nevertheless constantly condition their human makers. ... The objectivity of the world its object- or thing-character and the human condition supplement each other; because human existence is conditioned existence, it would be impossible without things, and things would be a heap of unrelated articles, a non-world, if they were not the conditioners of human existence”⁵.

It is precisely this conditioned existence of human beings that fascinates philosophy of technology. Things appear to have an interesting nature. On the one hand, they are products of human actions and on the other hand, they define the terrain of this action, its source and its completion. The degree of this autonomy and the time of its emergence are critical and, in fact, a matter of controversy among philosophers of technology.

Arendt’s analysis, for example, supports that things are part of the *vita activa*, that is, the terrain of action instead of that of theoretical contemplation. *Vita activa* contains labour and work and both of these activities concern themselves with production. However, *vita activa* also refers to political action, that is, the kind of activity that aims to produce itself instead of a separate product. Political action is the expression of human freedom; it does not originate from necessity but it is the way humans change the world. It is also what is closer to the most important aspect of the human condition which is birth and subsequently ‘new beginning(s)’. Even though, Arendt supports that action is ‘the only activity that goes on directly between men without the intermediary of things and matter’, it is hard to imagine how this is possible since this action is taking place in a world that is a world because things in it have always already formed it and gave it meaning⁶.

Any philosophy of technology then has to answer to this question: Is technology autonomous or not and how it interacts with the individual and society?⁷ This is a broader question that incorporates existential, social and political aspects with which technology constantly interacts. In fact, technology, through its manifold and ubiquitous nature, constantly re-enters and reshapes this nexus of interactions, in the degree that makes it difficult to decipher the nature of its influence. Realizing, however, this complicated relationship should be a critical matter for education as a domain that exists in society, is influenced by technology, or even shaped by it, but aspires at the same time to have an ontological role in teaching the learner what is this world, what is a self and what things should be. Philosophy of technology can offer us an enhanced sensitivity to these matters. However, as a field it has many different perspectives to offer and this choice alone is a serious matter. In the rest of the paper, I will present some of these perspectives but I will argue that Heidegger’s philosophy of technology that is considered ‘essentialist’ has a certain philosophical depth that might be missing from others.

2. The neglect of things and Instrumentalism

Technology has had a strange relationship with philosophy. It has been, in the best of times, intensely ignored and in the worst demonised. However, it has always been present in any kind of philosophical attempt either as the very medium of that effort –usually in the

⁵ Arendt, H., *The Human Condition*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 1998, p. 9.

⁶ Ibid., p. 7.

⁷ Feenberg, A., *Questioning Technology*, London, Routledge, 2006.

form of writing – or as part of the very social context in which that effort emerged. According to Arendt the reason for this neglect is the fact that the *vita contemplativa* or *vios theoretikos* (life of theory) was considered by the Greeks the way towards the ‘eternal’ and the ‘immortal’⁸. In *Nicomachean Ethics* for example Aristotle says

“For contemplation is both the highest form of activity (since the intellect is the highest thing in us, and the objects that it apprehends are the highest things that can be known), and also it is the most continuous, because we are more capable of continuous contemplation than we are of any practical activity”⁹.

Aristotle’s interpretation is based on a resilient subject-object dualism. Things are either something thought or something used. The individual can choose at will to associate or dissociate themselves from things. Things exist either in their materiality in our practical relations or in their abstractness in contemplation. Either way, things are neutral depending on human will.

The prioritization of theory over any other form of human activity is derived from the presumed neutrality of the process of making. In *Nicomachean Ethics* for example Aristotle differentiates between production and action arguing that: “production is different from action” since it operates ‘in the sphere of the variable’, that is, “(w)hat can be otherwise”¹⁰. This statement suggests that the process of production does not obey any eternal and essential rule; rather it is driven by “chance” contrary to the “object of scientific knowledge” that is driven by “necessity”¹¹. This accordingly means that science “is eternal, because everything that *is of necessity* in the unqualified sense is eternal; and what is eternal cannot come into being or cease to be”¹².

On the contrary, art has no specific aim or origin and its products could have easily not gained existence. Aristotle states: “Every art is concerned with bringing something into being, and the practice of an art is the study of how to bring into being something that is capable either of being or of not being, and the cause of which is in the producer and not in the product”¹³. Aristotle’s anthropocentric interpretation has implications in the construction of a further dualism between art or technology on the one hand and nature on the other. Webster F. Hood (1983) comments

“The natural form of something is intrinsic to that thing– that is, an oak tree is an oak tree because of some intrinsic principle which determines its growth and operations. A natural form has some power to define and effect operation; it is not “neutral.” Yet the forms which technology brings forth in matter as technics and products are given extrinsically by the artisan, are “artificial.” ...Since technical productions have no intrinsic principle of definition or operation they may be said to be neutral. They will not operate by themselves, they depend upon human use”¹⁴.

In this light, things are neutral in their making and neutral in their use. This, in consequence, suggests that technology is simply instrumental and no further philosophical interpretation is needed to explain its nature. In fact, Aristotle states that the “prudent man”, that is the one that posses practical wisdom, is “able to deliberate rightly about ...what is

⁸ Ibid., p. 16.

⁹ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J. A. K. Thomson, rev. H. Tredennick, intr. J. Barnes, London, Penguin Books, 2004, X II77 20- 25.

¹⁰ Ibid., II4oa 2 p. 149 and footnote 1 p. 149.

¹¹ Ibid., II4oa 18 p. 149.

¹² Ibid., II39a 25 p. 148.

¹³ Ibid., II4 oa 11-14 p. 149.

¹⁴ Hood, W. F., The Aristotelian versus the Heideggerian approach to the problem of technology, *Philosophy and technology: Readings in the philosophical problems of technology*, eds. C. Mitcham and R. Mackey, New York, The Free Press, 1983, pp. 347-363 348.

conductive to the good life generally” and therefore involves action not production.¹⁵ Hood argues that this points to the fact that the

“The goal of *techné*, its work or product – the article of clothing, the house, or whatever – which the activity of making posits as its object, is strictly instrumental to something else from which it receives its complete justification. And this “something” else is the use to which it is put – wearing the article of clothing, living in the house – for the sake of some activity that ultimately is its own end, namely moral or intellectual activity. Accordingly, technology is subordinate to practical wisdom, to moral and intellectual activities which are their own justification”¹⁶.

This instrumental understanding of technology, that is, the belief that things are means to a certain end and without any intrinsic value of their own, prevailed for centuries.¹⁷ This perspective, in fact, assumes that things have nothing to do with the way we live, perceive and experience the world and for this reason we need to explain how an observing mind that is outside of the world can access these things that are in the world. Only in this light, is ‘a brain-in-a-vat’ possible and Descartes’ question ‘how an isolated mind could be *absolutely* as opposed to relatively sure of anything about the outside world’ is logical. Whilst Descartes responded to this question by the invention of a benevolent God – that would not deceive him about the existence of the world – Kant responded with ‘a form of constructivism’.¹⁸ In fact, he described how ‘the outside world ...turns around the mind-in-the-vat, which dictates most of the world’s laws, laws it has extracted from itself without the help from anyone else’.¹⁹ In this way, the neglect of things or the misinterpretation of technology has contributed to the most radical anthropocentrism and subjectivism; the world is the human mind’s representation or its construction. The question that was never raised was: What do things do instead of what things are?

3. Essentialism: Things do

General David Sarnoff, the founder of the National Broadcasting Company (NBC) and one of the people that founded commercial radio and television in the USA once said: “We are too prone to make technological instruments the scapegoats for the sins of those who wield them. The products of modern science are not in themselves good or bad; it is the way they are used that determines their value”.²⁰ This approach, however, is characterised by McLuhan as naive and misleading. In fact, he states

“That is the voice of the current somnambulism. Suppose we were to say, “Apple pie is in itself neither good nor bad; it is the way it is used that determines its value.” Or, “The smallpox virus is in itself neither good nor bad; it is the way it is used that determines its value.” Again, “Firearms are in themselves neither good nor bad; it is the way they are used that determines their value.” That is, if the slugs reach the right people firearms are good. If the TV tube fires the right ammunition at the right people it is good”²¹.

¹⁵ Aristotle, op. cit., v, II4 oa 27-29 p. 150.

¹⁶ Hood, op. cit., p. 349.

¹⁷ Feenberg, op. cit.

¹⁸ Latour, B., *Pandora's Hope: Essays of the reality of Science Studies*, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1999, p. 6.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ McLuhan, M., *Understanding Media: The extensions of man*, London, Routledge, 2009, p. 11.

²¹ Idem.

The instrumental take on technology has prevailed for centuries maybe because a critique suggesting the exclusion of a tool from humanity's disposal would be considered fascistic, naive and even impossible since tools have a way to enter the social domain circumventing political intentions.²² McLuhan believes in the inherent value each technological object or each medium has. For him, what is of the most radical importance and what has the greatest influence in the way we lead our lives and perceive our world is not what we watch on TV but the fact that there is such a thing as TV in our lives and this thing in its own reality transforms our own reality. For this reason he states that

"For the "message" of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs. The railway did not introduce movement or transportation or wheel or road into human society, but it accelerated and enlarged the scale of previous human functions, creating totally new kinds of cities and new kinds of work and leisure"²³.

Feenberg terms theories like McLuhan's as 'substantivist' since they assume that technology 'embodies specific values'.²⁴ For me, these theories seem to work on two levels: first, they describe the changes that technologies introduce in our lives because of their inherent capacities to do something; for example the railway has the capacity to cover distances in a shorter time and thus makes possible the existence of a network of cities that would previously not have been able to exist, and then they move on a second level where they descriptively evaluate or name this capacity in a more abstract way. In McLuhan's case this generalisation would find its best utterance in his famous phrase "the medium is the message".²⁵ Whence, the theory is put in such terms, literally any artefact or thing can be a medium of some sort. Electricity for example can be the medium of light, the very medium that transforms night to day and in this specific respect it does not matter what the light is used for.

"Whether the light is being used for brain surgery or night baseball is a matter of indifference. It could be argued that these activities are in some way the "content" of the electric light, since they could not exist without the electric light. This fact, merely underlines the point that "the medium is the message" because it is the medium that shapes and controls the scale and form of human action"²⁶.

In a way it can be argued that McLuhan has an 'essentialist'²⁷ theory of technology since his dictum is expressed in such a way that it can be used as a framework for anything that exists. In this respect, he stands very close to Heidegger's more explicit essentialism that is expressed in his famous essay *The Question Concerning Technology* where he argues that 'the essence of technology is nothing technological' (1977, p. 4).²⁸ It is rather Gestell, or more simply, a framework that conditions the way we think or even better the way that the world is revealed to us. Existence is both restricted and allowed by technology and this is the only possibility for humans to experience the world, which is described by Heidegger as follows

²² Heidegger, M., *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, trans. & intr. W. Lovitt, New York, Harper, 1977.

²³ McLuhan, op. cit., p. 8.

²⁴ Feenberg, op. cit.

²⁵ McLuhan, op. cit.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 9.

²⁷ The term belongs to Feenberg.

²⁸ Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology*, op. cit., p. 4.

“Everywhere everything is ordered to stand by, to be immediately on hand, indeed to stand there just so that it may be on call for a further ordering. Whatever is ordered about in this way has its own standing. We call it the standing-reserve [*Bestand*]. The word expresses here something more, and something more essential, than mere “stock.” ... Whatever stands by in the sense of standing- reserve no longer stands over against us as object”²⁹.

Heidegger describes the essence of technology in these absolutist terms but he then moves on to give separate descriptions that support his belief. He says for example that

“The earth now **reveals itself** as a coal mining district, the soil as a mineral deposit. The field that the peasant formerly cultivated and set in order [*bestellte*] **appears** differently than it did when to set in order still meant to take care of and to maintain (emphasis added)”³⁰.

Heidegger, similarly to McLuhan seems to locate an essence of modern technology or a dominant trend in technology. Their essentialism seems to be supported by phenomenological descriptions that offer instances of this essentialism and ground it in a very specific manner. Even though, it is specific instances of technological artefacts or situations that give rise to their more radical belief about the nature of technology, this particularity gets marginalised after the dominant trend is established. When Heidegger argues that “everywhere...everything” is in the specific way that it is through modern technology’s prevalence, particular instances of technology become irrelevant. If everything needs to be this way, in this case en-framed by technology, then no description might inform us otherwise. However, this limitation is in a way self-defeating for essentialism since it is particular instances that create the dominant trend that essentialism locates in the first place. This means that even though essentialism can offer us the awareness of seeing technology or the world in a specific way, it might also blind us to the particularity of specific instances. In the next section, I discuss some of these shortcomings of essentialism.

4. Feenberg’s Critique

Andrew Feenberg argues that Heidegger’s essentialism is abstract, one-dimensional and unhistorical since “it interprets a historically specific phenomenon in terms of a transhistorical construction”.³¹ This is because, according to Feenberg, Heidegger does not understand technology as developing in stages and he also sets rigid borders between traditional technology or handicraft and modern technology. I this way, he argues that Heidegger denies “all continuity and (treats) modernity as unique”.³²

The challenge of this criticism has been taken up by Iain D. Thomson who supports that Heidegger was the philosopher who offered ‘the first historical conception of the essence of technology’.³³ This is because in the core of the Heideggerian critique of technology subsists an understanding of western philosophy as a series of consecutive historical understandings of what things are. These metaphysical structures have the character of ontotheology, that is, they first locate what is common in all entities and then they describe this common attribute as the ground of beings or what is most important about beings. In the case of ancient Greeks and especially Plato, the abstract idea (ἰδέα) is this being which

²⁹ Ibid., p. 17

³⁰ Ibid., p. 14-15.

³¹ Feenberg, op. cit., p. 15.

³² Idem.

³³ Thomson, I. D., *Heidegger on Ontotheology: Technology and the Politics of Education*, New York, Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 58.

is considered to be instantiated in a every specific object. The way the idea passes from abstractedness to specific beings is through the process of making. In this way, technology gives rise at the beginning of philosophy to a “productionist metaphysics”³⁴ which is, in fact, a historical construction. However, in our days we have the culmination of this understanding and technology is understood instead of a mode of Being, as Being itself.

Thus Heidegger’s deconstructing reading of western philosophy proves how the essence of technology is in its core a historical notion. This also shows that Feenberg’s critique is in great degree valid in the respect that Heidegger’s ‘history of being’ refers to such broad historical epochs that it does not easily accommodate changes of a lesser scale. For example, Heidegger may talk about the essence of modern technology that turns everything into a resource even earth itself but in our times several applications, social media and virtual realities allow communication and work in an environmentally friendly way that defies this very logic of consumption. It would seem then that we need a critical theory of technology that allows the appropriate sensitivity to particular technological instances.

Social constructivism could be an answer to this need. According to Bijker this approach can take multiple forms.³⁵ On the one hand, its “mild versions merely stress the importance of including the social context when describing the development of science and technology” and on the other hand the “radical versions of constructivism argue that the content of science and technology is socially constructed. In other words, the truth of scientific statements and the technical working of machines are not derived from nature but are constituted in social processes”.³⁶ Social constructivism arrived to this conclusion after studying specific technological artifacts. In fact, Bijker says that “[t]he analysis of singular artefacts indeed proved fruitful and convincing” since it pointed out that “that technology does not have its own intrinsic logic but is socially shaped, even at the level of a singular machine”.³⁷

However, Feenberg believes that since this approach focuses “on the specific local groups involved in particular cases and lack any sense of the political context”³⁸ it “has so disaggregated the question of technology as to deprive it of philosophical significance. It has become a matter for specialized research”.³⁹ For this reason, I believe that essentialism, with its metaphysical preoccupation seems to pose the question of technology in such a close connection to thought that dignifies it with significance. The absolutism in which any substantive theory of technology is expressed makes us sensitive towards the different manifestations of the same phenomenon, for example the technologization of education. However, essentialism’s focus in reasserting itself prevents us from seeing the instances of technology that move to a different direction. For example, Heidegger’s theory of Enframing cannot explain easily how modern technology that is inherently oriented towards efficiency is so fascinated with play and online gaming or how digital technologies that supposedly offer a more efficient way of communicating and connecting at all levels still finds resistance in education.

³⁴ Zimmerman, M., E., *Heidegger’s Confrontation with Modernity, Technology, Politics and Art*, Bloomington and Indianapolis, Indiana University Press, 1990.

³⁵ Bijker, E., W., How is technology made?—That is the question!, *Cambridge Journal of Economics*, 34, 2010, 63–76 65.

³⁶ Idem.

³⁷ Ibid., p. 66.

³⁸ Feenberg, op. cit., pII (preface).

³⁹ Ibid., p. 12.

In fact, even though educational thought that is philosophically driven is so fascinated with discussing the surrender of pedagogy to technology, technologically driven scholarship is equally sceptical towards education's resistance to incorporate digital technologies that are supposedly extremely efficient. It has even been stated that "[t]he only important field that computers have failed to change significantly is education".⁴⁰ This has been characterised as a 'crisis' in educational technology, and digital media are characterised as enigmatically malfunctioning in the specific context of education.⁴¹

It would seem that philosophical critique is then centred on the more abstract level of education regarding policy but the critique coming from the more immediate level of classroom practice suggests that digital media or hypermedia are "suitable mainly for a limited range of tasks involving substantial searching or manipulation and comparison of visual detail where overlaying of images is important. In short, the evidence does not support the use of most hypermedia applications where the goal is to increase learner comprehension".⁴² It has also been reported that hypermedia that offer a variety of possibilities for action and control fail to produce better learning outcomes, especially when the learner has not the appropriate prior knowledge. Finally, it seems that only the individual learning style is associated with the potential usability that specific hypermedia seem to offer.⁴³ It is then logical to assume that the learner as the agent or even the site of learning needs to be addressed in order to examine what is that technology does or can potentially offer to learning. As Jan Derry argues

"Much of the discourse on technologies in education emphasises interactivity, the possibilities for scaffolding learning and the constructive potential for learners to 'make their own meaning'. However, in the case of interactivity, for example, its human side is often not made explicit. What is downplayed is the nature of knowledge and the specific character of knowledge domains".⁴⁴

These confusing results seem to suggest that technology clearly has an impact on the way we perceive things but the case of learning as a thought process that is inherently connected to technology must be studied more thoroughly and philosophically.

For this reason, essentialism needs to be understood as Heidegger understands it. It is a twofold limit, that is, both a beginning and an end. The end part has been widely recognised but the way essentialism can be a beginning to something new must be re-examined. In this respect, philosophy of technology that is originated from Heidegger needs to reorient itself towards a phenomenological investigation of new technologies and investigate, for example, the reason that "[t]he use of digital technologies in education has so far not fulfilled expectations".⁴⁵ In this way, the Heideggerian program would be able to re-emphasise the sensitivity to particularity that social constructivism advocates for.

⁴⁰ Bennet, 1999, p.46 cited in Albirini, A., *The Crisis of Educational Technology, and the Prospect of Reinventing Education, Educational Technology & Society*, 10(1), 2007, pp. 227-236.

⁴¹ Idem.

⁴² Dillon, A., and Gabbard, R., *Hypermedia as an Educational Technology: A Review of the Quantitative Research Literature on Learner Comprehension, Control, and Style, Review of Educational Research*, 68(3), 1998, pp. 322-349 334.

⁴³ Dillon and Gabbard, op. cit.

⁴⁴ Derry, J., *Technology-Enhanced Learning: A Question of Knowledge, Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 42(3-4), 2008, pp. 505- 519 506.

⁴⁵ Idem.

5. Conclusion

Technology is the means for learning but it is also the means to learn about learning itself. This can become obvious if we take a closer look to the very science that in our time investigates the nature of knowledge. Cognitive science is a broad field concerned with learning and human knowing. It is a diverse field and incorporates perspectives from sciences like “linguistics, neuroscience, psychology, sometimes anthropology, and the philosophy of mind”.⁴⁶ Despite the influences these different perspectives have on cognitive science, technology, through the study, production and use of computers, is the one that really offers a window to how knowledge presents itself. With this perspective

“knowledge has become tangibly and inextricably linked to a technology that transforms the social practices which make that very knowledge possible— artificial intelligence being the most visible example. Technology, among other things, acts as an amplifier. One cannot separate cognitive science and cognitive technology without robbing the one or the other of its vital complementary element. Through technology, the scientific exploration of mind provides society at large with an unprecedented mirror of itself, well beyond the circle of the philosopher, the psychologist, the therapist, or any individual seeking insight into his own experience”⁴⁷.

Essentialism is a perspective which we cannot afford to lose since it is sensitive on the way technology constructs our lives and our worlds. Heidegger’s philosophy of technology has always sustained that no such philosophy is possible simply with the consideration of the object. The investigation needs to be always a simultaneous investigation of the object and the subject that is using the object. In his early work for example he asserts that the basic characteristic of the object is its inherent ability to be close and at the same time he alludes to the human ontological characteristic to bring things closer.⁴⁸ The relation is one of co-dependence. In a more basic philosophical level there is not even the possibility of a subject if the object is theorised as something else. In this respect, social constructivism cannot move to the unveiling of these deep philosophical assumptions by the studying of particular instances. On the contrary, Heidegger’s theory of technology can introduce a new philosophical concern with the learner-technology-world relation.

⁴⁶ Varela, F. Thompson, E., and Rosch, E., *The Embodied Mind*, London, MIT Press, 1993, p. 4.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 5- 6.

⁴⁸ Heidegger, M., *Being and Time*, trans. J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson, Oxford, Basil and Blackwell, 1973.

The Philosophy of Education and the Social Nature of Human Knowledge

La filosofía de la educación y la naturaleza social del conocimiento humano

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Resumen:

Podría decirse que la filosofía de la educación está peor considerada y es menos apreciada que cualquier otra disciplina filosófica. Este artículo analiza críticamente el destacado intento por superar este impasse realizado por el filósofo inglés Wilfred Carr. Él anima a que la disciplina tome una nueva forma de carácter distinto al de disciplina académica. Sin embargo se indica, en contra de Carr, que la naturaleza social y educativa del conocimiento constituye la pieza central de la investigación filosófica acerca del conocimiento humano.

Palabras clave: La relación entre filosofía y educación, Wilfred Carr, filosofía práctica, postfundacionalismo, segunda naturaleza, receptividad a las razones.

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Abstract:

Arguably the philosophy of education is less well regarded and appreciated than any other philosophical discipline. This paper critically analyses one salient attempt to overcome this impasse made by the English philosopher of education Wilfred Carr. He urges that the discipline take a new shape which is different in character from academic discipline. It is intimated, contra Carr, however, that the social and educational nature of knowledge forms the centrepiece of philosophical enquiry into human knowledge.

Keywords: The relation between philosophy and education, Wilfred Carr, practical philosophy, postfoundationalism, second nature, responsiveness to reasons.

1. Introduction

It is possible to identify a tension within the very phrase ‘philosophy of education’, namely, between the activity of questioning received knowledge and the activity of transmitting knowledge. This sort of commonsense (and stereotypical) understanding of philosophy and education may be partly responsible for their meagre interaction, which is widely felt not just by ordinary people but also by academic philosophers, especially in the Anglophone analytical tradition.² Accordingly the predicament the philosophy of education faces is its lacking of the appropriate impact on educational practices and its scholarly insularity from the rest of the philosophical disciplines. What makes general philosophers think they have little to say about education, however, seems not so much on account of philosophical reasons but rather for sociological reasons: e.g. the topology of the philosophy of education (it is generally conducted, unlike many other branches of philosophy, in Schools or Faculties of Education) and the fact that “most philosophers of education have the goal...of contributing not to philosophy but to educational policy and practice” and thus they, unlike their “pure cousins”, “publish not in philosophy journals but in a wide range of professionally-oriented journals”.³ One conspicuous recent tendency in the discourse of the gap between mainstream philosophy and the philosophy of education is to warn us against an “over-philosophication”⁴ or an “overintellectual myth”⁵ of educational theory. This tendency amounts to Wilfred Carr’s “‘dephilosophised’ or ‘postphilosophical’

² Harvey Siegel writes: “[P]hilosophy of education has not always been regarded by contemporary philosophers as important, or even a legitimate, area of philosophy [with notable exceptions]”, Siegel, H., Truth, Thinking, Testimony and Trust: Alvin Goldman on Epistemology and Education, *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 71(2), 2005, pp. 345-366, at p. 345. David Bakhurst states: “The philosophy of education is perhaps the least distinguished of all the established sub-disciplines of philosophy. ...The field is rarely considered a necessary ingredient of a serious philosophy curriculum”, Bakhurst, D., Il'enkov on Education, *Studies in East European Thought*, 57(4), 2005, Dordrecht, p. 261.

³ Phillips, D. C., Philosophy of Education, the on-line *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (SEP), 2008: <http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/education-philosophy/>.

⁴ Rorty, R., The Dangers of Over-Philosophication—Reply to Arcilla and Nicholson, *Educational Theory*, 40(1), 1990, p. 41.

⁵ Hirst, P. H., The Demands of Professional Practice and Preparation for Teaching, in J. Furlong and R. Smith, R. (eds) *The Role of Higher Education in Initial Teacher Training*, London, Kogan Page, 1996, p. 169.

educational strategy”,⁶ namely, his call to disburden the philosophy of education from being “an autonomous sub-area within academic philosophy”.⁷ I applaud Carr’s dissatisfaction with the insulation of philosophy from education and agree with some of his leitmotifs, and yet, I cannot resist the temptation to argue that his discourse ends up being incoherent on closer examination. Thus, my main aim in this paper is to urge that the fear of the isolation of philosophy from education can be reduced in a way that is different from that of Carr’s. That is, the fear can be defused not by disclaiming the philosophy of education’s burden of responsibility for academic philosophy but by properly recognising the nature of human knowledge as essentially bound up and shot through with issues pertaining to education. This is not to suggest that the discipline finds a new niche in the philosophy business but rather to suggest that such educational dimensions should form the centrepiece of the philosophical enquiry into human knowledge.

2. Carr’s Criticism of the Educational Theory Project

What is particularly notable about Carr’s line of thinking is a complex mix of his hankering after the Aristotelian tradition of practical philosophy and his heavy reliance on what he calls “postfoundationalism”.⁸ (The recent influence of neo-Aristotelianism on work in the philosophy of education is noteworthy. This is to indicate that the philosophy of education, in drawing on notions like practical reason and practical judgement, reflects the trend for philosophical work in the tradition of practical philosophy.) Carr’s basic presumptions are that “what we now call ‘educational theory’ is deeply rooted in the foundationalist discourse of late nineteenth and early twentieth century modernity”⁹ which is merely a reflection of the Enlightenment values and ideals and that we now live in a *post-modern* world insofar as the fundamental conditions underlying the modern Enlightenment period have come to lose much of their force. Carr thus claims: “It is quite bearable to give up on the notion of certainty espoused in the Cartesian view of rationality, or on the idea that there are logical ‘foundations’ to which philosophical appeal can be made, or on the idea that a *positive* science or philosophy can yield human progress...”.¹⁰ This thread of thought leads Carr to his highly controversial idea of “education without theory”. In Carr’s view, “theory” is to be abandoned precisely because it cannot be disentangled from its own particularities and contingencies and thus cannot take a vantage point from which to inform practice as the modern project of educational theory promises.

There has surely been disillusionment with the idea that (educational) theory can inform (educational) practice and furthermore there is nothing wrong with Carr’s insistence that theorising is itself a form of practice.¹¹ Nonetheless, it seems tempting to raise questions as to whether Carr smoothly combines an appreciation of some Aristotelian notions like practical reason with an employment of postfoundationalism. More specifically, the way Carr presents his ideas, I argue, collapses his own helpful awareness of the culturally, historically contingent context that has placed “educational theory” where it is, and rather opens him to the charge of sheer relativism.

⁶ Carr, W., Education and Democracy: Confronting the Postmodernist Challenge, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 29(1), 1995, p. 89.

⁷ Carr, W., Philosophy and Education, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 38(1), 2004, p. 60.

⁸ Carr, W., Education without Theory, *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 54(2), 2006, p. 147.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 136.

¹⁰ Carr, W. and Kemmis, S., Staying Critical, *Educational Action Research*, 13(3), 2005, p. 354, italics in original.

¹¹ Carr, Education without Theory, op. cit., p. 147.

It will help here to take up the dispute between Carr and Siegel¹² over Carr's locution. Siegel points out that Carr relies on the very notions that he himself purports to reject. For example, Carr uses the prohibited tactics, in declaring that "rationality is *always relative* to time and place".¹³ If Carr is right, this assertion itself, Siegel maintains, has to be *relative*. That is: (i) if the very sentence is really relative, then the sentence does not deserve special attention; (ii) if the very sentence is not relative, then the sentence betrays its content, since the sentence is *absolute*. In reply, Carr responds that "[p]ostfoundationalism can... without contradiction, include its own thesis within its own scope",¹⁴ for "postfoundationalism is not an epistemological thesis that 'rejects the possibility of objective knowledge' but an explanatory thesis about how objective knowledge emerges".¹⁵ The thesis that no discourse can be justified from outside any local practices of justification is unproblematic, but the trouble comes in if Carr is unaware (and I think he is) of the limits of the so-called genealogical enquiry to which he seems to commit himself in the above remark. That is, Carr often seems to offer his discourse not as explanatory thesis but as an "epistemological" thesis that there is no such thing as objective knowledge. A warning flag for espousers of genealogical enquiry is this: If it is impossible to reach objective knowledge due to historically, culturally embedded contingent factors and interests such as power or class that place constraints on our looking at the world, then, it follows, by the very same token, that it is *also* impossible to reach knowledge of such contingent factors and interests as such.¹⁶ This is to indicate that, if we are to do full justice to Carr's discourse, his "explanatory thesis about how objective knowledge emerges" *cannot*, contrary to his project,¹⁷ offer another *more* legitimate alternative to a view or system it is criticising, even if it could unpack the lack of the "legitimacy" of the presently dominant view or system. In brief, genealogists and strong contextualists *can never* occupy a neutral, transcendental point of view precisely because, *à la* Carr, they are carrying out enquiry from a specific perspective that is already embedded in countless interests and concerns.

What brings out certain essential features of Carr's thinking is his motive for avoiding *justifying* the plausibility of his discourse. For instance, in the final paragraph of his "Education without Theory", he says: "Although I have argued that it [the educational theory project] should [be abandoned], I have carefully resisted any suggestion that this is a recommendation that is 'justified by' or 'follows from' my argument".¹⁸ Note that this goes further beyond the insistence of the "post-analytical" philosophy such as Richard Rorty's view on which Carr heavily draws, one that we can discard the vocabulary of objectivity in

¹² Siegel's view stands in stark contrast to Carr's in the sense that Siegel takes modernist, Enlightenment epistemology to be still useful and necessary and so raises suspicion of Carr's line of thinking.

¹³ Siegel, H., Knowledge, Truth and Education, in Carr, D. (ed.) *Education, Knowledge and Truth: Beyond the Postmodern Impasse*. 1998, London, Routledge, p. 31, italics added by Siegel.

¹⁴ Carr, *Education without Theory*, op. cit., p. 152.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 151.

¹⁶ Frederick Schmitt duly makes this point, in a slightly different but surely relevant context. He responds to the pressure to abandon scientific knowledge insofar as social, political factors and interests should be taken into account in the consideration of scientific knowledge, claiming: "One might be tempted, after reaching skepticism, to give up on rationality and epistemic evaluation altogether and turn to social and political criticism of science instead. But I can see no way to make this approach coherent. If interests prevent us from getting straight about electrons, they will also prevent us from getting straight about interests" (Schmitt, F. F., *Socializing Epistemology: An Introduction through Two Sample Issues*, in F. F. Schmitt (ed.) *Socializing Epistemology: The Social Dimensions of Knowledge*, 1994, Lanham, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, p. 26, my italics).

¹⁷ The rationale for his "education without theory" is predicated on his aspiration to "[produce] an alternative history of the philosophy of education to that which currently exists" (Carr, *Philosophy and Education*, op. cit., p. 55).

¹⁸ Carr, W., *Education without Theory*, op. cit., p. 156.

favour of a social practice of conversation—“the practice of *justifying* one’s assertions to one’s fellow-humans”.¹⁹ What underlies Carr’s phobia of justification is his own understanding of the Aristotelian tradition of practical philosophy.

3. The Interpenetration of Theory and Practice

A reinvigorated awareness of Aristotelian practical philosophy, Carr asserts, involves a radical demand that “theoretical justification” should be replaced by “practical justification”, for the latter justification is “the only kind there is”.²⁰ I have no quarrel with the resurrection of Aristotelian practical philosophy to the extent that it is a significant corrective to the excesses in the overly theoretical approach of modern philosophy to social practices like education. In this regard, I do not deny Carr’s endorsed “non-theoretical forms of reflective philosophy”²¹ that never has “the aspiration to create a body of educational theory that can inform and guide educational practice”²² but instead which “enables each generation of practitioners to make progress in achieving excellence in their practice and, by so doing, ensure that the tradition constitutive of their practice continues to develop and evolve”.²³ Yet, nonetheless, it does seem that Carr’s interpretation misses the point of Aristotelian practical philosophy.

Carr’s discourse gives an inkling that he fails to acknowledge that practice as such does not speak by itself, as it were. Accordingly, he does not appear to have a proper appreciation of the other side of the same coin: namely, that theory as such is not a copy or representation of mind-independent objects or phenomena. In other words, a practice in itself by no means presents itself to us as the practice we understand and deal with—i.e. practice is *not* self-explanatory. Put the other way round, it is our history of conceptual commitments to practices that makes them deserve to count as a practice and thus practices are humanly-perceived states of affairs that make no sense to any other living beings and which never exist anywhere in the “natural” world. In this important sense, theory and practice are interconnected and go in tandem. This is the gist of what I mean by “practice as such does not speak by itself”. To put it in a somewhat provocative way, there exists neither “pure” theory nor “pure” practice. As Carr rightly claims, what theories we obtain is largely a matter of contingency. For what becomes the content of our knowledge never automatically springs to mind from what exists independently of us but (at least partly) depends on how we organise our enquiry into it in particular and on our mode of life in general. Therefore a future unified theory of all the elementary particles, for instance, might alter our practices such as dealing with particular objects. It is probably a fair criticism that Carr’s dismissive attitude towards theory in favour of the internally self-justifying character of practice does not take in stride this possibility, namely that theory and practice go hand in hand.

To put this in a slightly different way, what seems missing in Carr’s picture is an appreciation of the most basic conditions of human knowledge that make the theory-practice distinction possible at all and which, more generally, operate both as a promise and the conclusion of our intellectual activity. The fact is that behind a practice lie a wide range

¹⁹ Rorty, R., Introduction, in W. Sellars, *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind*, R. Brandom, study guide, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1997, p. 4.

²⁰ Carr, *Education without Theory*, op. cit., pp. 155-6.

²¹ Carr, *Philosophy and Education*, op. cit., p. 67.

²² Carr, *Education without Theory*, op. cit., p. 155

²³ Carr, *Philosophy and Education*, op. cit., p. 63

of inferences a person can make as well as other practices she ought to know as a condition for conducting that particular practice. This is precisely the way we live in the world as intellectual, sentient beings—as if we stood both within and outside our particular social practices at one and the same time. The major insight here is that the place we human beings live in is, from the very beginning, the world of such a tapestry of theory and practice, not the environment that non-human living beings may perceive by their imperative biological forces. The world I am trying to delineate here has much affinity with what Wilfrid Sellars calls “the logical space of reasons”²⁴ and what John McDowell dubs the world of “second nature”.²⁵ Along these lines, it is not far from the truth to say that to live *qua* humans, we need to be *socialised* into the world filled with meanings and sentience which are unique to human beings.

A trivial but telling example of *artefacts* may serve to illustrate this point. This present world is filled with artefacts and our daily life, whatever it is, go hand in hand with those artefacts. This means that human beings in no ways live in a simply “natural” environment (which would appear if all humans and accordingly all artefacts magically disappeared). The decisive difference between artefacts and natural kinds is that artefacts are, from the outset, “embodiments of meaning and purpose”.²⁶ It should not be taken, however, to imply that meanings and purposes are fixed and absolute. A part of what makes the human species special is the capacity to create new artefacts one after another and change the meanings and purposes of the existing artefacts—i.e. we can change the ways we are involved in those artefacts. Changes in artefacts do not cause a change in the most basic physical structure of the world such as natural laws²⁷ but can be relevant to our understanding of, and dealings with, the world. For, first, artefacts, explicitly or implicitly, carry meaning and purpose; second, (new) artefacts might change how things strike us—e.g. the invention of X-ray made it possible for humans to observe what we could not observe before. In short, artefacts and how we live are deeply entangled with each other.

The moral to be drawn from the line of thinking thus far is that the place we inhabit is essentially a *social* world. The deepest sense of “social” resides in the process through which humans as part of the biological species (e.g. as newborn babies) become humans as intellectual and sentient beings. This sense of “social” is prior to the relative difference in the standards of knowledge among societies to which Carr evokes sensitivity. In other words, human animals become a human being as a properly socialised individual. This educational process is precisely the point which the Cartesian brand of individualist epistemology falls short of recognising. To know something essentially requires being a member of a social world.

²⁴ Sellars, op. cit.

²⁵ McDowell, J., *Mind and World*, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1996.

²⁶ Bakhurst, D. Minds, Brains and Education, *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, 42(3-4), 2008, p. 427. Bakhurst’s account is illustrative: “[T]o interact with the artefactual is to engage in activities that are not just elicited by circumstance but mediated by meaning. So the child enters the human world, the world of meaning” (Ibid., p. 426). It is to be noted, however, that natural kinds, if any, such as gold would be unintelligible to us human beings were it not for our conceptual commitments to them.

²⁷ For instance, the brightest physicist would not be able to break the law of gravity.

4. The Social Character of Responsiveness to Reasons

Insofar as the idea that theory can take a vantage point and inform practice from that point has now been discredited, it is a step forward, as Carr does, to raise awareness of particularities and contingencies that have placed a particular theory where it is. However, we must not miss the forest for the trees. A toxic by-product of Carr's discourse is that he seems to lose sight of the most fundamental sense of 'social', thereby making his discourse look along the lines of utter relativism. The most basic sense of "social", as mentioned above, underlies differences among societies, for living *qua* a human requires us to be a social being rather than simply a genetic, biological creature and this is achieved through initiation into what Robert Brandom calls "social practices of giving and asking for reasons".²⁸ The capacity to be responsive to reasons in unbelievably complex ways makes the life of the human species as a whole radically different from that of other, i.e. non-human, living beings. Premised on this essentially social character of the ability to respond to reasons, we can, in varying degrees, depending on the motivation and imagination we have, communicate with one another, even if people live in different cultures, using different languages. This is in marked contrast to the case in which, for example, zoologists attempt to (one-sidedly rather than mutually) interpret the life of bats by appeal to anthropomorphism. In other words, the world of human beings as a community of thinking and minded beings is of an essentially social nature—"social" in a uniquely human way.

The insight that the deepest nature of human uniqueness lies in the sociality of responsiveness to humanly-perceived reasons opens our eyes to the *educational* nature of human knowledge. For, the world of second nature or the game of giving and asking for reasons has no final word that is predestined or can be legitimated from outside of our world, but instead it is always in some way in process and flux. At the core of those processes lies education in a broad sense. This is to intimate to us that there is no need to follow Carr in rethinking the nature of the philosophy of education. He makes as if the philosophy of education is different in character from academic philosophy and it is to be best understood and developed as "practical philosophy". In contrast, the perspective I have been urging, I hope, begins to articulate that educational aspects, broadly understood, are the core, if not the whole, of human knowledge. This view pursued here, if taken seriously, encourages us to see the traditional outlook towards the relation between philosophy and education differently. Paul Standish convincingly adverts to this point: "[F]orms of enquiry central to philosophy (into ethics, epistemology and metaphysics) themselves necessarily incorporate questions about learning and teaching: they ask questions not only about the nature of the good (for the individual and for society), but also about *how we become* virtuous; and not only about the nature of knowledge, but also about *how it is acquired*. In other words, these essentially educational questions of teaching and learning are not external matters to which the philosophy is applied, but internal to philosophy itself".²⁹

²⁸ Brandom, R. B., *Making It Explicit: Reasoning, Representing and Discursive Commitment*, Cambridge, Harvard university press, 1994, p. xiv.

²⁹ Standish, P., *Rival Conceptions of the Philosophy of Education*, *Ethics and Education*, 2(2), 2007, London-New York, Taylor & Francis, p. 162, italics in original. Standish is not alone in making this point. See, for example, Bakhurst's "Il'enkov on Education", *op. cit.*

The way out of the neglect of the philosophy of education begins with the realisation that the real task of philosophical enquiry into knowledge is to cast light on its “social” character in the sense I have been delineating and on its inevitable implications for the educational dimensions inherent in it. As Carr rightly sees things, there is no occupying a neutral ground in the world we live in. This reminds us that our world is not a simply “natural” environment that can exhaustively be explained in natural-scientific terms but rather a social world that imposes a requirement for there to be reasons unique to human beings. We cannot wipe away these reasons that are embodied and repositied in various forms as the legacy of human history but this by no means implies that such reasons and the ways we respond to them are absolute or fixed. It is instead brought to the forefront of our minds that at the heart of the world we live in, there lie ongoing processes. The full recognition of this point will bring a new tone to the philosophical study of education in particular and of human knowledge and development more generally³⁰.

³⁰ I am grateful to Bianca Thoilliez for her generous help.

La Relación Educativa como Ejercicio de Distancia: Una Mirada a la Experiencia Compasiva desde Rousseau

*The educational relationship as an exercise at a distance:
a look at compassionate experience from Rousseau*

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Resumen:

El presente artículo explora las posibilidades de la compasión en la relación educativa como camino para el reconocimiento pleno de la alteridad y la relación con los otros. Para esta exploración se emplean como referente las máximas de Rousseau sobre la piedad, para quien la identificación con el sufrimiento ajeno constituye el camino para la relación con los otros. Sin embargo, el análisis demostrará que el sentimiento compasivo no sólo no conduce necesariamente al reconocimiento de la alteridad, sino que puede contribuir a su negación. Para un reconocimiento verdadero la compasión debe estar mediada por la distancia. Una distancia que surge de la identificación del otro sufriente no con uno mismo, sino con los otros que son nuestros seres cercanos, que actúan como mediadores e introducen la distancia necesaria para que el sufrimiento ajeno no anule las posibilidades de la acción.

Palabras clave: Compasión, alteridad, educación, Rousseau, distancia.

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Abstract:

This article explores the possibilities for compassion in the educational relationship as a path to full recognition of otherness and the relationship with others. This exploration is based on Rousseau's maxims on piety, which use identification with the suffering of others as the way to building the relationship. However, this analysis shows that compassion does not necessarily lead to the recognition of otherness but may in fact contribute to denial. For true recognition, compassion must be mediated by distance, and this distance arises from identifying the suffering other not with oneself, but with others who are close to us and who act as mediators and add the distance we need for the other's suffering not to nullify any chance of action.

Keywords: Compassion, otherness, education, Rousseau, distance.

1. Introducción

La compasión goza en la actualidad de una gran presencia en el ámbito educativo. La inclusión en el sistema educativo ordinario de sujetos que tradicionalmente habían sido destinados a instituciones especiales; el aumento porcentual de la población escolar extranjera; el incremento del maltrato entre escolares y el rechazo que los estudiantes manifiestan hacia otros compañeros, hacen que la compasión, como mediadora de la relación entre los alumnos, y entre éstos y el profesor, se emplee como recurso para combatir los desencuentros. Asimismo, la introducción en el curriculum escolar de conflictos sociales y políticos, como la violencia de género, el maltrato infantil, la exclusión de las personas con discapacidad, los conflictos bélicos, etc. han dotado al sentimiento compasivo de un mayor protagonismo en la escena educativa.

La compasión se emplea como un recurso que contribuye al reconocimiento de la alteridad. Sin embargo, el acto compasional puede tanto conducir a este reconocimiento, como implicar lo contrario, esto es, su negación. Esta aparente contradicción, que desde un análisis meramente lógico podría parecer una tautología, no es tal si consideramos tres elementos esenciales en la experiencia compasional: el sujeto compasivo, el sujeto compadecido y la distancia que media entre ellos. Según cómo se articulen estos tres elementos en el ejercicio compasivo, éste puede conducir a una concepción plena del otro, o bien, por el contrario, a su negación. Así, una compasión que no considerase la evaluación que el sujeto que padece el sufrimiento hace de su propio dolor podría conducir a la eliminación de la alteridad. Como también podría conducir a ella una compasión en la que se produjese una identificación plena entre el sujeto compasivo y el compadecido, eliminando la distancia inevitable entre ambos. Por ello este texto propone un análisis de las implicaciones del sentimiento compasivo para el reconocimiento de la alteridad.

Desde una perspectiva pedagógica, el análisis de la experiencia compasiva no puede hacerse sin considerar el concepto rousseauniano de compasión, ya que Rousseau² fue el primer pensador de la época moderna en defender la educación de los sentimientos, antes

² No se pretende en este trabajo realizar un estudio exhaustivo o pormenorizado de la obra o los postulados pedagógicos de Rousseau. Se emplean simplemente sus referencias a la compasión como punto de partida para un análisis sobre las diversas implicaciones de las concepciones de la compasión.

incluso que la de la razón, “porque ser humano es más importante que ser sabio”³. A esta afirmación sigue una educación sentimental en la que la compasión desempeña un lugar esencial en la relación con el otro.

En su argumentación acerca de la compasión⁴, Rousseau trata sobre lo que dispone al ser humano para el reconocimiento del otro; “hace de la piedad una disposición”⁵, “un afecto estructurador que nos dispone a entrar en comunidad”⁶. Este concepto de compasión debe considerarse en el marco de la evolución de los afectos. Según Rousseau, el niño “no tiene ningún sentimiento”⁷. La única pasión que experimenta naturalmente es el amor de sí, sentimiento que nace con el hombre, ya que es imprescindible para la propia conservación. Es llegada la pubertad cuando el chico “empieza a sentir que no está hecho para vivir solo; así es como se abre el corazón a los afectos humanos y se vuelve capaz de apego”⁸, cuando el hombre “nace verdaderamente a la vida”⁹, esto es, a la humanidad. Esa conciencia nace de la propia debilidad, del reconocimiento de la vulnerabilidad esencial al ser humano: “son nuestras miserias las que llevan nuestros corazones hacia la humanidad”¹⁰. Esta debilidad es la que conduce al adolescente a tomar interés por los que le rodean; de esto se deriva que sea el sentimiento de los pesares de los otros lo que nos vincula a ellos, en oposición a sus placeres, ya que son éstos, los pesares, las necesidades, los dolores, la muerte al fin, lo común a todos los seres humanos. Así es como la compasión se erige como condición de posibilidad y desencadenante de la relación con el otro¹¹.

Sin embargo, ¿conduce realmente el sentimiento compasivo, tal como afirma Rousseau, al otro, a su reconocimiento? Para responder esta cuestión, recurramos a un pre-texto¹²: la historia de Psaménito narrada por Heródoto¹³. Psaménito, rey de Egipto, al ser vencido por Cambises, fue expuesto en público para probar su entereza. Frente a él hizo pasar Cambises a su hija, despojada de sus vestiduras reales y reducida a la condición de esclava, cargando con un cántaro en el que debía recoger agua. Psaménito presencié la escena en silencio, sin hacer más ademán de dolor que bajar la vista. Tras ella hizo pasa a su hijo con un dogal al cuello y un freno en la boca, camino del cadalso. Pero Psaménito repitió la misma conducta mantenida ante su hija. En ese momento apareció ante su mirada un viejo conocido que había perdido todos sus bienes y se presentaba como un pordiosero pidiendo limosna entre las tropas. Al verlo, Psaménito rompió a llorar repitiendo su nombre. Sorprendido Cambises preguntó a Psaménito porqué no lloró ni gritó al ver a su hija maltratada y a su hijo llevado al cadalso, y sin embargo lo hizo desconsoladamente al ver a un mendigo.

³ Otero Urtaza, E., “Las teorías educativas en los umbrales de la contemporaneidad”, *Teorías e instituciones contemporáneas de educación*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 2004, pp. 177-196.

⁴ Con el término “compasión” queremos referir la afección que un sujeto experimenta ante el dolor padecido por otro. Consideramos con M. Nussbaum que lo que Rousseau denomina “pitié” guarda más relación con este término que con el de “piedad”, término que en la actualidad posee matices de superioridad y condescendencia y que en lo relativo a este trabajo podemos considerar, como se verá más adelante, ejercicios de compasión mediados por una distancia vertical. Para una ampliación sobre las implicaciones de cada uno de los dos términos ver Nussbaum, M., *Paisajes del pensamiento. La inteligencia de las emociones*, Barcelona, Paidós, 2008, pp. 339-340.

⁵ Revault D’Allonnes, M., *El hombre compasional*, Buenos Aires, Amorrortu, 2009, p. 33.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

⁷ Rousseau, J. J., *Emilio, o De la educación*, Madrid, Alianza, 2005, p. 98.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 325.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 313.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 327.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 328-329.

¹² Tomado de: Alba Rico, S., *Capitalismo y nihilismo. Dialéctica el hambre y la mirada*, Madrid, Akal, 2007, pp. 49-50.

¹³ Heródoto, *Historia*, Vol. 2, Libros III, trad. C. Schrande, Madrid, Gredos, 1995, pp. 41-45.

La sorpresa de Cambises es nuestra pregunta cuando leemos esta historia desde la óptica de la compasión. ¿Cómo puede ser que Psaménito muestre compasión por un mero conocido y no lo haga ante el sufrimiento y la humillación de sus propios hijos? Las máximas que Rousseau postula acerca de la compasión esbozan algunas respuestas a nuestra pregunta. “No es propio del corazón humano ponerse en el lugar de personas que son más felices que nosotros, sino sólo de aquéllas que son más de compadecer”; “Nunca se compadecen en los demás sino los males de los que no nos creemos exentos”; “La piedad que tenemos del mal de otros no se mide por la cantidad de ese mal, sino por el sentimiento que atribuimos a quienes los sufren. Sin embargo, si ahondamos en las implicaciones de estas respuestas a nuestra pregunta acerca del motivo de las lágrimas de Psaménito, podría ser que no encontrásemos un sentimiento compasivo como reconocedor pleno del otro, tal como afirma Rousseau, sino la negación de su alteridad. Analicemos, pues, las implicaciones de estas tres afirmaciones a la luz del reconocimiento del otro a través o en su sufrimiento.

2. La experiencia compasiva como asimetría

“No es propio del corazón humano ponerse en el lugar de personas que son más felices que nosotros, sino sólo de aquéllas que son más de compadecer”¹⁴.

Añade Rousseau que ponerse en el lugar de los que son más afortunados o felices que nosotros puede despertar la envidia, mientras que las desgracias no son objeto de ésta. Y continúa:

“Nos vinculamos a nuestros semejantes menos por el sentimiento de sus placeres que por el de sus pesares; porque en éstos captamos mucho mejor la identidad de nuestra naturaleza y las garantías de su apego hacia nosotros. [...] La piedad es dulce, porque al ponernos en el lugar del que sufre sentimos el placer, sin embargo, de no sufrir como él”¹⁵.

De forma que lo que inicialmente consiste en compartir el sufrimiento del otro finaliza en una suerte de placer personal, de manera que si no queremos que sufra es para no sufrir nosotros con él. Se trataría, por tanto, de sufrir *con* pero no *como* el otro.

Así, tras la primera máxima de Rousseau sobre la compasión advertimos la ambivalencia inherente a ésta. La compasión es el primer afecto que aparece con la consideración del otro; sin embargo, quien se esconde tras este sentimiento no es el otro, sino uno mismo, que obtiene placer de sus desgracias. Así, la compasión puede ser una suerte de afirmación de uno mismo a través del sufrimiento ajeno, de un ajeno que colocamos en un lugar inferior en la escala de la fortuna, la felicidad o la deseabilidad. Pues, ¿quién sentiría envidia del hambriento, del abandonado, del que lo ha perdido todo? Una escala en la que tendríamos el poder de ignorar o incluso recrearnos en el padecer del otro, pero en la que decidimos voluntariamente no hacerlo, en la que escogemos padecer con él. La compasión consistiría así en un intento de compensación de una relación desequilibrada, en un movimiento de nivelación que tiene mucho que ver con “esa generosidad que lleva a veces al hombre a abstenerse de ejercer su dominio allí donde podría ejercerlo”¹⁶. Pero, ¿no podría ser el sentimiento de compasión ya una forma de ejercer ese dominio, de constatar ese poder de elección entre la ignorancia, la burla o

¹⁴ Rousseau, Emilio, op. cit., p. 330.

¹⁵ Ibíd., p. 327.

¹⁶ Alba Rico, S., *Capitalismo y nihilismo*, op. cit., p. 65.

el padecimiento? Retomemos la historia de Heródoto: tal vez Psaménito sintiese lástima del pordiosero, pero no de sus hijos, porque ante ellos no puede elegir compartir su dolor, porque ante ellos no puede sino sufrir con ellos, mientras que podría ignorar el sufrimiento del mendigo y sin embargo escoge compadecerse.

La compasión, por tanto, puede introducir una distancia vertical en la relación con el sujeto de ella, en la que el compasivo se imagina como el sujeto de su compasión, pero siempre desde la certeza de que no será él, desde el deseo de no ser él. Y la “mirada compasional”¹⁷ puede ser una forma de negación de la alteridad, de distanciamiento vertical de la alteridad, en un intento de atrapar al otro en un lugar que no pueda abandonar, el lugar del desafortunado, del desvalido, del que sólo puede ser sujeto, o tal vez, objeto, de compasión, reduciéndolo a su condición de otro, de diferente, a través de la resistencia a ser él. “Es posible ir más lejos y sospechar que la mirada compasional no es únicamente el corolario de la desafiliación creciente de los individuos, sino también la máscara o la coartada de un verdadero desconocimiento de la alteridad”¹⁸.

3. La experiencia compasiva como identificación

“Nunca se compadecen en los demás sino los males de los que no nos creemos exentos.”¹⁹

Aristóteles escribirá acerca de lo sucedido a Psaménito:

“Se siente compasión por los conocidos, si no están demasiado cerca en la relación, pues por éstos se tiene el mismo sentimiento que si le ocurriera a uno mismo. Por eso Psaménito no lloró por el hijo llevado a la muerte, según cuentan, pero sí por el amigo que pedía limosna, porque esto sí que era digno de compasión, mientras que lo otro era horrendo; y lo horrible es cosa diferente de lo lastimoso, y aleja a la compasión, y muchas veces sirve para lo contrario; porque ya no siente compasión cuando está cerca de uno lo que es horrible”.²⁰

Psaménito es incapaz de llorar ante el sufrimiento de sus hijos, pues el dolor que experimenta supera cualquier lágrima. Puesto que lo que a uno sucede acontece en el lugar de lo *horrendo*, ante lo que nada se puede decir, sobrepasa el umbral del sentimiento para caer en el vacío de sentido. “Lo horrible nos vuelve, no compasivos, sino desdichados”²¹. Y lo que al radicalmente otro sucede, nada tiene que ver con nosotros; así, sólo en el momento en que atribuimos a los animales o identificamos en ellos nuestra misma capacidad de sentir, experimentamos compasión ante su sufrimiento²².

Se compadece a los semejantes (en edad, hábitos, carácter, costumbres, etc.) porque en éstos se manifiesta con mayor claridad lo que a uno mismo puede suceder²³. “Sólo nos conmueve aquello que podemos representarnos”²⁴, y para la representación es necesaria una cierta identificación. Por otro lado, se compadece un suceso que se considera significativo,

¹⁷ Revault D’Allonnes, M., *El hombre compasional*, op. cit., p. 13. M. Revault distingue entre los vocablos franceses “compatisant”, que correspondería con el castellano “compasivo”, y “compassionnel”, neologismo que comenzó a emplearse recientemente en francés, inicialmente en el ámbito de la medicina, haciendo referencia a los cuidados que se brindan a enfermos terminales, y posteriormente en sociología y politología, referido a las iniciativas destinadas a la atención de los sectores más desfavorecidos de la sociedad. (Revault D’Allonnes, 2009, p. 13)

¹⁸ *Ibíd.*, p. 39.

¹⁹ Rousseau, Emilio, op. cit., p. 331.

²⁰ Aristóteles, *Retórica*, Madrid, Instituto de Estudios Políticos, 1953, II 8, 1386.

²¹ *Ibíd.*, p. 72.

²² Rousseau, Emilio, op. cit., p. 333.

²³ Arteta, A., *La compasión. Apología de una virtud bajo sospecha*, Barcelona, Paidós, 1996, p. 23.

²⁴ Alba Rico, *Capitalismo y nihilismo*, op. cit., p. 56.

o la pérdida de algo que merece estima. Nos compadecemos de que alguien haya perdido a un ser querido porque consideramos valiosas las personas a las que queremos²⁵.

La compasión entraña, por tanto, una doble identificación, con el sujeto que padece y con el objeto de su padecimiento. Una identificación que, según Rousseau, pasa por entender que lo que al otro sucede podría pasarme a mí, o que el otro que sufre “podría ser yo”²⁶. Sin embargo, el “podría ser yo”, frente al “soy yo” resulta esencial para el reconocimiento de la alteridad, porque introduce la distancia necesaria para desligarse de lo horrendo, alejarse del sufrimiento del otro sin distanciarse de él, permaneciendo a su lado. Y porque la reducción al “soy yo” convierte el sufrimiento en una experiencia propia, por lo que el otro desaparecería de la escena para ocupar el lugar protagonista uno mismo y su propio dolor²⁷.

4. La experiencia compasiva como atribución

“La piedad que tenemos del mal de otros no se mide por la cantidad de ese mal, sino por el sentimiento que atribuimos a quienes lo sufren”.²⁸

En esta tercera máxima de Rousseau encontramos un matiz que juega un papel decisivo en el carácter ambivalente de la compasión: la atribución. Así, la compasión no constituye la experimentación del sufrimiento, tampoco la expresión de quien lo vive, sino su atribución por un observador. Esta atribución es consecuencia de la distancia que media entre quien experimenta el sufrimiento y quien se compadece de él. Pero en esa distancia, o en su eliminación a través de la atribución, radica a su vez la perversión que el sentimiento compasional puede entrañar. Porque la compasión supone, por un lado, la atribución de la concepción personal del sufrimiento al otro y, por otro, la reducción de la experiencia del otro al dolor.

“Vemos a un ex agente de bolsa que lo ha perdido todo y duerme entre cartones; o a una anciana enferma que desde hace veinte años espera una carta del hijo desaparecido; o a un niño mutilado al que sus amigos dejan atrás mientras juegan a la pelota; y nuestra imaginación ocupa inmediatamente ese lugar de desdicha ininterrumpida, donde no hay otra cosa que el dolor de la cojera, la desesperación de la pérdida y el sufrimiento de la segregación. Pero en realidad en ese lugar hay sobre todo mal humor, esperanza inútil, la satisfacción de fumarse un cigarrillo, el desprecio por los compañeros, la convicción de tener razón, el orgullo de ser diferente, el placer del sol, la alegría de la propia astucia”.²⁹

Y, sin embargo, en la compasión sólo nos representamos el padecimiento, hasta el punto de poder experimentar en la imaginación un sufrimiento tal que ni el propio sujeto sufriente experimente en la realidad³⁰. Un padecer que, además, imaginamos o tratamos de vivenciar desde nuestra experiencia, nuestra historia, nuestras ideas, nuestros dolores. Nos resulta imposible tener experiencia directa, inmediata, pura, de lo que sienten otros. Sólo nos queda

²⁵ Martha Nussbaum identifica tres elementos cognitivos esenciales a la compasión: el juicio de la magnitud, es decir, el juicio de que lo acontecido afecta a algo valioso; el juicio del inmerecimiento; y el juicio eudaimonista, esto es, que la persona que experimenta el sufrimiento es alguien importante en mi esquema de objetivos. El primer y tercer juicios guardarían relación con la identificación. Nussbaum, M., Paisajes del pensamiento, op. cit., p. 361.

²⁶ Ibíd, p. 56.

²⁷ Taylor, C., La compasión, *Cuaderno gris*, nº. 7, 2003, pp. 249-260.

²⁸ Rousseau, Emilio, p. 332.

²⁹ Alba Rico, Capitalismo y nihilismo, op. cit., p. 60.

³⁰ Smith, A., *La teoría de los sentimientos morales*, Madrid, Alianza, 1997, p. 54.

pensar cómo nos sentiríamos nosotros en su misma situación, esto es, hacer un ejercicio de imaginación que, sin embargo, “sólo nos puede ayudar representándonos lo que serían nuestras propias sensaciones si nos halláramos en su lugar. Nuestra imaginación puede copiar las impresiones de nuestros sentidos, pero no de los suyos”.³¹

Una vez más encontramos la distancia como detonadora de la ambivalencia que entraña la compasión. Una vez más la mirada compasional puede constituir la negación de la alteridad por la reducción del otro a su sufrimiento y a nuestra miseria.

Afirma Rousseau que la compasión no se mide por el mal en sí que padece el otro, sino por el sentimiento que atribuimos a ese mal, esto es, por el padecimiento que ese mal genera en el sujeto que lo recibe. Esta afirmación resalta la acción y decisión del que sufre el mal y rechaza una concepción condescendiente de la compasión: sólo podríamos sentir compasión por aquellos males que, ambos, el compasivo y el compadecido, experimentan como tal, y no sólo por las acciones que el compasivo valore como injustas o perjudiciales, independientemente de que el sujeto de la compasión así lo experimente. Toma de esta forma protagonismo el sujeto que experimenta el mal, de forma que sería su criterio, y no el del sujeto que siente compasión, el que prima.

Si bien este protagonismo del sujeto sufriente resulta, por un lado, esencial para el reconocimiento de la alteridad puede, sin embargo, confundir los pesares y ahogar la capacidad compasiva, pues habríamos de sentirla no ya sólo por el hambriento, el desposeído, aquel a quien no se permite ser ciudadano, el que pierde a un ser querido, sino también ante quien pierde a su mascota, se le estropea el coche o pierde un jersey nuevo. Sumido en el sufrimiento ajeno, en lo horrendo, sin referente externo acerca de los males que merecen ser padecidos y compadecidos, el sentimiento compasivo estaría constantemente expuesto o en ejercicio, perdiéndose “la importancia del sufrimiento”³². “La compasión depende del punto de vista del espectador”³³ y para que se dé debe mantenerse una distancia entre el sujeto compasivo y el compadecido.

5. Educación y compasión: un ejercicio de distancia

Imaginemos que somos maestros de un grupo de alumnos entre los que se encuentra un niño con parálisis cerebral ligera, que se manifiesta en dificultades en el habla y el movimiento. Sus compañeros de clase suelen reírse de él por ello, y vemos en el comportamiento y la actitud del niño que sufre a causa de esas burlas, que se sabe diferente y se siente solo. ¿Sería la compasión un recurso acertado para aplacar las burlas y el sufrimiento del niño con discapacidad física? Antes de cuestionarnos su idoneidad, hemos de plantear si es un recurso disponible, esto es, si nuestros alumnos pueden sentir compasión.

Según Rousseau, la compasión es una tendencia natural; tras toda una infancia en la que los otros han carecido de presencia, Emilio llega a la adolescencia, se hace consciente de que no puede vivir solo y aparece el sentimiento compasivo como camino para el encuentro con el otro. También lo considera natural Adam Smith, para quien el sentimiento de compasión ante el dolor ajeno es una especie de acto reflejo que nos lleva a estremecernos en nuestro propio cuerpo cuando presenciemos un golpe³⁴. Por el contrario, Hannah Arendt defiende que “la historia nos enseña que no es en modo alguno natural que el espectáculo

³¹ *Ibíd.*, p. 50.

³² Nussbaum, *Paisajes del pensamiento*, op. cit., p. 348.

³³ *Ibíd.*

³⁴ Smith, *Teoría de los sentimientos morales*, op. cit. p. 50.

de la miseria mueva a los hombres a la compasión; incluso durante los largos siglos en los que la religión cristiana de la misericordia determinaba las normas morales.”³⁵ La ejemplificación de Arendt pone en cuestión en su dimensión efectiva, real, la consideración de la compasión como un acto reflejo que surge espontáneamente cuando somos testigos del sufrimiento ajeno.

Podríamos considerar que la compasión no tiene ninguna relación con nuestro ser humanos, pensar en ella como un constructo artificial, inventado del hombre para sí mismo, y del que por tanto podríamos prescindir. Hemos de preguntarnos, por ello, quién sería el ser humano sin la capacidad compasiva, ya que si le atribuimos un carácter esencial al ser humano, no podríamos plantear su eliminación sin considerar que conllevaría alteraciones en nuestra propia naturaleza.

La Historia y la literatura nos proporcionan dos ejemplos de sujetos ajenos a cualquier sentimiento compasivo cuyo testimonio nos sirve para hacer el ejercicio de imaginación de un ser humano carente de capacidad compasiva. La figura de Adolf Eichmann, teniente coronel de las SS nazi encargado de implementar la “solución final”, analizada por Hannah Arendt en *Eichmann en Jerusalén. Un estudio sobre la banalidad del mal* (1999); y el señor Meursault, descrito por A. Camus en su novela *El extranjero* (2002). En el primer caso nos encontramos ante un hombre que carecía de motivos para odiar a los judíos, que de hecho no los odiaba, y que sin embargo fue capaz de planificar y organizar la muerte de miles de ellos apelando al idealismo y su cumplimiento³⁶. En el caso del señor Meursault, la novela nos presenta a un sujeto absolutamente indiferente ante el mundo, incapaz de experimentar ninguna emoción, que asiste al funeral de su propia madre sin experimentar un atisbo de cualquier tipo de sentir. Un individuo que llega hasta el punto de cometer un asesinato sin sentir ningún tipo de impulso que lo lleve a emprender tal acción o que le haga reaccionar tras haberlo cometido. Ni lástima, ni furia, ni arrepentimiento, ni dolor; nada, no siente nada.

Un sujeto tal como los descritos se nos antoja difícil de entender e incluso un tanto inverosímil, no sólo por su carencia absoluta de emoción, sino también de ética. Y ello es porque las emociones y la ética guardan una estrecha relación; las emociones constituyen una base para la ética³⁷, ya que lo que produce un sentimiento de bienestar o malestar, en los otros o en uno mismo, anida en el trasfondo de los principios éticos que constituyen el marco de nuestras acciones.³⁸

Sin la capacidad de experimentar compasión, en su acepción de padecer con, de vivir el sufrimiento ajeno, perderíamos todo vínculo con los otros, y con él la posibilidad de la ética como realidad compartida. La compasión es un sentimiento ligado a la condición ética del ser humanos porque esta condición no puede pensarse sin la dimensión colectiva, y la compasión es una vía de acceso a esa dimensión; es a través de la compasión como accedemos a y nos ponemos en relación con los otros. El hombre es el único animal capaz

³⁵ Arendt, H., *Sobre la Revolución*, Madrid, Alianza, 1988, p. 71.

³⁶ Arendt, H., *Eichmann en Jerusalén. Un estudio sobre la banalidad del mal*, Barcelona, Lumen, 1999, p. 70.

³⁷ Solomon, R. C., *Ética emocional. Una teoría de los sentimientos*, Barcelona, Paidós, 2007, p. 15.

³⁸ Sobrepasa la intención de este artículo profundizar en la relación entre emociones y ética; nos limitamos por tanto a presentar un breve apunte que sirva para enmarcar la discusión en torno a la compasión. La relación entre emociones y ética ha sido un tema transversal a lo largo de toda la historia del pensamiento, estando presente en las reflexiones de los principales filósofos y pensadores, siendo actualmente un tema todavía en discusión. Para una ampliación acerca de los vínculos entre emociones y valores se pueden consultar, entre otros: Livet, P., *Émotions et rationalité morale*, París, Presses Universitaires de France, 2002; Nussbaum, Paisajes del pensamiento, op. cit., pp. 41-112; Solomon, Ética emocional, op. cit.; Tappolet, C., *Émotions et valeurs*, París, Presses Universitaires de France, 2000.

de experimentar compasión a través del ejercicio de imaginación del sufrimiento del otro, pero es también el único capaz de volverse “inhumano”³⁹ a través de la negación y renuncia de sus semejantes. Por ello, si bien no podemos considerar la compasión como un acto reflejo, como una respuesta del ser humano al dolor ajeno sin implicaciones de la voluntad o el juicio, sí podríamos pensarla como una suerte de predisposición que necesita de experiencia, ejercicio y, por ello, aprendizaje para su actualización.

Pero la compasión se encuentra impregnada de la ambivalencia que caracteriza todo sentimiento; puede conducir tanto al reconocimiento como a la negación del otro. Si, volviendo al ejemplo que abría este apartado, empleamos la compasión para acallar las burlas de los compañeros de un niño con discapacidad física, y este recurso hace pensar a los niños que su compañero es inferior y al propio niño sentirse inferior a sus compañeros, ¿podríamos afirmar que el ejercicio compasivo ha conducido al reconocimiento? Sabiendo que la ambivalencia de los sentimientos y, en este caso, de la compasión, hace necesaria su consideración en la situación concreta y el análisis de sus implicaciones y repercusiones, el desafío pedagógico radicaría en buscar un concepto posibilitador, tanto para el sujeto que experimenta compasión como para el compadecido.

Imaginemos que la soledad y el sufrimiento de nuestro alumno nos produce tal aprensión que no podemos sino lastimarnos de él, y transmitir esta lástima al resto de alumnos, de manera que indirectamente aprenden que ante sujetos que sufren la única acción posible es la lástima, ¿estaríamos ante un concepto posibilitador de la compasión? El ejercicio pedagógico requeriría buscar maneras de experimentar la compasión que no sumerjan a ambos implicados en una suerte de sentimentalismo, que no les encierre en la vivencia subjetiva del sufrimiento, que posibilite su elaboración y conversión en “un punto de partida que les permita actuar en el mundo”⁴⁰. La clave de esta compasión posibilitadora, activadora, radica en la distancia. H. Arendt cuestiona el protagonismo político de la compasión porque anula la distancia, el “espacio mundano interhumano donde están localizados los asuntos políticos”⁴¹. Una distancia necesaria entre “yo” y “otro” para que ambos no sean reducidos a la mismidad, pero tampoco queden atrapados en la diferencia radical que conlleva la negación de las semejanzas que existen entre dos seres humanos, en el “ruido” que aparece cuando escuchamos un idioma radicalmente diferente⁴².

La compasión si sitúa así no en “yo”, tampoco en el “otro”, sino en el entre, en la distancia que media entre ambos. Una distancia que es introducida por el “podría ser”. *“El otro no es otro para sí mismo sino un “yo” como yo mismo* y, por lo tanto, el lugar que ocupa la piedad está vacío”⁴³. Así, lo que a nuestros ojos es digno de lágrimas, puede ser horrible para quien lo experimenta. Y lo horrible nos sume en la desdicha, en el sin sentido; el “podría ser” actúa como barrera de contención frente a lo horrendo. Contención que posibilita que quien experimenta el dolor del otro lo haga desde la certeza de que no es él el que sufre, abriendo la posibilidad a una acción que lo horrendo aniquila. Quizá por ello lo determinante para la experiencia del sufrimiento ajeno no sea ponernos en el lugar del otro, sino tratar de compartir su dolor desde nuestro lugar, desde la certeza de que su dolor no es el nuestro⁴⁴.

³⁹ Revault, El hombre compasional, op. cit., p. 98.

⁴⁰ Revault, El hombre compasional, op. cit., p. 93.

⁴¹ Arendt, Sobre la revolución, op. cit., p. 87.

⁴² Waldenfels, B., Respuesta a lo ajeno. Sobre la relación entre la cultura propia y la cultura ajena, *Revista de Filosofía*, XXX, 71, 1992, pp. 1-6.

⁴³ Alba Rico, Capitalismo y nihilismo, op. cit., p. 60, cursiva original.

⁴⁴ Revault, El hombre compasional, op. cit., p. 96.

El “podría ser” resalta la distancia entre yo y el otro, edifica un nuevo espacio, que no es el propio pero tampoco el totalmente ajeno, marca una media distancia que no sería ya la distancia de la asimetría vertical, sino la distancia irreductible de la alteridad. Una distancia que adquiere relevancia como mediadora cuando consideramos que el otro “podría ser” no yo, sino uno de los míos, de mis seres queridos. Así, deseáramos para el otro no lo que deseamos para nosotros, sino lo que deseamos para nuestros otros⁴⁵.

Para que esta distancia sea mantenida y efectiva se hace necesario un segundo movimiento, tras el inicial de proyectar el sufrimiento de los otros en nuestros otros. Este segundo movimiento radica en la vuelta sobre el sufrimiento del otro, su reflexión, su análisis, para que el dolor no embauque al individuo compasivo, para que no lo impregne, para que éste sea capaz de tomar distancia no sólo con el sufrimiento del otro, sino con el sufrimiento propio que experimenta en sí, para que éste no se convierta en *lo horrendo*. Este segundo movimiento posibilita la conversión de la compasión en principios de solidaridad o justicia, que éstos sí pueden inspirar y guiar la acción. En nuestro caso imaginado, tal vez esta reflexión sustituiría nuestra aflicción por una fuerza que hiciese a nuestro alumno sentir y creer que tiene algo que decir o que aportar, que su identidad no se reduce a sus carencias frente al resto de sus compañeros, que pese a su discapacidad es alguien capaz

De lo discutido hasta el momento podemos extraer que desde una perspectiva pedagógica la relación entre compasión y educación ha de ser analizada desde una doble óptica: por un lado, el aprendizaje del sentimiento compasivo, esto es, analizar los modos de ayudar a los educandos a enfrentar la perturbación o conmoción que pueden experimentar al presenciar el sufrimiento ajeno, de manera que puedan articularlo y orientarlo hacia sentimientos posibilitadores de la acción y el reconocimiento. Por otro lado, el papel educativo de la compasión en el aprendizaje de la relación con el otro, esto es, la compasión como vía de acceso a los otros y el sentimiento compartido como expresión de la distancia media entre “yo” y “otro”. Esto último implicaría desgranar la compasión como una de las formas que puede tomar el reconocimiento de la presencia de los otros, analizar sus diferentes formas y manifestaciones y las implicaciones de cada una de ellas en relación con la responsabilidad que la presencia de los otros supone, la respuesta que nos reclama⁴⁶.

⁴⁵ Alba Rico, *Capitalismo y nihilismo*, op. cit., p. 59, cursiva original.

⁴⁶ Mèlich, J. C., *Ética de la compasión*, Barcelona, Herder, 2010, p. 12.

Raimon Panikkar va a la Escuela: Diálogo Intercultural y Atención a la Diversidad

*Raimon Panikkar goes to school:
intercultural dialogue and attention to diversity*

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Resumen:

Este artículo pretende reflejar la contradicción que supone hablar de una diversidad en la que cabemos todos y, a su vez, proponer una “atención a la diversidad”, donde los diversos son los otros, los diferentes, los desplazados de la “normalidad”. Esto puede observarse en nuestra legislación educativa más reciente y es que, no es de extrañar, puesto que arrastramos toda una tradición que defiende a lo mismo, de lo que se consideran elementos contaminadores traídos por los otros, los extranjeros, los extraños, los que no siguen el patrón común de la mayoría, el que “debe ser”. De la mano de Raimon Panikkar, trataremos de mostrar que otra “atención a la diversidad” es posible, a saber, una en la que nadie se sienta rechazado.

Palabras clave: Diversidad, cultura, Raimon Panikkar, interculturalidad, alteridad, diálogo, mismidad.

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Abstract:

This article addresses the contradiction that exists when we talk about a diversity where everyone is welcome, and yet, at the same time, propose an “attention to diversity” where the diverse ones are the Others, the strangers, the group of people displaced from the “common way of life”. This can be seen in our most recent legislation on education, which comes as little surprise, since our society has a long-standing tradition of backing the Same from what are considered to be contaminating elements brought in by the Others, the strangers, the foreigners, those who do not act as the majority does. Following on Raimon Panikkar’s ideas, this paper attempts to show that another “attention to diversity” is possible, a new one in which nobody can be rejected.

Keywords: Diversity, culture, Raimon Panikkar, interculturality, otherness, dialogue, sameness.

1. Introducción

Este artículo pretende realizar un análisis filosófico del uso de la tan ambigua fórmula terminológica “atención a la diversidad”, con el fin de matizarla y entenderla de tal forma que englobe a todos y cada uno de nosotros, pues somos todos los seres humanos los que componemos la diversidad a la que hay que atender, aportando, cada individuo, una identidad distinta al conjunto total. Se tratará de fundamentar, en las siguientes páginas, una atención a la diversidad, siempre cultural, que logre asentar la base teórica desde la que poder comenzar a construir una sociedad de ciudadanos libres que manifiestan sus diferencias sin temor y que, a pesar de no ser iguales ni igualados, puedan convivir pacíficamente en igualdad de condiciones. A partir de ella, podrán elaborarse estrategias de intervención educativa que verdaderamente fomenten una sociedad donde la convivencia pacífica entre pertenencias esté a la orden del día y donde el conflicto sea siempre, o prácticamente siempre, solucionado con diálogo, tal y como pretenden nuestros legisladores². Debido al reducido espacio, estas páginas sólo abordarán el cambio de mirada necesario para enfrentarse al momento de aplicación práctica, fundamental pero inabarcable sin una concienciación previa aportada por la reflexión teórica que abordaremos aquí³.

² Desde el año 2004, en el que se reunieron los Ministros de Educación y los de Cultura europeos en Opatija y Atenas respectivamente, las líneas de investigación europeas en pos de una cohesión social en las sociedades multiculturales han tratado de defender lo que aquí se indica. Véanse los documentos: *Declaración de Faro sobre la estrategia del Consejo de Europa en pro del diálogo intercultural*, 2005; y *Libro Blanco sobre El Diálogo Intercultural*, 2008.

³ Respecto a la aplicación práctica del planteamiento pedagógico intercultural de atención a la diversidad que defendemos aquí, existe ya numerosa bibliografía, no obstante, recomiendo encarecidamente, a este respecto: García Fernández, J. A., y Goenechea Permisán, C., *Educación intercultural: análisis de la situación y propuestas de mejora*, Wolters Kluwer, Madrid, 2009.

A esto hay que añadir que este escrito, de manera secundaria pero no menos importante, pretende rendir homenaje al filósofo y teólogo Raimon Panikkar, fallecido recientemente, y cuya obra implica un cambio de mirada hacia los otros y hacia nosotros mismos en pos de un mundo verdaderamente diverso que conviva en paz. Este autor, de padre hindú y madre catalana, ordenado sacerdote cristiano hacia la mitad de su vida, pero buen conocedor del hinduismo, dedicó mucho tiempo a plantear la posibilidad de una auténtica convivencia entre diferentes que manifestaran libremente sus pertenencias, en primer lugar, dentro del ámbito religioso y, más tarde, extendiendo su pensamiento más allá de la religión, teorizando acerca del diálogo intercultural. Él siempre luchó por un diálogo entre diferentes, frente a un monólogo de iguales absorbente y totalizador imperante en nuestro mundo occidentalista, que llevaba siglos causando violencia y muertes innecesarias.

El grueso de este artículo tratará de aplicar el concepto de “diálogo intercultural” panikkariano al ámbito educativo, acompañándolo de otras voces y miradas que, junto con la suya, nos permitirá hablar de una “atención a la diversidad” que realmente consista en algo más que el hecho de ser un término burocrático que aparece en los documentos legislativos y que ha de ser adaptado obligatoriamente a nuestras programaciones didácticas.

2. ¿Qué queremos decir cuando decimos “diversidad cultural”?

La UNESCO, en la *Convención sobre la protección y promoción de la Diversidad de las Expresiones Culturales*, que tuvo lugar en París, en octubre de 2005, afirma que “la diversidad cultural se refiere a la multiplicidad de formas en que se expresan las culturas de los grupos y sociedades”⁴. Cuando dichas formas de expresión se transmiten “dentro y entre los grupos y sociedades”⁵, calificamos a esa sociedad de multicultural. Ahora bien, ¿qué queremos decir cuando decimos cultura?

Desde los estudios de Clifford Geertz se desecha la existencia de una definición esencialista de “cultura” que habían defendido los primeros antropólogos del s. XIX y los de las primeras décadas del s. XX⁶. Este autor mostró que la cultura no es sino la forma humana de adaptación al medio, aquello que nos ha hecho evolucionar como especie por distintas vías, en función del entorno en el que nos encontrásemos. Afirma que “somos animales incompletos o inconclusos que nos completamos o terminamos por obra de la cultura, y no por obra de la cultura en general sino por formas en alto grado particulares de ella: la forma dobuana y la forma javanesa, la forma hopi y la forma italiana, la forma de las clases superiores y la de las clases inferiores, la forma académica y la comercial”⁷, y más particular aún, diría yo, la forma de este dobuano concreto, de este javanés, de esta mujer, de este proletario, etc.

⁴ UNESCO, *Convención sobre la protección y promoción de la Diversidad de las Expresiones culturales*. París, 20/10/2005, p. 4. Disponible en:

<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001429/142919s.pdf>

⁵ Ídem.

⁶ Véase: Geertz, C., Descripción densa: hacia una teoría interpretativa de la cultura, *La interpretación de las culturas*, Barcelona, Gedisa, 2000, pp. 19-40.

⁷ *Ibíd.*, p. 50.

Durante mucho tiempo se ha equiparado el término “multiculturalidad”, indistintamente, a los términos “pluralismo étnico” o “polietnicidad” y “multinacionalismo”, convirtiéndolo en ambiguo aparte de incompleto. Ambiguo porque al utilizarlo de manera indiferenciada para referirnos al pluralismo étnico y al multinacionalismo, confundimos dos realidades que no son para nada equiparables⁸ e incompleto porque habría lugares del mundo que no podrían ser calificados de multiculturales, por ejemplo, Islandia, con una población étnicamente homogénea y una única realidad nacional. Sin embargo, llevando al extremo la definición geertziana de “cultura”, si consideramos “cultura” equiparable a “identidad”, no existiría nación en el mundo que no fuese multicultural, pues en todas existe gran variedad de asociaciones y grupos basados en distinciones de clase, género, orientación sexual, religión, creencias morales e ideología política, entre otros.

Así pues, hablamos de una multiculturalidad global, basada en diversas identidades que se dan en cada nación, en cada etnia y en cada individuo a la vez y que se encuentran jerarquizadas dependiendo de numerosos factores (familiar, social, histórico), cambiando dicha jerarquización con el tiempo y las circunstancias, de tal forma que la cultura de cada uno, su identidad y los diversos grupos que se forman en torno a ella, van variando. Amin Maalouf, en su ensayo *Identidades Asesinas* nos habla, entre otros ejemplos igual de ilustrativos, de un italiano homosexual y patriota que en la época de Mussolini ve mermado su sentimiento nacionalista al verse atacada su identidad sexual, teniendo que esperar a una época más democrática para volver a sentirse de nuevo italiano⁹.

A partir de este ejemplo y otros muchos que podríamos añadir, parece que sucede que, cuando una persona pone una de sus pertenencias por encima de las demás, es a causa de sentir que dicha pertenencia se encuentra amenazada, llegando a actuar incluso con violencia con el único fin de defenderla. La cultura es la mayor fuente de riqueza que posee el ser humano, así, con el fin de preservar la paz, cada individuo debe poder ser libre de expresar, manifestar y vivir sus pertenencias sin temor. De hecho, varios estudios han demostrado que, cuantas más identidades englobe una persona, mayor número de mecanismos tiene para afrontar los obstáculos que se le presenten en su día a día¹⁰, al fin y al cabo, la cultura es nuestra principal herramienta de supervivencia, volviendo a Geertz. Si queremos fomentar una sociedad democrática y pacífica, la “atención a la diversidad”, que, al fundamentar la sinonimia de cultura e identidad aparece siempre como “atención a la diversidad cultural”, no puede reducirse a aulas de enlace, clases de apoyo o sesiones psicopedagógicas, puesto que siempre será un error tratar de hacer que los diferentes se igualen.

⁸ Véase: Kymlicka, W., Las políticas del multiculturalismo, *Ciudadanía multicultural*, Barcelona, Paidós, 1996, pp. 25-55. Aquí se indican detalladamente las diferencias existentes entre el multinacionalismo y a polietnicidad, pues no son, para nada, lo mismo, los derechos que reclaman aquellos que ocupan un territorio, con costumbres, tradiciones y un sentimiento nacional propios, pero dependiendo de otra nación, que los que reclaman aquellos que, individualmente, por cuestiones económicas, políticas, etc., trasladan su residencia a una nación distinta de la suya. Así por ejemplo, mientras que los primeros exigen derechos de autogobierno, los segundos no.

⁹ Maalouf, A., *Identidades Asesinas*, Madrid, Alianza, 1999, p. 22.

¹⁰ Es ésta la tesis que se defiende, a través de un pormenorizado análisis sociológico en Estados Unidos, en el artículo: Trueba, H. T., Múltiples identidades étnicas, raciales y culturales en acción: desde la marginalidad hasta el nuevo capital cultural en la sociedad moderna, en E. Soriano Ayala (coord.), *Identidad cultural y ciudadanía multicultural*, Madrid, La Muralla, 2001, pp. 17-44.

3. Si la diversidad somos todos, ¿por qué luego resulta que los diversos son los otros?

Al final del Preámbulo de la Ley Orgánica de Educación que rige el sistema educativo español actualmente podemos leer que “la atención a la diversidad es una necesidad que abarca a todas las etapas educativas y a todos los alumnos. Es decir, se trata de contemplar la diversidad de alumnas y alumnos como principio y no como una medida que corresponde a las necesidades de unos pocos”¹¹. Por tanto, defiende, tal y como lo hace la normativa europea¹², que diversidad somos todos. Sin embargo, más adelante, ya en el cuerpo de la ley, nos encontramos un apartado dedicado específicamente a la atención a la diversidad que reduce ésta a tres colectivos concretos¹³. ¿Por qué esta aparente contradicción entre teoría y aplicación?, ¿por qué, si la diversidad somos todos, luego resulta que los diversos son los otros? A mi modo de ver, esto responde a dos razones fundamentales, por un lado, a una reflexión teórica insuficiente que nos ha llevado a adaptarnos al discurso europeo sin pensar realmente lo que ello implicaba a nivel de aplicación, y por otro, a la dificultad de separarnos de una tradición de pensamiento asimilacionista profundamente arraigada.

“Una reacción natural, como nos enseña la historia, es la autoafirmación en detrimento del otro, definido como bárbaro, salvaje, pagano, infiel, no creyente, goy, khafir, mleccha, etc. Lentamente se descubren también los valores del otro, pero en general con los parámetros de la propia cultura”¹⁴. Existe pues, una tendencia a pensar en una normalidad homogeneizadora de lo propio, frente a lo que se sale de ahí. Siempre que aparece algo fuera de lo que se cree no sólo que es, sino que “debe ser”, confundiendo así ambos términos, se siente miedo, pues implica una ruptura de leyes no escritas pero establecidas. La diversidad cultural ha existido siempre, pero, a su vez, tradicionalmente, se ha dado la interacción de un yo mayoritario y por ello, superior, fuente de seguridad, de estabilidad y de verdad, con unos otros minoritarios y, por ello, inferiores, fuente de inseguridad, inestabilidad y falsedad. Las denominadas “minorías” han sido consideradas, durante mucho tiempo, elementos de posible contaminación por parte de ese yo garante de lo que “debe ser”, que, por seguridad, tenía que colonizar, absorber, re-educar o, al menos, controlar al otro¹⁵.

Hasta los años setenta del siglo pasado, era el asimilacionismo la corriente que primaba en cuanto a la concepción de cómo había de ser un encuentro con el otro, cuyo correspondiente educativo estaba en la educación compensatoria¹⁶. Aquel individuo que no se adaptase, por las razones que fueran, a lo que socialmente “debía ser” en nombre de la tradición, que nos aseguraba una vida pacífica y de bienestar, debía ser regulado para que no desestabilizase el orden de las cosas, saliéndose de los cánones marcados. Se decía que esto era así por el bien de todos, incluso por el bien del “diferente”, pues, de lo contrario, no se podría acoger a las mismas oportunidades que el resto y sería marginado, excluido, apartado socialmente. “Se niega que el otro habla y se niega que su habla sea posible; o en otro sentido, se da la autorización para que el otro hable de lo mismo y, entonces, se celebra

¹¹ Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación, Preámbulo.

¹² Véase: Consejo de Europa, *Libro Blanco sobre El Diálogo Intercultural*, 2008.

¹³ Ibid., Capítulo I “Alumnado con necesidad específica de apoyo educativo”

¹⁴ Panikkar, R., *Actitudes interculturales, Paz e Interculturalidad: Una reflexión filosófica*, Barcelona, Herder, 2006, p.37.

¹⁵ Panikkar, R., *Sobre el diálogo intercultural*, Salamanca, San Esteban, 1990.

¹⁶ Bernstein, B., Una crítica de la educación compensatoria, en M. Fernández Enguita (ed.), *Sociología de la educación*, Barcelona, Ariel, 1999, pp. 457-467.

la generosa autorización, no la voz”¹⁷, autorización a ser igual que yo, igual a lo mismo. Por tanto, se defiende aquí una igualdad homogeneizadora por el “bien” de todos, pero, sobre todo, por el bien de lo mismo, de la cultura superior mayoritaria.

Ahora bien, pensar que una cultura es superior a las demás y que éstas deben adaptarse o asimilarse a ella, es algo que, al menos, ha dejado de ser políticamente correcto. El valor de la multiculturalidad se defiende, a nivel institucional, desde la década de 1970, frente al asimilacionismo, haciendo hincapié en el carácter altamente positivo de la presencia de multitud de culturas que cohabitan en nuestras sociedades. Sin embargo, esta corriente, denominada “multiculturalismo” y cuya aplicación a nivel educativo se dio a llamar “educación multicultural” o “educación antirracista”¹⁸, no lucha por la interacción real y efectiva entre culturas, simplemente señala el hecho de la diversidad y el derecho a la libre expresión de las pertenencias de cada uno, pero en el desarrollo “normal” del tejido social sigue imperando el planteamiento asimilacionista. Sigue siendo necesario moldear al otro de tal forma que, de puertas a fuera, no enturbie la armonía del *statu quo*.

Hay libertad, pero libertad de puertas adentro, es el discurso de la tolerancia, del permiso del yo, desde una posición privilegiada, hacia el otro. Un permiso para ser otro, pero para ser otro fuera del trabajo, de la universidad, de la escuela¹⁹. Tal vez, una semana al año, tal y como hacen en muchos centros educativos, se instaure una semana lúdico-festiva, llamada “Semana Cultural” o algo parecido, donde el otro puede expresar sus pertenencias a lo mismo. Sin embargo, para lo mismo, para el yo, para la mayoría, no será sino un viaje turístico por rincones exóticos sin moverse de casa. No habrá un conocimiento profundo y auténtico de culturas distintas sino una banalización folclórica de las mismas, que llevará al alumnado a relacionar la interacción entre culturas con el ocio, cuando debería ser el mayor de los *neg-ocios*. Siguiendo a Panikkar, “el multiculturalismo exhibe todavía el síndrome colonialista que consiste en creer que existe una supracultura superior a todas las demás, capaz de ofrecerles una hospitalidad benigna y condescendiente”²⁰.

Toda cultura, siempre que no implique la violación de la integridad de nadie, constituye riqueza²¹ y, hoy en día, las políticas, si no son puramente asimilacionistas, no pasan de ser multiculturalistas, no haciéndose cargo de lo que la multiculturalidad implica. Los prejuicios por desconocimiento hacia las numerosas minorías que conviven con nosotros, sean de la condición que sean (sexuales, étnicas, religiosas, etc.) y el miedo que sentimos hacia ellas precisamente por ajenas, hace que sea bastante difícil erradicar actitudes como el racismo, el fanatismo, el sexismo, la homofobia o el integristismo, entre otras.

¹⁷ Skliar, C., *Acerca de la espacialidad del otro y de la mismidad, ¿Y si el otro no estuviera allí? Notas para una pedagogía (improbable) de la diferencia*, Buenos Aires, Miño y Dávila, 2003, p.86.

¹⁸ Besalú, X., *Diversidad cultural y educación*, Madrid, Síntesis, 2002.

¹⁹ Me refiero, por ejemplo, a la prohibición, recientemente, por parte de un instituto de una localidad madrileña, a una niña musulmana de poder asistir a sus clases con el velo puesto (*Najwa*, fuera de clase en Pozuelo por cubrirse la cabeza con 'hiyab', *Diario EL PAÍS*, 16/04/2010).

²⁰ Panikkar, R., La interpelación intercultural, en G. González Rodríguez-Arnaiz (coord.), *El discurso intercultural: Prolegómenos a una filosofía intercultural*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 2002, p. 30.

²¹ A este respecto, creo que los derechos humanos, siempre que sean verdaderamente universales, siguiendo el planteamiento de Mauricio Beuchot, podrían actuar como criterio a la hora de determinar, hasta qué punto una pertenencia debería poder manifestarse: “Por su propia naturaleza, los derechos humanos tienen una aspiración universalista. No pueden relativizarse las culturas. Allí, el pluralismo cultural topa con un límite, con un muro. Los derechos humanos, por su carácter universal, tienen una función de criterio”. Beuchot, M., Pluralismo cultural analógico y derechos humanos” en G. González Rodríguez-Arnaiz (coord.), *El discurso intercultural: Prolegómenos a una filosofía intercultural*, Madrid, Biblioteca Nueva, 2002, p. 116.

Ahora bien, hay otra forma de pensar. Se pretende hacer aquí explícito un discurso intercultural, entendiendo por “interculturalidad” una verdadera y efectiva interacción entre culturas que nos haga conocernos y *re-conocernos* a través de este conocimiento previo basado en el respeto. El otro no es un elemento contaminador sino enriquecedor que, sin duda, hay que fomentar desde todos los ámbitos sociales, entre ellos el educativo, con una “atención a la diversidad” que tenga en cuenta todas y cada una de las pertenencias presentes tanto en el aula como fuera de ella.

4. El diálogo intercultural visto por Raimon Panikkar: la comunidad en el *mythos*.

En primer lugar, para que un diálogo sea verdaderamente intercultural, es decir, para que haya verdadero encuentro y comunicación entre culturas, dicho diálogo no puede ser dialéctico, sino que, siguiendo a Panikkar²², debe ser “*dialogal*”. El diálogo dialéctico, de raíz occidental, conlleva una serie de reglas lógicas previas al desarrollo del mismo que los interlocutores han de seguir a la hora de responder, lo cual significa aceptar a priori la racionalidad de cierta lógica como juez del diálogo. Sin embargo, no todas las culturas razonan de igual manera, así pues, imponer ciertas reglas a priori implica no tener en cuenta la posible incompatibilidad, o dificultad de nuestro interlocutor a la hora de expresarse de un modo que no le es propio. El diálogo dialogal, por el contrario, no parte de una lógica apriorística, sino que sus reglas se van marcando a medida que la interacción dialogada va progresando. Se trata de la confrontación, como *legein*, de dos dialogantes que se escuchan intentando comprender lo que el otro desea decir, no tratando de reducir, de ningún modo, la asimetría insalvable que configura su encuentro (incluyéndose, en el caso del diálogo profesor-alumno, la edad²³, que tanto ha preocupado desde siempre a los docentes). No se trata pues, de vencer, no es una *disputatio* medieval, ni de convencer, no debemos perseguir la salvación de lo insalvable con “clases de refuerzo”, no está en juego una victoria, sino el buen vivir, el convivir pacíficamente. “El campo del diálogo dialogal no es la arena lógica de la lucha entre las ideas, sino más bien el ágora espiritual de dos seres que hablan y se escuchan. [...] En el ágora se habla, en la arena se lucha”²⁴.

El punto de partida del diálogo dialogal es, por tanto, hablar, comunicarse, tenemos que hacer por entendernos, siendo esto *conditio sine qua non* de una sociedad intercultural y, por ende, de una educación intercultural. Ahora bien, teniendo en cuenta que hay ciertas diferencias insalvables, pero que a pesar de ellas, el otro no nos deja *in-diferentes*, no podemos meramente traducir la cultura de los demás reduciéndola a nuestra racionalidad conceptual; por tanto, según Panikkar, el diálogo no debe darse entre dos tipos de *lógos* enfrentados, sino entre dos concepciones de *mythos*. El *mythos* es lo evidente, lo indudable, el horizonte de todo discurso, ya que nadie puede escapar de una experiencia vivida que le hace tener cierta identidad²⁵. El *mythos* constituye la raíz más profunda de la que emerge nuestro ser quien somos, es lo más íntimo y, por ser tal, inefable. El *mythos* no se cuenta, el *mythos* se vive.

²² Panikkar, R., *Paz e Interculturalidad: Una reflexión filosófica*, Barcelona, Herder, 2005, pp.49-59.

²³ Véase: Zambrano, M., *Esta juventud de ahora, Filosofía y Educación: Manuscritos*, ed. de Ángel Casado y Juana Sánchez-Gey, Málaga, Ágora, 2007, pp. 93-96.

²⁴ Panikkar, R., *Paz e Interculturalidad*, op. cit., pp. 52-53.

²⁵ “La totalidad del ser en la que el ser resplandece como significación, no es una entidad fijada de una vez para siempre, sino que requiere ordenamiento y ensamblaje, el acto cultural del hombre. [...]. Todo lo pintoresco de la historia, todas las culturas, ya no son obstáculos que nos separen de lo esencial y de lo Inteligible, sino vías que nos permiten acceder a ellos. Más aún, son los únicos caminos, los únicos posibles, irremplazables e implicados, por tanto, en lo inteligible mismo”, Lèvinas, E., *El Humanismo del Otro Hombre*, Madrid, Caparrós, 1993, pp. 28-29.

Sólo la comunión en el *mythos* puede lograr un verdadero encuentro intercultural, ya que nos permite aprender el sentido de lo que el otro dice aunque no compartamos su mundo conceptual. Si esto es posible, es porque no se trata de comprender desde nuestra racionalidad, la del otro, no es la comprensión lo que nos acerca verdaderamente al otro, sino la vivencia, o incluso, más bien, la *con-vivencia*. Así pues, el vehículo de manifestación del *mythos* no puede ser el concepto, elemento clave para toda comprensión, sino el símbolo, que nunca puede ser comprendido del todo, sólo vivido, sentido. Mientras que el concepto reduce, delimita, fija, encierra..., el símbolo es pura apertura, es ilimitado y flexible, no mata la realidad sino que la hace más viva de lo que de por sí ya es.

Un encuentro intercultural no debería consistir, por tanto, en dar nombre a lo que los otros expresen, puesto que el concepto otorgado siempre será mera traducción, un intento de comprensión de un yo que, por esta vía, comprende artificialmente al otro, pues lo aleja de su ser como es para adaptarlo a esquemas de razonamiento que no le corresponden. Más bien, este tipo de encuentro debería basarse en un dejarse llevar por el otro, en vivir los símbolos del otro sin ponerles nombre, al menos, al principio. Vivir para comprender, nunca a la inversa, pues la dictadura del concepto previo, puede dar lugar a prejuicios indeseables al propósito de construir una sociedad pacífica.

La conciencia simbólica nos abre al *mythos*, independientemente del entendimiento, y no pensemos, dice Panikkar²⁶, que esto es más fácil que una traducción lógica de las creencias del otro, pues resulta mucho más difícil transparentar los *mythoi* que los *logoi*, ya que son aquéllos lo más oculto y arraigado en cada cultura. Hemos de matizar, una vez dicho esto, que no se trata de no traducir jamás, el lenguaje es indispensable para la comprensión del otro, sino que de lo que se trata es de no conceptualizar previamente a vivir la cultura del otro, de no obviar la muerte del *mythos* que supone el *lógos*. Sólo el paso por el *mythos* permite un *lógos* flexible y ausente de prejuicios.

Para conocer al otro como y, a la par, reconocerlo fácticamente, hemos de saber cómo simboliza su lenguaje, el cual, dependiendo de a qué tipo de pertenencia nos refiramos, tendrá que ver con el idioma o no, pero de lo que no cabe lugar a dudas, es de que, sólo adentrándonos en el *mythos* del otro y dejando que éste se adentre en el nuestro, podremos conseguir un diálogo fructífero en cuanto a la convivencia pacífica se refiere, aunque para ello sea necesario hacernos conscientes de nuestro deseo del otro, pues “lo que queda fuera de consideración en esta eventualidad, es que es necesaria una orientación que lleve precisamente a un francés a aprender chino en lugar de declararlo bárbaro (es decir, desprovisto de las auténticas virtudes del lenguaje); que le lleve a preferir la palabra a la guerra”²⁷.

La comunidad en el *mythos* no tiene nada que ver con un acuerdo respecto al *lógos*. El *mythos* es fluido, es un horizonte que se aleja cada vez más según nos vamos acercando a él. Es inaprensible, ya que para serlo, sólo puede ser revestido de un *legein*, de un decir, *mythos-legein*, mitología, y esto significa ya la muerte del propio *mythos*. Si el vehículo del *mythos*, decíamos que era el símbolo, su poder radica en la confianza; sólo si se cree en él puede ser realmente calificado de *mythos*, la luz de la razón elimina su oscuridad, pero es que es ésta su propio brillo. “La confianza surge cuando nos damos cuenta de que nuestra propia naturaleza nos empuja a confiar en algo que, aun no siendo nosotros mismos, está en nosotros”²⁸. Para tratar con el otro, con el extraño que nada tiene que ver conmigo, necesitamos seguridad y certeza, en cambio, para tratar con el otro como prójimo nos basta

²⁶ Panikkar, La interpelación intercultural, op. cit., pp. 39-40.

²⁷ Lévinas, El Humanismo del Otro Hombre, op. cit., p. 34.

²⁸ Panikkar, Paz e Interculturalidad, op. cit., p.124.

con la confianza. Sin la confianza en otras culturas, la interculturalidad degenera o bien en absolutismo cultural, el cual defiende la existencia de una meta-cultura, identificada con una cultura mayoritaria a la que las demás deben adaptarse o desaparecer en pos de su mejora, por ser claramente inferiores a la primera, o bien en mero multiculturalismo, en relativismo cultural, donde el diálogo responsable aparece como imposible²⁹.

La interculturalidad ofrece un camino intermedio entre el absolutismo de defender valores universales preconcebidos y el rechazo absoluto a toda posibilidad de surgimiento de esos valores. Se trataría pues, de un diálogo constante e interminable, de una vecindad basada en la cooperación necesaria para crear individuos responsables, de una negociación infinita entre todos. Lograr esta negociación infinita debe ser, hoy en día, el mayor de nuestros objetivos políticos y educativos, ya que es algo serio, nos va el buen vivir, el convivir, en ello. El encuentro entre culturas no debe ser turismo, ocio, sino todo lo contrario, *neg-ocio*, tal y como decíamos en el apartado anterior.

Panikkar nos habla de una *relacionalidad radical* entre todos los seres humanos que, salvándonos del solipsismo cultural, nos impedirá caer tanto en una homogeneidad destructora de la diversidad como en un relativismo cultural insalvable, llevándonos a construir valores aceptados y respetados por todos, siempre revisables y modificables, que permitan construir un mundo en paz, difícilmente quebrantable. “La paz no puede identificarse, pues, con el fin de los combates que acaban faltos de combatientes, por el fracaso de unos y la victoria de otros, es decir, con los cementerios o los imperios universales futuros. La paz debe ser mi paz, en una relación que parte de un yo y va hacia el Otro, en el deseo y la bondad donde el yo, a la vez, se mantiene y existe sin egoísmo”³⁰.

5. Atender a la diversidad de otra forma es posible bajo la mirada intercultural.

La “atención a la diversidad”, desde un punto de vista intercultural debe fomentar la presencia de cuantas más pertenencias sean posibles dentro del aula, sin cohibirlas, sin reducirlas, sin encerrarlas a aulas de enlace, o a sesiones psicopedagógicas donde se traten con el fin de olvidarlas a la hora de pasar al aula común. Esto significaría dialogar constantemente, dejándose cuestionar por el otro y cuestionándole a su vez. Enseñar a nuestros alumnos cómo dialogar desde el punto de vista intercultural, cómo lograr una comunión en el *mythos* dentro del aula, con el fin de poder conseguirla más allá de sus muros, y dejando hablar al que no es como uno mismo, antes de etiquetarle tópicos que, en verdad, dicen muy poco de él y de lo que siente. Es cierto que esto es difícil, pues necesitamos docentes concienciados del esfuerzo que llevar esto a la práctica supondría, pero se puede lograr.

²⁹ “La gran tentación, hoy como siempre, es construir un gran supersistema: <<Aquí estoy yo, el tolerante, el que ha sido capaz de hacerle sitio a todo el mundo, ya he encontrado un lugar para cada sistema. Obviamente, tú debes de permanecer en el lugar que yo te he asignado, yo –el gran jivanmukta de la tradición vedántica– sé que me encuentro por encima de todas las diferencias, y que tengo un lugar para los cristianos, los judíos, los musulmanes, para todos... por supuesto, ellos se comportarán y se situarán conforme yo lo he establecido, ya que mi visión superior y comprensiva, me permite ser tolerante y abarcar, de forma totalizadora, a todos dentro de ella>>. Ciertamente ésta no es una actitud pluralista. Pero la cuestión del pluralismo no es tampoco la incertidumbre que se plantea ante la pluralidad de entidades irreductibles. Afirmar que se es tolerante con una pluralidad de actitudes religiosas o de mercados mundiales, o de escuelas de arte, en tanto que estas actitudes no entren en contradicción con nuestra idiosincrasia, con el transcurrir normal de nuestros negocios, y siendo respetuosos con aquellos antojos y caprichos de los demás que no interfieran en nuestra planificación, tiene muy poco que ver con el pluralismo religioso, económico o artístico”, Panikkar, *Sobre el Diálogo Intercultural*, op. cit., p. 20.

³⁰ Lèvinas, E., *Lo infinito en el tiempo, Totalidad e Infinito*, Salamanca, Sígueme, 977, p. 310.

Necesitamos al otro, lo necesitamos para crecer como individuos, como ciudadanos activos y responsables y esto es lo que hay que transmitir en la escuela, hacer consciente esta necesidad, ese deseo del otro que permanece escondido en lo más recóndito de nosotros mismos, bajo la capa de una tradición que pretende no ser perturbada pero que jamás ha dejado de serlo. Nunca somos de manera fija y estancada, ni somos como debemos ser, sino que estamos siendo, con otros que nos complementan, que nos hacen dudar, que nos hacen avanzar o retroceder, pero siempre con otros que son tan diversos y múltiples en identidad como nosotros mismos y que merecen toda nuestra atención, como nosotros merecemos la suya.

“Estar siendo es el acontecimiento imprevisto que nos obliga a pensar más en “nuestro” ser, en nuestra identidad, que en el ser del otro, que en su identidad. Nos obliga a fragmentarnos en nosotros mismos, a quitarnos de encima aquel tiempo y aquella temporalidad en que el otro era, podía ser, debía ser, no podía ser, un artificio mímico de la mismidad”³¹.

³¹ SKLIAR, op. cit., p. 38.

La Educación en Pensadores Españoles Contemporáneos

Education in contemporary Spanish intellectuals

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Resumen:

Destacamos el pensamiento educativo de tres maestros de la filosofía española contemporánea: Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936), José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955) y María Zambrano (1904-1991). En estos autores observamos, principalmente, el aprecio que sienten por el sentido formativo de la filosofía y su preocupación por un saber de experiencia. Al mismo tiempo, sugerimos los temas más singulares en la atención educativa de cada autor.

Palabras clave: Filosofía de la educación, Miguel de Unamuno, José Ortega y Gasset, María Zambrano.

Abstract:

We underscore the thoughts on education expressed by three masters of contemporary Spanish philosophers: Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936), José Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955) and María Zambrano (1904-1991). In these three authors, we observe their appreciation of the educational sense of philosophy and their concern for experience-based knowledge. At the same time, we suggest the most singular topics each author brings to the field of education.

Keywords: Philosophy of education, Miguel de Unamuno, José Ortega y Gasset, María Zambrano.

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1. Introducción

En el origen de la historia del pensamiento como reflexión acerca de la realidad están todas las ciencias que, separadas en la actualidad, tuvieron un origen común en la filosofía. Los primeros pensadores fueron también físicos, astrólogos, matemáticos y, especialmente, pedagogos. La filosofía surge como un ejercicio racional y crítico para alcanzar un saber acerca de la realidad, tanto teórico como práctico. La educación es un saber práctico que no puede desengancharse de una reflexión teórica acerca del ser y vivir humanos, y en este sentido no puede alejarse de la filosofía.

La filosofía como amor a la sabiduría comporta un especial cuidado para servir de guía y orientación en la vida. Así Jaeger en la *Paideia* reconoce que a Platón en su magna obra *La República* le interesa tanto la organización política o jurídica de la ciudad, como la especial formación del individuo, pues saber de educación significa aprender a ser “guardián de su propia persona”. Platón consideró la esencia de la filosofía en relación con la educación. Epicuro en su *Carta a Meneceo* afirma que si la filosofía no sirve para curar las heridas del alma, de nada sirve, lo cual significa también reconocer el carácter formativo de la filosofía.

Aristóteles dice en su obra *Metafísica*, Libro I que “el carácter principal de la ciencia consiste en poder ser transmitida por la enseñanza” y en el Libro V, cap. I refiere que “todo acto educativo enriquece el conocimiento y se orienta en la búsqueda de la perfección”.

Lo cierto es que la *Paideia*, el sentido formativo de la filosofía, aparecía enormemente claro entre los primeros filósofos, preocupados por un saber de la experiencia. Así el saber acerca de la educación se considera una cuestión humana que atañe al contenido ético y político, y estos temas son, al mismo tiempo, estrictamente filosóficos. La idea de la filosofía como reflexión sobre el hombre venía matizada con una clara orientación que, denominaremos, pedagógica o educativa en cuanto que busca conseguir un hombre nuevo (Fichte, Kant, Rousseau...). Pero, el positivismo y los prejuicios cientifistas arrumbaron ciertos saberes como filosofías genitivas y, entre ellas, la pedagogía dejó de ser de interés para algunos filósofos.

Sin embargo, el siglo XX supuso pronto un momento de crisis en la historia del hombre y, por ello, de las ciencias humanas. La filosofía española se hizo cargo de esta situación y analizó de modo radical esta crisis, no sin esperanza. Esta le llegaba desde el interés por acercar la filosofía a la vida desde un planteamiento claramente educativo.

Estudiaremos esta perspectiva desde tres autores del momento: Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936), educador vivencial y pedagogo de los temas más nucleares, desde la reflexión sobre la niñez a la importancia del maestro como modelo educativo; Ortega y Gasset (1883-1955) cuya misión es revitalizar y crear comunidad en España; María Zambrano (1904-1991) que propone la interacción entre el maestro y el alumno como clave del progreso educativo y humano.

Se ha dicho, a menudo, del pensamiento español que es realista, en el sentido de su atención a los problemas y preocupaciones de la vida humana, es humanista porque está centrado en el hombre y alejado de cuestiones abstractas, y con un hondo sentido ético. Nosotros añadiríamos, también educativo.

En efecto, ya Séneca decía que “Se enseña no para las aulas sino para la vida” y este sentido cercano a las cuestiones humanas ha impregnado el modo de ser y comportarse de los pensadores españoles. Así, el planteamiento pedagógico de Vives descansa también en un sentido ético y en un afán de liberar al hombre de sus propias cadenas, exaltando su propia dignidad. Todo ello bajo la guía práctica “el saber debe servir para la vida”.

El mismo Unamuno repite el adagio “Utilitario fue sin duda el origen de la ciencia; la necesidad del saber para vivir y no una vana curiosidad movió al hombre a escudriñar los secretos de la vida de la naturaleza y del espíritu” (*Apertura del curso académico de 1900 a 1901. Obras Completas*). Y Ortega “La universidad tiene que ser la proyección institucional del estudiante, cuyas dos dimensiones esenciales son: una, lo que él es: escasez de su facultad adquisitiva de saber; otra, lo que él necesita saber para vivir” (Misión de la Universidad).

Por otra parte, el gran momento educativo que supuso la Institución Libre de Enseñanza fue, de nuevo, un intento importante de separarse de todo cuanto pudiera ser mera erudición o tecnicismo para centrarse en una educación formativa, activa, impulsada por el método intuitivo “el arte de saber ver” como sinónimo de un saber integrador, armónico del cuerpo y del espíritu, razón y sentimiento, voluntad y estética. A este respecto convendría leer con detenimiento la obra del profesor Juan Marichal, que abarca y amplía este período e incide en el programa político, por ende, educativo, de estos pensadores².

Esta filosofía educativa, basada en una reflexión renovadora del hombre desde la ética a la fe en la libertad y en la ciencia, explica la originalidad y riqueza de sus recursos pedagógicos más concretos. Por ejemplo, la mayor atención al libro del universo y de la sociedad que al del texto. De aquí la afición a las excursiones científicas, los viajes y visitas culturales, trabajos prácticos y la discusión seria y no formalista entre profesores y alumnos. También el fomento de las relaciones sociales entre los miembros de la comunidad escolar, tutorías, colonias vacacionales, etc. Así dice Giner de los Ríos: “Sólo de esta suerte, dirigiendo el desenvolvimiento del alumno en todas las relaciones, puede con sinceridad aspirarse a una acción verdaderamente educadora en aquellas esferas donde más apremia la necesidad de redimir nuestro espíritu: desde la génesis del carácter moral, tan flaco y enervado en una nación indiferente a su ruina”³.

La gran personalidad de Giner de los Ríos, de Cossío... influyó decisivamente en el mal endémico de la educación, que era profundo en España. La creación del Ministerio de Instrucción Pública, del que comienza a depender el pago de los maestros, supuso un avance y un progreso social y moral en la educación. En 1882 se había creado el Museo Pedagógico Nacional que con Albareda y, luego, con Cossío alientan la reforma de las escuelas normales. Igualmente, desde la creación en 1907 de la Junta de Ampliación de estudio se visitan centros extranjeros, además de la Junta para el Fomento de la Educación Nacional y Escuela Superior de Magisterio. Todo ello supuso un avance en la educación en España.

En el siglo XX serán herederos de aquel espíritu los pensadores Unamuno, Ortega y Zambrano. Poseen ciertos caracteres que sienten en común: a) Su preocupación por España que les adviene a través de una vivencia: la deficiencia de la cultura ambiente, la deficiencia de nuestra educación y, por ello, de nuestra convivencia; b) La necesidad de emprender una labor urgente. Se sienten llamados y se proponen a sí mismos para realizar la tarea de elevar a España. c) Creen que son los jóvenes los verdaderos mediadores de este cambio.

2. Miguel de Unamuno: educador

Miguel de Unamuno ha sido valorado, en muchas ocasiones, sobre todo como educador. Son muchos los estudiosos españoles y extranjeros que así le han considerado. Nos vamos a fijar en una autora, también filósofa, María Zambrano que además podría ser estimada

² Marichal, J., *El secreto de España*, Madrid, Taurus, 1996.

³ Giner de los Ríos, F., *Ensayos*, Madrid, Alianza, 1973, p. 116.

como discípula⁴. En uno de sus muchos artículos que le dirige dice lo siguiente: “Así cuando apareció Unamuno tuvo caracteres de irrupción que no dejó de ser recibida con ese asombro que se defiende en indiferencia, especie de reto que el español lanza al que le dice algo demasiado hondo, al que le descubre algo que de veras le importa. Unamuno habla, como en España no se había hablado, habla de cosas que no se hablaban hace tiempo⁵. Pero, además, María Zambrano, le compara con Ortega y reconoce en Unamuno a un maestro. Considera a Ortega “un filósofo que prendía en un círculo de discípulos reducidos”, mientras que “la figura de don Miguel se elevaba y se adentraba en el ánimo de los españoles, como la de un mediador. Porque su palabra, que sonaba desde más de medio siglo, lenta, imperceptiblemente, se había ido haciendo palabra de alimento”.

En efecto, su obra y su vida entera han estado dedicadas a elevar el nivel cultural y moral de España. Por ello, son también continuas sus reflexiones acerca de la educación e, igualmente, se detiene en la obra de educadores españoles como la escuela Nueva de Ferrer, el Padre Manjón, etc ...Como existen tantas referencias destacaremos los temas más repetidos que creemos son también los fundamentales en su tratamiento acerca de la educación y que, al mismo tiempo, nuclea muchos criterios que constituyen las líneas pedagógicas fundamentales. Estas referencias se encuentran en muchos de los discursos pronunciados y artículos escritos por Unamuno y, también, en una novela que dedicó enteramente al tema de la educación, *Amor y Pedagogía*.

2.1. El maestro como modelo

Como los Institucionistas, Unamuno concedía una gran importancia al maestro como ejemplo en todo acto educativo. Considera que el entusiasmo del maestro que pone todo su interés en transmitir la verdad es la mejor herencia que se puede proporcionar al alumno tanto en el aprendizaje como en su formación humana. “Cuando el que aprende siente que quien le enseña lo hace por algo más que por pasar el tiempo, por cobrar su emolumento, o por lo que llamamos cumplir el deber, y no suele pasar de hacer que se hace, entonces es cuando aquél se aficiona a lo que se le enseña” (*Arabesco Pedagógico*, 1913).

De la importancia que concede al maestro nos habla la creación de dos cuentos que tienen como figura principal, la del maestro *El diamante de Villarola* (1898) y *El maestro de Carrasqueda* (1903). En el primero critica la pedagogía de aquél maestro que toma a los niños como medio de investigación pedagógica, es decir, como conejillos de india, para su propia experimentación y no como lo es toda persona, un fin en sí mismo. En el segundo es una lectura positiva del maestro que enseña al niño a conservar lo mejor de su niñez. Este tema será una preocupación siempre repetida en Unamuno y alentada en su reflexión acerca de los maestros.

Considera al maestro, fundamentalmente, como un hombre sabio y dador de amor. Respecto a la sabiduría, critica la falta de reflexión y rechaza una pedagogía que se convierta sólo en táctica o estrategia “Lo que necesita el maestro es menos pedagogía, mucha menos pedagogía, y más filosofía, mucho más humanidades. El maestro de primeras letras no puede ser, como no puede ser el padre, un especialista. Hacer de la pedagogía una especialidad es perderse en la técnica pura, en la técnica huera y vana. Y el tecnicismo ha sido como el positivismo, la plaga intelectual de la segunda mitad del pasado siglo XIX. Y la técnica podrá producir Estados fuertes, pero no crea pueblos libres y conscientes de su libertad” (*Otro Arabesco Pedagógico*, 1913).

⁴ Sánchez-Gey Venegas, J., *La mirada zambraniana sobre Unamuno. Cuaderno Gris*, 6, Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, 2002, pp. 197-203.

⁵ Zambrano, M., Unamuno y su tiempo, *Universidad de La Habana.*, 15(46-48), 1943, pp. 52-82.

Unamuno distingue bien entre desarrollo técnico y progreso moral. Apuesta claramente por lo segundo; de este modo, reconoce que la filosofía proporciona una formación integral de la persona, una formación que surge de dentro y busca su interiorización y perfección, no persigue tan sólo un producto externo sino que hace referencia a la formación desde dentro. La filosofía no pretende ni una parte, ni nada externo a la condición humana.

En cuanto al amor busca la relación personal como el lazo más importante de toda educación, la ejemplaridad, pues todo alumno requiere ver lo que debe hacer y no sólo que se le diga. Esto es lo esencial, lo demás son artificios: “Por maestro me tengo y en mi enseñanza he prometido poner siempre todo el ahínco y todo el amor de tal”.

2.2. El amor como fuente de toda educación

Veremos el rechazo de toda pedagogía que no se base en el amor y atienda sólo al tecnicismo pedagógico. Así en *Amor y Pedagogía* (1902) ironiza acerca del cientifismo educativo que impide el verdadero crecimiento y madurez humanas, porque sólo el amor libera y permite alcanzar la autonomía personal. Aunque conocemos la novela, nos detendremos en la referencia que hace de ella el mismo Unamuno en carta a Jiménez Ilundain, dice que se trata de un hombre que se casa deductivamente para poder tener un hijo y educarlo según los principios teóricos de la pedagogía para que llegue a ser un gran genio. El tecnicismo y el positivismo ahogan la vivencia en el hijo que acaba en el suicidio.

Amor y Pedagogía es, pues, una crítica al positivismo desde los temas educativos, porque se aleja del sentido vital verdadero, que lleva al conocimiento y al gozo o satisfacción personal. Frente al artificio de un pedagogismo técnico defiende la verdadera relación personal. Critica cualquier otro tipo de relación como la emulación que despierta y aviva la envidia “son muy propensos los jesuitas con todo aquello de dividir la clase en cartagineses y romanos y nombrar emperadores de uno y otro bando”. El rechazo a la emulación lo manifiesta también en otras ocasiones. Considera vejatorio la relación competitiva que es ajena a la verdadera convivencia, único valor que se ha de fomentar en la escuela “La emulación, aguijada por vanidad no pocas veces, esa deplorable emulación que nuestro infausto sistema de notas y recompensas fomenta, rara vez puede dar óptimos frutos. Es un sistema condenado hoy por los más juiciosos pedagogos. No habéis de proponeros sobrepujar a los demás, sino sobrepujaros a vosotros mismos, ser hoy más que eraís ayer”.

Critica también una educación que no tenga en cuenta al niño; como se diría actualmente, que entienda la escuela sólo como aparcamiento escolar: “Esta educación contribuye luego no poco al descrédito de la escuela y a que ésta sea considerada como una especie de asilo al que se envía al niño para que no dé la guerra en casa, cuando debía ser, ante todo y sobre todo, una escuela de libertad y dignidad humanas” (*Conferencia en la Sociedad de Ciencias de Málaga en 1906*). El amor forma a las persona auténticamente. Y, por supuesto, en este mismo sentido valora la condición de maestro que ha de vivir de y para el amor “Y para nada hace falta más amor que para llenar vuestra misión, maestros de la niñez. Ved que se os entrega y confía lo más precioso del linaje”.

Con estas palabras finaliza la *Conferencia en la Sociedad de Ciencias, de Málaga, el 23 de agosto de 1906* en la que expone su preocupación por los temas educativos. Será la pedagogía del amor la que constituye el resumen y lo más valioso de todo su planteamiento: El amor es la única pedagogía fecunda. Amad a los niños y sabréis enseñarlos.

2.3. El rechazo de la metodología

Unamuno expresa rechazos y, en ocasiones, críticas injustas a la metodología ya que no puede negarse que es importante conocer métodos, dificultades en el aprendizaje,

formas de evaluación... ; no obstante, hoy más que nunca hemos de asentir a la condena de una pedagogía formalista, sin contenido, o al excesivo afán técnico o metodológico, que no tiene en cuenta el valor de lo humano o, incluso, que considera a los niños como medio para experimentar en la pedagogía y, por supuesto, alejado de lo vital. “Libreme Dios de predicaros que cerréis los libros, pero sí os repetiré que aprendáis a ver al través de ellos la vida, y no al través de ésta los libros, como hoy tanto ocurre. Poco se lee aquí, por desgracia, pero es donde se lee menos donde más daño puede hacer aquello poco que se lee” (Apertura del curso en la Universidad de Salamanca de 1900 a 1901).

La *Conferencia en la Sociedad de Ciencias, de Málaga, el 23 de agosto de 1906*, la dedica íntegramente a expresar los fundamentos pedagógicos de la educación. En ella rechaza los pedagogismos que según considera no son más que retruécanos sin sentido, “Y he oído a este respecto razonamientos tan especiosos y tan rebuscados como aquel que no es lo mismo aprender una cosa para saberla que aprenderla para enseñarla”.

A menudo, Unamuno recuerda que disciplina viene de discípulo, de atención al discípulo, por tanto, requiere cuidado personal, lo cual es lo más alejado del vano pedagogismo. De esta manera critica la jerga, tan usual en nuestros días, de palabras rimbombantes que nada dicen, así como de enseñanzas parciales, extrapolares... que no conducen a una verdadera formación: “Si logran enseñar a leer, escribir y contar bien no habrían hecho poco. Enseñar a leer bien, enterándose uno de lo que lee, es acaso la suprema labor del maestro”⁶.

Es muy conocido el texto unamuniano en el que critica el exceso de didacticismo sin verdadera reflexión, pues, como Giner de los Ríos, defendía que el maestro desde la educación infantil a la universidad debe ser sabio. La educación es, sobre todo, sabiduría y luego afán, entusiasmo por transmitir a los alumnos, así el que sabe con sentido sabrá también enseñar. “Estoy harto de decir y repetir a los maestros que lo importante no es precisamente cómo enseñar, sino qué es lo que debe enseñarse y qué no. De qué sale el cómo mejor que del cómo el qué” (*Otro arabesco pedagógico*, 1913).

La verdadera pedagogía consiste, pues, en enseñar lo realmente formativo a la inteligencia y al corazón del alumno, por ello Unamuno propone que, de niños, deben aprender a leer, que es el comienzo de la apertura de una mente amplia y abierta, dispuesta a dialogar con el otro y con lo otro. Además, hay que propiciar la enseñanza en valores, que es siempre una enseñanza en contenidos, que atiende al fondo, pues la educación ha de llevarnos a alcanzar la mejor humanización personal y social. Frente al positivismo, que Unamuno abandona a partir de 1900, propone un humanismo que centra sus preferencias en las humanidades y, concretamente, en la educación.

En aquellos momentos, se desarrollaba la pedagogía social, por lo que se estimaba la necesidad de la educación como tarea para hacer del ser humano un buen ciudadano, lo cual está actualmente en pleno desarrollo: “Y mil veces me he preguntado a tal respecto si aparte de las necesarias disciplinas que hay que transmitirles al rescatarlos para ciclo social, no sería acaso la mejor educación, sobre todo cívica”⁷. La actual preocupación por la ética de la ciudadanía tiene también en Unamuno, a uno de sus representantes.

Creemos que ha quedado suficientemente expuesta la preocupación de Unamuno por ser un verdadero educador y por exponer todos aquellos fundamentos pedagógicos que permitieran aprender a ser cada vez mejores personas. Hemos analizado algunos de los muchos temas y de las muchas ocasiones en las que Unamuno se interesó por defender y mejorar la educación en España.

⁶ Ibíd.

⁷ Zambrano, M., *Obras Completas, Conferencias y Discursos*, vol. IX, Madrid, Escelicer, 1971, p. 606.

3. José Ortega y Gasset: misión y educación

Ortega, como Unamuno, se propone una misión primordialmente educativa: transformar y elevar el nivel cultural de España, porque entiende el problema de España desde una tarea educativa que se relaciona con la política. Ya en *Pedagogía Social* de 1910 expone la importancia que concede a la educación en un texto, que se ha hecho muy conocido "... para un hombre nacido entre el Bidasoa y Gibraltar es España el problema primero, plenario y perentorio" y recordándonos a Platón "Hagamos de la educación la ciudadela del estado" (*La Pedagogía social como programa político*, 1910).

María Zambrano le reconoció siempre como su maestro porque Ortega se distinguió, como pocos en su época por ser "alguien ante el cual nos hemos sentido vivir". Así le denomina en uno de los numerosos artículos que le dirigió y dice aquello en lo que consiste para ella ser maestro: atraernos y, al mismo tiempo, dejarnos ser nosotros mismos. "La acción del maestro trasciende el pensamiento y lo envuelve; sus silencios valen a veces tanto como sus palabras y lo que insinúa puede ser más eficaz que lo que expone a las claras. Si hemos sido de verdad sus discípulos, quiere decir que ha logrado de nosotros algo al parecer contradictorio; que, por habernos atraído hacia él, hayamos llegado a ser nosotros mismos". Ortega, como dice Angel Casado⁸, evoluciona en su idea de la educación desde uno de sus primeros escritos, como es, *Pedagogía Social*. En este escrito, Ortega subraya: a) la participación en la vida pública como una tarea a cumplir humana y cívicamente; b) desde su formación clásica y aristotélica entiende que toda acción humana si está orientada en el sentido ético-político es acción transformadora, c) transformar la sociedad es tanto una acción política como una acción educativa, d) la propuesta es desde el interior, humanismo; e) apuesta por la pedagogía social.

Hay que tener en cuenta que en el periodo de formación alemana, sus maestros Natorp y Cohen promueven la Pedagogía Social. En este artículo de 1910 Ortega pensará que Europa es la solución a España, más tarde irá percibiendo con más claridad que adquirir una cultura es un proceso, que la filosofía es ir tomando conciencia de esa cultura, que no es sólo eliminación de problemas sino integración de los mismos. En los posteriores escritos también tendrá en cuenta el carácter personal de la educación, no de forma individualista sino como asimilación de la tradición. Veremos, de nuevo, los temas más importantes de su obra educativa teniendo en cuenta que la *Pedagogía Social*, *Pedagogía de la contaminación*, *Biología y Pedagogía* y *Misión de la Universidad* son algunas de las obras en las que ha estudiado el desarrollo de sus presupuestos pedagógicos.

3.1. La educación es "prepararse para la vida"

Como Unamuno crítica los excesos de didactismos o metodologías, que no van al fondo de lo más vital "Ahora bien el problema de la pedagogía no es educar al hombre exterior, ... sino al hombre interior, al hombre que piensa, siente y quiere. Ved, señores, el caso admirable que ofrece el hombre: se mueve en el espacio, va de un lugar a otro, y mientras tanto lleva dentro de sí el espacio infinito, el pensamiento del espacio" (1910). En *Pedagogía de la contaminación* (1917) explica el sentido educativo del término "contagio", que significa empaparse por dentro frente a enseñanzas mecanizadas y externas, que no se asimilan porque no se entra bien en lo enseñado.

Matiza que el objetivo del maestro es enseñar, pero el alumno es quien ha de poner el esfuerzo para sentirse, de verdad, enseñado. Ello sucede con la ciencia, el arte y la ética.

⁸. Casado, A., *La evolución del pensamiento educativo de Ortega en X Seminario de Hª de la Filosofía española e Iberoamericana*, Salamanca, Pub. Universidad, 2000, pp. 451- 464.

Esa asimilación personal, ese entrar de verdad en lo enseñado y no quedarse fuera, con sólo las palabras, significa tomar conciencia, es aprender desde dentro. Contaminar es el ejercicio personal, reflexivo, crítico y formativo en torno a la realidad. Por ello trata de las ciencias que se refieren a lo más humano y propone como verdadera educación descubrir el sentido de la vida, que resume en la filosofía, “La filosofía, señores, no se enseña; la filosofía a lo sumo, se contamina. Frente a la pedagogía mecanizada yo afirmo como única verdadera y sin hipocresías la pedagogía de la contaminación”(1917).

Su aportación en 1917 es que la tarea primordial de la educación, frente a todo mecanicismo pedagógico, es enseñar a vivir, situar al alumno para que descubra desde sí mismo lo más auténtico, la verdad. “Porque lo real y concreto de la ciencia es la actividad sin descanso del intelecto que se enfrenta valerosamente, peligrosamente con los problemas y pugna con ellos, para darles solución”. Y, más aún, Ortega, adelantándose a la crítica que propone en *La Rebelión de las masas* (1929) sobre el hombre sin preocupación por el sentido de la vida, rechaza un saber sólo pragmático “no es la ciencia como saber, es la ciencia... materializada en utilidad”⁹.

En *Biología y Pedagogía* (1920) abunda en el rechazo de los practicismos y didactismos en la búsqueda de “prepararse para la vida” desde una intención más honda que atañe a la conciencia humana, lo cual no sucede en una cultura meramente tecnológica. Esta no prepara la vida, porque no la capacita para la verdadera cultura y progreso de los pueblos. “previa a la civilización transitoria de nuestros días, previa a la cultura de los últimos milenios hay una forma eterna y radical de la vida psíquica que es supuesto de aquéllas. Ella es, en última instancia la vida esencial”. Ortega se está refiriendo a la educación moral que atiende a la sensibilidad y a la educación de la voluntad.

Cuando Ortega habla de vida, se refiere al fundamento de su reflexión filosófica que va matizando desde 1914, la denomina razón vital, se trata de una razón concreta, humana, viva, dinámica y también a lo que es verdaderamente esencia o constitutivo de la condición humana. *Biología y pedagogía* apunta, pues, a los problemas esenciales humanos que no son referencias efímeras o meramente accidentales “La escuela ideal sería para mi opuesto gusto un instituto que hubiese podido permanecer idéntico desde los tiempos más salvajes del pasado y perdurar invariable en los tiempos más avanzados del futuro”.

Ortega favorece la pedagogía como reflexión del acto educativo, de ahí que se interese por la filosofía, e igual que rechaza los tecnicismos, tampoco está de acuerdo con el espontaneísmo rousseaniano, pues es preciso, como ya se ha dicho buscar lo esencial de la condición humana “Pienso, por el contrario, que toda educación tiene que ser positiva, que es preciso intervenir en la vida espontánea o primitiva”. Ante la consideración de tres formas de actividad espiritual: la cultura, la civilización y el afán creador Ortega considera que es una “actividad creadora” para educar una “vida creadora”.

3.2. La tarea docente y educadora

Ortega, como es habitual en él, tiene visión sobre el futuro y reconoce el papel renovador del maestro en España. Así en sus palabras en la Escuela Superior de Magisterio (1913) compara esta tarea con otras más arcaicas y decadentes en la sociedad española “Yo veo ante mis ojos signos de renovación pero no los hallo suficientemente en la política ni en la literatura ni en la universidad.. no ha comenzado aún la renovación del catedrático, pero sí ha empezado y con clara energía la del maestro -vosotros sois la prueba. Lo que encontré en vosotros cómo alumnos no lo he vuelto a encontrar”.

⁹ Ibid., p. 90.

El papel primordial del maestro de la República ya estaba en la atención y consideración del Ortega de 1913, una vez más queda patente su claro sentido y visión proféticas. Por otra parte, se ocupa en *Misión de la Universidad* de la tarea docente e investigadora de los profesores universitarios. Critica duramente el especialismo que conlleva el menosprecio por los temas más generales de la cultura, a la que sólo se la considera como un “ornamento”. De este modo, la investigación y el especialismo debe deslindarse como tarea docente de la verdadera tarea educadora. Especialmente defiende la sabiduría “No se debe enseñar sino lo que se puede de verdad aprender”¹⁰. Estas palabras son el aliento de una vital preocupación: “Que se centre la universidad en el estudiante y no en el profesor”¹¹. La universidad no subsiste por sí sola, depende del tejido social y de la cultura como razón vital. Es una conquista del ser humano que decide vivir de la inteligencia.

La tarea que propone de recortar disciplinas y la necesidad de explicarlas íntegramente supondría un avance, aún hoy, si estas propuestas se llevasen a cabo. Y sobre todo, Ortega defiende la necesidad e importancia de un estudio verdadero de lo humano. “Cultura es lo que salva del naufragio vital, lo que permite al hombre vivir sin que su vida sea tragedia sin sentido o radical envilecimiento. ... No podemos vivir humanamente sin ideas”¹².

Ortega subraya, especialmente, en *Pedagogía de la contaminación* que la enseñanza más formativa sólo es posible desde la interacción maestro-alumno. Pues lo verdaderamente importante no es el contenido de lo que se transmite, tanto en la ciencia, en el arte, como en la moral. Estas materias no “prenden en el alumno” si no hay un esfuerzo conjunto, una innovación, un aliento, en definitiva, un esfuerzo personal por parte del alumno y una entrega desde el maestro. “No nos hagamos ilusiones: falta a nuestra época la conciencia de la cultura, esto es, de aquella cosa que en apariencia más la la envanece. A ello ha contribuido la expansión democrática de la enseñanza, que ha cuidado más de extender el uso del vocabulario que de intensificar y purificar en una minoría selecta la conciencia de las ideas”.

Ortega desea para sí, como Unamuno había deseado ser un maestro “lleno de ahínco y amor”, ser un verdadero maestro inquietador de sus alumnos “Me contentaría con pasar junto a las almas más quietas que la mía y dejar caer en ellas fermentos de duda, ambición y esperanza”¹³.

4. María Zambrano: el magisterio desde el discípulo

María Zambrano llegará a ser maestra después de ser una muy buena discípula. Como hemos dicho, lo fue de Unamuno y de Machado, aunque de quien se denominó a sí misma discípula fue siempre de Ortega, de quien fue su alumna. Del orfismo pitagórico, y de San Agustín, y de los místicos... sintió que aprendía porque a tantos y tantos amó y reconoció.

En el prólogo al libro que recoge escritos tempranos, *Hacia un saber sobre el alma*, María Zambrano habla de esta relación de maestro y discípula. “Aunque haya recorrido mi pensamiento lugares donde el de Ortega y Gasset no aceptaba entrar, yo me considero su discípula”. En efecto, se sintió siempre su discípula porque, como el maestro, quería “salvar las circunstancias” y encontrarse como intelectual “a la altura de los tiempos”. Los caminos que ella recorre distintos a Ortega serán los de una razón tan íntima como trascendente y, de ese modo, encuentra la vocación que siente de maestra.

¹⁰ Ortega y Gasset, J., *Misión de la Universidad*, Madrid, Revista de Occidente, 1930, p. 51.

¹¹ *Ibíd.*, p. 50.

¹² *Ibíd.*, p. 35.

¹³ *Ibíd.*, p. 96.

Así, de este modo, hemos de hablar de su misión educadora y de sus preocupación por los temas pedagógicos, que se refiere mucho más a su vivencia que a sus solos escritos. No obstante, los temas pedagógicos zambranianos que recorren algunos de sus artículos y, en especial sus obras son: varios artículos escritos en la revista *Educación* de Puerto Rico y entre otros: *El pensamiento vivo de Séneca* y *La Guía, como forma del pensamiento*.

4.1. La escucha, condición del discípulo

El saber sapiencial que Zambrano propone y que, desde sus primeros artículos, denominará *razón poética* consiste en el desvelamiento del origen y destino del hombre, como búsqueda y revelación de la condición humana. Razón poética es unidad de pensar y sentimiento en una forma nueva de educar y educarnos para ser más y mejores personas.

Así se entiende su propuesta de una forma nueva de pensar. En 1943 escribe dos artículos muy singulares en la propuesta de la razón poética *La Guía, como forma del pensamiento* y *La confesión: género literario*. Defiende que el conocimiento ha de ser siempre transfigurativo y en esa misma razón engendradora, poética, creadora el pensar zambraniiano se hace realmente pedagógico. En *La Guía* hay sobre todo una escucha y ésta es la verdadera enseñanza, sentarse ante alguien a quien el discípulo reconoce y el maestro tiene en cuenta, la enseñanza se hace así personal y viva. Este conocimiento, a base de comunicación y escucha, es educativo en cuanto cambia y renueva nuestro estado de ser. Es un saber de experiencia.

En 1964 escribe en la revista *Educación* de Puerto Rico un bello artículo que titula *El Despertar* y que tiene que ver con la educación. Resalta siempre al maestro porque a él le corresponde despertar en el alumno la atención al saber y el de hacerla renacer. “Pero ello ha de saberse, pues, que todo se puede hacer mejor cuando se sabe. Y aunque parezca raro y aún quimérico, es posible y necesario, indispensable, aprender a despertar, a recibir la luz del día como si ciegos, hubiésemos recuperado la vista; como si amortajados fuéramos llamados a resucitar”.

María Zambrano ha buscado en la filosofía un saber que trate de la condición humana y explique su vivir, por tanto, es necesario crecer en consciencia para luego trascender, salir de sí, in más allá. Justamente esta acción transitiva tiene un primer momento de ensimismamiento, es la vocación. La vocación es siempre dádiva, como la poesía. Es gratuidad y lo mejor de la condición humana es esa generosidad que se desarrolla gracias a la vocación.

Sólo esta generosidad “ha traído al mundo cosas nuevas: palabras nunca dichas anteriormente, pensamientos no pensados, claridades ocultas, descubrimiento de leyes no sospechadas, y hasta sentimientos que yacían en el corazón de cada hombre sin derecho a la existencia” (La vocación de maestro, 1965). La vocación lo es siempre como verdad encarnada y vivida y nunca abstracción. Por eso, el maestro es un ser vocacionado, un ser mediador y comunicador que se expone a sí mismo en su tarea diaria “... el maestro es mediador con respecto al ser en tanto crece, y crecer para lo humano es no sólo aumentar, sino integrarse... algo todavía más que desarrollarse como lo es para una planta y para un animal”. Esta condición del maestro le viene de su libertad ofrendada o vocación.

Sin embargo, la crisis del pensamiento occidental es también debido a la crisis de las aulas que se genera en el repudio de la tradición “la repulsa con que los jóvenes... quieren anegarla por entera”. Mas es posible salir: desde la ofrenda, que es entrega y sacrificio.

En 1970 escribe en la *Revista Educación* un artículo que titula *Esencia y forma de la atención*, es cierto, que la escucha sólo puede darse en personas atentas, pero el interés de la atención reside, además, en la importancia que María Zambrano concede al carácter unitivo de la persona. Este supuesto unitario persigue, según Zambrano, la esperanza. Junto a este sentimiento unitivo, María Zambrano descubre el sentimiento de filiación, que se aviva ante un maestro, como Séneca, a quien llama padre porque siente lo universal en la comprensión más plena del pensar. “Como Molinos, como el Maestro de Avila, como el mismo San Ignacio, Séneca sale de la sustancia española que es su vida más consistente, más permanente y viva: la paternidad. Si es dudosa la calidad de los hombres de Estado, por ejemplo, de España, si puede ser cuestionable que haya habido o no filósofos en sentido estricto, hay unas cuantas cosas evidentes, realidades espléndidas que nadie puede negar y algunas de estas realidades, no son precisamente historia, aunque tampoco exactamente naturaleza, tal paternidad”.

4.2. La educación para la libertad

Esta preocupación recorre también la obra zambraniana, en la medida que su reflexión lo es acerca del hombre. Ocuparse del ser humano es pensar acerca de la libertad. Entiende la libertad no como mera elección de medios para alcanzar un fin, sino que la libertad es reconocer el fin para encontrar el sentido de la existencia humana y dárselo a sí mismo. *Sobre una educación para la libertad* (1934) María Zambrano reflexiona sobre la pedagogía del siglo XIX y afirma que la educación liberal, que parte de Rousseau, defiende una libertad naturalista que “es, no necesita edificarse; nace, no se hace”. Se trata de una cualidad que le ha sido sustraída por la sociedad y que el hombre ha de buscar. “Se trata de ser *libre de*, libre con *respecto a* todo lo que no es propiamente individual”.

Sin embargo, puede darse otra forma de libertad que no es creadora sino que es, en cierto modo estática, y hasta arbitraria. Se da desde la espontaneidad que “suprime el esfuerzo, el entrenamiento; se va eludiendo todo lo que necesita ser aprendido con dolor” a Zambrano le parece que es sólo psicológica y poco ética. “Y por este camino se desemboca allí donde desde el principio se postulaba: en el hombre masa. Este hombre que la pedagogía russoniana iba a buscar, terminó en ser el hombre masa, el hombre de la democracia moderna en un primer momento, de “la rebelión de las masas” en el final del proceso”.

Busca plantear bien este tema de la libertad y el de la educación que surge “como potencia y posibilidad de creación, como esfera de una existencia personal, como condición del espíritu”. Apela Zambrano al final de estas páginas a la razón vital de Ortega que defiende una razón ética desde la necesidad de ejercer la decisión personal, y termina Zambrano con una reflexión y una pregunta.

‘Libertad para’ es necesidad de ensanchar la propia individualidad y conquistar lo más pleno. Tanto Unamuno, Ortega como Zambrano afirman que lo decisivo es conquistarse “saber qué se ha de hacer”. La libertad significa recorrer un camino con sentido, especialmente, la libertad es un proyecto. Desde sus escritos de los años 30 su ideal de libertad consiste en que “no rompa los cables que al hombre le unen con el mundo, con la naturaleza, con lo sobrenatural. Libertad fundada, más que en la razón, en la fe, en el amor” (*Horizonte del Liberalismo*, 1931).

María Zambrano relata desde Séneca el descubrimiento de lo trascendente y de su amor a lo concreto, “Regresa de la idealidad para apegarse a algo concreto, que no pretende, además, definir. De ser lógicamente ideal, se transforma en divinamente materialista, si por materialismo entendemos el apego maternal a lo concreto, la renuncia a la abstracción

por no despegarse de las entrañas. Y brota así, una sabiduría prolija y sutil, que no puede ser aprisionada en definiciones, ni en ninguna armazón lógica. Un saber acerca del alma y sus vericuetos, flexible y astuta, que a veces trae la verdad más desnuda y a veces encubre con la mentira la verdad más inmediata” (*El pensamiento vivo de Séneca*, 1944).

Si nos referimos a la dimensión política, es destacable, como hemos mencionado, que desde su primer libro *Horizonte del liberalismo* ahonda también en esa tarea educadora de una conciencia de la libertad, que propone la defensa de la persona y su dignidad. Rechaza toda forma de “razón violenta” que sólo conlleva totalitarismos y humillación al ser humano.

4.3. La interacción maestro-discípulo

El artículo *Ciencia e Iniciación* (1970) trata de exponer que lo más importante de la enseñanza es el descubrimiento. Así el maestro es capaz de poner al alumno en situación de saber preguntar, al mismo tiempo, que con su enseñanza posibilita más y más preguntas. Es decir, lejos de los didactismos, entiende la enseñanza como una relación personal en la que “el maestro ofrece al discípulo una enseñanza que excede a las preguntas del discípulo”... Y así el educador, el verdadero maestro, enseña al discípulo a saber interrogar; que quizás sea lo más difícil hacer con justeza, de manera que la respuesta, como un pez, salte, o que salte la imposibilidad de las respuestas”.

Cuando María Zambrano se refiere a Ortega señala con emoción esta interacción que une al maestro con el alumno que es tan viva como entrañada y que halla su sustento en la coherencia “Y al comprenderlo así vi también la coherencia perfecta entre su persona y su obra... Y cuando de un pensamiento de un maestro, en horas así, se vierte ese precipitado moral hasta parecerse a una sustancia, entonces el ser discípulo queda incorporado a la persona, inseparable de ella. Y es un extraño alimento, en forma de implacable exigencia” (1964).

En el artículo de 1965 *La vocación de maestro* valora ambos términos notablemente: vocación y maestro. Lamenta que la filosofía, sofocada en posiciones racionalistas no se haya ocupado de la vocación. Considera que sólo puede hablarse de vocación desde la libertad. Y, por tanto, desde la persona.

Pues persona es “ante todo, una promesa, una promesa de realización creadora”, así María Zambrano define el ser personal no sólo como proyecto o quehacer, a la manera orteguiana, sino desde una razón poética o creadora, que tiene en cuenta la realización del otro. Siempre ha perseguido en la filosofía un saber consciente y, al tiempo, salir de sí, trascenderse. El maestro es comunicador, desde ahí se expone siempre en su labor mediadora “el maestro es mediador con respecto al ser en tanto crece, y crecer para lo humano es no sólo aumentar sino integrarse”. Sin embargo, la crisis del pensamiento occidental sucede también en las aulas donde se ha generado una repulsa a la tradición por parte de los jóvenes, lo cual exige del maestro entrega y sacrificio. Pues no tener maestro es “no tener a quien preguntar y, más hondamente todavía, no tener ante quién preguntarse”. El maestro ayuda al alumno a salir de sí, “el alumno se yergue” y el maestro le libera del “temor que dispara la violencia”. Para María Zambrano enseñar es una búsqueda en la que “maestro y alumno se aguijonean” queriendo hallar la verdad.

Decíamos, al comienzo, que la filosofía se ha ido alejando de la educación, y es cierto. No obstante, los pensadores españoles que hemos analizado han expuesto un pensamiento educativo y, sobre todo, han vivido ante los demás: alumnos y ciudadanos con la misión y vocación de sentirse educadores.

La Ética del Cuidado Permite Construir un Currículo Escolar que no Ensalza la Independencia ni la Violencia*

Caring pedagogy builds a curriculum that does not extol independence or violence

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Resumen:

La pedagogía del cuidado es una perspectiva filosófica y educativa que propone la creación de un currículum ajeno a las dicotomías sexistas y que afronte, entre otras, la necesidad de incluir el reconocimiento de la interdependencia y los vínculos emocionales como parte de la vida humana y de la identidad moral. Así, propone que el sistema educativo incluya contenidos curriculares que enseñen el valor y la práctica del cuidado como bien público, y contribuya a que éstos se distribuyan de forma equitativa.

Palabras clave: Ética del cuidado, currículum, interdependencia, violencia.

Abstract:

Caring pedagogy is a philosophical and educational perspective that proposes creating a curriculum without the bias of sexist dichotomies acknowledging the need for interdependence and emotional bonds as part of human life and moral identity. To that end,

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the paper proposes that an educational system should include curricular contents that teach the value and practice of caring as a public good, and contribute the fair distribution of those goods.

Keywords: Ethics of care, curriculum, interdependency, violence.

1. La necesidad del cuidado de los seres humanos y del planeta

En este artículo partimos de la siguiente premisa: se tiende a considerar la culminación de la libertad humana como la facultad de reducir al mínimo la dependencia de los demás en todos los aspectos de la vida. Así, por ejemplo, Rousseau consideraba que la peor carga que soporta el ser humano es su estado congénito de debilidad que le impele a buscar la ayuda de otros, y que se manifiesta ya en el llanto del bebé que reclama la atención y el cuidado de los adultos³. De hecho, aún son muchas las personas que consideran que hay que dejar llorar a los bebés, o de lo contrario, cada vez serán más dependientes de las figuras de apego.

Desde la perspectiva dominante el énfasis puesto en la autonomía, entendida como autosuficiencia, se ensalza de tal manera que se obvian las condiciones ontológicas relacionadas con la vulnerabilidad del ser humano y del planeta. El valor supremo es la independencia y se considera superior a valores relacionados con los vínculos interpersonales y la interdependencia en el logro de un desarrollo sostenible a nivel local y global.

El paradigma androcéntrico considera que los seres humanos somos individuos autónomos que soportamos la convivencia como mal menor. Por ejemplo, el estado de naturaleza sobre el que teorizó el influyente Rousseau⁴ presenta al ser humano como un ser solitario, autosuficiente y libre, que posteriormente y a causa de factores externos y fortuitos, se vio obligado a entrar en relación con otros y vivir en sociedad. Este tipo de preconcepciones se ha ido perpetuando hasta nuestros días, de manera que, en nuestras aulas no se educa para vivir solidariamente, sino que se educa para luchar de un modo civilizado en una guerra sin cuartel –aunque no se explicita por no ser considerado políticamente correcto-. En nuestras prácticas cotidianas, la lucha por la independencia y la libertad individual terminan dejando en segundo plano los vínculos que nos unen a los demás y al mundo⁵.

La cultura dominante, que es también la que tiende a enseñarse en las escuelas, exalta el valor de la independencia entendida como autosuficiencia, al tiempo que se obvian las convicciones relacionadas con el sentido de comunidad y la búsqueda del bien común. Incluso, legaliza⁶ la violencia en determinadas circunstancias, como ocurre en el caso de las guerras. La identidad personal tiende a construirse, para muchos, de forma aislada y ajena a

³ Naval, C., y Altarejos, F., *Filosofía de la educación*, Pamplona, Euns, 2000.

⁴ Rousseau, J., *Contrato social*, Madrid, Espasa-Calpe, 1975.

⁵ Groenhout, R., *Connected lives. Human nature and an ethics of care*, Oxford, Rowman & Littlefield, 2004.

⁶ A pesar de que desde otras perspectivas el uso de la Guerra o la violencia puede ser inevitable o incluso un mal menor para defender determinados valores, como la vida de inocentes, desde la ética del cuidado se defiende que la violencia es siempre inhumana. Así se expresa una de las pioneras en este pensamiento, Nel Noddings: "Care ethics advises continuous observation of real conditions and behavior, the recognition of turning points, and close adherence to reality without simply accepting the 'ways things are'. The conventions of war are of little use if they are regularly contravened. More over, it is hard to argue that an immoral activity can be conducted morally", Noddings, N., *The Maternal Factor. Two Paths to Morality*, Berkeley, University of California Press, 2010, p. 208.

las formas de dependencia constitutivas de la propia ontología humana. Sin embargo, la pedagogía del cuidado defiende que la vinculación con los otros es una realidad constitutiva de las personas, y que además tiene la potencialidad de permitir la expansión del propio yo sin hacer uso de la violencia⁷.

2. La perspectiva de la pedagogía del cuidado

Desde la ética del cuidado⁸ se defiende que no podemos dar la espalda al hecho de que ningún ser humano puede sobrevivir al nacimiento sin el cuidado y la atención de otros, muchos morirían tempranamente, otros enfermarían severamente o se verían envueltos en accidentes serios. Ser cuidado no es sólo vital para la supervivencia en los bebés, la primera infancia o en periodos de enfermedad o vulnerabilidad, sino a través de toda nuestra vida. Incluso cuando no estamos en situación de dependencia, necesitamos de otros porque somos seres relacionales y emocionales. Los lazos afectivos que nos unen a los demás dan significado, calidez y alegría a nuestras vidas, y ser privados de ellos supone una injusticia. Incluso en los entornos laborales, las organizaciones políticas o los grupos voluntarios son necesarias las relaciones de cuidado, sin el apoyo de las cuales no podríamos desarrollarnos⁹.

Las necesidades de cuidado de las personas dependientes sólo han salido a la esfera pública cuando las mujeres han accedido al mercado laboral y se han problematizado las responsabilidades domésticas, que hasta entonces asumían las mujeres como amas de casa y cuidadoras. Consideramos que en unas sociedades como las nuestras, en las que las transiciones entre el mundo privado y público son mucho más permeables para mujeres y varones, y en las que las mujeres tienen reconocida la igualdad, al menos a nivel formal, resulta necesario replantearse si es pertinente mantener las dicotomías que separan lo masculino de lo femenino, lo público de lo privado, o la dependencia de la independencia. Es pertinente asumir que el ser humano y el planeta en el que habita es vulnerable, y cuestionarnos sobre quienes tienen la responsabilidad de hacerse cargo de los y las ciudadanas que necesitan apoyos para su desenvolvimiento individual y colectivo, y del cuidado por el desarrollo sostenible del planeta. Partimos de la premisa de que la ciudadanía no puede desentenderse del trabajo del cuidado, ya que incluye una serie de prácticas y valores vitales para la supervivencia y el bienestar humanos¹⁰.

⁷ Escámez Sánchez, J., y Vázquez Verdera, V., La educación para la igualdad de género y para el cuidado de las personas que lo necesitan, *Edetania. Revista de Estudios e Investigación en Educación*, 2010, 37, pp. 57-68.

⁸ La expresión inglesa “ethics of care” suele traducirse por ética del cuidado. Es importante matizar que el verbo cuidar en inglés (to care for) como verbo intransitivo resulta ser sinónimo de la expresión castellana “preocuparse por” relativa a sentir inquietud por alguien o algo y dedicar atención a alguien o algo. Así mismo, consideramos significativo incluir la siguiente reflexión: En español si utilizamos la expresión “cuidado por”, nos referimos a la necesidad de tratar con mimo y atención algo que puede ser vulnerable; en cambio, cuando utilizamos “cuidado con” podemos referirnos a un imperativo de actuar con precaución ante algo que puede ser peligroso. Así, nos crearemos expectativas bien distintas si nos dicen “ten cuidado por este animal” o “ten cuidado con este animal”.

⁹ Lynch, K., Lions, M., y Cantillon, S., Breaking the silence: educating citizens for love, care and solidarity, *International Studies in Sociology of Education*, 17, 2007, pp. 1-19.

¹⁰ Cobo, R. (ed.), *Educación en la ciudadanía. Perspectivas feministas*, Madrid, Catarata, 2008; Lister, R., *Citizenship. Feminist perspectives*, New York, Palgrave, 2003; Siim, B., *Gender and citizenship*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Desde el feminismo se ha puesto de manifiesto que nuestras sociedades no tienen en cuenta el valor no sólo social, sino también económico, de las prácticas de cuidado¹¹. El mantenimiento de la vida y del bienestar físico y emocional de los individuos y sus comunidades ha sido una tarea desempeñada en la mayoría de los casos por mujeres, y por ello no ha recibido consideración ni reconocimiento social. Las investigaciones actuales siguen llamando la atención sobre la primacía de lo masculino, la desvalorización de lo femenino a través de la desautorización de los discursos de las chicas y el desprestigio de las tareas asignadas a las mujeres¹².

Simone de Beauvoir¹³ teorizó a mediados del siglo pasado que ya en la horda primitiva se valoró, por encima del engendrar la vida (actividad propia de las mujeres), el arriesgar la vida en la guerra y la caza (actividad que realizaban los varones). En aquel momento histórico, los varones en sus expediciones guerreras y de cacería hacían alarde de su supremacía matando y poniendo en juego su propia vida, demostrando así que la violencia era un valor. Masculinidad y violencia se unieron así a la lista de rasgos propios de los hombres, y por tanto rasgos dignos de estima.

Hoy en día las sociedades democráticas y desarrolladas no podemos mantener las mismas actitudes y valores, ya que resultan obsoletas. Más bien al contrario, debemos gestionar la vida individual y colectiva para hacer posible la paz, el desarrollo sostenible de las personas y el equilibrio ecológico. El trabajo del cuidado es un bien público, y de su desempeño dependen la supervivencia y el bienestar de las personas y del planeta. Por eso, defendemos que la escuela debe incluirlo como contenido y práctica educativa:

“Nuestro reto es ambicioso: introducir los saberes asociados al trabajo del cuidado de las demás personas en la cultura escolar, no como un hecho anecdótico ni únicamente como un juego, sino con toda su autoridad femenina (...) Hoy tenemos que modificar la centralidad de los saberes y trabajos considerados tradicionalmente masculinos en la cultura escolar y crear una nueva cultura escolar en la que se valoren los sentimientos y las emociones, las capacidades relacionales, los saberes y las experiencias de las mujeres y los saberes asociados al cuidado”¹⁴.

3. La necesidad de dar respuesta a la vulnerabilidad humana ha de incluirse entre los contenidos curriculares

Muchos consideran que introducir en el curriculum escolar contenidos relacionados con pautas tan “privadas” como las relacionadas con la creación de vínculos emocionales y la atención a personas dependientes en contextos familiares y/o domésticos es una intromisión innecesaria en el curriculum escolar; y que, en todo caso, son asuntos que han de aprenderse en el hogar. Existen resistencias¹⁵ a enseñar en la escuela aquello relacionado con el cuidado, la dependencia, lo doméstico, lo femenino; debido a que estos contenidos y valores no formaban parte del curriculum escolar que la modernidad concibió para los varones; y aunque hoy resulten necesarios para el conjunto de la ciudadanía, no encuentran la acogida que se merecen.

¹¹ Instituto de la Mujer, *Cuidados a personas dependientes prestados por mujeres: valoración económica*, 2008.

¹² Ballarín, P., Retos de la escuela democrática, en R. Cobo (ed.), *Educación en la ciudadanía. Perspectivas feministas*, Madrid, Catarata, 2008, pp. 151- 186.

¹³ Beauvoir, S., *Le deuxième sexe 1*, Paris, Gallimard, 1970.

¹⁴ Solsona, N., El aprendizaje del cuidado en la escuela, en García, M., Calvo, A., y Susinos, T. (eds.), *Las mujeres cambian la educación. Investigar la escuela, relatar la experiencia*, Madrid, Narcea, 2008, p. 227.

¹⁵ Para ampliar el tema sugerimos la lectura de: Arnot, M., *Schooling and the reproduction of class and gender relations, Reproducing gender? Essays on educational theory and feminist politics*, London, Routledge, 2002, pp. 55-76.

El contenido cultural que forma parte del curriculum escolar tiene su origen en el conjunto de saberes que se consideró necesarios para los varones, y al que posteriormente se incorporaron las niñas. Se trata en todo caso de un curriculum orientado al desempeño en el ámbito laboral y público, y que obvia todo aquello referido a lo femenino y lo doméstico. El curriculum masculino está diseñado desde preconcepciones dicotómicas y androcéntricas que consideran necesario preparar al alumnado para su futuro desempeño como ciudadanos y ciudadanas que deben participar de forma autónoma en el ámbito público, contribuir económicamente a través del trabajo productivo remunerado, consumir los bienes y servicios que el mercado le ofrece y –aunque no se reconozca explícitamente- utilizar la violencia si su “yo” o su “patria” se ve amenazado. Esto es así porque se considera a los ciudadanos como individuos liberados de los vínculos de dependencia.

El bienestar de una sociedad está estrechamente vinculado a su capacidad de dar respuesta a las necesidades que se manifiestan. Los beneficios derivados de las actividades de cuidado son un bien público. Los trabajos de cuidado de las personas dependientes, y de la dimensión ecológica, económica, social y demográfica del planeta supone una contribución indispensable en la supervivencia física, emocional y económica de los individuos y de sus comunidades. En consecuencia, la responsabilidad por el cuidado, como bien público, ha de universalizarse y ser aprendida por varones y mujeres.

“El reto más difícil para las escuelas sería el analizar y reconstruir la totalidad del curriculum para hacerlo inclusivo de la experiencia femenina”¹⁶.

Incluir los temas relacionados con el cuidado permitiría tanto la institucionalización, en el seno de las comunidades más inmediatas y primarias, de ciertos valores que hacen el mundo más habitable, como el aprendizaje de ciertas competencias necesarias para la creación y mantenimiento de la vida, los vínculos afectivos, la atención a las personas dependientes, el desempeño doméstico o la crianza de los hijos e hijas. Si estas habilidades no se aprenden en la escuela, se ven forzadas a aprenderse de manera informal y en base a expectativas que están atravesadas por estereotipos de género. Es importante tomarse en serio las competencias relacionadas con el cuidado, y convertirlas en objeto de enseñanza escolar. Noddings plantea que:

“Nuestra sociedad no necesita hacer de sus niños los mejores del mundo en matemáticas o ciencia. Necesita cuidar de sus niños –para reducir la violencia, respetar el trabajo honesto de todo tipo, premiar la excelencia en todos los niveles, asegurar un lugar para cada niño y un adulto emergente en el mundo económico y social, producir personas que sepan cuidar de forma competente de sus propias familias y contribuir de forma eficaz en sus comunidades. En directa oposición contra el actual énfasis en los estándares académicos, el curriculum nacional, y la evaluación nacional, he argumentado a favor de que nuestra principal finalidad educativa debe ser el fomentar el desarrollo de personas competentes, bondadosas, cariñosas y a las que es fácil amar. (...) Todos los niños han de aprender a cuidar de otros seres humanos”¹⁷.

No se defiende la idea de que los poderes públicos abduquen de la responsabilidad de ofrecer los apoyos materiales y los recursos humanos necesarios e imprescindibles para el bienestar del conjunto de la ciudadanía y del desarrollo sostenible del planeta. Más bien lo que estamos proponiendo es que ninguna de las agencias afectadas se desentienda de lo que consideramos es un deber de ciudadanía. Todas las personas hemos de participar y comprometernos con la creación de las condiciones de posibilidad que hacen el mundo más habitable para todos y cada uno de los ciudadanos y ciudadanas:

¹⁶ Noddings, *The Maternal Factor*, op. cit., p. 231.

¹⁷ Noddings, N., *Educating moral people. A caring alternative to character education*, New York, Teachers College Press., 2002, p. 94.

“La persona es responsable de aquello que está en el campo de acción de su poder, de tal manera que la responsabilidad de cada uno está en proporción al poder que tiene. Cuando el mundo de *lo otro*, las personas o la naturaleza, depende de mi acción para su existencia, o para una existencia digna, entonces la conciencia de mi poder tendría que generar el sentimiento vivo del deber de mi acción para garantizar tal existencia y dignidad. A esa especie de responsabilidad viva por *lo otro*, y del sentimiento que la acompaña, es a lo que se llama responsabilidad ética: el cuidado, reconocido como deber, por otro ser que, dada su vulnerabilidad, se convierte en preocupación comprometida. La responsabilidad primaria, y más radical, es la que tenemos por las personas debido a su vulnerabilidad. El niño o la niña recién nacidos son los seres más indefensos entre los vivos y necesitan ser cuidados durante un periodo de tiempo más largo”¹⁸.

4. La educación para el cuidado como posibilidad de un mundo mejor

Es necesario impulsar un cambio de creencias y actitudes que ponga en evidencia lo desfasado de las dicotomías androcéntricas; y en su lugar proponga una reorganización de tiempos, espacios y normas en relación a la responsabilidad por el cuidado y a la equidad de género. No basta con instar a que las familias distribuyan las responsabilidades de forma más equitativa, sino que la escuela misma, al igual que el resto de instituciones sociales, ha de hacer uso de la capacidad crítica y ha de evaluar el profundo androcentrismo de sus prácticas. La escuela no puede echar balones fuera, debe mantener una postura crítica y actitud vigilante para evaluar:

“Si ésta enfatiza, por ejemplo, el mundo laboral y público (considerado masculino) sobre el doméstico y privado (considerado femenino), el trabajo retribuido (ejercido mayoritariamente por los hombres) sobre el voluntario y “del amor” (realizado por las mujeres), la producción sobre la salud y el bienestar, la racionalidad sobre la emotividad, la competitividad sobre la cooperación, los deportes competitivos (el fútbol, el baloncesto, el jockey, etc.) sobre los juegos (las gomas, la rayuela, etc.), la rapidez sobre la reflexividad, la palabra sobre el silencio, etc.”¹⁹.

La pedagogía del cuidado argumenta a favor de un modelo educativo que cuente con el cuidado como forma ética existencial de ser y estar en el mundo. Se considera que la orientación de los sistemas escolares no debe ser exclusivamente la de capacitar a las nuevas generaciones para incorporarse a las necesidades del mercado de trabajo y de la economía. Hemos de prestar la suficiente atención a la educación para la vida personal, familiar y ética; y tomarnos en serio las necesidades de afecto y cuidado que todos los seres humanos tenemos.

Defendemos la necesidad de cuestionar la pertinencia de los legados androcéntricos que perpetúan las dicotomías que separan el mundo en dos realidades contrapuestas; las de aquellas que entienden su vida de forma interdependiente y se encargan del cuidado afectivo en el ámbito doméstico, y la de aquellos que viven de forma independiente y tienen poder para participar en el ámbito público y el trabajo remunerado e incluso para ejercer la violencia en determinadas circunstancias. De esta manera, se invita a que el conjunto de la humanidad caiga en la cuenta de la interdependencia que existe entre todos los seres humanos; es importante posibilitar que varones y mujeres sean educados para una autonomía moral anclada en la solidaridad y la preocupación por el bienestar del otro.

¹⁸ García, R., Pérez, C., y Escámez, J., *La educación ética en la familia*, Bilbao, Desclée, 2009, p.109.

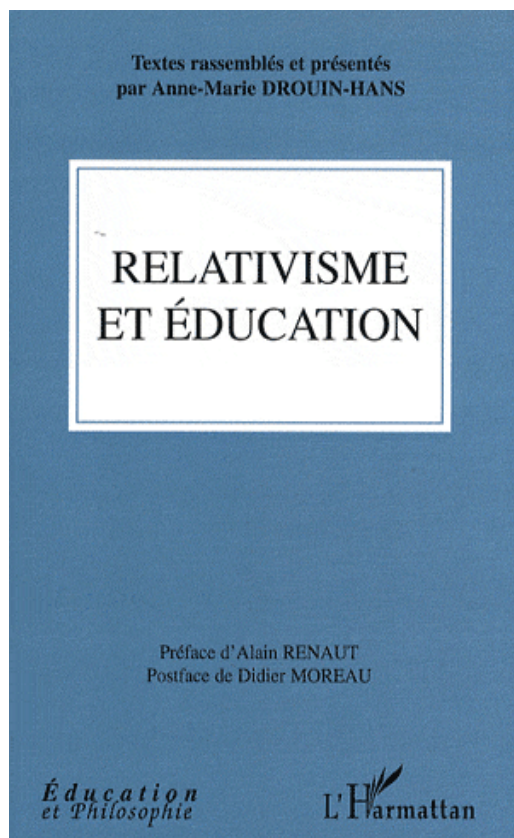
¹⁹ Subirats, M., y Tomé, A., *Balones fuera. Reconstruir los espacios desde la coeducación*, Barcelona, Octaedro, 2007, p. 53.

BOOK REVIEWS

Relativisme and Education ***[Relativisme et Éducation]***

By : VV.AA., Anne-Marie DROUIN HANS (Ed.)
Paris : L'Harmattan

Marina SCHWIMMER



Assembled and presented by Anne-Marie Drouin-Hans, *Relativisme et éducation* is comprised of 16 articles, as well as a preface from Alain Renaut and an afterword from Didier Moreau. The book offers a contemporary French perspective on philosophy of education. It focuses on the place of relativism within education and thought about education. In this context, relativism refers to the theory according to which certainties and truth are impossible, and ethical and epistemological standards are absolutely relative to time, space and other contextual elements. This theory, very present in actual ways of thinking, rests on a critical aversion to universalistic and potentially dogmatic pretensions (as evidenced in some religious and imperialistic thought). Clearly, relativism is in danger of falling into a form of nihilism where everything has the same value, ideas as well as values, where no criteria could help us judge what is worthier of belief or action.

In the field of education, this weakening of certainties has tremendous impact. This crisis concerns educational practice as much as thought about education. Some of the tasks of philosophy are then, to interrogate: 1) the meaning of the concept of relativism; 2) the tensions provoked by the spirit of relativism; 3) possible ways to surpass relativism. This is the task this book tries to fulfil.

Renaut, in the preface, discusses critically political and moral liberalism (the principles of respecting individual freedom and not being harmful to others) as being the actual response to today's spirit of relativism. This minimization of all ethical content appears to be the most defensible way to deal with our plural societies. French schools thus have the mandate to educate to promote the principle of tolerance, excluding any more substantive content concerning how to live a good life. Renaut argues for the necessity of reintroducing abstract entities (for example the idea of Humanity) in our judgments.

1. The meaning of relativism

Trying to define the concept of relativism more extensively, Drouin-Hans simply declares the impossibility of being a relativist. No one claims that he or she is a relativist. Relativism is always the extreme from which we distance ourselves. She questions the relationship of education to truth and concludes that it is an intrinsic task of education to teach to master the relativity of things. Brigitte Frelat-Kahn prefers to speak of the "resistible" character of the concept of relativism rather than of its impossibility. This displacement is important to her in the sense that relativism can be dangerous to culture and that we must then "take it seriously". One must recall that in France, there is only one School, the same for everyone and that this unity is the very foundation of the republican conception of knowledge, equality and democracy. Drawing on Rorty, she suggests not to think of democracy as a fixed experience in order to learn to dominate the transitory and not prostrate oneself before the eternal. Education should have to train for this type of experimentation.

2. Shakings and tensions

The tension, inherent to education in post-modernity, between the necessity of transmitting a culture, knowledge and thus a stabilised construct, and the necessity of always calling into question established certainties and resisting false beliefs, is at the centre of the articles of this section.

Heléna Théodoropoulou analyses the paradoxical character of the “soft relativism” that characterises our age. Education, she claims, is a dialectical movement between the transmission of stabilised values (orthodoxy) and the destabilisation of these values (relativism), by the exposition of its provisional and conflicting character. She uses the case of environmental ethics to illustrate this paradox and the critical role of philosophy of education in resisting the institutionalisation of beliefs into *truths* and *common sense*. Patrick Berthier takes a similar approach and asserts that contemporary relativism is a form of “deterritorialisation” (*a deleuzian concept*), a permanent becoming without prescribed aims. He opposes a deweyian naturalistic (based on the value of experience) and a symbolic (based on linguistic value of human reality) approach as two ways of conceiving what can be accounted for as a relevant education in this open context. Alain Trouvé reflects on the place of “elementary” knowledge (which presupposes cultural invariants) in the postmodern school culture. Éliane Ricard-Fersing analyses the problem posed by constructivism in education. Can an epistemological theory legitimately be turned into a pedagogical approach? Finally, Patrick Boumard exposes the paradox of the “libertarian educator”. How can one speak of the freedom of the *infans* (him who cannot speak for himself) when the role of the educator is precisely to initiate him to (not to say impose on him) language and knowledge?

3. Surpassing, bypassing relativism

This third section explores ways of overcoming or bypassing the menace of relativism. Those who try to overcome it present alternative perspectives which suggest that the way out of relativism is by our engagement with the world. Many authors take a hermeneutical approach. For example, Michel Fabre, says the educator’s role is to prepare people to enter a problematic world through rigorous interpretation. Fabre asserts that there are some implicit elements in a text (in the world) that can be analysed, which limit the interpretative possibilities and thus provide a regulated frame of analysis. Such an education would help us exit the crisis of meaning we are undergoing, in which all solutions are counted as good (relativism), while avoiding the danger of insistence on the goodness of a single solution (integristism). His purpose here is to offer a epistemological norms that would limit the hermeneutical movement and could otherwise lead to some undesirable consequences of perspectivism. However, one wonders whether this quest for a supposed hidden meaning of the world a reflex of the western metaphysics, for it seems to contribute to a certain form of disengagement. According to Josep Lluís Rodríguez Bosch, hermeneutic is indeed a perspectivism, however this does not mean that it leads to relativism. On the contrary, perspectivism bounds the interpreter to the necessity of choosing and being responsible for the perspective he or she chooses. Didier Moreau also offers an interesting contribution showing how the creation of myths is valuable to fight against relativism as well as dogmatism by providing a sense of direction without claiming its inescapable truth. In a world where, myths have more or less disappeared, hermeneutic dialogue provides a space for the pupil to forge his own significations.

Although the hermeneutic perspective is very present in this volume, some alternative perspectives are also offered. For example, Giuseppe Mari explores the challenge posed by the reunion of objectivity and subjectivity as a mean to surpass relativism, using an Aristotelian approach: the idea of the multivocity of the Being and the theory of virtue are used to defend this pragmatic view. According to Mari, one can unite subjectivism (including emotions) and objectivism (the rational community) through communication. Dialogue provides a space for rational argumentation where the subject is free to make its own decisions in a responsible way. Finally, other contributors have claimed that relativism is simply a chimera because we still have very deep beliefs regarding education. Roger Monjo points out that the value of the project of equality of opportunity is unanimous in our contemporary world. The project in itself is not submitted to relativization as we all accept it. Instead he states, there is a conflict of interpretations about the meaning of a principle that nobody questions.

In the afterword, Moreau concludes that one paradoxical verdict of this volume is that relativism in education is only a metaphor, and actually, does not concretely exist. He also offers an interesting synthesis of some guiding questions of the book: questions regarding the place of humanism in contemporary education, the actuality of the emancipation value, the meaning of our finitude, fallibility and incompleteness. Clearly, this volume offers precious insights into some of the very pressing questions of our time. It should be of interest to anyone who wants to engage philosophically with the challenges posed by education in our post-modern time. Unfortunately, it might seem a little bit too abstract to a more pragmatic audience. The jump towards more practical issues is rarely attempted.

While I have not reviewed all of the contributions presented in the volume, I have tried to draw a general picture of the questions and approaches covered. Although the juxtaposition of many articles concerned with the same topic did create some unfortunate repetitions, especially regarding the tensions created by relativism, this book offers a wide and interesting account of the state of philosophy of education in France.

Philosophy of Education ***[Filosofía de la Educación]***

Por: VV.AA., Guillermo HOYOS VÁSQUEZ (Ed.).
Madrid: Trotta & CSIC

Bianca THOILLIEZ



Having four pages at most to comment on a book consisting of fifteen different contributions is quite a challenge. It is even more daunting, I find, when the contributions are all featured in a volume that bears the generic title of “Philosophy of Education”. All this may seem to make it an unlikely candidate for a critical review. But the unlikelihood is in appearance only, given that the book in question forms part (specifically, “part” number 29) of the *Iberian-American Encyclopaedia of Philosophy*. Moreover, the authors of its chapters and the editor, professor Guillermo Hoyos Vásquez, are all well-known scholars in the area of the philosophy of education being written (and read) in Spanish and Portuguese on both sides of the Atlantic. These two circumstances alone clearly make the book worthy of study, and also make it particularly relevant on this occasion for inclusion in a publication of the characteristics of this monographic issue¹. Its belonging is based on the fact that this volume well serves the purpose of providing a panoramic view of Iberian-American contemporary philosophy of education. In the analysis that follows, I will try to connect the contributions by attending to their subject matter and approach, which in some cases will mean changing the order in which the chapters are originally presented.

1. Education Confronting Postmodernity

Those of us who live through the hot peninsular summers know well what happens to the earth when it goes from dry to arid and finally to parched and cracked. Also known, with the permission of Baumann, is how fluid and liquid the boundaries of our urbanite societies are in the 21st century. As *Joan-Carles Mèlich* highlights, it is a time in which we have accustomed ourselves to calling post-modern, and that “is born the instant a single truth decomposes into hundreds of relative truths that mankind divvies up. Not substance, nor God, nor causality, nor reason, nor subject, nor history” (p. 35). It is a philosophical time in which “there are only *stories, tales, games, interpretations*” (ibid.). The pedagogical consequences of this are, on one hand, that “human beings no longer find rules of learning in a transcendent world”, and on the other, that “all people must endow themselves with a history and invent their own existence” (ibid.). The subject is the protagonist and narrator of a story with an ending and multiple purposes. Neither philosophy nor philosophers can escape that fact. In order to reflect on education in today’s world, Mèlich concludes that a post-modern education requires that teachers and students both be convinced “that there is no single unique language, no privileged language” (p. 51). As he says, “in a world where absolute truths have disappeared, meaning can not be discovered, but rather invented” (p. 53). When the concept of truth enters a process of successive divisions, philosophical reflection seems to grasp onto a degree of material quality of the objects of study. *Fernando Bárcena*’s text proposes thinking about the ambivalence and mistakenness of the body in its dual epistemic and existential mission. The body, in singular, is like the one that “expresses the events of the existence of a subject” (p. 251-252). Keeping this idea in mind in a pedagogical setting does not imply teaching the body in accordance with a set list of ideas, but rather, that “the body itself, in the events that occur to it, will be the one to provide new dimensions for the event of learning” (p. 252). The body is a space where we can give way to the meaning, be it painful-suffering or amorous-erotic, of what is happening to us. It is a passivity that can lead to the silencing of the *logos*, but that accentuates the testimony of the physical world, which does not speak but feels and “distorts our thinking” (p. 253). Recovering the body in singular, as a space for experiential learning, means remembering that we are beings who suffer. This restoration of the body will also remind us of the

¹ For which suggestion I would like to thanks professor Gonzalo Jover.

possibility of thinking about it in its erotic dimension, “as an event at the most intense moment of a loving embrace” (p. 270). Living in corporal awareness, as Bárcena proposes, will enrich the biographical-temporal perception of our existence, since the body is not independent of our inner being: we are what we do, with all that we suffer and enjoy. In an exercise that also consists of questioning something we think we already know, *Jorge Larrosa* proposes “darkening what seems clear (...) making the reading matter even more mysterious and therefore more interesting” (p. 278). The chapter fulfils its intended aim: rather than offering answers to the meaning of the reading and plurality of texts, Larrosa launches a series of interlinked questions. *First*, if the reading is singular and the text is plural, does that make the reading experience become subjective and the plurality of the text polysemous? He says, “Is the subjectivity of the text not confused with a sort of weak subjectivism? (...) Does the plurality of the text belong to the text itself? (...) And if it does, is it enough to say that its meaning is always open to interpretation?” (p. 279). *Second*, is learning to speak the same as learning to translate? Translation, its practice and its theory, helps think about reading, its teaching and learning in another way. But *third*, beyond the understanding-translation of the text involved in the act of reading, wouldn’t it be possible to think of reading beyond its communicative dimension? Isn’t reading itself an experience? And more importantly from an educational point of view, “why do teaching apparatuses prize comprehension, why do psycho-technical and pedagogical texts on reading move exclusively within the framework of comprehension?” (p. 283). If, *fourth*, we state that reading is a translation experience, isn’t reading something other than appropriation and dis-appropriation? When faced with a text, the reader appropriates it in his approach to the same extent that the text can make off with the vulnerability of the reader. *Fifth*, how is reading affected by there being myriad languages and the possibility of polyglotism? As well as being “Babel-esque” and plural, educational spaces become singular because of the presence of boys and girls in those spaces. Similarly, then, childhood can be the object of philosophical study. The work by *Diego Antonio Pineda* and *Walter Omar Kohan* makes a general presentation of the possible relationships between philosophy and childhood. The authors rescue from the history of philosophy what Plato, Montaigne and G. Mathews said about childhood. Then, they take us to the American philosopher Lipman’s proposal centred on the philosophical education of childhood and that consists of presenting philosophy like a game, with its rules, in which everyone, including children, can play. The trouble with this philosophy for children, as the authors of the chapter point out, is precisely the concept of childhood underlying this entire educational project, as if still “wanting to see the adults of the future in children, who must be modelled after the pretensions of the adults of the present” (p. 311). To finish, they propose new ways of thinking of childhood “as the potential for multiplying possible childhoods and worlds, to open childhood and the world up to experience, evolution, events” (p. 316).

2. Ethical and Moral Dimensions of Education

Another line of work present in this collective piece is the study of education in ethics and morals. *Marco Zingano* gives a historical-philosophical overview of the concept of *paideia* in three classical Greek philosophers, Socrates, Plato and Aristotle. After a certain time, city-states such as Athens gave up their traditionalist perspective on preparing the new generations, introducing a new attitude “according to which reason (...) is what is divine in us, or is our most divine part, the part that makes us most like the gods” (p. 57). The specific consequences this new attitude brought to moral education of young people

fell into two groups: that “there is no space for a will independent from the acknowledgement of reasons for acting in a direction” (p. 58) and that “if doing something depends crucially on the beliefs that the agent has in relation to his action, then, *prima facie*, the moral training, no matter how complete, does not seem any different by nature from other teachings” (ibid.). The contribution of classical Athenian philosophy to this matter was key, since it uncovered the difference between learning what things are and wanting the best things. For Socrates, moral education was strongly intellectualised; and Plato went on to offer a more complete explanation of the subject’s action by “introducing non-cognitive elements, typically emotional (e.g., wrath, appetite) with a relevant role for the decision that the agent has to take” (p. 63). However, it wasn’t until Aristotle that relevance was given to emotions in the process of discovering what is best and wanting it, since emotions condition “the grasping of moral reasons in the life of men” (p. 73). That is perhaps why the Aristotelian perspective is viewed by many as being more “informative” for the purposes of pedagogic action. Related to moral and ethics education, we find the chapter written by *Fernando Gil Cantero* and *Gonzalo Jover Olmeda*. They propose exploring the “common horizon of humanization” (p. 230) portrayed by the convergence of education and human rights. However, despite the respect generally accorded to human rights, their effective integration nevertheless encounters a certain amount of resistance. The authors point to one of the possible causes as being the re-deployment of “the other languages of education” (p. 236) related with the “post-modern de-pedagogisation” (p. 237) in which, they say, pedagogy gives up any hope of mature knowledge so as to perpetuate itself in seductive adolescence (ibid.). Thus, they advocate that pedagogues should work from “the conviction that not all options are equally valid” (p. 238), trusting that “individuals can share some criteria that structures their common way of life” (ibid.). The educative relevance of an ethics of human rights is based on the pretence of universality with which international declarations on human rights are stated, which “does not refer so much to the values they espouse as to their valuing the human condition in its experience of happiness (p. 243). Close reading of legal texts on human rights, would represent a source of criticism, consciousness-raising and doubt for any educators who are ethically committed to their task. Universities have traditionally been in charge of training the intellectual elite along with noteworthy centres of cultural production and critique. *Susana Villavicencio* presents several philosophies of the university in order to reconsider its purposes and ideals in today’s economic globalisation. She illustrates her analysis starting with the contribution from Jaspers, for whom the mission of the university “is the quest for truth in the community of researchers and disciples” (p. 323). Then, Habermas stated that “we have passed from the enlightened ideal of institutional autonomy and freedom of thought (...) to a weave of different functions in a single institution” (p. 326). But Derrida is the one who Villavicencio considers to be the rescuer of the sense and designs of the university in terms of responsibility. “Consideration of the purposes and responsibilities of the university (...), requires distinguishing what makes the university different” (p. 337). This difference lies in its ability to be different from the other institutions. Defending an active and autonomous stance of the university is key to achieving its own goals.

3. Education and Freedom

Reflecting on moral education requires considering the phenomenon of freedom in mankind. *Newton Aquiles von Zuben* and *Silvio Gallo* propose precisely that. Specifically, studying how freedom is related to “educational processes, according (...) to the political thought of Hannah Arendt and the proposal for a ‘liberating pedagogy’” (p.

179) of the anarchist thinkers of the 19th and 20th centuries. Both perspective are joined, according to the authors, by the socio-political approach they offer on the practice of freedom. Although Bakunin, Robin and Ferreri Guardia would no doubt disagree with Arendt's position that "draining education of any and all authority was a mistake in that it did nothing to help prepare children for a future life of equality in the political sphere" (p. 201). Still, they would agree on "taking education as preparation for a political life founded on exercising one's freedom" (ibid.). In a quite different direction, *Rodolfo Vázquez* presents a liberal model of education as a facilitator of equal opportunities in the framework of a democratic State. Making a political reading of the theories of Rawls or Dewey, the author defends a mixed model of education, decentralised, democratic and pluralistic. But the title of the chapter ("Liberal and Democratic Education") should not mislead, since that model is founded on a strong state intervention presided by equality and solidarity. He therefore advocates an "egalitarian liberal education" (p. 226) that deploys "all the means for the educand to discover the meaning of his or her social dimension" (ibid.). *Eduardo Mendieta* presents us with the South American tradition in pedagogy where education is understood as the practice of freedom, "as a praxis of liberation for the oppressed, excluded or outcast" (p. 341). The author makes an illustrative review of the intellectuals who promoted this way of understanding education. On Freire, he points out that at his core "we find a human figure as a creature of time" (p. 343), which is "what makes education a determining factor" (ibid.) for mankind. The final ending of the conversation that the two strike up will be awareness-raising: "we take conscious place in a historical and historised world by that very process of deliberated appropriation" (p.346). On Illich, Mendieta cites his de-schooling philosophy, founded on the double accusation that "education is confused with the awarding of diplomas and certificates" (p. 348), and that schooling has become "one of the main vehicles (...) of the modernization of poverty" (ibid.). Enrique Dussel and Juan Luis Segundo are representatives of analectic pedagogy aiming at freeing each and every person "from the inner transcendental, exteriority or metaphysical difference that every human and cultural being possesses" (p. 352). And last, Borda and Bondy, according to Mendieta, represent "the best example of the appropriation of historical materialism from pedagogy" (p. 352). In their studies on the mechanisms of the geopolitics of knowledge, the production of contemporary knowledge not only reflects "passively the effects of colonisation and imperialism, but also participates actively in those processes" (p. 354). The pedagogy of liberation affords a chance to make a conscious critique of those processes and is especially capable of fight against them.

4. Epistemological Reflections about Education

The fourth group of papers is concerned with the epistemological dimension of education. *Alejandro Ramírez Figueroa* looks at the relations between epistemology, science and pedagogy. His main thesis is that "a correspondence can be established between the epistemological approaches and ways of understanding (...) what is teachable in a science; (...) [and] whether or not there is any independence between real science and learned science" (p. 77). The author looks to replace the justificationism in that regard, i.e., that the teaching of a science contributes nothing to science itself, since they are independent levels, and that what can be taught of a science are its formal procedures (contrasting hypotheses). With support from the contributions to the philosophy of science of Kuhn, Feyerabend and Hanson, he strives to show the difficulty of believing that when a science is taught, the science is learned just as it is. Science can indeed be taught, but what we learn are in fact "reconstructions" (p. 96). This chapter is followed by one by

Carlos Eduardo Vasco Uribe, Alberto Martínez Boom and Eloisa Vasco Montoya, whose aim is to “put into play some of the questions concerning epistemological thought on pedagogy and didactics” (p. 100). Their proposal consists of trying to differentiate between the realm of education as a practice situated within the complexity of social contexts, and pedagogy or didactics as epistemological practices of knowledge. This attempt is complicated if not downright impossible, since it is hard to justify saying that “as such and such a social practice, education would not directly be an object of an epistemological reflection, but pedagogy, as with didactics, would in fact be an object of that reflection” (p. 103). This ends by saying that “pedagogy and didactics are closer to teachers, to teacher trainers and to students of education, whereas education itself, as the current slogan goes, ‘is everybody’s business’” (p. 124). This willingness to differentiation that moves them is rather extreme. That is how *Javier Sáenz Obregón* would understand it. He defends pedagogy as a field of knowledge and practice. His proposal focuses on “analysing two historical events in which philosophy was taken as education” (p. 157). He finds the historical background for this way of thinking of philosophy as pedagogy first in the educational practices that accompanied the start-up of schools in the 16th century, when pedagogues took the classical concept of method to move “towards the simplification of the presentation of the teaching materials by establishing more efficient procedures (...) and organising the contents according to its nature” (p. 160). Second, it is found in the works of John Dewey on the relationship between pedagogy and philosophy. Pragmatic positions on knowledge lead to understanding that philosophy is no more and no less than a general theory of education “not only embodied and thus inseparable from formative practices, but a theory whose meaning and worth are played out on their formative action of subjects” (p. 164). Sáenz Obregón considers these antecedents as elements that encourage optimism to improve communication between the camps of theory and practice in education. This is a dialogue “that inevitably requires reconstituting the job of teacher” (p. 173). The relations between knowing, teaching and learning are being widely shaken by the presence of the new information technologies (NIT). Thus, *José Gimeno Sacristán* gives a rich reflection on the relationship between technology and education. He begins with the different ways of understanding technology in the educational setting: as a method, instrumental medium, model of rationality and means of communication. But “what do we understand by education when it comes to posing its relationships with technology?” (p. 139) he later asks. Despite the advantages of more and faster exchanges of information, Gimeno Sacristán fears that “difficulties may arise in generating suitable learning environments” (p. 145). But the most important challenge posed by advances in NIT to education is that it is occurring outside the school: “If adopting and using NIT takes place outside school, it not only means NIT are no longer subject to educational criteria but that the right to education has other settings for being carried out and depends on different agents other than schools, whose control is very difficult” (p. 155).

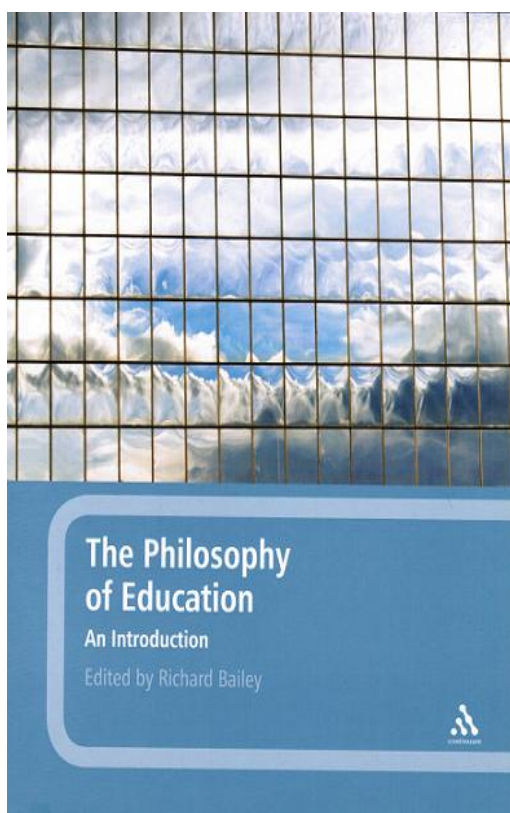
The miscellaneous nature of the contributions included in this volume creates a certain lack of unity. The itinerary followed throughout this “stroll through different philosophical traditions” announced by the editor in the introduction is not at all clear. This may be something to be expected from being part of an Iberian-American encyclopaedia of philosophy. And yet, reading it offers a plural panorama, rich and extensive in nuances from main lines of work in the philosophy of education written in the Iberian-American linguistic setting. That is more than enough good reason to encourage its being read and studied.

The Philosophy of Education. An Introduction

By: VV.AA., Richard BAILEY (Ed.)

London: Continuum

John TILLSON



1. The book's ambitions

Bailey's problem-based introduction to the philosophy of education, seeks to encourage its readers to reflect philosophically about education. Comprised of thirteen chapters, each by a different author (or multiple authors in the case of the Brighouse/ McAvoy chapter), nine of the chapters attempt to balance the encouragement of the student's own thinking, the development of an argument and the provision of a survey of thought in relation to some particular philosophical cum educational problem. With the further exceptions of Harry Brighouse and Paula McAvoy, who are writing in the United States, all of the contributors are working in UK universities, many of them having chairs or being senior scholars there.

Although each of these chapters focuses on a distinctive issue, and so the book to that extent is naturally segmented, there is something of an argumentative thread which runs through the book as a whole: namely, a validation, by argument and demonstration in turns, of philosophising about education as being both interesting and important. Thus, two of the other four chapters do some logically prior, reflective work: they aim to convince us that education needs philosophy at all (Paul Standish's 'What is the philosophy of education?' and Richard Pring's 'Does Education need Philosophy?'). Closing the book, the remaining two of the other four chapters address readers who have been convinced of the distinctiveness of philosophical reflection and the need for it in educational matters, with John Gingell's 'Reading philosophy of education' and Richard Smith's 'Writing philosophy of education' providing something of a 'how to' guide and delivering on what their titles promise.

2. The nine problem-based chapters

'What is education for?', by Roger Marples, critically discusses three philosophical curriculum theories in relation to the aims of education (namely, RS Peters' and Paul Hirst's defence of the academic curriculum, Richard Pring's defence of a vocational curriculum and John White's defence of a well-being directed curriculum). 'What should go on the curriculum?', by Michael Hand, asks what *could* and what *should* go on the curriculum, before evaluating two of the same theories as Marples' chapter (RS Peters' defence of the academic curriculum and Richard Pring's defence of a vocational curriculum), in addition to virtue based approaches to the curriculum. 'Can we Teach Ethics?' by James C Conroy dedicates less space to addressing the title question than to the matter of how we are to determine the nature of goodness in the first place. 'Do Children Have Any Rights?', by Harry Brighouse and Paula McAvoy, assesses two rival theories for children's rights (namely the choice theory and the interest theory) together with two arguments made by Onora O'Neill that children ought not to be thought of as rights bearers. They argue that children have three kinds of rights corresponding to three fundamental interests: rights which protect the distinctive goods of childhood (e.g. a right to play), rights which protect welfare interests which they share with adults (e.g. a right to shelter, but not a right to sexual relations), and a right to protect one's future capacity for agency. 'Can schools make good citizens?', by Tristan McCowan, engages with the debate of quite how we are to conceive of a citizen and suggests a rough definition in order to proceed with the debate, before discussing the levels at which schools can contribute to forming citizens. 'Should the State Control Education?', by Judith Suissa, shows how engaging with the title question leads to yet more fundamental issues than simply balancing the rights and responsibilities of children, parents, and communities, such as evaluating

justifications for, and rival frameworks of, the state.

Carrie Winstanley's chapter 'Educational opportunities – who shall we leave out?', does an excellent job of introducing the complexities of distributing finite educational resources amongst competing claimants. Usefully, egalitarian theories of distribution are broken down into three kinds (equality of resources, outcome and opportunity), complicating any simple claim that children ought have equal rights to education. 'Should schooling be compulsory?', by Dianne Gereluk, adjudicates between arguments for and against parental rights over their children's education, conceiving of the question as being whether the state or parents should have the last say. After discussing these arguments in relation to the case of *Yoder Vs Wisconsin* – in which the United States Supreme Court decided that Wisconsin could not compel Amish children to attend public schooling beyond the eighth grade – Gereluk concludes that a balance should be found between state and parental influence. Finally, 'What's wrong with indoctrination and brainwashing?', by Richard Bailey, evaluates rival conceptions of indoctrination, suggesting that it be characterized as a teaching style which inculcates non-evidential and non-critically held beliefs. Bailey contends that such a teaching style is wrong because it is 'incompatible with the principles of open-mindedness and autonomy ... central to liberal democracies' (p. 145). Valuably, Bailey also criticizes the insidious notion that indoctrination is unavoidable since we must impart *some* beliefs to children without justifying these to them. Bailey agrees that children often are not capable of understanding the reasons which justify the beliefs which adults impart. However, he contends that so long as there *are* reasons which warrant the relevant beliefs, imparting those beliefs does not necessarily count as indoctrination. It seems that we ought to add (or at least make explicit) a further condition though: that the educator *knows* the reasons which warrant the relevant beliefs.

3. Reflections on the book as a whole

While the authors demonstrate philosophical thinking, they also survey positions on their chosen topics, pose related questions for the reader's consideration and recommend further reading. To put them in contact with primary source material in manageable chunks, each chapter includes extracts from key texts in the philosophy of education, such as RS Peter's influential book, *Ethics and Education*. However, sometimes these are argumentatively idle, despite being included in the main body of text, which seems odd even for an introductory philosophical text.

Introductory texts have a choice between providing a maximally impartial overview on the one hand, and an argumentatively engaged one on the other. In its ambition to demonstrate the philosophy of education in action, it is this latter approach which the book's contributors have taken. Bailey's introduction states that the book's principal aim is to stimulate the reader's own thought: in the case of each contribution, he says 'the goal is to inspire and provoke you to think for yourself'. While this might seem to subordinate its duty to truth to its duty to pedagogy, in some respects these duties are two sides of the same coin here, since the book does better at demonstrating good philosophical thinking the more robust the arguments of the contributors, as well as the more accessible they are.

Unfortunately, the book seems not to have been proofread, as is evident from many chapters' containing awkward grammar and typos which include spelling mistakes. The book appears to have been rushed and could have been improved in some simple ways. For instance, while Bailey does a fantastic job glossing a philosophical term of art, that term had already appeared earlier in the book. Glossing them as they appear in the book as a whole, or placing them in a glossary at the back and not just in his chapter would

benefit newcomers to philosophy. Indeed, there seems to be a lack of editorial explication; the editorial vision is left largely implicit since it is not communicated in the introduction but only evident in the succession of chapters. Further, while Bailey lists a series of interesting questions in his editorial piece, but does not explain why those which do not feature in the actual book were not selected or why those questions which do actually appear in the book were.¹ While sense of the ways in which the various questions explored in the book relate to each other would have contributed to readers understanding of the questions themselves, one might suggest that the job of mapping these questions in relation to one another is work for the reader. Still, a chapter or editorial discussion would likely benefit the reader in this task

4. Hand's contribution on curriculum content

While I should like to engage philosophically with many of the contributions in this book, given the limited space available in a book review, I shall limit myself to just two. 'What should go on the curriculum?' asks *Michael Hand*. Firstly Hand points out that 'the question what *could* go on the curriculum' is logically prior to the question of 'what *should* go on the curriculum' (p. 49). Failing to find any satisfactory answer to this question, Hand proceeds to evaluate what he calls 'the leading curriculum theories in the philosophy of education' (p. 59), finding compelling objections to each of them. He concludes by saying that on both questions, further philosophical attention is badly needed. This chapter ought to inspire further thought from students and established education researchers alike, and I hope that it does.

It is surprising that Hand proceeds to discuss what he identifies as the logically subsequent question having found the question which he takes to be prior, to be as yet unresolved. The prior question being unresolved, it should be impossible to move on to the subsequent question. Were one to risk an answer to what *could* go on the curriculum, it might be this: the intention behind education fundamentally ought, quite simply, to be an intention to make a (positive) difference to those being educated. That is, to bring about something which would not be the case were the education not to take place. This leaves wide open (and fruitfully so) the question of what sorts of difference we ought to aim for and how we ought to bring them about, that is the question of what *should* go on the curriculum.

Hand himself has made an interesting contribution to the question of what belongs on the curriculum: the possibility of truth argument, and, *implicitly*, the certainty of truth argument. Hand argues that a discrete, compulsory, open-ended subject focused on the critical examination and assessment of religious beliefs should form part of pupils' schooling because: religious claims (about God, salvation, life after death, etc.) are momentous, distinctive and plausible, so children are entitled to an education which enables them to make intelligent judgments about the truth or falsity of such claims.² The notion

¹ The questions Bailey lists are these: 'What should we teach?'; 'what experiences are most valuable/ relevant/ necessary for students?'; 'Who should pay for schooling?'; 'Are some ways of organizing or presenting the curriculum inappropriate?'; 'Should schooling be compulsory?'; 'Should all students be taught together, or grouped according to their ability?'; 'Should schools prepare their students for the world of work?'; 'Is the ideal outcome of schooling a happy/rational/spiritual/good person?'; 'What type of person should teachers aim to develop?'; 'What should the values and ethos of the school be?'

² Hand, M., 'Religious Education' in J. White (ed.) *Rethinking the School Curriculum: Values, Aims and Purpose* (London: RoutledgeFalmer, 2004)

that religious claims are plausible, but not certain, motivates the open-endedness of the subject, the distinctiveness of the claims motivates the discreteness of the subject and their momentousness together with their credibility motivates their appearing on the curriculum at all. Were some religious beliefs *certain* (or as nearly certain as can be), as opposed to merely plausible, then, by the lights of Hand's argument, this together with their distinctiveness and momentousness would seem to motivate a discrete, closed and confessional, compulsory subject. It is a shame that Hand does not discuss his own work in this context, but it is perhaps understandable since his work is not as prominent as the work which he does discuss.

5. McCowan's contribution on schooling for citizenship

McCowan asks whether schools can make good citizens, which might at first blush appear to be an empirical question. However, as McCowan makes clear, it conceals many prior, philosophical questions. While making clear at the outset that it is the English school system which he has in mind, McCowan draws upon examples from around the world to illustrate his points, thus making it clear that his is a question of international significance. Drawing a distinction between 'citizenship' in the sense of a legal status and a more normative sense, which comes with attendant standards of behaviour and attitude, he surveys some rival ideas of citizenship in this second, contested sense.

McCowan's own analysis of the concept of citizenship looks at points to be more of an analysis of the kinds of societies within which one can be a citizen. In truth, one cannot provide one without the other, because a conception of a citizen presupposes a conception of a society within which they go about their affairs. The analysis comes in four parts: differences with respect to the rights and duties conferred on individuals between given states, differences with respect how universal and consistent the status of citizenship is amongst people in any given state, differences with respect to how far a given states' sense of identity stretches – whether it is global, or more insular, and differences with respect to how far citizens are expected to conform to norms or reflect critically on them. The last analysis seems to run the concepts of freedom of thought and speech together with the concept of freedom of action. However, speech is itself an action. Moreover, freedom of speech without freedom of action is superficial, being of the character 'say and think what you like, but just you try it'! Thus they rightly belong together in the same category.

McCowan contrasts thinkers who subordinate the cultivation of critical thought to the cultivation of national identity, with those who place critical thought at the centre of their conception of citizenship (giving the example of a liberal democracy). However, he does not offer much in the way of arguments supporting either view or attempt to adjudicate between them. This is likely because of the space constraint. McCowan provides a provisional conception of citizenship relevant to the English context in order to proceed to the question of whether this can be facilitated by schools. Since this second question is more empirical and pedagogical in character, it seems to me that the chapter ought to have focused on the prior, more philosophical questions and have provided and engaged with more of the relevant arguments for determining what a good citizen is. As it is, the chapter provides an excellent overview of both the philosophical and more pragmatic issues relating to citizenship education.

6. Whom the book may interest and how it may be of use

As a whole, Bailey's book is engaging and easily accessible for the non-specialist. The questions addressed are all very interesting ones and the book certainly succeeds in its primary aim of inspiring and provoking philosophical thought: my own thinking has certainly benefitted much from the many stimulating arguments and important considerations presented and discussed in each of the chapters. Many individual chapters ought to feature on policy, philosophy, social justices and teacher training courses. Although pitched at the introductory level for those in teacher training, philosophy undergraduates, and non-philosophers interested in education, many of the chapters could be used as good starting places for academic philosophers and philosophy postgraduates interested in the specific problems discussed.

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John **TILLSON** is registered to begin a Ph.D on the proper place of religion in schooling at the Institute of Education, University of London. He gained a BA in Philosophy at Durham University in 2004, since then he has been awarded with a PGCE in Religious Education and an MA in the Philosophy of Education from the Institute of Education, University of London. His research interests are primarily in the philosophy of religious education and his publications include 'A Critical Commentary of Stephen Law's *The War for Children's Minds*', in Bajo Palabra, Journal of Philosophy, II Época, N° 5 (2010): 551-556 and 'Religious Education and the Floodgates of Impartiality', in *Philosophy of Education Society Yearbook*. Urbana: IL, Philosophy of Education Society, (forthcoming in 2012). He has presented papers at many conferences and seminars in England and the United States.

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John **WHITE** is Emeritus Professor of Philosophy of Education at the Institute of Education, University of London. He is interested in the mind of the learner and in interrelationships among educational aims and their application to school curricula. He is member of the Editorial Board of the *Journal of Philosophy of Education* and Honorary Vice-President of the Philosophy of Education Society of Great Britain. His recent publications include: *Exploring Well-being in Schools: a guide to making children's lives more fulfilling* (2011), *Rethinking the School Curriculum: Values, Aims and Purposes* (2004), and *The Child's Mind* (2002).

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NEWS AND INFORMATIONS

CALL FOR PAPERS 2011

1st Bajo Palabra-UAM International Philosophy Conference: “Reflections for a pluralistic world”

Madrid, 21-25 November 2011

Registration

<http://conferencebajopalabra.wordpress.com/>

Organized by

Bajo Palabra Philosophy Association
(*Asociación de Filosofía Bajo Palabra, AFBP*)
Autonomous University of Madrid
(*Universidad Autónoma de Madrid, UAM*)

Promoted by

Deanship of Student Affairs
Vice Presidency for Students and Life Long Learning
Vice Presidency for University Extension and Outreach
Department of Social Anthropology and Spanish Philosophical Thought
Department of Philosophy

With the collaboration of

Network of Young Researchers in Philosophy
(*Red de Jóvenes Investigadores en Filosofía, REDJIF*)

A- Presentation and aims

Bajo Palabra Philosophy Association (*Asociación de Filosofía Bajo Palabra*) was founded in the Autonomous University of Madrid. During the last few years, the Association has been engaged in the task of spreading philosophy within and beyond the academic world. As a way of continuing these efforts, Bajo Palabra Philosophy Association has launched for the first time its own *International Philosophy Conference*, with the purpose of opening a pluralistic arena for the development and discussion on the reflections of philosophers and researchers. For the inaugural event, the *1st Bajo Palabra International Philosophy Conference* will take as its main, general topic of discussion that of the challenges of the present world with its complex realities. In the present conjuncture, there can be no doubt as to the importance of the contribution of discourses from the various disciplines of Humanities for a better understanding, as well as for the improvement, of our environment; equally fundamental to this purpose are the interactions between these and other disciplines and practices: philosophy, film and the arts, historiography, natural sciences or politics. All of these will have a chance to communicate and share the results of their respective efforts. On the other hand, nowadays it is clear that the ambition of developing a pluralistic and complex form of thought can no longer be developed without assuming an international scope; because of this, our Conference in its very origins is born out of a close collaboration between both European and American research centres.

B- Sections of the Conference

Following this general vocation that aims to share “reflections for a pluralistic world”, the following sections are presented to those researchers interested in presenting a paper (of about 25-30 minutes, including some minutes for debate) in the Conference:

1. Metaphysics and Philosophy of Religion:

The branch of the conference on Metaphysics and Philosophy of Religion proposes an open debate on three fundamental concepts in the history of Western thought: Necessity, Contingency, and God. The modal coordinates of the concepts of necessity and contingency open possibilities for multiple philosophical approaches, all of them turning around one and the same core issue: the necessity of God and the contingency of the world. Our expectation is to open a historical and conceptual debate on the conflict between two antagonistic ontological modalities: that of the “cosmologies of necessity”, as opposed to that of the “ontologies of contingency”. Such an approach has the advantage of its great versatility as for the range of relevant questions and issues it covers.

Branch coordinators: Ana Carrasco Conde, Iván de los Ríos and Miguel Ángel López.

2. Aesthetics and Theory of Arts:

The contemporary modes of experience, be it sensory or artistic, that are so characteristic of our present times, are confronting the new challenges of the virtual or digital universes, opening a wide range of issues that extend from the materiality of their technological supports to the many different ways in which these technologies enable global connectivity and exchange fluxes. Taking these new conditions of existence as a background, we would like to open a debate concerning the aesthetic phenomenon, in order to examine its present coordinates and its still unexplored potentialities – including references to classical issues, or to more traditional modalities of aesthetic experience whose reassessment may prove particularly pertinent in this context.

Branch coordinators: David Díaz Soto, Javier Lareu y Rubén Prada.

3. Ethics, Political Philosophy and Philosophy of Law:

We are in a situation which everyone seems to agree in describing as a “crisis”, be it political, economical or at the level of values. Such a crisis has taken place following the fall of ideologies and the rise of liberal conceptions as a dominant paradigm. In Western philosophy, the influence of Post-structuralism has given place to a lack of structural and systematic stability, making the present situation a rather confused and unpredictable one. On such a context, some are already warning against a regression with respect to our previous social achievements, while others speak about the weakening of political discourse. All of this presents us the urgent task of rethinking the reality or virtuality in which we could reformulate the political, ethical, moral and legal issues, and reconsider how these can affect and transform reality.

Branch coordinators: Delia Manzanero, José David Sánchez Melero, Diego Fernández Peychaux y Diana Constantinescu.

4. Philosophy of History:

Philosophy of History is represented in this Conference with two lines of research. The first one stimulates a critical reflection on the different conceptions of time that have been proposed in the past, emphasizing the debate on the issue of whether history may have been understood as a secularized theology. The second line of work examines the present notion of temporality that has emerged in globalized societies and which is held by a post-modern thought that has warned of the problems and dangers of theleological thinking.

Branch coordinators: Cayetana Martínez, Martin Eyrich and Eduardo Zazo Jiménez.

5. Philosophy of Education:

This branch will address the current situation and the vigor of international contemporary discussions that are taking place within the field of philosophy of education. The panel of philosophy of education intends to be an open space of reflection for those researchers interested in thinking about and discussing different educational issues, from a large variety of philosophical perspectives. Living as we do in a world of increasingly pluralistic dimensions requires a reflective effort from both the educational and pedagogical stands.

Branch coordinators: Bianca Thoilliez, Marina Schwimmer and John Tillson.

6. Spanish and Iberoamerican Philosophy:

The Spanish and Iberoamerican Philosophy branch of 1st Bajo Palabra International Philosophy Conference calls all researchers interested in this field to collaborate, with papers focused on the following subjects: “New proposals coming from Spanish and Iberoamerican thought in the face of the crisis of Western reason”; “The humanistic dimension of Spanish and Iberoamerican thought”; “Multiculturalism and new forms of global organization”.

Branch coordinators: Marta Nogueroles and Carmen Arriaga.

7. Logic, Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Language:

The main purpose of this Branch is to stimulate research on issues relating to the fields of Logic, Philosophy of Language, History and Philosophy of Science, Epistemology and related disciplines. Proposals offering innovative approaches, as well as pertinent reassessments of more traditional issues will be particularly appreciated. Argumentation and philosophical consideration of issues will be given preference over their merely erudite exposition.

Branch coordinators: Alejandro Rodríguez Peña and Jorge Ruíz Abánades.

C- Organization and management

The organization and management of the Conference will be conducted by the members of Bajo Palabra Philosophy Association. The selection of papers for the Conference will be supervised by the coordinators of the different branches outlined above, who will also have the support of an Advisory Board composed of university Staff members from national and international research centres, who will act as an advisory committee to look after the quality of contributions and the development of the Conference.

D- Registration

- The submission period will open on January 1st, 2011 and will close on April 15th, 2011. Prospective speakers should submit the abstract of their proposals in: <http://conferencebajopalabra.wordpress.com/>
- Registration fees are 30€, both for attendees and speakers. Registration period will be open until November 18th, 2011. All assistants will receive a certificate of attendance and participation in the Conference.
- The recognition of 3 credits for attendees is being processed.

1st Award Competition of *Bajo Palabra Journal of Philosophy* for Young Researchers

To encourage participation of young researchers and to promote the inclusion of their work in the journal, the present competition is announced. It is open to any researcher under 35 years old, who is registered in the Conference and who has submitted an unpublished work to one of the proposed branches. Several prizes will be awarded. Works will be selected by an international jury, based on their originality, academic rigor and accuracy. Each of the winners will get: a certificate from the Autonomous University of Madrid, the outstanding publication of the paper in a journal issue, and the return of the registration fees.

Works have to be submitted by email to: revistabajopalabra@uam.es. The deadline for the reception of works for taking part in the competition will be on **September 15th 2011**.

The decision will be made public over the celebration of the Conference (21-25 November 2011).

For more information about the competition's rules and selection criteria, please visit: <http://conferencebajopalabra.wordpress.com/competition/>

PUBLICATION PROCEDURES

The journal *Bajo Palabra* publishes quality, original articles on themes within the field of humanities, especially work of a philosophical character. It also admits thesis reports, philosophical dissertations, book reviews of philosophical interest and course, congress and conference reviews. *Bajo Palabra* is open to students and researchers from any university who want to share their research with other interested academics. The journal issues one volume each year.

Guidelines to submit papers

1. Articles should be written in Spanish or English, and should not exceed a maximum of 15 pages (5000 words, bibliography and footnotes included), book reviews should be between 2 and 4 pages, and research project reports between 5 and 8 pages.

2. Originals should be presented in Word Perfect or Word for Pc formats in an editable version. Font format used should be Times New Roman 12, justified, and with 1.5 line spacing.

3. Submitted originals should be signed with the author's name and last name, and should indicate academic level, workplace, e-mail and/or personal Web page. When the original is signed by more than one author, the journal will respect the order choice made by the authors.

4. The editorial board reserves the right to publish or not received contributions and to decide on the number of contributions that will appear. The evaluation process is conducted by an external scientific board of qualified researchers of the field. The authors who collaborate in one issue will receive a copy of the journal.

5. Every submitted article should present its title, a six-line abstract, and a list of key words both in English and Spanish.

6. Bibliographic references and footnotes should be numbered consecutively. Quotes should be presented in inverted comas ("..."). When possible, authors should include the following bibliographic information: Author, title of the work and/or journal, edition [this information is not required for first editions, incunabula, etc.], publisher, and date of publication, or periodical publication details (volume, number, date, etc.), followed by information about the location the chapter, paragraph, page, etc. if there are quoted passages.

6.1. Bibliographic references should be given in full the first time following this model: Last name, Name, "Chapter", *Work' title*, Edition's city, Publisher, Year, pages. For example: Ortega y Gasset, J., "Lo que dijo a Goethe un capitán", *Meditaciones del Quijote*, Madrid, Revista de Occidente en Alianza Editorial, 2001, pp. 51-54.

6.2. If this reference is repeated again, it will suffice to write: author, work's title, op. cit., and page number. For example: Ortega y Gasset, J., *Meditaciones del Quijote*, op. cit., p. 106.

6.3. When the repetition is immediate, only the page number has to be specified as follow: Ibid., p. 15.

6.4. When not only the work's title is repeated but referred page number is repeated too, the footnote should say "Idem."

6.5. Brackets [] should be used when personal additions are included within a quote. They should also be used for suspension points to express omissions within a quote [...].

Originals should be sent by email to:
revista.bajopalabra@uam.es

Authors can also register in our Web site in order to receive instructions by e-mail:
www.bajopalabra.es

Evaluation Process and Originals' Selection:

1. Originals should be sent to the above-mentioned e-mail address before the 30th of November of each year.
2. The journal will acknowledge the reception of papers to the authors, but will not correspond again with them until the final decision.
3. The coordination team will send originals to editorial and scientific board anonymously to proceed for its evaluation. Two external experts will be involved in the evaluation process of each original, and will evaluate its originality, relevance, and quality. After the evaluation, a confidential report is produced to assess the suitability of the publication. This report contains comments, and in some cases, they will be transmitted to the authors in order to make corrections.
4. The journal's secretary will transmit the reasoned decision of the editorial and scientific board, thus ensuring the anonymity of the process. The journal's secretary will also communicate the foreseeable date of publication. When necessary, the secretary will contact the authors with suggestions and comments in order to meet the journal's requirements.

Warnings

The scientific board will take into consideration all the originals that it will receive, but doesn't promise to give them back neither to correspond with authors, unless under requirement.

The editorial board of *Bajo Palabra* is not responsible for the opinions expressed in the journal by its collaborators.

Submitted originals should not have already been published nor be in the process of being published. After their publication in *Bajo Palabra*, authors will have the right to reproduce them but indicating always the place of its original appearance.

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