

## ***Postmodernity and Education. Death of Man and Death of Pedagogy<sup>1</sup>***

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**Abstract:** After the hope for resurrection of the Judeo-Christian tradition, Pedagogy paved the way to moral improvement according to the winds of the Enlightenment. Hence it went from a metaphysical and transcendental formative ideal to a human ideal linked to the idea of education. However, with the advent of post-modernity, a new horizon has emerged that has led to the death of Pedagogy. On the one hand, the metaphysical crisis – which involves the death of man as a creature of God – has resulted in the death of Pedagogy, which has lost its teleological and eschatological significance. On the other hand, structuralism heralded the death of the modern subject, which has likewise led to the death of man, who had trusted in the Enlightenment dreams of education. Today, therefore, in the post-modern world, Pedagogy has been reduced to a residual discipline in which the body – in a post-organic context – is detached from the idea of resurrection, being instead configured as an element of insurrection. While Christian pedagogy sought perfection and modern pedagogy moral improvement, the goal in the post-modern era is performance.

**Keywords:** Death; resurrection; pedagogy; postmodernity; performance.

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### **1. Introduction**

There is no doubt that the question of the death is crucial in every culture. And this has been since prehistoric times, as can be deduced from the worship for the dead in the Paleolithic era. As a matter of fact, confidence in immortality -just as other philosophic concepts- is part of the heritage of the Western culture, which contributed to break the initial Jewish pessimism that believed that the body ended up in the *Sheol* a place of oblivion and exclusion (James, 1973, p. 318). If so, it must

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be assumed that from the sixth century B.C. Jews believed in the resurrection, a concept that was integrated into Christianity and, therefore, in the world view of the Western culture.

In this way, the subject of the death came to Christianity where it found in Christ's resurrection a real keystone of their religious conception. Meanwhile, modernity triggered the experience of secularization and the acceleration of time (Koselleck); punished the death of God and metaphysics (ontotheology meant the oblivion of the Being, according to Heidegger); therefore human finitude lost its metaphysical content and remained limited to the purely immanent. With the advent of postmodernity, death has acquired new profiles, as Zygmunt Bauman (2014) rightly pointed out by meaning that postmodern logic has deconstructed immortality that now appears as a relic of the past.

## 2. The Newness of Christianity: the Hope of Resurrection

It is well known that Christianity embodies a horizon of hope beyond death by promising eternal life, which is away from the pessimism of the ancient world. Prophetic trust in the Old Testament is fulfilled by Christ's resurrection so that – as it happened in the Hebraic world – Christianity also assumes the duality – life and death – as the two sides of the same coin. Needless to say, the arrival of death -whose time of visit is unknown- could not take the Christian unprepared. In this sense, *Didache* – the first Christian catechetical text dating from the late first century AD – presents the doctrine of the two paths: the path of life (that is, the path of evangelical perfection), and the path of death which is none other than that of sin.

There is no doubt that the symbol of the path is very old, evolving from the *Hellenic paideia* – which can be found in Hesiod – to the *Christian paideia*. Bruno Snell reminds us to address this issue «for educators was the crossroads of the very symbol of their profession» (2007, p. 417). After all, those educators – originally slaves job – had to guide the child, showing them the way of good (knowledge and virtue) while warning them of the consequences of evil (passion and vice). As seen, Christianity – and hence Christian *paideia* – turned to the conceptual and instrumental categories of the Hellenistic World by merging Hellenic wisdom and biblical and evangelical revelation, also taking advantage of the symbolism of the path, as stated in *Didache* in order to achieve virtue (*arete*). Already in this text it is advised to watch over life looking forward to the end of time, because «your constant faith will be of no use if you are not perfect at the last moment» (Padres apostólicos, 1950, p. 93).

Christianity – matrix of the perennial pedagogy – was in the eyes of pagan peoples a real scandal, rightly because of the resurrection of Christ, starting point of Christian eschatology which gives a hopeful horizon to human life. The Hebrew prophecy in the Old Testament (Isaiah, Hezekiah) is fulfilled in Christ and so, from the Christian perspective, life and death are not two separate realities but form a whole because if one has not led a proper life with an eye set on God -the true and authentic guide or Master- salvation is impossible. At this point, we should not overlook the pedagogical sense of the prophecy that brought together the present with the future (González Lamadrid, 1993, p. 30).

Only in this way it is understood the interest of the early Christians by the Parousia, or second coming of Christ to earth, that is, by the end of time that they felt as an immediate thing, although its time was continually delayed. «For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done» (Matthew 16, p. 27) Naturally, *Didache* included all these things in some inchoate sense but unmistakable by announcing the second coming of the Lord. «Then shall appear the signs of the truth. First the sign spread out in Heaven, then the sign of the sound of the trumpet and thirdly the resurrection of the dead» (Padres apostólicos, 1950, pp. 93-94).

We are therefore faced with a pedagogy that has its core in the risen Christ which guarantees not only human resurrection but also eternal life, in its duality of soul and body that in catechisms and devotional books was presented in a way that is suited to a child's mindset, based on the Creed adopted at the Council of Nice (325 AD). But the issue not solely concerns children but also adults since the treaties of preparation for death – as highlighted by Antonia Morel d'Arleux (1993, p. 719) – represent a means within the educational program of Christianization in «the vast process of evangelization of uneducated lay people, although they were also aimed at the education of the clergy mostly ignorant». Perhaps for this reason, the consolation genre – of Greco-Latin origin – was one of the most widespread in the Middle Ages, as is evident in the *Letter of Consolation for the Death of a Friend* that Vincent de Beauvais wrote to King Louis IX of France – the future Saint Louis- for the death of his eldest son Louis, written in the thirteenth century. In this emblematic text of Christian spirituality, Beauvais made it clear that «death must be expected carefully, it must be remembered and learned, but not called». For the Dominican scholar – in accordance with Ciceronian and Senecan philosophy – learning to die is nothing but setting aside the soul from the body. Along with pagan authors, Vincent de Beauvais brings up San Ambrosio and other classic scholars to justify that death should be embraced and learned, although «life should never be abhorred or death called» (2006, p. 85).

Aside from consolation, the preparation for death began to generate a new type of didactic literature, that is, *Ars Moriendi*, whose period runs from the fifteenth century to the Enlightenment, not to mention the humanistic contributions such as Erasmus. «Actually, for humanists and their disciples, the art of dying well was not limited to preparing the last moments, but it assumed a whole Christian lifestyle» (Morel, 1993, p. 725). Furthermore we note that this type of didactic literature increased with humanism, generating a sort of classical texts that demonstrate the existence of this educational literature of saving wisdom nature, connecting life with death and which increased in times of the Counter Reform, in a context that urged Christians to meditate on their weak condition, such as *Ecclesiastes* recalls when addressing the issue of vanity of human things.

In the spiritual literature of Renaissance the figure of Christ takes back all its relief from the moment its imitation will become one of the pillars of *Modern Devotion*. Thomas a Kempis – in *The Imitation of Christ* – addressed, after expressing contempt for the vanities, the question of death, in the context of the first book of this work as a warning for spiritual life. It presents, of course, pedagogy of death that away from any harrowing gloomy temptation advises the Christian to learn «to die to the world so that you can begin to live with Christ» (1945, p. 120).

According to this view, Christian life – which has a lot of path or moral and spiritual journey – was regulated by a number of schemes that gave provisions about the care of the body while demanding a series of spiritual exercises to care for the soul. Now, all this without losing sight of the horizon of dying well, as described in the treaties of preparation for death that required – just as the spiritual exercises – pious habits and meditation exercises. In its own right, this view gave rise to a didactic literature that suggested self-control in order to avoid falling into the vice of the deadly sins, calling for a godly way of life. Thus, education – understood as a self-forming endeavor – had a religious background to the point that God was considered the only doctor able to heal physically and spiritually.

In fact, it calls for the sanctification of the path of perfection and faithful life in the world. Hence the importance of *Introduction to the Devout Life* (1608) of Francis de Sales (1623-1662), a book that moves away from the Calvinist and Jansenist rigor (Port-Royal), but makes no concessions in terms of achieving virtue, that is, Christian holiness. Therefore, and without ignoring the religious dimension, it considers the cultural knowledge, the life of the heart (the love of God, human conditions, etc.) and the care of the body, in one whole led by a Christian ideal that combines the love of God and the humanistic tradition. In short, the conduct of a good Christian in his pilgrimage to heaven should be regulated in order to achieve the salvation of his immortal soul while his corrupted turned to dust body must await the Last Judgment to raise.

On this last point, Christianity as noted by the Polish philosopher Leszek Kolakowski in the meetings of the *Rencontres Internationales de Genève* of 1987 is based on an anomaly. «C'est ainsi que toute la civilisation européenne, durant près de vingt siècles, a été basée sur la croyance en un fait non seulement anormal mais absolument impossible dans l'ordre de la nature, à savoir la résurrection du Christ». Indeed, in the image and likeness of Christ Christianity relies on the resurrection of the body, in a sort of eschatological agape where the disabilities shall be eliminated. There is no doubt: Christianity is a religion that evens up the differences, that makes us all equal in the end; this aspect – along with the resurrection – is also an offense to those who want to achieve this equality here and now, that is, on earth through an immanent and worldly hope that delays – if not removes – the resurrection day.

### 3. Modern Pedagogy: The Secularization of History

It has been said that in the same way that God became flesh, Christianity became spirit. Over time, and as a result of the secularization arising from the modern project, the Holy Spirit became spirit or, if you like culture, whose phenomenology was described by Hegel in 1807. The German thinker described his idealistic system according to which «the spirit is always Idea», so that education takes on a dimension of self-consciousness in the sense that performs an upward movement, «from a natural sensitive consciousness up to identify this consciousness with the absolute» (Quintana, 2013, p. 513). Based on the same approach, Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* can be interpreted as a Bildungsroman in which the main character is the consciousness that evolves throughout the history from the time that the single individual is an unfinished spirit.

It is well known that Hegel includes the concept of *Bildung* (Formation) in the foreword and introduction to *The Phenomenology of Spirit* pointing out the evolutionary sense of consciousness: «The number of configurations that consciousness moves through this path is, rather, the unfolding story of the formation of consciousness itself towards science» (Hegel, 1999, p. 54). Therefore, the single individual also has to walk the steps of formation of a universal spirit, so that *The Phenomenology of Spirit* is an account of formation (*Bildungsroman*), which is articulated as a journey to the spirit through consciousness. It is therefore a process that every single individual must travel to the rhythm of the steps of formation of a universal spirit because «the goal is the pervasiveness of the spirit in what is knowledge» (Kempen, 1945, p. 22). So, man needs to train himself (form his consciousness) because, not being by nature what it should be, it must get hold of through the experience of consciousness (self-consciousness) which, if understood, becomes universal. The Hegelian *Bildung* implies a transformation so that the human will can leave the natural stage for achieving a universal world of the spirit where all the supra-individual creations are brought together; some creations that the pedagogy of the sciences of the spirit (Dilthey, Spranger) will identify with culture.

In relation to our interests it should be remembered that the spirit acquires a historical dimension. It is no surprise then that similar to what happened with Christianity understood as a history of salvation, also the pedagogy is characterized by its messianic, salvific dimension, that is, soteriological. Here we follow the indications of Reinhart Koselleck who received the teachings of Karl Löwith, one of the authors who best elaborated on the theological implications of the philosophy of history. In his analysis of the sense of history, Löwith highlights the role of Joachim of Fiore (1131-1202) that, drawing from the Trinitarian scheme (Father, Son and Holy Spirit), interprets the providential progress as a sort of historical «eschaton» (1968, pp. 216-217). In this way the story is divided into three stages: age of the Father, age of the Son and age of the spirit.

With this tripartite division of history, modernity builds an economy of salvation that, thanks to an educational process, prepares the reception of the message of truth as a divine plan that passes through fear (The God of the Old Testament) and the love of Christ (New Testament). Only after these two stages you will reach the age of reason, the age of the men of the Enlightenment, the hour of the spirit, the age of the triumph of ethics and morality that marks the coming of age, as presented by Lessing in *The education of the Human Race* (1780). After this moment, it becomes feasible and producible, that is, it is possible that human beings become involved in the project of «making history» assumed by modern philosophies of history, according to which «the future is no longer raised in advance only by God but can be done and produced» (Koselleck, 2012, p. 178).

It seems clear then that the Pedagogy – a modern adventure – undergoes a process of secularization, as Koselleck remarked when analyzing the semantic meaning of *Bildung*, following the presentation he made of the second volume of the work *Bildungsbürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert, II. Bildungsgüter und Bildungswissen* (1990). In his anthropological and semantic analysis of *Bildung*, a guiding concept, he highlights its Germanic specificity; its influence to the whole of individual life by being configured as a personal self-determination; its interdisciplinary analysis as it

concerns theology, philosophy, art, music and pedagogy; its evolution (theological, enlightened and modern); its personal and cultural dimension that takes a social and political bias after 1918, etc. (Koselleck, 2012, pp. 49-93).

In accordance with the thesis of Koselleck, we can say that Pedagogy wished to encourage the arrival of modernity, and by extension expedited the acceleration of time in the hope of fostering the salvation of mankind after a process of secularization that was to promote, under the influence of the Enlightenment, a sort of temporary utopia to be carried out on earth. In a nutshell, an imagined society based on the idea of progress was proposed, which gave an educational meaning to the project of the Enlightenment, where Pedagogy emerged at a time when a new state of affairs was created, namely «the disappearance of the afterlife in favor of the realization of justice in the here and now, and the transformation of *perfectio* spatially conceived in a temporary willingness of people towards *perfectibility*» (Koselleck, 2012, p. 181). On the basis of perfectibility, a project of worldly improvement, either individually or collectively, Pedagogy finds its reason for being, by which the idea of perfection – according to Christianity, a story of salvation – has been disrupted on the idea of perfectibility. In other words: the perfectibility is human, while the idea of perfection refers to God.

Meanwhile Christianity was going to be considered an episode of the evolution of human civilization from the time that the spirit became a purely factual issue and, in some way, supernatural. If Christianity praises the idea of transcendence, the afterlife to which will have to account when death comes, modernity – with its secularization project – brings into its dynamic view of history a number of concepts (revolution, crisis, progress, decay, patriotism, utopia, etc.) analyzed by Koselleck, which will give meaning to human redemption that will find in the trilemma of the French Revolution (liberty, equality, fraternity) a major reference. In any case, the process of secularization will be one of the axes of the historical evolution of humanity thus becoming a priority educational objective by contributing in a sense of enlightenment to an open future. Clearly this secularization has led, according to Koselleck, the onset of acceleration as a post-Christian category so that, after the French Revolution, the historical intervals are shortened as a harbinger of the redemption of this world, something that strongly influenced the philosophies of the history of the nineteenth century.

Well, it is only after the French Revolution that a unique group prevails – the history – whose object and subject is humanity, where all the particular stories are subsumed. This singularity of the history through its link with the optimism of Leibniz and the idea of humanity, purpose of the education of the human race (Lessing), will have important educational implications. For Lessing, we are faced with a careful freemason fighting for the worldly success of a moral commandment. «Bourgeois society, virtuously perfect, that they already embody and personify, as brothers, is for them the ultimate goal of nature» (Koselleck, 2007, p. 84). All implied that for Koselleck the morality dominating Freemasonry should be quietly extended outside the inner circles, so the help of education of mankind was needed, a goal to achieve. On the other hand, in the late nineteenth century a Kantian as Paul Natorp, promoter of Social Pedagogy and representative of Neo-Protestantism, comes to identify the morality – objective of pedagogy – with the religion of humanity, a sort of condition of possibility for Social Pedagogy (1914, pp. 22-23).

It is rather significant that Dietrich Bonhoeffer, involved in the attack on the Führer of July 20, 1944, asked his parents on January 17, 1945, from the prison of the Gestapo in Berlin, the works of Pestalozzi (*Leonardo and Gertrudis*, *The Evening Hour of a Hermit*) and Natorp (*Social Pedagogy*) two examples of a pedagogy based on the ideals of the religion of humanity, that is, a human community represented by the idealism of freedom and brotherly love; these principles are connected with the modern Masonic message and the Gospel message cleared of any dogma. Behind the Social Pedagogy of Natorp some analysts notice the presence of Platonism, the utopian thought of Thomas More and Rousseau's philosophy as contributing factors of an ideal society with a socializing sign. In other words, the aim was to seek – as Ludwig Feuerbach and Adolf von Harnack suggested – the essence of Christianity reducing it to a purely anthropological and moral issue, while others – as Christopher Dawson (1951)- advocated from a confessional position to revive the spirit of Christianity by its historical dynamics that involves a «universal mission of transforming the world».

In short, Pedagogy – from its origins in the late the eighteenth century – needed a moral substrate, which was to foster both the formation of individual ethics (Kant, Herbart, Schleiermacher) and the moral values of the community through the idea of humanity (Pestalozzi, Fichte, Natorp). Moreover, thanks to the modern secularization process, education was interpreted, at least, in two different ways. First, from a historical dimension, by facilitating – as Lessing did – the arrival of a new age of spirit. Second, this education in singular collective form (the education of the human race) contributed to the success of Pedagogy, a new discipline that was based – without forgetting the psychological observation – on a worldly horizon ethically and morally. In such a way, a messianic, educational dimension began to take shape and will burst with the spiritual conceptions of idealism (Herder, Fichte, Schelling, Hegel) that also foreshadow a future state of historical humanity, whose echo can be felt in the neo-idealism (Gentile). After all, these evolutionary ideas were transferred to the positivist scheme (Comte) and materialist's scheme (Marx) meaning the acceleration of time, a task for men to reach the golden future, that is, the era of freedom, happiness and fraternity. Let us also remember that socialist pedagogy – such as outlined by Bogdan Suchodolski – contested the religious, metaphysical foundation of education, along with the classical humanistic conception and the naturalistic functional conception of Rousseau. «The socialist system is a social system built by men and for men» (Suchodolski, 1976, p. 118). In this way, the ideal of humanity and socialism appear as *telos* of the history and therefore of pedagogy, opening to a secular and worldly horizon, certainly hopeful, fraught – in the case of the communist tradition – with a strong utopian burden that rejects the scheme «of dualism of man as a carnal and spiritual being» (Suchodolski, 1976, p. 135).

Things took over with the advent of postmodernity -by stating the end of metanarratives (Lyotard) and the end of history (Fukuyama)- putting an end to the logic of the Christian schedule, secularized by modernity. From now on, positioned in the late twentieth century, there was nothing to wait for: neither the Resurrection announced by the biblical account, nor the trust in the Last Judgment from the Parousia or second coming of the Son of God, let alone the messianic hope of salvation of Christianity and, therefore, of Pedagogy, a product that emerged from modern secularization.

#### 4. The Death of Man and the Postmodern Dissolution of Pedagogy

It has been said that contemporary man – after the ultimate experience of the Holocaust – has been saturated with so many deaths, innocent victims of barbarism. As we know eugenic and neo-Malthusian doctrines left their mark on the educational field generating a series of practices in support of the sterilization of large sectors of the population. Even pedagogues as Paul Robin and Ferrer Guardia recommended to take favorable steps for the birth control since a good birth ensured a good education and a better social organization. Anarchist pedagogues realized that a sexuality outside of procreation was an idea that was to be spread among the working class, especially among women. You could not let that working families were more extensive than the bourgeois, usually limited to a couple of kids.

Far from libertarian principles, totalitarianism made of death a trivial matter, submitting human beings to an unreasonableness hitherto unknown. So, the eyes of a child as Petr Ginz – victim of the Holocaust – described in all its harshness the barbarism of Nazism, with its sophisticated programs for chilling annihilation and starvation. In the note of January 1, 1942, he wrote in his diary «what it is today usual under normal circumstances would arouse a shock» (2006, p. 68). Precisely, Petr – at reaching the age of 14 years – was sent to Terezín concentration camp, a fortress town located 61 kilometers from Prague that Nazi authorities proudly showed to observers of the Red Cross, and was eventually deported to Auschwitz where he died. However, few literary pages have shaken us more than those where Jorge Semprún (1963) describes in *Le grand voyage* how several dogs from the SS devoured – this, simply and flatly – the bodies of children who appeared in Buchenwald, coming from wagons that were carrying adults to the Final Solution. Children who came to that tragic fate accidentally, where nobody expected them, at Buchenwald which was strategically located next to civilized Weimar, an educated city where Schiller and Goethe shared friendship.

In fact, the history of the first half of the twentieth century – collecting what was sown in previous stages – he saw that death became commonplace whether it was the Russian pogroms, the trenches of the First World War, the extermination camps of Nazism or the battlegrounds of World War II. However, from a pedagogical point of view, death has rather received scarce attention, which was updated after the outbreak of the winds of existentialism that followed the philosophy of Heidegger who introduced the man as a being for death. It is possible that Janusz Korczak led with some enthusiasm the procession of 200 children that from the Warsaw Ghetto was directed towards a terrible end in Treblinka. Although there are conflicting views, it is said that each child brought with him a toy or a book in order to sweeten the fatal outcome.

After 1945, a veil was drawn over the bodies, disfigured and raped, dismembered and burned. Few people spoke of the body, silent witness of the hugest barbarism experienced by mankind. In that context, Giacometti sculpted bodies of extreme thinness witnessing the fragility of human existence. On the other hand, Francis Bacon refused to shape entire bodies after the devastating flood of the Second World War. Meanwhile, the humanist restoration seemed possible to the extent that in Europe the Pedagogy continued the traditions prior to 1939.

In Germany it remained for a while the pedagogy of sciences of the spirit, while in Italy the neo-idealism of Gentile gave way to the neo-spiritualism of Augustinian foundation. Meanwhile, in other countries such as Spain it prevailed the perennial pedagogy, linked to Catholicism that sought its *aggiornamento* through the Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), that put on the table the importance of the pedagogy of resurrection defended by Henri Bissonnier. If the totalitarian regimes had eliminated the different bodies (ethnic minorities, disabled, abnormal, etc.), now it emphasized again the eschatological meaning of human life so it argued for the resurrection of the body, especially the disabled who had been recklessly removed in the framework of the Final Solution.

The arrival of May 68 introduced some new features amid the strains of the Cold War. On the one hand, the *nouveaux philosophes* took the time to denounce the totalitarianism of philosophies of history among which there was Marxism – a metanarrative according to Lyotard (1984) – that was accused of having been used to justify the dictatorship of the proletariat. From that point onwards, Pedagogy could not legitimize its ideological dimension but its practical aspect, that is, by the success of the actions.

Moreover, there was a return to the Nietzschean philosophy that had already been recovered by existentialism, after the manipulation to which it was subject by the Nazis. It is true that now Nietzsche was read – which in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-1885) condemned at those who despised the body – from the viewpoint of the recovery of a corporeality that had been forgotten or simply suppressed. Nietzsche highlights the importance of the body as a creative element, although at this point he discards the tragic view of his philosophy to choose a more gratifying path that, over time, has been artificially invigorated by technology. In fact, the distance between reality and fiction was shortened, so literature -there we have *Blude Runner* (1969) – brought us a world in which the gap between the human and the mechanical, between reality and its reproduction, was growing fainter.

Against this background, a philosophy of difference was developed which became a reference for vindicating the marginalization and dissemination of thought. So the work begun by Nietzsche, continued by Heidegger and consolidated by the French post-structuralists, involved the failure of the philosophy of identity that defines the conceptual world in relation to the idea (Plato), to the being (Aristotle), to the person (Boethius), to the subject (Descartes) and to the Hegelian dialectic process according to which the difference, as the result of denial, is overcome with the reconciliation of opposites. Rather than harmony the emphasis was put on dissonance and difference, thus the idea of identity – and ultimately of God – receded in intellectual environments that, in turn, broke the bonds of life with the afterlife, that is, life with the ideas of immortality and resurrection.

Also at that time – and simultaneously with the decolonization process – there was a movement for individual freedom and civil rights which involved a new framework not only for education, with the emergence of the first steps of the pedagogy of difference, but also a new aesthetic that definitely broke the mould of the classic canons. During the sixties new bodies arise, previously censored as heterodox and marginal, that is, bodies that distanced from conventional aesthetic canons or that embraced a sexuality often seen as deviant, if not pathological. Thus,

which until then had been considered as «abnormal», deformed and sickly, began to regain its personality, so monstrosity changed from being viewed as something strange to be part of everyday reality.

Therefore, we move away from a pedagogy of resurrection and we approach a pedagogy of insurrection, understood as a radical alternative to a situation that wants to go beyond the recognition of difference. It is, in short, a new open sensitivity that helps us understand the social reality from «other» parameters: from a radical nature of the human being that recognizes each one in its own unique corporeality. Ultimately, this spirit of time has favored new theories as *queer pedagogy* and *crip theory*, which put sexuality and disability as two innovative elements that shape the new educational maps. After all, postmodernity has shown the links that connect education with sexual diversity, to the extent that corporeality – in an era of high technology – takes on a new plasticity, which relies on the use of the nearest technological consulting. In short, the slender and tanned bodies from totalitarianism (whether fascist or stalinist) were abandoned to make way for *cyborgs*, short form for *cybernetic organism*, in a world where virtuality has replaced reality, as it corresponds in a post-metaphysical order that sometimes has forgotten the flesh, to the extent that corporeality gives increasingly more space to technology.

The myth of eternal youth – present in post-metaphysical bodies – finds now its duplicate in a technology that modifies the bodies to the point of becoming true works of art according to *body art*. Amid this state of affairs, the cyborg is a metaphorical figure, coined by Haraway (1995), that presents a cybernaut as hybrid citizen – half machine, half human –, that moves around in a world of mechanical reproduction, a world of virtual multiplicities involving changes in the logical nature and culture because the cyborg has no gender. Seen clearly, it is a worldly spirit, without eschatological hope (the resurrection was linked to the flesh, not the technology) that configures a postmodern atmosphere that embodies aspects of Nietzschean vitalism, the hedonism that Freud fostered in his fight against puritanism, the culture of simulacra (Baudrillard) and entertainment (Debord) which promotes new heroes that take us back to a starting time, to a mythical worldview that, thanks to crossbreed and the baroque, was enthroned in a world of high technology. The world of video games takes on better than any other artistic expression this postmodern universe, a real narrative that is called to replace the film and television, with its heroes and mythologies. So, it has changed from a reality set on a physical and metaphysical world to a virtuality that articulates a postorganic world where life no longer depends on the empirical reality but the technological virtuality so the human being no longer is in possession of one single life. There is life outside the organic reality, even beyond *Second Life* (2007), which is a virtual construction that has replaced the afterlife.

Therefore, the world of the World Wide Web is post-metaphysical, since it is not possible -given the existing many points of view, connected through the network- a dominant unity as coming from God or the Idea, as it happened in the past. In fact, with the advent of postmodernity acceleration has produced a paradoxical situation by reducing everything to the real time, to the present. The use of chronometry is inherent to the scientific management of work (Taylorism), one of the manifestations of the industrial world and the technical rationalization. Due to the impossibility of

shortening the time up to a zero value it has taken place a sort of exhilaration of the here and now, the present time. In such a way that the old round watches have given way to digital devices where only the present exists. From the instant reality, pedagogy – understood as a saving knowledge – loses its reason for being since it is delegitimized to contribute to the precipitation of an eschatological time, not only of theological-religious basis, but also of worldly-moral nature. So postmodernity has terminated two worlds: the one corresponding to the tradition of the Christian perennial philosophy, its hope in the afterlife; and the one of modern rationality which found a great sounding board in the utopia of the Enlightenment with its messianic, saving, pedagogical project.

Hence the death of Pedagogy announced by Gilles Ferry in the pages of *L'Education Nationale* on May 11, 1967. Furthermore, 15 years later – in 1982 – the same author stated that it was the death of dogmatic teaching, which contrasted with the multidisciplinary framework of educational sciences. Well, at that time Pedagogy died in its strong sense since it could not rely on a metaphysical foundation, or a historical and ideological legitimacy. Thus, pedagogy lost its normative and teleological dimension, being diluted in the magma of educational sciences, of all the fields concerning education.

So the death of metaphysics – which involves the death of the human being understood as a creature of God – and the death of the modern subject – by being captured in a number of structural networks and philosophies that diminished his freedom – involved the death of Pedagogy, a subject that today is doomed to be residual in postmodern world. So much so that pedagogy is part of the world of yesterday, whether the classical – Christian-metaphysical one or the modern liberating with its ideological burden. Therefore, it has lost the perspective of resurrection and the worldly hope understood as history of salvation of mankind. Moreover, death has become an individual and personal matter, linked to the present and detached from Pedagogy understood as knowledge of salvation. Life and death no longer form a compact whole as happened when the Christian worldview was dominating. In view of what we are saying, it only remains to understand death as a personal collapse on the way towards the abyss, as Francis Scott Fitzgerald described in *The Crack-Up* (1936). Those were times of crisis, the same that ultimately live in the people of our time, the postmodern man.

But there is no need to be necessarily pessimistic because this same perspective offers a potentially creative framework with undeniable consequences for education (once Pedagogy is dead), which finds in the *performance* – in the staging of the own self in connection with others, whether known or bystanders – a large number of possibilities. So if modernity forged the ideal of formation (*Bildung*) in the postmodern world – the world of today – this role may be replaced by *performance*, which emphasizes the game between artist and onlooker. From there, this formation is an open work, not something determined by Christian eschatology or the philosophy of modern history. In short, the *performance* draws a crossing of settings, of experiences shared through gestures, looks and complicities where we are all equal.

While knowing that the term *performance* is an anglicism that can be linked to the way you act and interpret a scenic role, we can mean that the formation – detached now from God and history and, therefore, from pedagogy – becomes a stage play where –

as in *performances* – all kinds of artistic resources are involved, beyond conventional art and literature. Art – traditionally linked to music and painting – expands a thousand different ways that are no unfamiliar to new technologies. *Body-art* be would be only one side of this formative building that has a lot of dramatic since – in postmodern world – human beings acquire the status of *homo dramaticus*, acting on an open process of construction and reconstruction, along a life that is meant as a real art work that has a lot of self-education, a point that agrees with classical *Bildung*. Besides, drama – recalls Rancière – means action, so this pedagogy also requires – as in Goethe or Dewey – the weight of the action (2010, p. 11).

Of course, a theory of human formation (free from the anchorage to metaphysics and the philosophy of history) may be coherent based on the idea of *performance*, seen as a staging, which connects with other moments in history, with the notion of mask that is behind the idea of person that – etymologically – comes from Greek *proposton*, that is, the mask that actors wore. In the origins of culture human beings also covered their face with masks, although by identifying mask and person, personalism claims a pedagogy of face, in line with the values of the perennial pedagogy. However, today – when cyberculture has become accepted – the face is masked by an endless stream of masks and configurations, in an world that is ephemeral and volatile, where things do not last.

According to what has been said, you can establish a kind of common thread formalized in three stages. Thus, to a first phase that praises premodern perfection, which corresponds to a metaphysical time inspired by a religious and divine eternity, codified in dogma, it follows the perfectibility or modern refinement, in line with a formative worldly aim, and which led to a theory of human formation that – roughly – concurs with the ideal of neo-humanist *Bildung*, although it had an influence on the philosophies relying on the improvement of humanity to accelerate the course of history. Meanwhile, today we have the *performance*, something that corresponds to postmodernity and that emphasizes the importance of imagination and creativity in a virtual world – post-metaphysically and post-organically – where identities are continually constructed and deconstructed, in a sort of endless symphony of concatenated configurations that require constant regulation of the personal ideation process which – in turn – calls for a significant amount of empowerment. In short, behind the concept of *performance* – a sort of palimpsest – we recognize the presence of flashes of that opening to premodern eternity that proclaimed the immortality of human soul and the ethical redemptive dimension of modern formation. Far from those ideals, we now have the *performance* that takes a personal and dramatic dimension, the formation of the self in an open and plural context that confines death to the purely immanent.

While it is true that Pedagogy died a long time ago when the great force-ideas – the Christian eschatology and the modern utopia – surrendered, the present opens up to a horizon of possibilities from the idea of *performance*, an educational challenge for postmodern times, that is, post-metaphysically and post-organically. Ultimately, the *performance* leads us to the escape and dispersion, a path that everyone should write outside the Christian theological assurances and philosophies of modern history that brought about the emergence of Pedagogy, a modern subject that presently does not occupy a place of relief in the postmodern intellectual landscape.

In short, death does not confer a tragic existence as it happened in existentialism, but it appears as the last scene of the dramatic representation that is life, a life that is detached from the confidence in the Easter resurrection of former times and that nor is today at the service of modern redemptive ideals that required the defense of the ideological cause to accelerate the course of history. When there is no metaphysical transcendence and ideological utopia is a thing of the past, everything can be resolved now and here, in a personal and dramatic construction that fluctuates between reality and fiction. In the end, education – once pedagogy is left behind – can be stated with the life that sees death as something virtual, a kind of simulation in these postmodern times.

## 5. References

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