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Pedagogist as Social Professional: Sozialpädagogik and Professional Pedagogy

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Abstract

The profound changes that have occurred over the last few decades to the social, cultural and relational reality have added a new emphasis on pedagogy even though the emerging need for the profession of “pedagogist,” a new intellectual and social profession in common consideration, but which boasts over 2500 years of history and tradition as its reference science. This profession is at the top of pedagogical and education professions. Its conceptual and operational framework, its methodologies and procedures, its technical vocabulary and everything constituting an advanced professional knowledge were born and developed in the ancient times, beginning with its origins in classical Greece. The recent re-foundations can be found in the Sozialpädagogik, in the same Mittleuropean cultural environment where other social professions of recent birth have their ground. Re-founders of this science and profession were Mager, Diesterweg, Natorp and Durkheim Pedagogist. In this paper, we summarized the essential features of this profession, its methodology, its principles, its practical procedures, with special attention to the problems of couple and family, and those belonging to its initial education and its recognition by law which in Italy have been solved only at the end of the year 2017. The branch of General Pedagogy that includes this subject is called Professional Pedagogy.

Keywords: pedagogist, social professions, Sozialpädagogik, Professional Pedagogy, methodology

1. Introduction: a historical contextualization

Education has faced in the second half of the twentieth century a heavy crisis, which is not finished yet. It is the correspondent crisis society and culture have met in the same period. It was a real epochal transition, from an Evo that lasted less than 2 s to one that, perhaps, was not yet started.

This crisis involves major social issues such as family and, conceptually before it, the couple and genres. We may adopt in this regard the inclusive concept of ‘system’ that was introduced in Italy since the 1968 dispute [1] to indicate the whole of socio-cultural phenomenon. ‘The system’ had a profound crisis and owing to it, we understood how and to what extent the system was relying on a peculiar way of raising a family, of living partnership, on a particular construction of genders (i.e., polarized to their extreme extent, functional to the entire system, besides being the very root of it).

The basic features of this crisis were represented, quite obviously, by the dizzying acceleration of the evolutionary rhythms, by the evident extension of the explicit lifelong education, by the multiplication of access to and dissemination of information, by the generalization of mobility, until the current globalization took place.

In times, chronologically not too far away, although culturally remote, one could at least suggest an education consisting of the replication of some set of patterns. In order that it might actually work, an explicit kind of family education limited to a relatively short period of human life, about a dozen years, and an evolutionary rhythm not too high was necessary. In other words, what we will call 'a quasi-static hypothesis' with a transfer from thermodynamics would have shown its value: that is to say, becoming a process that could be strictly treated as if 'the system' were in every moment of its evolution in a static equilibrium. For these reasons, evolution need not happen according to frantic rhythms, as it would have happened sooner or later, but effectively along those centuries. In addition, the gaps were not to be too long, in compliance with an explicit education that began in childhood and ended, as it was claimed, in adolescence.

2. A social revolution: new paradigms of couple and family required

The evolution that occurred includes a profound *shift of paradigm* with a Kuhnian meaning [2]. We are facing a '*scientific revolution*,' which was born more or less around the 1960s or shortly before, and whose problematic content is a big part of our dealing today, and for the next decades. The educational problems posed are direct and mainly dwell on a specific professional sector.

We are problematically leaving a historical age that lasted about two centuries, or less, which properly came after the one that was historiography called 'Modern Age.' The term 'Postmodern' introduced by Jean-François Lyotard [3] was impressive, and effective, to appoint the end of the previous age. The term "post" resulted totally inappropriate and misleading when applied to the history and the humanities. It could have a partial success as well as ephemeral in the domains for which it was coined, that is, in literature and architecture, but had no plausibility in the human sciences and in pedagogy in particular.

The Postmodern Age, put properly next to the 'Modern' one, so-called by history and culture (sixteenth-seventeenth-eighteenth century, about), had its roots in the Enlightenment, the Industrial Revolution and the bourgeois revolutions of the late eighteenth century: in a definite set of ideas and orientations, economic and social upheavals, and spread in the West during the following century. In this specific regard, Der Wiener Kongress formed an unrealistic restoration of political regimes specifically 'modern,' that is to say absolute, which no longer had any cultural, economic and social coherence.

The nineteenth-twentieth century society had as its primary cell a peculiar type of family called by Durkheim "*famille conjugale*" [4, 5] and by Le Play "*famille nucléaire*" [6]. Its acceptance, with all the heavy sacrifices which involved especially the woman, went hand in hand with the claim that it was the kind of family that 'existed since the ancient times' (or 'natural'), 'traditional' or 'the result of millennia of civilization,' apparently powerful and mutually contradictory and that therefore could only have had a rhetorical function of persuasion and compliance. In fact, it was an absolutely dated and contextualized phenomenon, with its specificity: this paradigm of family completely peculiar and absolutely original has taken the place of the two pre-existing paradigms that remained in the West for many centuries: that is, the *noble* and *patriarchal* paradigm.

3. The XIX-XX paradigm of education

The paradigm of nuclear family postulated (and required) a particular type of couple, the so-called overlapping couple, built through polarization of the genders pushed to the extreme, enhanced by a target education in line with its goals.

The dominant educational paradigm in the short Evo XIX-XX was transmissive and consisted of the replication from one generation to another of strict and fixed idealized models, that the teacher had first received and made his own, in such an integral way to feel unconditionally committed to replicate them as closely and impersonally as possible with her/his pupils. Moreover, she/he was considered uncritically entitled to use any tool she/he considered fit for the purpose.

The current information and mobility would be enough to explain the practical impossibility of a transmissive education, especially if focused on fixed models, and this is because these would have lost soon every plausibility and would have proved outdated, overcome by some others as time went by, at least before the end of a dozen years or slightly more. In addition, the longest lifespan of the 'explicit' education in a reality characterized by an increasingly frantic and quick evolutionary rhythm would make obsolete any model or fixed principle, despite its primal validity and soundness, to be checked by information and interpersonal mobility like in our days with no ancestors in human history.

4. The new social need of the professional at the top of the pedagogical culture

This particular crisis today is clearly a problematic situation for pedagogy: we refer to a pedagogy that, properly and by its very nature, cannot have any form of detachment, just like, for example, the separation of the historian or what has been attributed to clinical physicians for a long time.

In cases like these, it is manifested more clearly than elsewhere in the application framework that is its true essence, not reducible to merely speculative, philosophical or 'theoretical' thought, but inseparable from taking charge and care of whosoever is going to be educated, in any interpersonal relationship and as a social requirement, and from the organic relationship with the experience of the object of its study and intervention.

This, among other things, is more consistent with the etymology of a term [7] that is present and common in Romance languages, as well as in German and Slavic languages and also in Hungarian, Finnish, Basque or Albanian, while it is still facing difficulties in English. We should not forget that the same term has appeared in the West in 1495, as a mold from Latin [8].

This means that pedagogy is characterized more clearly today than it was in the past, as a domain of study that can be called upon to express its own profession: an upper intellectual profession, working in the social and in all of its instances, whose most proper name is "Pedagogist" (Pädagoge, paedagogist...not to be confused with the educator, l'éducateur or die Erziehrer).

Strictly speaking, the profession of the pedagogist has emerged (or better, re-emerged) as a social profession only in the twentieth century. This can be compared to the professions of the psychologist, sociologist, psychotherapist, and in some respect to other intellectual occupations such as the accountant or the social worker.

For all these professions, and others, a wide methodological framework is to be found in the previous century, mostly in *Mittleuropa*, in the central European world German-speaking, or in its immediate vicinities. For example, a psychologist would refer to Wundt, Weber, Fechner, Helmholtz, Mach; a sociologist to Auguste

Comte as the first thinker and then to the Alsatian-Lorraine Durkheim for vast amounts of knowledge and content; and a psychotherapist first to Sigmund Freud, and so forth.

The profession of the pedagogist too finds its foundation in the same world, to be precise, in the establishment of die Sozialpädagogik and in its first steps. We would then refer to Mager, Diesterweg, Natorp, and also the social sensitivity of some pedagogists like Pestalozzi, of course as a generalist or Durkheim himself, considering his character not less pedagogical than sociological, being one of the fathers of the Scientific Sociology. It should be kept in due consideration the fact that he had become a full professor at the Sorbonne in 1906 for the Chair of Pedagogy; it was in 1913 that the name of the course would become *Pedagogy and Sociology*, and at least in our context, his pedagogical works are not to be considered minor works [9].

5. Conceptual and operative pedagogist tools from ancient times until the present time

This reference to the last centuries does not diminish the history of pedagogy, which traces its origins back to Western civilization and that must be considered a resource, as Dewey taught us since he traced it back to the Sophists “*the first body of professional educators in Europe*” [10], partly because the essential tools both of the reference knowledge and the professional practice are to be found precisely in those classical roots.

We could begin with the classical Greek culture. We will start, therefore, with πάντων χρημάτων μέτρον ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος, τῶν μὲν ὄντων ὡς ἔστιν, τῶν δὲ οὐκ ὄντων ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν by Protagoras; οὐδέν ἐστίν, εἰ δ’ ἐστίν οὐ νοητόν, εἰ δὲ νοητόν, ἀλλ’ οὐ γνωστόν, εἰδὲ καὶ γνωστόν, ἀλλ’ οὐ δηλωτόν ἄλλους by Gorgias; φύσει μὲν ἐστὶν ἄνθρωπος ζῶν πολιτικόν by Aristotle; the role and importance of ῥητορεία; the Socratic διάλογος in its two phases, that of εἰρωνεία and of μαευτική τέχνη; πολιτεία meant as socialization and active participation in political activities, in the broadest sense of the term; the classical logic with its rules; the γνῶθι σεαυτόν, with its full awareness of everybody’s potentialities and limitations; finally the condemnation of ὕβρις. We will, however, go on quoting other expressions full of significance.

This does not diminish the necessity to refer to that long history, as for example with reference to Seneca, Quintilianus, Scholastics or part of it, and other authors in the Middle Age.

When we quote Comenius, we have already arrived at a modern perspective (i.e., at the Modern Age) and not surprisingly in the field of an educational pedagogy practiced in schools, rather than social as it was the art of the Paedagogus in the ancient Greece and Rome.

We claim it should be better to understand deeply the reasons why professionals whose technical-scientific culture is pedagogy based, including the school staff, the historical dimension actually plays a fundamental role, which is not accomplished by other forms of knowledge or by other professions.

6. Die Sozialpädagogik and its role

Die Sozialpädagogik is a branch of the General Pedagogy, which, while going back to the mid-nineteenth century, in Italy has been largely ignored for nearly a century and a half, as pedagogy, not a direct and vocational school education, has

largely been marginalized and as other social scientific knowledge with professional effects such as Psychology and Sociology has long been held in low esteem.

The majority of the academic Italian Pedagogy has long been confined in the 'Magisteri,' particular university faculties that had been founded and developed since the 1930s with primal scholastic educational purposes, and as such, they remained until their closure in the 1990s.

The term "extraschool" and its derivatives have been used for a long time to extend the dominant school education, as if the commitment to education were essentially centered on school, and the rest was attributable to a single generic and vague term. Today, this expression is out of use, but the reductive vision recurs through too many approaches to social pedagogy, which are characterized by a substantial and unique variation to social issues: as if one could forget that the entire pedagogy concerns society, social relationships and the roles of people in society. In simple but strict terms, pedagogy whose domain covers the whole of society is called 'General Pedagogy': this does not make it really necessary to point out or develop a branch called 'Social Pedagogy' with the entire society as its domain as well.

7. What's new in Italian law?

In the Italian law and culture, school roles and functions have a strong definition and structure; instead, regulatory definitions and recognitions are missing long time as for other specifically pedagogic professions in the social field.

We had to wait until the end of the year 2017. December 27 2017, the Italian parliament approved in the comprehensive law 205 eight paragraphs of article 1 that finally gave a legal recognition to the pedagogist with a master's degree, as well as to the socio-pedagogical professional educator (3-year degree).

The pedagogist, at the apical level, should have received, after an initial MSc degree, further training with vocational qualification. On the contrary, the professional educator socio-sanitary, that is the operator of educational practice in the world of Health, and acts properly at an intermediate level, in Italy has a proper corresponding initial university education (a 3-year course) and a strong legalized legislation only in healthcare (after the Ministerial Decree 520/98), and follows degree programs that are still active in the faculty of Medicine and Surgery.

Nowadays, one of the pivotal tasks of pedagogy is to bring the Social Pedagogy back to its origins and to its specific nature, taking into account today's emerging needs for social and higher intellectual pedagogy profession-based and for the academic induction-oriented courses. On this task and on its fulfilling, the role of pedagogy is basically played within the culture and society in progress.

8. The pedagogist's professional practice 'in between'

A mistake to avoid carefully in the profession of pedagogists is falling in the dualism between theory and praxis. It is a sort of dualism spread in the nineteenth century or before, typically philosophical, belonging to those that John Dewey systematically fought against. Pedagogy cannot be reduced only to a theoretical level or just to the level of praxis, or to some contrasts between them. It is rather a dimension in between theory and practice, synthesis and chance of communication between the two levels mutually irreducible.

The level in between can be defined with the term *applicativity*. The terminological issue has a very important strength if we consider the persistence of phrases

belonging to philosophy in the pedagogical debate with their unsuitable content that produces misunderstanding, such as that of 'practical science,' which is still referred not infrequently to pedagogy. The theory-practice sort of dualism was born and raised in philosophy: we do not argue here of its values in that context or of its limits in a broad sense; we simply mean to point out how it is clearly inadequate when applied to pedagogy.

If we remain on the level of theory, we can place in it a number of other scholars and proponents even in a different professional position. We think, for example, of those large companies' managers who plan the main lines of professional training, recruitment, internal relations, or cultural image of the company, its history, its archives, or also the human resources management. Other examples of professional on the theoretical plane of Pedagogy can be public Managers (in ministries, local government, health, etc.) who fulfill some actual pedagogical or direction guideline functions on a well-established political plan, or those in large agencies who are in charge for training (in the broadest sense), from whose theories, educational actions are performed; or intellectuals whose creativity directly influences education, or of those who address educational issues from a more general perspective.

At the level of theory, in short, extensive types of subjects can be placed: those who, shall we say, work to develop general views of education that are likely to have a not sudden impact on the educational act.

Nevertheless, it is equally important to grasp the existence of a praxical level with some efforts. The term 'educator' means, even in everyday language, anyone who educates or teaches, that is, any person acting on this level. In this regard, despite the general and specific cultural background, the projects, and even the will of the act, we could say that we are all "educators" for the fact that we are human beings, that is, a place of values, social subjects, knots of a network of interpersonal relationships.

At this level, we can place those who, among the action-oriented ones, practice professionally their function with awareness, according to a plan (not necessarily drawn by themselves) and with some cultural foundation inside a work or planned performance or somehow structured. In this case, it is feasible to apply some adjective or periphrastic qualification to the noun, till to talk of educational operators: in Italy, we saw, the term '*professional educator*' pointed out a professional who deals with health, and now many things can change, with the reform processes recently started. It is a sort of a diverse and consistent world: the world of different types of performers: from the private teachers to tutors, governors, community or boarding school assistants and keepers, *Betreuer*, (*jugend*)*lehrer*, prefects, and so forth. As a general rule, they are people who exercise their educational activity with a large predominance (if not exclusive) of the practice level.

But the profession of the pedagogue in action, unlike the ones in the quoted examples, lacks a general framework as for the induction training, although he started having his first legal recognition and status in Italy 2 years ago.

It is useful to draw a fundamental distinction between the general and generic acting in the field of education or 'Erziehung,' and a practical action based on a well-defined theoretical and general reference, after having set a plan based on the awareness of the whole. This second articulation of educational professionalism requires a qualification that is not guaranteed either by the current high schools and institutes or by the Socio-Psycho-Pedagogical secondary school curriculum reformed in 2010, which in fact does not have any of the vocational values that are now non-existent also in other types of pre-university schools. For this reason, it seems good a qualification as a university degree, exactly as it is for other technical professions, which in the past decades relied on an education course ending with a high school diploma, and as happened for primary school teachers having a specific degree since 1999.

9. More thoroughly about *Erziehung* and *Pädagogik*: education and pedagogy

One of the basic problems of current practices in education is made up of different types of action that do not actually appear to be inscribed in a theoretical framework and a well-set planning of reference, nor do they seem to be carried out by suitably qualified practitioners: this order of problems is also complicated in the compliance with the principles that still recall the Italian Neoidealism, and its refusal to consider the educational dimension scientifically and technically as, well as, teaching itself. In other words, a transition from *Erziehung* to *Pädagogik*, and from the *Erzieher* to *Pädagoge*, is necessary for all that part, which is fundamental and appropriate to fulfill, that is for an increasingly significant and growing aspect of the educational reality.

Considerations like these would be sufficient to throw light on the existence and importance of the vital intermediate level of pedagogy or, better, the human mediation of the pedagogist.

It would be enough to reflect on the distance between theory and practice as for the specific part of education, leaving no room for illusions (above all the ones groundless in principle) according to which this space is filled by itself, or for educators' voluntary pursuit to theory, or for the theoretical pedagogists' voluntary access to practice.

Short in-service qualification courses also held in agreement with the university serve to cover up an existing problem of an illusory smokescreen and to allow promotions without real consideration for the skilled personnel who will remain qualified only on paper, besides the perpetuation of a neglect educational policy of social and health institutions.

We always remember that an essential characteristic of the Italian school and university is the full legal value of the qualification, the centrality of the conquest of the "piece or sheet of paper," which is at the same time strength, weakness and problematic.

Pedagogy is not limited to the confined dualism theory-practice but is qualified in its own autonomy with the presence of a dimension in between, with an intermediate level, which allows communication and mutual integration of theory and practice for achieving something else significantly different. The Italian Pedagogy today has a wide awareness of this as well as the dangers of reductionism in a way or another [11].

Hence the Professional Pedagogists' own dimension appears, precisely the dimension of *Empirie* or *Anwendungsmöglichkeit*. Far from being the Hegelian 'synthesis,' it is the level of the dialectic continuous interaction between theory and practice that admits the usage of the Frankfurt School critical theories, in order to be understood. A few years of an intense debate on the qualification of the Professional Pedagogist took place in the world of trade associations.

At present, there is a general agreement in claiming that it corresponds to the post-graduate level, with a few more years of study, training, development, and one or more passages. However, the 3-year course graduate student in the field of the Sciences of Education is not properly a 'pedagogist,' as a law degree student is not a 'lawyer.' The remembered Italian law 205/2017 finally recognized the profession, asking for at least 5 years of university study.

10. From Pedagogy as social science to pedagogist as professional practice in society: so that it is democracy and not authoritarianism

The following pages of this paper will be addressed to take some general guidelines and methodologies into consideration in the practice of the Professional Pedagogy, as well as how it is actually experienced.

But first, one more reflection is necessary, with regard to the relationship between the level of the general theory, and that of praxis—practice and performance, in education.

An attempt to abolish the level of pedagogical mediation is not impossible: rather, it is unacceptable, not acceptable as it integrates a totalitarian, fundamentalist, humanly incongruous project. A project where there are, on the one hand, a small circle of advisers to the Prince dictating from above the lines of what ends to be a *Kommandierte Pädagogik* (Commanded Pedagogy), and on the other hand, an army of performers who respond directly to ‘the central authority’ and that, without a true expertise but full of honors and formal observance, ensure the accurate and loyal implementation of those provisions.

It is not a coincidence that the Pedagogy is absent in similar domains, replaced by philosophy at the top and by practical experience at the bottom.

The denial of pedagogy is well combined with the denial of democracy, with the denial of science, the reduction of scientific culture to pure technology, with the denial of professionalism. Giovanni Gentile was not the unique philosopher teacher in this sense: the problem still occurs over and over again, even today, in various forms.

11. The Professional Pedagogist’s helping relationship: some basic elements of this professional practice

Pedagogy as a profession, not performed in schools, is a recent one, though grafted on the trunk of an ancient knowledge. For this, it needs doctrinal elements, its own methodology, a specialistic vocabulary, a set of procedures, and so on, elements for a long time held by other professionals, and all consistent with its origin and history, therefore its roots. We will explore below a broadly representative number of them, both as a ‘state of the art,’ and as suggestions, or as an openness to future experience and developments, referring to the details of some other works where there is no time, nor space to enter [12].

The Professional Pedagogist’s helping relationship (initially ‘*relation d’aide*’) is a form of dialogical action, a ‘*let us talk!*’. This is a reason why it can be exchanged, at first glance, with an overlap to certain psychological and psychotherapeutic interventions, but it is a very different thing, as we are trying to describe.

The pedagogist has no patients or customers, and she/he has *interlocutors*.

The pedagogist’s interlocution is one whose domain is in the educational and relational field and it always takes place on the cultural level, referring to the essential dimensions of man as a subject of culture, history, and cultural evolution. The following are some important examples of fundamental components of this form of professional dialogue:

- The life project
- The relation with peers
- The logical and methodological consistency
- The process of evolution and transformation
- The education process-centered activity

It is an explicit dialog, through which the pedagogist clearly puts her/his thesis and positions into discussion, as the other self is requested to do: each one is called

to present and treat one's own point of view for what it is, that is, as personal positions that are not meant to be generalized. The pedagogist's interlocution is not effective if someone claims to present her/his own positions like the ones "belonging to everyone", and to be passed for indisputable.

In the dialog, each of the two (or more) parties, including the pedagogist, brings into play what we might call their visions (views, beliefs, etc.). The term, however, indicates at least two different concepts, for which we may suggest, as technical terms, two German nouns.

A first concept consists of the *die Einsichten*, those 'visions' that are presupposed to experience and whose possession allows the experience to take place. These are not empirical, but prior to the empirical moment, since most of the positivistic 'pure experience' misunderstanding is scanty reproducible. These conceptual tools are self-evident and unmistakable, but together necessary for the educational process: "*Unter Einsichten werden Aussagen verstanden, die der Urteilsart der apriorischen Sätzen entsprechen. Dieses Vorausgehen gilt natürlich nicht im Sinn der physikalischen Zeit, sondern als logisches Vorausgehen*" (*Insights are statements that correspond to the type of judgment of the a priori sentences. This precedence is of course not in the sense of physical time, but as a logical precedence.*) [13]. It is neither the psychological-cognitive insight, that is to say, the sudden enlightenment that helps to solve a problem posed rationally, perceiving the essential relationships, nor the psychoanalytic insight that is the ability to look within oneself, motivations, dynamics, inner meanings. If anything, in this respect, the concept of archetypes can be borrowed from psychoanalysis as an important example.

The *Einsichten* with a further example, the images of male and female that have so strongly imbued with their own culture the past two or three centuries: the male as an external projection, fast, tending to the sudden attainment of the outcome on the other's ground, even with her sacrifice; the female as an internal projection, all inclusive, tending to achieve some outcomes in the long run, on her own ground and with her own sacrifice. These visions have a metaphor in the physiology of the reproductive organs and, in this sense, they are prior to the experience, but they have nothing to do with the actual males and females as subjects of culture, except for a purposeful education in this sense.

Different concepts, referring to what we would call 'visions,' are the general views of reality under study and, in this case, of the pedagogical interlocution. Those are called *die Anschauungen*. One thinks of the *Welt-anschauungen* (*worldviews and theories?*), probably the best known and most widely used compound term than those that can be formed with this term, but it means more specifically philosophical or ideological views of the universe. We are rather interested in the visions of mankind, of the human being, of the intrinsic characteristics of man as such, that is possible to emphasize by a compound: *Mensch-heit-anschauungen*.

Typical is the example, in relationships, of the comparison between different *Anschauungen* of one of the partners who leads a life of external commitment in work, culture, art, sports, and so on, and the other one who expresses her commitment inside the house, in the stability of the relationship and in children: this diversity had its canonical composition in the nuclear couple with a hard, indisputable, division of tasks imposed by an education that is aimed at this, which passed it as if it were 'natural.' Today, other possible solutions are to be found, and this is a goal whose nature is typically professional-pedagogical.

The *Anschauungen*, with a substantial difference from the previous ones, are also the result of experience and indeed continually subject to revision in the light of the experience itself and evolvable as any other human activity.

What matters most in this dialogic context, of the one and the other "visions," is that each of the parties (including the pedagogist) tells her/his own, thus becoming

the object of interlocution as well as the necessary conditions for it. Rather, the necessary conditions are the explicit and unreserved complete statement of the one and the other visions, and a willingness to challenge them fully and without reserve.

The latter requirement is an important prerequisite for interlocution, as for any proper educational intervention.

In fact, for an interlocution to be turned on, it must assume a peculiarity in the parties, which we call *openness*, that is, the full and unreserved availability to change, to become, and to be subject to an evolutionary becoming, to put in question one's own ideas and life project, to reflect on and change one's own choices, especially the fundamental ones, and even things considered taken for granted and well set, including oneself, to begin with one's own person, and a profound conviction of the value of pluralism and divergence.

In front of an interlocutor who refuses somehow to be opened to relevant parts of the dialog, the pedagogist, by rule, could do nothing, in practice, something can be done by indirect means and ways, or looking for glimpses of revelation if it seems that they do not exist.

Dialog, of course, is always bi-directional or multi-directional when the human beings who seek the pedagogist's help are more than one, or when she/he considers involving other people, and she/he succeeds. But a part of this word process is the pedagogist himself/herself, who must be the first to show openness, and to be the witness of human positiveness. Ideas are always for the man, and we mean all the ideas since Pedagogy could not accept the reverse nowadays.

A *project of life* is always present, in any person. Of course, it should not be rigidly unchanging, and many difficulties arise precisely when the subject is closed in it, and chained to it, regardless of both its internal (e.g., logic) and external (e.g., disproven by the facts) contradictions. This is not a *plan* or a *model*.

In addition, there are often embedded or hidden aspects, which as such do not indicate any contradiction with the reality or with the life plans of other closer persons, even when such contradiction is apparent. A typical case is when implied, tacit, taken for granted aspects in one's life project occur as a desire for obligations or functions to be fulfilled by the partner but never argued or quarreled upon.

Consistency, or at least the compatibility between life projects of those who establish whatever human partnership, should be considered a necessary condition: it is true for the couple, the family, school, education, associations, cooperation, and so forth.

The pedagogist has an important role in clarifying what is implicit, that is, to change the functions and properties (the "extensions") of a sort of hidden file. Note carefully that these are ideas that dwell in the conscious level: digging into the unconscious is not the pedagogist's task, but of the psychologist's task in some of his specialties.

The addressee of the pedagogical support is, therefore, the human subject, meant as a subject of history and culture, as the place of values and a complex interpersonal communication link, as a subject of politics in the broadest sense and in the original sense of *πολιτεία*: that is to say, with a strictly technical term, the *persona* (*person*). The Latin term entered the philosophy and disciplines of man in the last century. It has had greater success in the context of the Catholic philosophy and pedagogy, but it has been for a long time gotten the attention of laity pedagogists, and moreover, Mounier himself identified its roots in Socrates, Kant, Leibniz, and Pascal.

The term "individual" is employed in other contexts: the use of this term is not incorrect, by itself, when one wants to speak about an element of a population, giving prior attention to the population itself, may be in the case of evolutionary studies, or statistical-operational studies such as those that belong to the so-called (in Italy) experimental pedagogy. But the pedagogist in his professional practice

focuses his attention on the interlocutor. As Mounier wrote in a famous quotation, Personalism emphasizes “*l’insertion collective et cosmique de la personne*” [14] (*the collective and cosmic insertion of the person*).

The attention is required, then, especially when we talk about ‘help’ (or ‘aid?’), for example, to ‘family,’ ‘school,’ ‘a company,’ ‘the association,’ ‘the sporting club,’ and ‘the couple.’ This is, therefore, a synecdoche: the whole instead of and for its parts. When a pedagogist is invested with a supportive task with reference ‘to the couple,’ he actually helps the partners to deal with problems related to their being a couple, to their relationship as a couple.

Here, too, the discussion is far from being purely nominalist. For example, choosing one of the frequent cases of which we have extensive experience: when a couple supportive relationship is started, it is not the same thing if the pedagogist helps the one or the other partner, and this even when they both ask for the pedagogist’s help and at the same time, as well as the case of parenthood is very different when one is called upon to help parents (or one parent) or the son. The two partners are not characterized by the same “*insertion collective et cosmique*,” and the same goes from parents to children. Problematic situations, in such cases, may also be the same, and sometimes it is not even said that they are such, but this is not true for problems, that is, how each person poses problems starting from problematic situations that can also be similar, but in any case, the similarity cannot be considered for the particular helping relationship to be activated.

A misunderstanding to avoid with careful attention concerns the cultural character of the pedagogical interlocution however it is meant. *The pedagogist’s intervention is never a therapy*, and the pedagogist should not be confused in any way with a therapist. In pedagogy, there is not a ‘physiology’ that, in violation of some of its standard parameters, integrates some form of disease whose cure is the task of the physician, psychotherapist or some other professional or practitioners.

What the pedagogist can do is, if anything, *to be of some help to the therapy* that, as just noted, is a *support to the therapist himself*, or to those who have to approach the treatment or must follow it (but it is not possible to speak of “patient” even in this case), or even for those who are near, as caregivers to the one who must follow a therapy. Typical are the cases of the depressed (or her/his family members) who need a cultural intervention to rationally approach what should be considered a disease like any other and family members affected by a conversion syndrome (formerly ‘hysteria’) who need to know how to behave during accesses and at the end of these, how to come back to everyday life and every form of relationship after operations or disabling diseases, how to prevent cases of potentially pathological situations to be held under control (such as diabetes), or diseases that require special diets and regimes of life), and so forth.

These are cases in which the pedagogist acts largely as a teacher (the so-called non-school teaching...): cases in which she/he is more likely to appear as a woman/man of learning and culture, far from the stereotype of the therapist, even though she/he acts in healthcare facilities or at the side of it.

For this reason, she/he cannot call patients her/his interlocutors.

He can instead use the adjective ‘clinical,’ in the methodological sense. When using this adjective, and the corresponding noun one may note also a distant kind of etymological meaning. In classical Greek, also used by Claudius Galen, κλινικός was an adjective [15] related to the intervention on the bed (κλίβε) where the patient was lying, that is to say, a specific intervention ‘*in situation*.’ One can also refer to the verb κλίνω, which indicates to address, to lean to approach.

Clinical as a conceptual method is used for the obvious occurrences in the educational dialog as for any elements of communication in the sanitary clinical field: for example, realism, attention to the addressee, the problematic nature of things and situations, the direct relationality, professionalism, the focus on doctrine, the

possibility of considering any form of individual variation, the mutual exclusion of 'medium,' types that instead are involved in the educational processes, even, statistics based. The procedure recalls rather the *abduction* or *retroduction*, originally 'απαγωγή: from some elements of a peculiar 'clinical' case, the expert professional is able to go back to the general case, or 'casuistry.' Human mediation is a condition of knowledge and of professional handling of the case itself. It's a way to remember the *anthropological principle*; reality is cognizable because of man.

Argumentations such as these lead us to state that the pedagogist should be considered also, and in an increasingly strong perspective, a methodologist.

Among the professional techniques specifically pedagogical, there is the usual procedure, theoretically and epistemologically founded, that is to help the other person to make *the transition from the problematic situation to the problem*.

With some substantial difference from both the Pragmatistic-Strumentalistic Pedagogy, and the Epistemology of Critical Rationalism or Falsificationism, we call *problematic situations* any case in which the living-man is in conflict, contrast, contradiction and imbalance, discrepancy, thus in crisis with its environmental interaction; being aware that interaction is undeniable and criticism is usual, normal, obvious, extremely frequent. Only when there is a part of the human disposition to react positively, constructively, ready to take charge of, we properly speak of *problem*.

We also do not speak of 'solution' to the problem, but '*attempts (note the plural) to solve the problems*,' having no criteria of truth.

Problematic situations are into the reality of things, and only the man is able to put them as problems, and to take them in charge, sometimes in such a small way. This is an aspect of vision, properly anthropological of education and pedagogy (General and Professional).

The Professional Pedagogist, for her/his intrinsic reasons, is the one who helps the interlocutor in his/her solution attempts. Even if she/he had possible hypotheses to solve some problems, if anything, she/he should present them as her/his own, or not presenting them at all. The whole dialog-based work consists of ensuring that the other person tries to develop her/his possible solutions.

The pedagogist has no solutions to offer, but an ongoing process that tends to help the research for such solutions. The interlocutor who asked "So doctor, what is the course of study my son can follow?" ; "Must I abandon my wife/my husband?"; and "Must I change my job or stay where I am?"; the only answer the pedagogist can give is, ultimately, "*we will go on talking about it*."

Of course, she/he could envisage her/his possible solution, or even more than one: if it is clear that these are some possible hypotheses and provided that it is one or more within a broader and more diversified variety. But she/he must carefully refrain from doing so, whenever her/his hypotheses are likely to be taken for what they are not (a judgment, diagnosis, expertise, etc.), or it might become an excuse for the interlocutor who hides behind it and breaks the discussion ("the expert told me so!").

As for the pedagogist: a researcher, with no ends or τέλος, there is neither a '*physiology*' to refer to nor a '*law*' the violation of which constitutes an offense, which would lead to judgment and condemnation.

Also, for this, the pedagogist does not make judgments (as pedagogist), and in any case does not impose sanctions, or pronounce convictions. In some cases, he takes on external factors: the diagnosis of a doctor, a judgment of a court, the recognition of habits and established practices of a sociologist...'*external*' does not mean stranger, being well known that the pedagogist's culture is a very complex one, and that she/he must be able to make herself/himself a specific resource of contributions coming from that set of sciences that are presented as *Sciences of Education*.

The pedagogist rather expresses *opinions*, and *points of view*: his own or those of others, always explicitly and admittedly.

Pedagogist never prescribes, rather *indicates*.

He does not really give advice, rather *suggestions*. He does not tell anyone to follow a different path from the chosen one: if anything, he tells that in addition to the determined one there are other tracks and discusses with her/his interlocutor what they are.

After having, presented and argued his views, opinions, points of view, visions (in the sense of *Anschauungen* and *Einsichten*), directions, suggestions and anything similar, the next step consists of “*let’s talk again*,” provided that the interlocutor maintains the necessary openness.

The answers that the pedagogist can give, and it is her/his duty to give, are answers on method and not on merit. When he gives answers on merit, and it happens, he does not give them as a pedagogist, rather, as a human person to whom the claim by Terentius “*Homo sum: nihil humani a me alienum puto*” [16] is relevant.

In regard to the interlocutor’s legitimate and understandable need to find answers on merit, the pedagogist can only have a specific task: to help him find them.

They are answers, methodologically speaking, which take the form of hypothetical imperatives. The normativity of pedagogy, in the case of Professional Pedagogy (or at least in this case), is a normativity that connects certain directions to the existence of certain premises. The type of response by which the Professional Pedagogist helps his interlocutor to arrive at is a sort of “*if...then...*”.

But still, the hypothetical procedure is, at a closer look, double. It hypothesized the subsistence of the premise or protasis (“*if...then...*” or “*if not...then...*”). But the link between the premise and the consequence, protasis and apodosis, “*if...then maybe...or if not...then maybe...*” is even hypothetical.

Those of the pedagogist, and probably not only belonging to the Professional Pedagogist, are then *double hypothetical imperatives*: when one cannot read them in this form, which often happens in the educational literature, it comes from the fact that the premise or protasis or the hypothetical link one wishes necessary and rigid, is hidden, with a determinism that is typically positivistic.

This is a way to overcome the dualism, typical of philosophy and intrinsic to it, between prescriptiveness and descriptiveness, between normative and descriptive sciences, nomothetic and idiographic disciplines.

The hypothetical nature of these essential steps in the pedagogical supportive relationship and the overcoming of the just mentioned dualism give substance and implementation also in the pedagogical field to the praise of a *systematic doubt* that was well taken, in the contemporary epistemology, by the Critical Rationalism.

Doubt permeates the pedagogist’s opinions, information, suggestions, visions: expressing himself in these terms and in her/him subsequent professional practice, she/he also gives an account of non-omnipotence of education, being also an example of a way of life, dealing with problems, in strictly pedagogical terms, as well as in coherence with human nature.

An essential part of the pedagogist’s technique in the helping relationship is the ability to become involved deeply and basically in the dialog: the pedagogist does not have, at present, either the “*clinical detachment*” or something that resembles it, and probably he cannot own anything analogous for intrinsic reasons to his specificity.

What he makes systematic use has a lot to do with *empathy*, such as how it has been dealt with by Carl Rogers. The latest, while rightly pointed out in the History of Pedagogy, was not a pedagogist but a psychotherapist: this should be reminded of those who would claim to transfer to the pedagogical field that *Client Centered Therapy*, which was named as such (therefore, as previously said, an intervention maybe important but not pedagogical at all) [17].

However, the technique that the pedagogist is required to make use of is substantially different from the pedagogist: *it is to get inside the problematic situation*

suggested by the interlocutor, taking into account deliberately some future developments, in order to give it back in a way that can be solved better by the same interlocutor.

It is therefore suggested to use the original term *Einfühlung*, which may indicate a design, a technique that one can learn and that is taught and that evokes a different theoretical and professional context (as the same *Einsicht* instead of *Insight*). In German, the term *Empathie* exists as well.

The use of *Einfühlung*, the absence of any kind of clinical detachment, makes on the one hand the Professional Pedagogist's intervention important, *the sense of limit*. In this context, some supportive relationships that last months or years, with weekly meetings or even more frequently, as it happens in psychotherapy, or in certain medical or social relations, in sport training, in musical or art teaching, are not to be forecasted.

12. A kind of conclusion: human imperfection and education

This, among other things, due to the deepest sense of *human limitation* characterizes this one as many other educational relationships. Human limitation perceived on the one hand in terms of *perfectibility* as the other side of *imperfection* belonging to the same coin, which is mankind, and on the other hand, in its nomothetical and regulatory aspects, that is, the ethics of looking for that “*better*,” which is always possible and that man is oriented to seek and pursue.

The Professional Pedagogist's helping relationship has fairly strict limitations, also for some wear and tear of human resources: approximately, we could talk of a few weeks, or even long-term relationships however made of short and dense interviews and breaks, filled with letters or phone calls or short messages, remembering that the dialog is never exclusive and conclusive in the process.

As it grows and develops, this dialogic relation is meant to be followed by other dialogs, or rather by the next development of that same dialog in other places and with other interlocutors. Even before the supportive relationship begins before meeting the other person, the pedagogist knows very well that the dialog she/he has to establish will be followed by other interventions, he/she sets how and when, of course, but this basic feature must be clear to her/him and without any prejudice.

There are essentially *two basic choices*, not mutually exclusive.

One is the observed need to continue the conversation with some other professional or expert: a psychologist, a doctor, a social worker, a lawyer, a sociologist, a therapist, or any other. It is an ethical principle, therefore, on the part of the Professional Pedagogist, not only to ensure an effective *redirection* that is a plain dimension, which happens at a fixed time but also to supply any help to this (as in the already mentioned so-called *support to therapy*, for example). This is what we call *professional redirection*.

The other choice, hopefully, more frequent, consists in propitiating the continuation of the dialogic relation in the context where the problematic situations arose or with people who started the controversies, or with persons that may be involved positively in them. If the dialogue at first, before the professional performance of the Pedagogist, was poor, in the couple, or at work, or in family, or in any human fellowship, it will start again with new and more effective vitality and openness. This is the Professional Pedagogist's act named as *canonical redirection*.

Anyone can be redirected especially in any site of human relationship, which may have some educational meaning to the interlocutor.

In a time of transition from a short Evo eighteenth/nineteenth century to the next, today's society shows a new need in the field of education, human and social relations.

The Social and Professional Pedagogy, with its 2500 years of history and the frame of the nineteenth century, Sozialpädagogik has got all the resources to respond in a completely positive way.

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[13] Fischer KG. Wie ist Theoriebildung für Politische Didaktik Möglich? In: Borrelli M, editor. *Deutsche Gegenwartspädagogik* Band I. Baltmannsweiler: Schneider; 1993. p. 107

[14] Note added à:Lalande A, editor. *Vocabulaire Technique et Critique de la Philosophie*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France; 1926

[15] “Clinical” today can be matched with ‘ή κλινική τέχνη, that is roughly ‘clinical art’. Moreover, is increasing the use of the Anglo-American term ‘*clinic*’, to indicate, for example, a training and educative session in sport or music with an athlete, an artist, an example of particular value, in which the great personage of that human activity enters in the context of a team or a complex or a band or other human society, to bring his own and very important and useful example. This is an exceptionally effective way of proceeding as education and *Bildung*, which generally requires limited time and efforts. As usual, the technical terms should not be translated. See References in the [12] note

[16] *Heautontimorumenos* (163 a. C. n.) (the punisher of himself, a Greek word in Latin) by Publius Terentius Afro (190 or 185 – 159 a. C. n.) v. 77. The full text is publicly available online

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