Greater Humanities for Education

Greater Humanities per la Formazione

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ABSTRACT

This article deals with the fragmentation of the Humanities, a proposed solution to it, and its applicability to Education Sciences. *Section §1* examines some of the historical roots of both the divide between Humanities and Natural Sciences, as well as that between the Humanities and Social Sciences. The goal will be that of drafting a genealogy of the issue, and not that of providing the reader with a thorough diachronic recount. Once the need for a common direction is established, Clifford's proposal is examined and supplemented with Burawoy's epistemological partition of social sciences (*Section §2*). Finally, the resulting template will be applied to education in general and, more specifically, to Education Sciences, in order to see if they fit the *Greater Humanities* vision. In particular, the case of Italy's *Scienze della Formazione* post-academic movement will be tested for compliance. Its overarching research programme, as outlined by Margiotta, will elicit a closer look at the ties between Education and unitarian projects devised for the Humanities.

Questo articolo si occupa della frammentazione delle Scienze Umane, di una soluzione a tale divisione e dell'applicabilità di quest'ultima alle Scienze pedagogiche. La *Sezione §1* esamina alcune delle radici storiche della spaccatura tra Scienze Umane e Scienze della Natura, così come quella tra Scienze Umane e Scienze Sociali. Lo scopo sarà quello di abbozzare una genealogia della questione – e non quella di fornire al lettore una dettagliata carrellata diacronica. Una volta stabilito il bisogno di una direzione comune, la proposta di Clifford è presa in esame e integrata con la suddivisione epistemologica delle scienze sociali suggerita da Burawoy (*Sezione §2*). Infine, il modello risultante sarà applicato alla formazione in generale e, in particolare, alle Scienze pedagogiche, allo scopo di vedere se aderiscono al progetto delle *Greater Humanities* [Umanesimo Metropolita]. Nello specifico, il caso italiano del movimento post-accademico delle *Scienze della Formazione* sarà rapportato al modello. Infatti, il programma di ricerca comprensivo delle *Scienze della Formazione*, così come tracciato da Margiotta, solleciterà uno sguardo più ravvicinato alle relazioni tra la Scienze pedagogiche e i progetti "unionisti" pensati per le Scienze Umane.

KEYWORDS

Greater Humanities, Education Sciences, Epistemological Divide, Constructivism, Italy.
Umanesimo Metropolita, Scienze Pedagogiche, Frattura Epistemologica, Costruttivismo, Italia.

How do Education Sciences measure up to face the challenge posed by the fragmentation of the Humanities?[1] In this article, I will maintain that they fare well in the light of Clifford's *Greater Humanities* (Clifford, 2013a) – the latter being one of the several frameworks proposed to solve the conundrum of an ever-sprawling and identity-seeking epistemological *milieu*.

In order to prove this point, I will outline the genealogy[2] of the schisms that characterised scientific thinking, until the most recent divisions among humanities themselves (*Section §1*). Drawing on Foucault, the focus will be on "effects" rather than "causes" (Perrot & Mariani, 1997, p. 192), with the goal of appreciating and of "localiz[ing]" issues – i.e. find their appropriate ontological placement within a realm of contingencies (Brossat & Mariani, 1997, p. 76). A trend is pinpointed: the more the Humanities are challenged by the emergence of Natural Sciences over the course of history, the more they multiply their branches, each with its own paradigm.

At this stage, Clifford's *Greater Humanities* are introduced (*Section §2*). Originally conceived as a prospective scenario for the academia, *Greater Humanities* excel at highlighting the communal aspects that ought to be pursued in order to keep the Humanities together. That is, not because unity is mandatory, but because Clifford's tenets make for a space that enables the cohabitation of different research programmes.[3] Inasmuch as competitiveness, mutual understanding requires common grounds as well. For this reason, I will argue Clifford's vision should be supplemented by the analysis of Burawoy, whose perspective pivots on social sciences. In fact, his framework could be conceived of as an extension of Clifford's ethico-political concerns (Burawoy, 2005).

Finally, notwithstanding occasional lack of communication between Social Sciences and Education Sciences (*Section §3*), it is possible to show that both *Greater Humanities* and Burawoy's solution to the fragmentation of Social Sciences fit the programme of Education Sciences. On the one hand, closer examination of the aetiology of the *Greater Humanities* will prove that such vision is deeply intertwined with educational contexts (*Section §3.1.*). On the other hand, by applying a Clifford-inspired template, it will be possible to show not only that education *is* intrinsically Humanistic, but that even specific research programmes *concerning* Education closely follow the benchmarks laid out by *Greater Humanities*. Such is, for example, the case of the Italian *Scienze della Formazione* post-academic research programme (*Section §3.2.*).

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1   Author's note. This article derives from a paper presented at *SIREF Winter School* (4th Edition, Bologna, 24–25 January 2020). Originally, the paper included a detailed report on a training experience planned after the *fourfold model for designing teacher research in suboptimal educational contexts* (Marcelli, 2019). After due review on behalf of the undersigned author's peers, owing to its length and detail – a decision was made to leave the experiential study for a later submission and evaluation process. Conversely, more focus was paid to the paper's initial theoretical outline, which provided further background that proved instrumental to the validation of the aforementioned *fourfold model* and, eventually, matched the focus of the conference entitled: *La Generatività della Pedagogia nella Ricerca Internazionale: Prospettive Interdisciplinari per un Nuovo Umanesimo nella Società dei Dati* [my translation: 'Education's Generativity within the Scope of International Research: Interdisciplinary Perspectives for a New Humanism in a Data-Driven Society'].

2   *Genealogy* is philosophically defined as the "metahistorical display of ideal meanings and of indefinite teleologies" (Foucault, 1971).

3   *Research programmes* is a concept devised by Lakatos in order to highlight the fact it is not single theories that are appraised as scientific or not, but series thereof. Research programmes arise from the "continuity" of theories and are characterised by "methodological rules" that set the path to be followed (Lakatos, 1978, pp. 46-47).

1. In *varietate concordia*?

The struggle for a unitarian view of the Humanities is long-standing and intricate. It spans across the history of Europe: from a period in which Western countries revelled in the self-discovery of their political might (Hoffman, 2015, pp. 19-20) and gleefully embraced *Studia Humanitatis* as the core cultural asset of their societal *status quo* (Foucault, 1976, pp. 25-67), to the later demise of their faith in the innate humane virtues of a covetous *intelligentsia* (Wallerstein, 1989, pp. 40-45).

Possibly, the hardest blow came with the development of natural sciences. In their epistemic naiveté, some early Renaissance scholars assumed one could negotiate with the forces of nature the same way one is compelled to use persuasion and good manners in order to meet the approval of its peers (Garin, 1983, pp. 69-73): that is, the idea that "the organic power of tropes to work wonders […] contained the power to transmogrify reality" (Stark, 2009, p. 89). Such core misunderstanding had the merit of promoting human initiative at the expense of a theologically prearranged destiny, and was, according to some, "instrumental in the emergence of modern science" (Henry, 2008, p. 4). However, it brought with it a fatal flaw: the attempt to tackle extra-human mysteries with the least effective approach. If eloquence effects changes on the human social fabric – they argued – there must be a specific type of eloquence that works with nature as a whole. Unfortunately, although language plays a fundamental role in our comprehension of natural phenomena (Galilei, 1623), the latter are way different from a whimsical child that ought to be persuaded through manipulative speech. As Stark observes: "most of the modern experimentalists […] ardently objected to such ideas of organic spell casting" (Stark, 2009, p. 91).

Once the scientific method got a firmer foothold, it became clear scientists had a long way to go before they could master the so-called "language of nature" (Galilei, 1623). But when scientific discoveries began to affect most of society – e.g. by changing the ways of production – the opposite of Renaissance magical thinking occurred: from the 18th century onward, several scientists not only took up the idea *Studia Humanitatis* were insufficient a means to develop the science of nature, but they also discarded the idea Humanities could play a pivotal role in our understanding of society without a naturalistic framework. As Kutac, Osipov, and Childress put it:

> This new way of thinking allowed the sciences to flourish and diversify, while the humanities fragmented and ultimately calcified over the centuries. The humanities curriculum split into many academic fields and lost its foundational unity and social purpose (2015, p. 378).

To this, Clifford argues:

> Humanities disciplines, or sectors of disciplines, have occasionally tried to be more 'scientific' on a natural science model. And, of course, this impulse has importantly defined the 'social sciences' (with decidedly mixed results)"(2013a, p. 4).

If there exists something such as a social science – scholars argued – it has to look like physics (perchance, mechanics): a nomological and reductionist endeavour in which individuals are treated, at best, as the gears of a gigantic machinery – their unique properties being just one of the many side-effects of their core

functioning (Wallerstein, 1989, p. 49).[4] Such belief is long-lived and recurrent, as exemplified by Hempel, who did not accept the need for methodological distinctions when explaining a "historical event" compared to a "physical event" (Borutti, 1999, p. 25).

Ever since the 'naturalization' of social science took place, an epoch of divides commenced. On the one hand, history of philosophy records several attempts at making the Humanities fully autonomous. For example, by steering away from natural sciences: – such is the case of Dilthey's *Geisteswissenschaften* (Riedel, 1989, pp, 48–49) and of the later uptake of antipositivist stances on behalf of postmodernists (Bereiter, 2010, pp. 3–4). On the other hand, notwithstanding repeated attempts to fix the gap, practical concerns slowed down the process: for example, several scholars denounce an excessive compartmentalization of both the Humanities and Social Sciences, and of the lines of inquiries they harbour (Emmett, 2010). Such partition comes in the shape of unequal funding, uneven careers within the academia, and occasional efforts to undermine competitive fields (Riedel, 1989, p. 35).

For example, Kuper and Marks report on the widespread conflicts within Anthropology: such "nineteenth-century discipline [is] fragmented" and has spawned "a variety of specializations" that are often "bundled together in many university departments", but do not cherish each other (Kuper & Marks, 2011, p. 166). Such is the case of biological anthropology:

> The biologists do genetics, or neuroscience, or primatology, or chase up new developments in evolutionary theory. They show little interest in archaeology [...] or in ethnography, except for snippets of information about sex and violence. Some do seem to feel that if only they could spare the time they would be able to knock some evolutionist sense into cultural anthropology. But they are too busy (2011, p. 167).

Confrontation was sparked "in the 1980s" by the emergence of "two radical movements:"

> Sociobiologists claimed that genetics was about to revolutionize the human sciences. These would become at last a branch of biology [...]. Another new movement appeared centre-stage in the 1980s (in fact another very old movement, in modern dress). Cultural theorists, identifying themselves with the humanities, insisted that foreign ways of thought are resistant to translation, that variation and change characterize even the most isolated populations [...] so comparisons are problematic. [Some] followed that road down to a relativist dead end. All generalizations about human beings were suspect, except for the iron law that culture trumps biology (p. 167).

Thus, it appears Humanities responded to the naturalization effort by increasing their diversity, to the point Social Sciences are, sometimes, regarded as something altogether different from 'Humanities proper' – the chief example being sociology (Zald, 1991). However, this means reconciliation is needed within the various fields of humanities as much as it is needed between Humanities as a whole and Natural Sciences.

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4   Concerning the reductionist attitude of some 'naturalized' Social Sciences, Washburn once addressed "human ethology" and remarked "[it] might be defined as the science that pretends humans cannot speak" (Washburn, 1978, p. 414)(Kuper & Marks, 2011, p. 167).

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This said, the present paper will not specifically address the overall merger of the two domains. Rather, its goal is to demonstrate how Clifford's conciliatory proposal, which was conceived as a response to the unitarian conundrum, eventually underpins the epistemological foundations of Education Sciences *qua* research programme.

2. Introducing the *Greater Humanities*

Upon request on behalf of the organizers of a conference on the future of academia, Clifford came forward with the concept of "Greater Humanities" (2013a, p. 1). According to its creator, said concept is meant to be grandiose and "utopian" – that is, the big idea of a prospective state of affairs rather than a detailed developmental plan (p. 1). It is thus unclear why de Graef includes it in his list of expressions coined as an apologetic reaction to "neo-liberal STEM-cum-biomed-fetishism" (de Graef, 2016, pp. 1–2), although, in a later interview, Clifford points out that the concept was somehow an attempt at dodging the "belittling" on behalf of universities' corporate management (2013b, p. 75).

In Clifford's own words, *Greater Humanities* is a concept that meets the need to account for the sprawling lore we possess about humankind, its artefacts, and what could be termed as the *Lebenswelt*.[5] Much like a broad metropolitan area, the Humanities might be seen as both unique and connected suburbs: while enjoying their own ontogeny and identity, they exchange individuals, information, and goods with both neighbouring and distant suburbs, thus generating a complex network with its own emergent properties. In this regard, "disciplinary traditions" relate to *Greater Humanities* like administrative divisions relate to a densely populated city: they do indeed represent *a way* of managing the urban *milieu*, but they do not saturate the panoply of its representations – not to talk about the inefficiency of the outdated governing practices they might be standing for (Clifford, 2013a, p. 2).

After establishing his epistemological fresco, Clifford elects to overlook differences, in order to highlight what is shared by this mosaic of knowledge and practices (p. 3):

> **a-***Interpretive*: Work in the Greater Humanities is textual and philological in broad, more than just literary, senses. Interpretation aims for persuasive, perspectival explanations and for temporally contingent descriptions and causes.
>
> **b-***Realist* (not 'objective'): In the Greater Humanities realism is based on the narrative, figural, and descriptive representation of social, cultural, environmental, and psychological phenomena. Realist accounts are textured, nonreductive, multiscaled, and overdetermined.
>
> **c-***Historical*: Ways of knowing in the Greater Humanities grapple with temporally specific conjunctures, tendencies, and fields of force. They are temporal in a Darwinian sense: everything is constantly made and unmade in determinate, material situations, developing without any guaranteed direction.

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5   I hereby use 'life-world' [*Lebenswelt*] according to Habermas' conception: "that linguistic structure […] through which society, culture and personality are mediated", and which Habermas associates to "the idea of material reproduction" that perpetuates all instances that are ultimately regarded as meaningful and cultural in essence (Rasmussen, 1984, p. 131). As such, it interacts with other systemic aspects of society that do not directly contribute to meaning construction but are nonetheless one essential component of the social engine (pp. 131–132).

d-*Ethico-political*: The Greater Humanities can never be content with the instrumental or technical conclusion that something must be so because it works or because people need it. Where does it work? For whom? At whose expense? What 'constitutive outsides' trouble all our powerful, meaningful orders?"

By saying so, Clifford not only suggests we recompose the divisions within universities (Clifford, 2013b, p. 77): he does also answer the long-standing fragmentation outlined in the *Section §1* of this paper. He believes such vision dodges the accusation of "imperialism" and promotes the alliance of fields of studies that acknowledge how knowledge and its management "is enmeshed in relations of power" (2013b, p. 77).

I argue Clifford's view could be fruitfully supplemented by Burawoy's. The latter challenges social sciences, and then provides his solution to the puzzle. I maintain *Greater Humanities* should undergo the same kind of scrutiny: in fact, without an appropriate framework, they run the risk of becoming what Burawoy dubbed "Wallerstein's Totalizing Utopia" – that is, a single and monolithic social science (p. 509). In order to avoid such nefarious outcome, Burawoy recommends we "provincialize" social sciences by "grounding them in their particularity and their specific context of production" (pp. 508–509). Because of that, two fundamental questions are asked (pp. 510–511):

- For whom is social knowledge produced? In other words: is it anticipated such knowledge "be given back to the world from which it was taken"?
- What is the purpose of social knowledge obtained? Does social science reflect upon its ends?

Burawoy solves said issues by distinguishing four dimensions of disciplinary knowledge: "professional" (instrumental knowledge for an academic audience), "critical" (reflexive knowledge for an academic audience), "public" (reflexive knowledge for an extra-academic audience), and "policy" (instrumental knowledge for an extra-academic audience) (p. 512). His normative claim is that the above dimensions should not "blur into each other" but rather enjoy "*relative autonomy.*" As they balance their respective tendencies – e.g. "professional knowledge" will always lean toward "self-referentiality and insularity" (p. 515). Hence, Burawoy advocates for a *unicuique suum* [to each his own] standpoint, which does not annihilate local differences between diverging branches and yet acknowledges said branches share the same roots and interact with each other by means of feedback processes. By talking of "provinces", Burawoy draws on a geographical metaphor that closely resembles Clifford's later idea of Humanities as a glocal fabric of interacting suburbs.

3. Parallels between Greater Humanities and Education Sciences

Now that the theoretical framework is established, it is time to turn our attention to Education Sciences in order to appraise their compliance with the *Greater Humanities* project.

On occasion, social scientists seem to give education for granted – that is, as if it was a matter of fact and not a matter of concern.[6] Such is the case of *The Pol-*

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6   The distinction between 'matters of fact' and 'matters of concern' is drawn on Latour (2004).

itics of Method in the Human Sciences: Positivism and Its Epistemological Others (2005b), which outlines the critical history of "some of the main disciplines in the human sciences" (Steinmetz, 2005a, p. 4): education is missing. The very term "education" sparsely populates the entire volume. It is usually mentioned as a variable, a property to investigate, or circumstantial information (Somers, 2005, pp. 233, 248; Collier, 2005, p. 331; Abbott, 2005, pp. 394, 402, 405, 409–410; Eley, 2005, p. 499; Burawoy, 2005, p. 519). Rarely, education is reflected upon: *qua* related to the social capital (Mirowski, 2005, p. 146; Somers, 2005, pp. 244–245, 251; Burawoy, 2005, p. 517), *qua* science education (Mirowski, 2005, p. 145), *qua* deriving from unpleasure (Elliott, 2005, p. 432), or *qua* civic education (Burawoy, 2005, p. 523). Only once 'education' is mentioned in a paragraph that deals with the epistemology of social sciences: it is recognised as playing a pivotal role in individual ontogeneses (Abbott, 2005, p. 412). Steinmetz's case is, of course, anecdotal – but, as argued for by de Graef "anecdotal evidence" can still be "telling" (2016, p. 4).

So, where does Education stand with regards to *Greater Humanities*? Is it the elephant in the room?

3.1   It has always been all about education

The first point is general, but not simplistic. In the two foundational texts in which the notion of *Greater Humanities* is addressed, the term 'education' is used infrequently; however, said idea was conceived *from within* and *for* an educational context (see Clifford, 2013a; Clifford, 2013b). Albeit visionary in essence, Clifford's picture is deeply rooted within his work both as a researcher *and* as an educator. Interdisciplinary research hubs, such as the Center for Cultural Studies at the University of California at Santa Cruz (UCSC) were born out of an attempt to even out the disparities between different research divisions – a process that Clifford himself dubs the "institutionalization of interdisciplinary humanities" (2013b, pp. 71–73). Education immediately took centre stage in Clifford's practice: international conferences and "lecture series" were organized, in order to foster exchange and the lifelong learning of participating investigators (2013b, pp. 79–90). The chief recipients of the Center's services at UCSC were "groups of graduate students" – the logic, was one of empowerment, in a way that recalls constructivist evaluation practices (Stufflebeam, Madaus, & Kellaghan, 2000, p.71–72): students could study new topics, gain insights, invite available experts, and eventually feed their results back to the student community (Clifford, 2013b, p. 81). Thus, we shall agree that the concept of *Greater Humanities* has always been educational all the way through – to the point its very creator possibly felt little need to make this point explicit.

Inasmuch as the *practice* of education constitutes a core element of the way *Greater Humanities* are implemented, Education Sciences themselves closely follow the tenets of Clifford's vision:

- INTERPRETIVE. According to current trends in Education Sciences, education could be conceived as a "constructivist" endeavour. As such, it is post-Cartesian, postrepresentationalist, and it fosters the inclusion of the observer in its practices and modelling processes (compare with Riegler, 2005, pp. 4–5). Its processes unfold at a level of intersubjective exchange (Fujarra Beraldo, Ligorio, & Barbato, 2018) aimed to develop individuals, their bodies, and their minds.

- REALIST. Although constructivist stances tend to have an "agnostic" approach to reality (Riegler, 2005, p. 4), Education Sciences are continuously fuelled by the investigation of reality as a guide for educational practices, which, in turn, draw on empirical findings in order to attain their goals. Even when scientific goals are seemingly disconnected from actual scenarios, education endeavours to effect change in actual states of affairs (see, e.g., Noddings, 1995, pp. 7–8).
- HISTORICAL. Education Sciences acknowledge education deals with the *hic et nunc*, but it does so by throwing a bridge between the past and the future (Smith, Gamlem, Sandal, & Engels, 2016). Education *makes* history by projecting human beings beyond their perceived limitations, but it does also take history into account, by acting consciously upon its disciplinary memory. Education Sciences aim to ease such goal and they are themselves at the crossroads of present contingencies and broader temporal arcs.
- ETHICO-POLITICAL. Education is deeply entrenched within the ethico-political fabric of our society, though it is distinct from what we ordinarily call 'politics' (Margiotta, 2007, p. 457). That is, both for the best and for the worst: schooling techniques have been adopted by authoritarian regimes to imbue people's with ideology; however, on most occasion, education 'proper' is synonymous with emancipation and individual liberties – although said concepts are in need of revision (see De Lissovoy, 2015). In sum, education could be defined as one of humans' "meta-biological competence" and as a "social technology" (Margiotta, 2007, p. 457).

3.2 The Italian contingency

Once proven education and the 'Sciences' thereof are legitimate members of the *Greater Humanities* – if not the most abiding of the lot – it is time to see how Education Sciences fare when confronted with critiques that are usually addressed to social sciences, broadly conceived. This effort entails a reprise of 'Burawoy's challenge', as illustrated in *Section §2*. I maintain Burawoy's requirements might be met by education at both a general and a local level. In order to support my claim, I will draw on a specific instance of Education Sciences, which is academically situated in Italy and accounts for a 'general' Burawoyan setting: *Scienze della Formazione*.

In a broader perspective, Italian education studies have already met Burawoy's demands for a more conscious approach. Such new course of events was sanctioned by the advent of a research programme dubbed *Scienze della Formazione*, which, from the 70s onwards, began to challenge the pre-existing *Scienze dell'Educazione* (Minello & Margiotta, 2011, pp. 138–173). Academic journals such as *Formazione & Insegnamento* owe their name to this epistemological turn of events. Although it will not be possible, in this paper, to detail the evolution of these two Italian schools of thought, it will suffice to say that whereas *Educazione* focused mostly on policies, schooling, curriculum studies, and classroom didactics, *Formazione* welcomed two apparently distinct domains of interest: non-formal and informal educational practices (including extra-academic training), as well as a broad reflexion on the normative and deontic features of education as a whole – i.e. *pedagogia* (Minello & Margiotta, 2011, *ibid*.).[7]

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7   After interviewing Minello and Margiotta in early 2019, it became clear that, drawing on Italian academic jargon, *Formazione* and *Educazione* differ to a great degree from their Anglo-Saxon relatives: as such, they ought to be regarded as false friends in translation. In Italian, *Educazione* is almost al-

Current *Scienze della Formazione* closely follow the research programme outlined by Margiotta in 'Perché una teoria della formazione? Un programma di ricerca,' which could be regarded as a veritable *Manifesto* of the academic movement it contributes to. The following analysis collects all the entries which, in that seminal text, happen to be analogous to the unitarian frameworks of Clifford and Burawoy. In order to better understand the coverage of the *Scienze della Formazione* programme, Clifford's "ethico-political" feature is broken down into four sub-sections: two of them, which are addressed to an extra-academic public, have been included as part of the Clifford-inspired analysis of 'education proper,' whereas the two sub-sections related to academic professionals are gathered under the separate umbrella of Education Sciences.

- HERMENEUTICS. *Scienze della Formazione* acknowledge education depends on the intentions of those who design and implement it (Margiotta, 2006, p. 186), and that relations are essential in order to achieve successful outcomes (p. 187). Moreover, education is maintained to be interpretive inasmuch as it is based on the need to ask "why" questions (p. 188), as well as the creative appropriation of schemes – which is an activity that goes beyond mere repetition (pp. 190–191) Finally, deliberation is recognized as relevant for a positive outcome of the educational process (p. 190). Constructivism stands as the main frame of reference (pp. 223–224).
- REALISM. *Scienze della Formazione* postulate education's link with reality by examining how it is possible to bridge between "doing" and "being" (p. 186). When doing so, relationship with the environment is essential for the successful achievement of educational outcomes – no matter how idiosyncratic they might be (pp. 187, 218): "experience" is the core of all educational processes (p. 187).
- HISTORY. *Scienze della Formazione* assume "heritage" is one of the most delicate assets teachers and educators are required to handle (p. 185). Moreover, from a scientific point of view, the historical perspective is ineliminable, since "the [very] concept of education was constructed over time" (p. 186). Because of that, Margiotta delves into a detailed historical analysis of past scientific beliefs about education (pp. 193–208).
- ETHICS AND POLITICS A (PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE). *Scienze della Formazione* aim to develop global society in a sustainable way and, although they are dedicated to "social progress," they do take into account shared repositories of values, which contribute to identity-making processes (pp. 185–186). The pivotal concept of the *Formazione* research programme is the acknowledgment we live in a "knowledge society" (pp. 208– 211).
- ETHICS AND POLITICS B (POLICIES). Notwithstanding the above emphasis on individuals, values, historical processes, and experience, Margiotta is not oblivious of the fact education – at least in its formal manifestation – is typically governed

ways used to denote 'formal schooling,' together with its intricated ministerial policies. Conversely, *Formazione* echoes the German concept of *Bildung*, with its stress on individual ontogeny and the fostering of opportunities for further personal development by means of multiplying accessible existential pathways (Gennari, 2006). Thus, the English term 'training' is but a poor translation of *Formazione*: in fact, 'training' has already been borrowed by the Italian language in order to introduce behaviourist concepts into the academic discourse. Consequently, since the *Formazione* paradigm is deeply adverse behaviourist theories (especially when naïve), it tends to deal with the term 'training' *qua* 'conditioning' (as in 'bootcamp') and not *in lieu* of other expressions such as 'coaching,' 'workout,' or 'supervised/structured education.' Therefore, it is strongly advised translators take this into account when addressing Italian books and papers on education.

by norms (p. 186). Thus, *Scienze della Formazione* take upon themselves the duty of reaching out to political cadres in order to fulfil their goals in unison with well-entrenched governmental practices (see, e.g. Margiotta 2007, pp. 442–467).[8]

As anticipated, *Scienze della Formazione* adds to the above points some remarks that, in the long run, proved seminal with regard to Italian academic professionalism and its critique within the field of Education Sciences:

- ETHICS AND POLITICS C (ACADEMIC PROFESSIONALISM). According to the *Scienze della Formazione* programme, investigators and educators alike are required to become the accountable planners of educational contexts and experiences, and transform themselves into guides once the learning activities have commenced (Margiotta, 2006, p. 212). In this respect, the specific duty of researchers is that of providing models that relate localized processes of education within the broader picture of societal change (Margiotta, 2006, pp. 213, 223).
- ETHICS AND POLITICS D (ACADEMIC CRITIQUE). While modelling education, the investigator is also required to adopt a critical approach. Namely, she should oversee the eventual lack of holistic approaches to the individuals and their wellbeing, exert a critique of disciplinarity, break down past knowledge, and take into account institutional influence (Margiotta, 2006, pp. 187, 218, 223). All of the above critiques shall become part of well-established evaluation processes (Margiotta, 2006, pp. 192– 193). Arguably, when evaluation pervades the investigative process, the gap between researchers and educators shrinks.

4. Conclusion

Indeed, Clifford's description of the *Greater Humanities* fits the propensity of Italian Education departments to abide by the tenets of *Scienze della Formazione*:

> It's an approach to knowledge which also critiques and bypasses, transcends in some degree, all of those hierarchies of high culture and low culture, a vision of knowledge which is simultaneously bottom up and top down, if you like, but also sideways—which subverts the hierarchies and the certainties of an older humanities or even an older hierarchically arranged university (2013b, p. 77).

Or is it the other way around? The structure of this theoretical study is top-down: the vision dictates the framework, and then the framework is applied to the empirical reality of Education Sciences – as described by those who promoted their thriving (e.g. Margiotta). However, given the centrality of Education in Clifford's model, it is legitimate to wonder: from an epistemological perspective, can we distinguish sufficiently developed Humanities research programmes from sufficiently developed research programmes concerning Education Sciences? Or do

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8 During a private exchange with the undersigned author (circa 2017), Margiotta expressed the desire to create a journal of education and cultural studies specifically aimed at a politically-involved readership. Possibly, he had in mind to repurpose *Comprendre*, the academic journal of the *Société Européenne de Culture* (SEC). His plans got eventually halted by his untimely passing in August 2019.

all Humanities boil down to Educational practices (either at the individual, group, or environmental level)? Such issue becomes particularly apparent when we move beyond the traditional segregation of professional fields and, drawing on Burawoy, 2005, we take into account the extension of socially-relevant sciences to the public sphere. Thus, further inquiries are needed in order to establish the eventual epistemological primacy of Education Sciences over its closest siblings.

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