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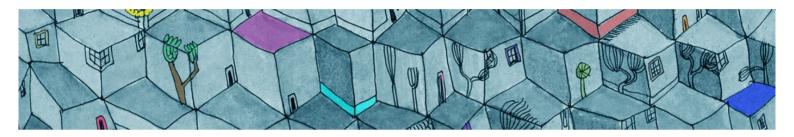
EducA, International Catholic Journal of Education

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Designation

EducA, International Catholic Journal of Education

Property

Association for Catholic Institutes for the Study of Education –ACISE (FIUC member).

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(Postal address – Rua Pinto de Aguiar, 345 – 4400-252 Vila Nova de Gaia – PT)

Regularity

Annual, at April each year.

Identity

EducA is a peer-reviewed international and electronic journal created to publish the best research in education that is done in the Catholic Universities all over the world.

Main Objectives:

. Stimulate the publication of social researchers from the Catholic Universities in the whole world, that have been conducting research activities in the education domain;

. Disseminate the research activities results to all those potential interested in the education field and decision makers;

. Promote the international scientific and professional cooperation between researchers investigating in education.

Main characteristics:

. EducA publish original papers insert in the education sciences field, as a plural and transdisciplinar scientific field.

. Each number of EducA has a main theme and a small number of free theme papers.

. EducA is open to the publication of empiric research papers, methodological papers, literature reviews and systematizations, fundamental theoretical papers and evaluations of relevant projects, innovations and experiences.

. All the submitted papers to the EducA Journal are submitted to a blinded peer-reviewed process, as the international standards. Each paper will be submitted anonymously to at least two referees.

Target-audience

The international scientific and academic community, the schools all over the world and other potential public interested in the education research domain.

Board of direction

The board is responsible for the coordination and general management of the journal and of the Advisory Council and the Scientific Committee, for the journal quality assurance. The Board also is responsible for the sustainability of the project.

Advisory Council

Composed by the peer-reviewers. This team of teachers, experts and researchers is responsible to support the journal doing the evaluation of the articles submitted to publication.

Scientific Committee

Composed by teachers and researchers in education, all over the world. This team is responsible for the advice in the selection of the themes of the journal and cooperate with the board of direction in the identification of peer-reviewers and coordinators of the themes of the journal.

Themes and specialized coordinators

Each number of the journal will have an invited Coordinator specialized on the theme that will cooperate with the director inviting researchers on the specific theme, doing a first view of the articles proposed, suggesting the specialized peer-reviewers.

Editorial Process

The articles proposed are firstly review by the board of direction in order to assure the fulfilment of the editorial criterea of the journal and the formal requests. The editor will send the blinded articles to the reviewers- two for each article -and their analysis will be done in an established protocol. If corrections are recommended, the authors will do them and the editor will accomplish the final style revision in order to be published. All these steps, from the article reception to the acceptance will not exceed three months.

Beginning

April 2015 (1st number)

Main theme of the first number

The distances in education (Coordinator Juan Carlos Torre Puente).

Main theme of the second number

Open to others (Coordinator Bart McGettrick).

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"OPEN TO OTHERS"
EDITORIAL COMMENT

Professor Bart McGettrick[*]

There is a real sense in which the title of this edition to EducA is itself a contradiction. If we were truly open it may be that there would be no "others!" There would be only a concept of "we" and "us," rather than some kind of identification with "others" – implying a difference or separation in some way.

This journal is concerned with Catholic education, and of course the term "Catholic education" immediately provides an orientation to a certain kind of education. In my view this is an education inspired by hope, love and justice. It is education intended to be for the benefit of all humanity, for "the common good," and is not only about the education of those of a certain faith and denomination. It is an education where the goodness of God is at the centre and is the foundation and reason for all we do in education. It does not imply a closed system of education through doctrine and dogma, but an education inspired by the Holy Spirit to benefit all of God's children and His creation. Indeed one might claim that an essential characteristic of Catholic education is to tear down the walls of division, separation and discord wherever and whenever they exist.

In many respects it is all too easy to identify "others." Politically and economically the migrants to Europe are on our doorsteps from The Middle East. We welcome them as sisters and brothers and they enrich the communities of Europe. To the educationist they are our neighbours, part of our community ... communities of hope, of love and of justice. These are

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not vague and remote ideas, but have to be lived and given real expression otherwise they are the tatters of memories and fantasy.

The identity of the students from Christian institutions is formed through the lived experiences of the university or school. These are not simply the experiences deriving from the curriculum, however impressive the teaching is. They are the experiences that come from every facet of university or school life, experiencing the graces of the Christian culture and community. Christian identity is carried in the heart and soul of each student – each unique and distinctive - and formed largely through and by experiences. So the educated person is someone who carries a rich interior self; a person of transcendence whose world does not stop at the functional and the superficial, but reaches to the deeper recesses of the human condition so that it inspires and gives true life to the full. A Catholic education does not fulfil its mission if it leaves untouched, uneducated the spiritual life which each person has. The Christian message is not one that ignores the challenges of life, but encompasses them. It is a message of mercy and reconciliation in the lived contemplative experiences of life.

Electronic journals are often transient publications, addressing contemporary issues and moving on. Much of "EducA" is like that, but there are contained in this edition some articles which are not at all transient, but will be of lasting relevance for the student of Catholic education and Catholic studies. For example, the ideas of Dom Henry Wansbrough reflect on whether the Catholic Church itself has become more open to others with the style of "listening" being adopted by Pope Francis, perhaps suggesting we do need to more open and learn from other traditions.

Professor Sullivan argues that Catholic schools in their Christian mission demonstrate their character through sacramental reference points. They must be places of reconciliation, of celebration, of community, of all those outward signs of inward graces. Reaching out to others is simply intrinsic to this message. Dr Leonard Franchi examines some of the challenges of this in "the public square," highlighting some of the conceptual and practical challenges which exist.

In this edition Professor Grace asks whether Catholic schools are indeed truly "open to others" or have they been –and perhaps still are- intrinsically places of indoctrination? He argues for more research being undertaken in a more "open" conceptualisation of Catholic

education. While Dr Andrew Morris provides evidence of the value of Catholic education from the meticulous studies undertaken in England. The narrative methodology of student reflection from Dr Bignold raises issues about what counts as "evidence" in the academy. She argues that we do need to be a listening Church – and especially listening to students, to the poor, to those at the margins. This issue of the status and engagement of students in higher education is very significant, especially if we are indeed to be open to others. To some extent this can be related to the study of Dr Ricardo Machon at Loyola Marymount, California, which suggests that first generation students are more engaged spiritually and in service-based activities than non-first generation students.

Professor Tomáš Jablonský poses the question, *"Who is my neighbour?"* addressing the very relevant concerns of modern times, seeing education, of necessity, involving "others." Sister Pina del Core examines the critical issue of identity and culture, and how we need to be open to other cultures through our own identity. Professor De Natale focuses this on the culture of youth and adolescent, and examines how important it is to have a pedagogy of education that pays attention to the personal needs of young people of that age. Fr Joseph Varghese describes and analyses the work of an Indian saint, St Kuriakose Elias, of the 19th century who eloquently envisaged the Catholic school as "a mission that was inclusive," highlighting how such a conceptualisation can survive in time and place.

Fr Imad Twal, from the Latin Patriarchate in Jerusalem comments on how Religious Education contributes to a more open society in the challenging settings of Jordan and The Middle East.

What is striking about the contributions, individually and collectively, is the congruence across countries and cultures, and the ways in which they complement each other to provide a coherent account of education that relates to the universal Church.

All of these contributions together suggest transformation and openness. They lead to the need for an "emergent design" – an architecture of change that uses research and scholarship from the wider world by being truly open to others. This is driven by a vision of goodness and justice. Scholarship in its endless quest for truth proclaims this and is part of it. It is never used to adjust this clear vision, but may be used to adjust how we might achieve how Catholic education always contributes to the common good by being open to others.

COMMUNICATION, MEDIA AND INCULTURATION

John Sullivan[*]

Abstract

This article addresses two dimensions of being open to others, both of which are then related to inculturation, a task shared by the Church and her schools and universities. First, the micro-level of personal communication with other individuals is considered, along with the qualities and virtues that enhance such communication. Second, the focus switches to the broader level of an intelligent and sensitive engagement with the media of communication deployed within contemporary culture. In the final section there is an indication of the bearing on inculturation and the relevance for Christian educators of both effective personal communicative relationships and a critical discernment of culture and its media of communication.

Keywords: Communication, communicative relationships, dialogue, communication media, Christian educators, faith, culture and inculturation.

It is one thing to believe that by being fully open to God's self-communication we make possible the emergence and flourishing of our own authentic identity; that is hard enough. To accept the risk of letting down the barriers we hold up against God and to trust that God both has benign intentions for, as well as supreme knowledge of, who we are and who we can become, with the help of grace, already seems highly risky. Somehow, it seems even more difficult and rash to be fully open to other people, whose goodwill towards us and whose capacity to understand us, we often have good reason to doubt. Yet, this is our calling: to meet God in, through and with the other person. For us to hear and respond to this call – and thus to enter into communion with others – requires us to engage in serious

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communication with a view to being really present to one another. If education is to promote our humanity, and if becoming more human is the necessary path towards participating in the life of God, then a major task of educators is to facilitate, to encourage and to model the capacity to communicate with others. In this paper I draw attention to some aspects of this task by bringing out its demands, complexities and challenges. In part one the focus will be on personal communication and its requirements. In part two a feature of the wider culture is brought into view, one that deserves more attention than it has so far received from faith educators, despite the efforts half a century ago of that far-sighted commentator Marshall McLuhan (McLuhan, 1978; 2010): the impact of new media of communication. Finally, and briefly, in part three it is suggested that the educational task of inculturation – relating the Gospel to a particular culture – a task which is shared between the Church and her schools and universities – has to be both sensitive to the personal dimensions of communication and alert to the significance and implications of the media used in communication.

Kevin Trowbridge distinguishes communication from media in terms that are pertinent to my areas of focus in parts one and two of this paper. '*Communication* is the relational process of creating meaning while *media* refers to the channels through which messages pass from one communicator to another. … Meaning is created through a relational process that involves the interaction between communicators, messages, and channels' (Trowbridge, 2012, pp.325; 327). Thus, in the first section I will concentrate on the human interactions, the 'software' of human qualities, virtues and capacities that are at the heart of communicative relationships, while in the second I attend to the bearing of the 'hardware' of the media employed in contemporary culture on human perspectives and interaction. In the light of parts one and two, I end, in part three, by proposing that inculturation of the Gospel depends on both the fostering of effective communicative relationships at the personal level and the critical discernment of a culture, especially being alert to its media of communication.

1. Communication between persons

Two dangers come to mind when we reflect on interpersonal communication. There is the raw truth of what is inside us and needs to come out. This will be deeply personal and subjective. It may be one-sided. It may be vehemently expressed. It may emerge from pain. It has immediacy and vigour. It comes from below. Its claim is to be authentic, true-to-self, rather than applicable to all. In contrast, there is a carefully honed, precise expression of

truth which has been 'validated' by some tradition as authoritative. This will be more objective than subjective, more universal in scope than particular to individual cases. It comes from above or outside us and claims to be transferable between people.

Both these types of truth can play a valuable part in communication, and both are valid and necessary, but each, taken on its own, is insufficient, because what is lacking in each is the complex and demanding task of entering into the experience and perspective of the other. This is a failure in relationship. In the first case, the person uttering a truth is insufficiently free at that moment from their pain (interpreted broadly) to attend to, to hear and to take fully into account other person(s), their needs and perspectives. At its best, such raw expression conveys a real authenticity, it calls for attention and it invites some reciprocity in response, preferably one that is restrained, sensitive and appreciative. At its worst, it can slip into mere self-indulgence, being both aggressive and defensive at the same time, lashing out in an undiscriminating manner. In the second case, because of their relatively detached and measured language, the person uttering a truth can seem to be insufficiently invested in, or affected by, the truth they utter; they can seem safely 'above the fray' rather than in the midst of the mess of life. They can appear insufficiently in touch with or sympathetic to those they speak to; if so, they fail to elicit a hearing. Their language comes across as abstract and it lacks concreteness or a 'down-to-earth' quality.

We must find ways to reconcile these two sources of truth and to bring them into dialogue because to leave them apart is damaging, damaging to individuals, damaging to traditions, damaging to communion between people, and damaging in that such separation blocks off avenues to a fuller appreciation and understanding of truth. To rely only on the first would leave people trapped by the limitations of their own experience and it would narrow their worlds unduly. To rely only on the second would be to inhibit serious personal engagement with the resources that traditions have to offer, it would prevent ownership and invite inauthenticity, it would undermine the capacity (and the need) for traditions and 'validated' truth-claims to be tested by the reality of people's experiences, to learn from this and to be open to further development.

Disagreement sometimes will be inevitable, but such disagreement does not have to be taken to be deliberately destructive; it can be constructive both in its intention and in its effects. Disagreement is often taken by leaders to be a sign of disloyalty, instead of as a different

understanding of what loyalty requires of us. The expression of disagreement usually calls for courage in overcoming fear of disapproval or of upsetting others. If the disagreement is to be constructive, care must be taken that it is not expressed aggressively. Here the tone of voice, as well as the language used, matters. Furthermore, if the disagreement is to be constructive, then the aim should be to assist in the process of finding a better way forward. Thus, commitment to a cause, about which one cares, is to be combined with civility; the critique offered is concerned with reconciliation rather than victory of one side over another.

The German philosopher Jürgen Habermas has drawn attention to the conditions necessary for communication to have a chance to flourish: one must believe that genuine consensus is possible; there should be equality among participants, together with freedom from constraint; there should be no premature closure of discussion topics or outcomes; all participants should have voice, respect and attention (Adams, 2006). Nicholas Burbules (Burbules, 1993, p.42) points out the key communicative virtues, which include tolerance, patience, openness to give and receive criticism, readiness to admit one may be mistaken, a desire to reinterpret or translate one's own concerns so that they will be comprehensible to others, self-imposition of restraint in order that others may speak and willingness to listen thoughtfully and attentively.

Many elements play a part in the communicative relationship: presence and posture, tone of voice rhythm and repetition, pace and pausing, cadence and gesture. Communication requires language (or media), together with relationship; it is supported or obscured by the exercise of the art and the power as well as by the intentions and clarity of the communicator in addition to the capacity and receptivity of those one wishes to reach. Communication is not a matter of merely broadcasting a message, but of bringing people together. This is best done as a joint activity, with shared effort and with reciprocal exchange. It is important to be alert to the gaps that can occur in attempts to communicate. There can be slippage between what one means to say, the degree to which one manages to say what one means, what the other person thinks should have been said, what the other person thinks was said, what the other person thinks was meant and how others interpret what others tell them was said. Words can change their significance for us according to several factors that exert an influence on their reception: what other words are used along-side them; who is saying them; our relationship to the person saying the words to us; where they are said (in what context); who else is present when they are said; our knowledge of the topic; whether we have prepared ourselves appropriately; and what else is going on in our lives at the time.

Various obstacles to dialogue can interrupt or distort communication: perhaps fear of disapproval or of reprisal, or insufficient trust in the other person's goodness and sincerity, or lack of confidence in the validity of one's own experience and insights, or, in contrast, too much confidence in one's own perspective and convictions. Other obstacles might be flattery, gossip, lies and slander, twisting of words, misrepresentation and selective deployment of truth or evasion. Excessive reticence might lead one to fail to speak when this is required, while excessive boldness might tempt one to jump in too quickly to have one's say without consideration of the consequences or likely impact. Another factor is our ignorance: there is much that we do not know. To start with, God will always remain beyond our ken; we never have our understanding of God 'taped', sorted or settled. Then, we remain a mystery to ourselves, despite rare moments of insight, often granted to us by others who shock us by their observations of who we are and what we are like. As for other people, no matter how well we think we know them, they too escape our grasp; they have depths that we cannot reach. If we think of the Church, she seems to be full of surprises for us, some welcome, others quite unwelcome. If we were not open to surprise, we would be closed to grace. Among the conditions which facilitate effective communication might be noted a recognition that no one has a monopoly on the truth, a presumption that those with whom we differ are acting in good faith, caution in ascribing motives to others for their adoption of particular arguments, and a willingness to put the best possible construction on differing positions, together with acceptance that one's own viewpoint might be mistaken.

What might dialogue - between parties who disagree about truth-claims or about values - achieve? Dialogue could lead to some combination of benefits drawn from the following possibilities: agreement on substantive issues, more effective joint action and collaboration, agreement about procedures for dealing with neuralgic issues, reduced number areas of disagreement about issues or an increased number of areas of agreement. Or it might open the door to better mutual understanding and appreciation; it might resolve some misunderstandings or improve relationships between participants. Other potential gains might include a raised level of involvement in decision-making processes, a more internally cohesive community and better witness externally. Educators might prompt students to ask: can we approach others seeking to appreciate their position and passion, their experience and perspective, their pain and fear, their commitments and their way of reading threats to these commitments?

Teachers and educational leaders everywhere, if they are to be effective, should go beyond mere competence; they need honesty, humility, humanity and hope. To sustain these for the long haul, they require conviction (with regard to their fundamental principles) courage (in how they put these into practice in face of difficulties, opposition and disappointments) and compassion (for those on the receiving end of their work). The tone of voice to be adopted should be one that is confident, clear, open, humble, respectful, invitational, imaginative, constructive and collaborative. When these elements are present, features of teaching for worthwhile learning that become evident include compassion for learners, rather than a need to exercise control over them, admiring contemplation of what is being studied, instead of efficient manipulation of it, and a stance of inter-dependence with students, fellow teachers and the wider community, in place of treating either the classroom or the topic under investigation as personal possessions.

2. Communication media and faith education

More than a generation ago the cultural theorist and religious thinker Walter Ong (1912 - 2003) pointed out how changes in the media of communication used in a society alter the balance within what he called the 'sensorium', the relative attention given to seeing, hearing, touching, tasting and speaking in our engagement with the world around us. Changes in the communication media employed by people in general and by teachers and learners in particular affect not only our language but our perceptions and our thinking, our modes of reasoning and valuing. It seems timely at this point in our cultural development, when waves of digital innovation in communication technologies wash over us with increasing rapidity, for Christian educators to reflect on how our interaction with communication media might affect our understanding of the task of communicating Christian faith.

Because of my low level of expertise in this field, I will rely heavily for this part of the paper on my reading of some writers who have greatly enhanced our understanding of how communications media affect our engagement with reality. Apart from drawing upon Ong, I will also refer to the writer who first alerted me (in the 1980s) to the influence of television in framing the way we interpret the world, Neil Postman, before making use of the lenses provided by three other specialists in media and communication: Sven Birketts, Luciano Floridi and Peter Horsfield.

Although my intention is not to concentrate on the media being used – or that might be used – in Christian education, nor is it to demonstrate a desire to be up-to-date or culturally 'savvy' as to the potential of new communications technologies, I believe it is important to acknowledge, albeit only too briefly and inadequately, their bearing on any attempt to communicate or to witness to Christian faith in church or in educational settings (at any level). Wise educators should remain alert to the bearing of culture and its communication media on the outlooks and mind-sets, the dispositions and expectations, the capacities and blind-spots of teachers and students. The messages that are conveyed, the language that is used, the relationships that are fostered, the modes of presence that are established and the kinds of learning that are facilitated in education cannot help but be deeply implicated in and pervasively influenced by the broader communication context.

The rapid development of new and increasingly more sophisticated communication technologies has an impact on our understanding of knowledge (its sources, nature, structure, reliability and interconnectedness or coherence), of text and of learning. It also modifies how we think about personal identity, self-expression, social conventions, community, authority and our perception of moral norms. In doing so, the ways we read and respond to the world are shifting. Changes occur in our experience of time and space, our sense of presence – who is present to us and how; changes are also experienced in our views on of what is possible, what is plausible and what is permitted. Our awareness and appreciation of stability, of continuity, of achieving depth through long-term engagement with and commitment to others, with texts and the world around us may become interrupted and inhibited.

Religious faith is inevitably influenced by the cumulative effect of all these unforeseen consequences of technological change, along with alterations in our thinking, our habits, our imagination, desires, our priorities and the people we are in touch with. Affecting us in tandem, new technologies 'modify our reflexes and expectations' (Birketts, 2006, p.xiii). Technology changes the story-line of society in several ways: it significantly adds to the sheer number of stories to which we have access; it loosens our connection to traditional reference points for the stories we inherit; it modifies how we encounter stories, for example, beyond face-to-face encounters and listening to elders, to sources and agencies with which we do not enjoy a direct and ongoing relationship or holistic reinforcement experiences. Nearly twenty years ago an observer of cultural trends could comment: 'Children used to

grow up in a home where parents told most of the stories. Today television tells most of the stories to most of the people most of the time' (Gerbner, cited by Warren, 1992). Despite the continuing cultural dominance of television, it is likely that this judgement has been rendered out-dated, given the proliferation of new communications media now being deployed by children and young adults who live in a hypermedia environment where there is a blend of 'text, still image, moving image, and sound, all arranged through a series of controlling icons' (Purves, 1998, p.112).

Walter Ong has argued that Socrates' complaints at the end of the *Phaedrus* about writing – that it diminishes memory, lacks interaction, disseminates at random, and disembodies speakers and hearers – are similar to late twentieth-century worries about computers as well as fifteenth-century concerns about printing (Ong, 1982, 79 -81). This complaint has been well-described by John Durham Peters in his history of communication *Speaking Into the Air*: 'Writing parodies live presence; it is inhuman, lacks interiority, destroys authentic dialogue, is impersonal, and cannot acknowledge the individuality of its interlocutors; and it is promiscuous in distribution' (Peters, 1999, p.47). Not only, as Ong observes, might we apply this to computers; it has been lamented also with regard to many other technological innovations in communication.

Two major insights from Ong deserve mention here: first, his account of the 'sensorium'; second, his analysis of key characteristics of media. In *The Presence of the Word* he describes the sensorium as the complete set of our bodily senses working together as an operational complex (Ong, 1967, p.6), explaining that the way we use our senses and the relative weight we attribute to each of them has a different configuration according to the culture in which we find ourselves. 'Cultures vary greatly in their exploitation of the various senses and in the way they relate their conceptual apparatus to the various senses. … a given culture … brings [a person] to organize his sensorium by attending to some types of perception more than others, by making an issue of certain ones while relatively neglecting other ones' (Ong, 1967, pp.3, 6). This is not to deny the fact that our senses provide both opportunities for, as well as constraints on, cultural developments; the influence between culture and senses is reciprocal. Our world is simultaneously both personal, as constructed by us, and objective, given to us. 'The sensorial organization specific to any given time and culture may bring us to overspecialize in certain features of actuality and to neglect others' (Ong, 1967, p.175).

Following on from this, Ong draws attention to three characteristics of media. He shows how any particular medium used in communication addresses and activates one or more of the different physical senses of sight, sound, hearing, touch and taste, affecting social perception as well as bodily engagement. Then, he links different media with particular associated ways of managing information, including its storage, retrieval and dissemination, with attendant effects on how cultures develop and deploy systems of meaning. Finally, he shows how the use of different media frames the pattern of relationships and authority in a culture.

It is often the case that, for most of the time, we remain unaware of the ways that our use of media of communication influences our perceptions and behaviour. In this respect, I found very helpful the work of Neil Postman, an expert on communication and culture, when I came across it thirty years ago. Postman pointed out that

> Each medium … makes possible a unique mode of discourse by providing a new orientation for thought, for expression, for sensibility. … Whether we are experiencing the world through the lens of speech or the printed word or the television camera, our media-metaphors, classify the world for us, sequence it, frame it enlarge it, reduce it, colour it, argue a case for what the world is like (Postman, 1987, p.10).

In the cultural mind-set fostered by television, Postman lamented the trivialisation that pervades our information environment. He quotes a television editor's assumptions about a news show 'that bite-sized is best, that complexity must be avoided, that nuances are dispensable, that qualifications impede the simple message, that visual stimulation is a substitute for thought, and that verbal precision is an anachronism' (pp.107-8). In addition to being concerned about the deleterious effects on education and on the political health of democracies of the cultural mind-set changes brought about by television, he noted that 'questions about the psychic, political and social effects of information are as applicable to the computer as to television' (p.166). His argument was that cognitive habits, social relations and value priorities are inevitably modified by the ideology-laden baggage that accompanies technological change.

Sven Birkerts enhances our appreciation of the nature of the changes brought about by the emergence of new communications media in two ways: first by offering a balance sheet of gains and losses; second, by drawing attention to the new communal experience made

possible through such media, a form of life he calls 'electronic tribalism' (Birketts, 2006, p.27). Birketts mentions four principal gains for individuals from electronic postmodernity:

> an increased awareness of the "big picture," a global perspective that admits the extraordinary complexity of interrelations; an expanded neural capacity, an ability to accommodate a broad range of stimuli simultaneously; a relativistic comprehension of situations that promotes the erosion of old biases and often expresses itself as tolerance; a matter-of-fact and unencumbered sort of readiness, a willingness to try new situations and arrangements (Birketts, 2006, p.27).

For educators these features deserve to be considered assets that support learning, rather than liabilities that impede it, even if they tend to erode fixed certainties and confidence in the reliability of traditions. These gains, however, for Birketts, should be weighed against some accompanying losses, among which he includes:

> a fragmented sense of time and a loss of the so-called duration experience, that depth phenomenon we associate with reverie; a reduced attention span and a general impatience with sustained inquiry; a shattered faith in institutions and in the explanatory narratives that formerly gave shape to subjective experience; a divorce from the past, from a vital sense of history as a cumulative or organic process (Birketts, 2006, p.27).

It is interesting to note a rather different inflection of Birkett's loss column when assessing the consequences of widespread use of new communications media. In her 2015 book *Reclaiming Conversation* Sherry Turkle laments the way that, in the various dimensions of their lives, people find ways around conversation, tempted by the possibilities of a text or an email in which they do not have to look, listen or reveal themselves. Her argument is that we are becoming addicted to connection over conversation, and this fact is stopping us from engaging in real debate, sharing our real opinions and reacting to our family, friends, partners and colleagues in a way that either encourages necessary conflict, or diffuses it. According to her, we are shying away from the real politics of the public square and heading for a subdued, online version of ourselves, allowing digital devices to dictate our daily life. Her thesis is that, in the bid for instant and permanent connectivity that is fuelled by new digitised communication, real presence - along with deep and engaging conversations that require time - are put in jeopardy. Such connectivity, rather than serious and deep communication, is what Birketts refers to as being enveloped in 'hive life', a form of electronic tribalism, one that is being built out of multiple components: 'telephone, fax, computer-screen networks, e-mail, interactive television' (Birketts, 2006, pp.226; 228), to which we could add texting, skype and smart-phone applications.

The specialist in the philosophy and ethics of information, Luciano Floridi, refers to four revolutions brought about by Copernicus, Darwin, Freud and Turing. Each of the first three of these revolutions displaces some aspect of our understanding of our place in the world and our own nature. As he says, with respect to the first three of these revolutions, 'we are not immobile, at the centre of [a] universe' that revolves around us, 'we are not unnaturally separate and diverse from the rest of the animal kingdom, and we are far from being Cartesian minds entirely transparent to ourselves' (Floridi, 2014, p.90). The fourth revolution, as described by Floridi, one inaugurated by Alan Turing in the 1940s, 'displaced us from our privileged and unique position in the realm of logical reasoning, information processing, and smart behaviour' (p.93). Our own creations, computers and related information and communications technologies, alerted us to our situation as 'mutually connected and embedded in an informational environment (the infosphere), which we share with other informational agents, both natural and artificial, that also process information logically and autonomously' (p.94).

Key elements in this infosphere include (among others) 'cloud computing, … smartphone apps, tablets and touch screens, GPS', as well as 'identity theft, online courses, [and] social media' … all of which have become 'environmental, anthropological, social, and interpretative forces', forces which cumulatively work together in such a way as to modify, pervasively, profoundly, and relentlessly, 'how we relate to each other … and how we interpret the world' (Floridi, p.vi). The infosphere evidently includes, for Floridi, not only the technological tools and their properties, but also the agents who use them and the interactions and relations they make possible. Our whole environment now has to be understood as one that is inescapably interactional, governed by informational processes. In a striking comment, Floridi observes that 'we grew up with cars, buildings, furniture, clothes, and all sorts of gadgets and technologies that were non-interactive, irresponsive, and incapable of communicating, learning, or memorizing' (p.48), but this is no longer the case. Increasingly and inexorably everything around us seems to be interactive and mutually responsive, so that, in terms of information, even if not in terms of emotional bonding, we are totally connected. According to Floridi, information and communication technologies (ICTs) have affected our understanding of what it is to be real; where once it was thought that to be real was to be unchangeable (therefore only God has true being); then that to be real was to be capable of being perceived by the senses; through the impact of ICTs, to be real is to be

something with which one can interact, even if that is transient and virtual, rather real in the concrete sense intended when perceivability was the yardstick (Floridi, 2014, p.53).

Christians are not immune from changes in the information and communication environment. They are inescapably influenced by what surrounds them both in what they think is plausible and how they express what is dear to them. Peter Horsfield links different interpretations and emphases within Christianity, and hence its diversity, to different responses by Christian groups to the communication possibilities made available by various media.

> Some Christian groups have been open to particular media practices but closed to others. Some have utilized similar media to others, but used them differently or ordered them in different hierarchies of value. Some have approached media from a purely utilitarian mindset, using whatever's available on the basis of its usefulness and effectiveness. Others have been selective in the media they use because of a given medium's different cultural associations. Some have seen technological forms of mediation as a priority; others have given higher priority to bodily, interpersonal forms of mediation (Horsfield, 2015, p.286).

Christian educators must face the challenge of evaluating and working out the implications for their mission of the various features of our communication environment that have been noted in this section, whichever term one finds most helpful - hypermedia, the infosphere, the hive, connectivity or informational matrix. They need to be alert to how communication media are shaping our environment in its multiple dimensions – cognitive, economic, political, social, cultural, moral, and even physical. A few comments on the bearing of such developments on education seem pertinent.

First, it must be acknowledged that 'no communication arrangement can guarantee to make accessible the truths of Christian faith' (Scharer and Hilberath, 2008, p.21). Such access, is subject to and requires both the gift of grace and the free response of the one who receives it.

Second, technology can do much but still remains in service to the underlying and enduring inner capacities or gifts of humanity, including imagination. This point is illustrated in the following brief anecdote. 'When I grew up, I could not imagine a world without Kodak. Neither could the managers of Kodak. As a result of this assumption, Kodak has become history' (Mahbubani, 2015, p.30). Even as humanity becomes increasingly dependent on technology, the technology still depends on our inner capacities and qualities, such as

sensitivity, listening, intelligence, conscience, empathy and judgement. Without these, connectivity will never lead to community or become mutual attunement.

Third, in order to move beyond mere connectivity, there is the need to nurture the willingness to engage in deeper listening. Many years ago Postman claimed that one of the benefits that education should give us is a built-in crap-detector, the ability to tell when some person or group was trying to deceive or manipulate us (Postman and Weingartner, 1971). Can we now hope that one of the benefits that education will give us is a better hearing-aid? There are signs in our culture of greater openness about and willingness to share experiences, feelings and a greater acknowledgement of our need for recognition, acceptance and affirmation.

Fourth, with pluralism, postmodernity and a widespread erosion of confidence in claims to certainty about metanarratives, perhaps education will begin to do justice to the diversity of ways of knowing, focussing not only cognitive, rational and conceptual knowledge, but also aesthetic, symbolic/gestural, embodied, kinaesthetic and spiritual knowledge.

Fifth, in acknowledging much greater access to and democratisation of knowledge – with multiple sources of information – Christian educational institutions should welcome and adjust to the ensuing distributed nature of authority. Centralisation and concentration of authority, with associated pressures toward conformity and compliance, even though marked features of the Church in recent centuries, do not fit well with the Christian mission to make mature, responsible and committed disciples.

Sixth, if in the past a strong emphasis in Christian education has been to pass on a body of content (scripture, doctrine, moral precepts), and if, in more recent times students have been encouraged to interrogate their own experience, in the light of current cultural developments in our communication environment, it is now necessary to give priority to equipping students to interpret and critique the culture, its assumptions and values, the habits it promotes, attentive to what it privileges and what it neglects, aware of how it frames our sense of identity, relationships, belonging and expectations.

3. Inculturation, mediation and communication

Integral to being human is participation in a culture. Many people inhabit several cultures at the same time, although these do not all have the same degree of purchase on their lives. As was noted in part two, the cultures one lives among affect a person's awareness and imagination, hopes and fears, expectations of others and assumptions about life. Cultural environments are permeated by messages mediated via many different modes of communication beyond immediate face-to-face contact, for example, television and the global internet, advertising and music, magazines and movies, video-games and mobile phones, along with the whole range of what Floridi has named the infosphere, each of which exerts a subtle influence on how people think and value. Christian educators must be conscious of, informed about and sensitive to the impact of culture on themselves and those they hope to address. The many types of activity that a Christian educator might be involved in, including proclamation and witness, worship and service, nurture and liberation, constantly have to be adjusted: as the surrounding culture changes, these activities are inevitably understood and expressed differently in a new mixture and set of priorities.

Some aspects of a culture will be hospitable to religious faith; some aspects will be hostile; while still other aspects will be indifferent. Christian educators need discernment – to avoid blanket acceptance or blind rejection of culture of the people with whom they are working. If Christians run away from the surrounding culture, so as not to be contaminated by it, they risk slipping into a ghetto, abdicate their responsibility to influence the world for the better and fail the people God wants them to touch; their purity becomes irrelevant to the world. On the other hand, if they throw ourselves into the world, they might soon find they have accepted too much of it on its own terms, and without realising it they could become assimilated and swallowed up by it and unable to bring to it the distinctive salt and light of faith. The challenge is to learn how to swim in a culture without drowning in it. In order to be relevant, they need to be rooted in culture and local needs. But, to be adequately Christian, they also need to be able to transcend culture. They have to be both at home, familiar with and hospitable to a culture, but also, to some degree, also a stranger, unsettled and disturbing in it. They are called to be *in* the world, to prompt it lovingly towards God, yet not *of* the world, fully accepting it as it is.

In bridging the gap between faith and a particular culture, Christian educators need to emphasize both the 'foreignness' of Christian faith – its supernatural character – and its

connection to, its continuity with, and its be-friending and enhancing of daily life – its natural aspects. They should avoid watering down the challenge and 'foreignness' of faith and the Gospel by domesticating the call to conversion of life and holiness. Yet they should also avoid causing unnecessary barriers for those on the path to faith by lacking imagination and creativity in their presentation of the Christian story. Thus, in one sense Christian educators today face the same challenge of holding in balance both closeness to and distance from the culture(s) surrounding them as the one with which all their predecessors had to deal. Yet, they also need to reflect carefully on the rapidly changing context brought about by Floridi's fourth revolution and its as-yet-unclear implications for our sense of identity, relationships, belonging, our thinking, valuing and imagining, our memory, hopes and constraints. Being immersed in a culture always entails being subject to unconscious codes that are difficult to discern, being complicit in hidden conflicts that can easily remain outside our consciousness, and being prompted to be creative with the resources available to us (see Gallagher, 2004, p.161).

The challenge entailed in connecting faith to culture is sometimes referred to as inculturation – the task of showing how the gospel relates to a particular time, place and cultural setting. This is a two-way process. Just as the gospel casts new light on each human situation, in turn that situation can bring different dimensions of the gospel into salience. Throughout history, each generation has had to read, receive and respond to the gospel in ways made possible by, but also in ways that are restricted by, the patterns of perception and behaviour associated with life in the world. The gospel always has to take root, to touch down in flesh and blood people, in very particular circumstances. Inevitably, in doing so, it changes colour, depending on what is already lighting up the lives of the people and what is darkening them

In an encounter with Christian faith, the culture will find itself challenged and be pressed to see itself in a new light. At the same time, when Christians encounter another culture, they will find their faith challenged, and they will find it necessary to re-interpret this faith and see it differently. Modifications in self-understanding are likely to be necessary on both sides as bridges are built between the heritage of Christian faith and the value systems, symbols, and cultures of learners. Incarnating the faith in a particular context will entail engagement by Christians with the language, perceptions, priorities, preoccupations and practices of the people therein. Such engagement facilitates the reception and appropriation of Christian faith

in terms understandable to the receiving culture. In turn however, all cultures need to be evangelized, brought into the light of the Cross.

The process of inculturation calls for two processes to take place in reciprocal interaction. There needs to be an intelligent 'reading' of a culture, conducted in such a way that one's reading is minimally dominated by the thought-forms of that culture (otherwise one's thinking will merely be a reflection of what is already there in the culture). This calls for a degree of standing back, of distancing, from that culture, in order to approach it freed from its presuppositions, insofar as this is possible. 'The world's outlook evaluates and understands by equating the person with possessions, positions, achievements, actions, linguistic or religious or cultural groups' (Mattam, 2003, p.229). There also needs to be an immersion into the outlook of Jesus. Integral to this challenge of holding together both processes – interpreting the culture and induction into a Christian perspective – there needs to a recognition that both worlds, that of our contemporary culture and the world of Jesus, do not appear before us transparently, nakedly, obviously or simply in some unfiltered manner; they come to us via multiple mediations. The complex role of communication technologies in mediating to us our culture has already been apparent in part two of this paper. The person and teaching of Jesus is accessible to us also only via multiple mediations: through scripture, preaching, sacramental practice, ecclesial life, the witness of countless people of God, prayer, service and conscience - all the elements that comprise a living tradition.

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I have been reflecting on the centrality of communication in our lives and the influence of new media of communication in our culture. Let me make a more explicit connection now with my understanding of education. Education is about the capacities of human nature: energy, emotions, intelligence, memory, will, conscience, imagination and wonder – and how these are developed, oriented, ordered and integrated. Christian education does all this in the light of Christ. Education can be an encounter and a journey in which many gifts and capacities are made possible. The following list, while long, remains incomplete. Education can enable people to think clearly, to analyse ideas, to weigh up the soundness and significance of claims, to express oneself convincingly, to interpret evidence and to take into account different points of view. Through their example and with their guidance, teachers can help students learn how to listen sensitively, to read intelligently, to judge carefully, to appreciate the insights, gifts and works of others and to relate compassionately and

cooperatively. To this treasury of gifts one might add further possibilities: learning to know oneself, to give oneself to commitments and to others, to love wisely and to develop confidence and competence in ongoing learning, together with the discipline and reinforced desire to find truth, beauty and goodness and the capacities to build a good life.

My own experience as a teacher, of children, young people and adults, is that students surprise us by their singularity. They learn something different from what we teach them. They break through our expectations (positive and negative). We experience them as a foreign country. They make demands on us that force us to be more attentive to their otherness, rather than taking them for granted. Although we want them to be like us in some aspect of knowledge or skill, they cannot be a copy; they are – like us – originals. Our courses are intended for the general student, but we face real individuals. The material is new for them; through them, it becomes new for us. Their worlds are (at least slightly) changed in their encounter with us; our world is also changed when we respond to who they are. This is a view of the relationship between teachers and students that would have been recognized by St. Augustine centuries ago. In his manual for catechists, he wrote: 'so potent is the feeling of sympathy, that when they are moved as we speak and we as they learn, we abide each with the other; and thus they, as it were, speak in us what they hear, while we, in a manner, learn in them what we teach' (Augustine, 1912, p.31). It is a view that is been echoed and expressed creatively a generation ago by Parker Palmer:

> The teacher who knows the subject well, must introduce it to students in the way one would introduce a friend. The students must know why the teacher values the subject, how the subject has transformed the teacher's life. By the same token, the teacher must value the students as potential friends, be vulnerable to the ways students may transform the teacher's relationship with the subject as well as be transformed. If I am invited into a valued friendship between two people, I will not enter in unless I feel that I am valued as well (Parker Palmer, 1993, p.104).

The qualities that education both depends upon in its teachers and seeks to develop in students are illustrated by two comments that bring out, respectively, the impact of personal communication and the need for a careful and intelligent reading of culture. The first comment comes from a young schoolteacher: 'I remember my English teacher because … he inspired me to be better, to take risks, to ask awkward questions and to feel as if I mattered' (Nicholson-Ward, 2015, p.9). The second comment is made by a professor who is an experienced teacher-educator: 'The authority of professors as scholars in their disciplines lies in their mastery of the discipline's discourse, but their authority as teachers lies in their skill

at the boundaries between the disciplines and the many worlds from which their students come' (Kenneth Bruffee, quoted by Esterline, 2005, pp.104-5). The former emphasises the positive influence that effective personal communication by a teacher can exert on students; the latter stresses the need for teachers to build bridges between students and the various cultures that surround them. That bridging role – between individuals and culture - has always been central to education; as a priority today, it must now include a confident engagement with and a critical interrogation of the influence of new media of communication. Without this, it is only too likely that students will find themselves kidnapped, rather than liberated, by their culture. Without the qualities that are integral to effective personal communication, it is quite possible that differences between people will lead to unnecessary conflict between them and that the capacity for learning of students will be impaired.

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DIÁLOGO COM O OUTRO.
PARA UMA PEDAGOGIA DO ENCONTRO[*]
DIALOGUE WITH THE OTHER.
FOR A PEDAGOGY OF ENCOUNTER

Joaquim Machado de Araújo & Alberto Filipe Araújo[**]

Resumo

Este artigo valoriza uma pedagogia que faz do diálogo o *leitmotiv* fundante cuja pedra angular é a palavra iniciática, enquanto trans-formação (*um-bildung*) e enfatiza a importância de Olhar o Outro não como um "menor", não como o "estrangeiro", mas na qualidade do meu "próximo" à semelhança da parábola evangélica do "Bom Samaritano". Assim, afirma a condição itinerante do ser humano (*homo viator*), realça a simbólica do gesto fraternal, mostra a importância do diálogo realizado ao longo do caminho e as repercussões pedagógicas desta perspetiva. Trata também da iniciação e da palavra no processo de conscientização e crescimento em humanidade, abordando a dimensão renovadora da pedagogia e a necessidade da batuta iniciática de um Mestre no percurso formativo de cada educando.

Palavras-chave: Proximidade, Itinerância, Educação, Mestria.

Abstract

This article values pedagogy as dialogue, the founding *leitmotif* whose cornerstone is the initiatory word, as trans-formation (*um-bildung*) whilst emphasizes the importance of Looking at the Other not as a "minor", not as a "foreigner" but as my "neighbor" like in the Gospel parable of the "Good Samaritan". It underscores the traveling condition of the human being (*homo viator*), highlights the symbolism of the brotherly gesture, shows the importance of the dialogue held along the way and the pedagogical implications of this perspective. It also deals with initiation and the word in the process of awareness and growing in humanity by addressing the renewing dimension of pedagogy and the need for the Master's initiation baton in the formative path of each student.

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Introdução

O apelo de abrirmo-nos ao Outro permite aprofundar a educação como iniciação aos grandes símbolos da Tradição, e não como uma mera didática de procedimentos, do tipo técnico-instrumental, que inelutavelmente nos conduziram àquilo que Neil Postman designa pelo "fim da educação" (2002) e ao que Olivier Reboul designou por "uma educação sem símbolos face a símbolos sem educação" (1992: 217-219).

Este artigo valoriza uma pedagogia que faz do diálogo o *leitmotiv* fundante cuja pedra angular é a palavra iniciática, enquanto trans-formação (*um-bildung*) e enfatiza a importância de Olhar o Outro não como um "menor", não como o "estrangeiro", mas na qualidade do meu "próximo" à semelhança da parábola evangélica do "Bom Samaritano". Na primeira parte, afirma a condição itinerante do ser humano (*homo viator*), realça a simbólica do gesto fraternal, mostra a importância do diálogo realizado ao longo do caminho e as repercussões desta perspectiva na pedagogia. Na segunda parte, trata-se da iniciação e da palavra no processo de conscientização e crescimento em humanidade, abordando a dimensão renovadora da pedagogia sob o ensinamento iniciático de um Mestre que ultrapassa o mero trajeto pedagógico do educando para se situar no plano da trans-formação de si em ordem ao rosto do Outro.

1. Do diálogo ao caminho sob o signo do gesto fraternal

O nosso ponto de partida começa precisamente com o encontro *No caminho de Emaús* e a aproximação do Mestre dos Mestres:

> Nesse mesmo dia, o primeiro da semana, dois dos discípulos iam a caminho de uma aldeia chamada Emaús, que ficava a cerca de duas léguas de Jerusalém; e conversava entre si sobre tudo o que acontecera. Enquanto conversavam e discutiam, aproximou-se deles o próprio Jesus e pôs-se com eles a caminho; os seus olhos estavam impedidos de o reconhecer. Disse-lhes Ele: "Que palavras são essas que trocais entre vós enquanto caminhais?" Pararam entristecidos. E um deles, chamado Cléofas, respondeu: "Tu és o único forasteiro em Jerusalém a ignorar o que lá se passou nestes dias?" Perguntou-lhes Ele: "Que foi?" Responderam-lhe: "O que se refere a Jesus de Nazaré, profeta poderoso

em obras e palavras diante de Deus e de todo o povo; como os sumos-sacerdotes e os nossos chefes o entregaram, para poder ser condenado à morte e crucificado (Lc 24, 13-20).

A condição de *homo viator* (Marcel, 1963) é realçada por muitos outros autores, mesmo quando, como Daniel Hameline, afirmam que "Nós somos todos viajantes porque nós somos todos obrigados a caminhar sem que o saibamos porquê" (1986, p. 130). A condição itinerante dos homens traduz-se, segundo este autor, num dos mais velhos gestos do mundo, que é o de "indicar o caminho a um desconhecido, e para isso desviar-se da sua própria direção e acompanha-lo uma parte do seu trajeto" (Hameline, 1986, p. 130). Assim sendo, "a condição itinerante expõe-nos a perdemo-nos, mas também a prestar ajuda; ela implica também que nós possamos ser chamados, por sua vez, a tornarmo-nos guias" (Hameline, 1986, p. 131).

Daniel Hameline reconhece mesmo que o exemplo dado transborda a semântica inerente ao sentido próprio dos mecanismos da linguagem, postulando já um outro nível semântico mais profundo e, consequentemente, enraizado na linguagem do mito:

> Dizer da condição educativa pela condição itinerante, é inscrevê-la numa narrativa que é já por si simbólica: a vida humana é aí lida como um itinerário. Esta simbólica oferece o duplo caráter de ser largamente atestada no nosso património cultural, mesmo no fundo antropológico comum a todas as culturas, mas também de convir singularmente à situação presente, tal como nós a somos conduzidos a imaginá-la. Dizer o destino dos homens utilizando a *imagerie* [no original] do percurso do itinerário, da viagem, é retomar as imagens que a linguagem do mito amplamente utilizou em numerosas culturas, bem como a linguagem da vida espiritual ou moral, seja ela cristã ou pagã, ocidental ou oriental (Hameline, 1986, p. 131).

A imagem da "condição itinerante" do homem chama a atenção para a "condição educativa" enquanto caminho de formação plasmado num poema dos «Proverbios y cantares» do livro *Campos de Castilla* (1912) de Antonio Machado (1875-1939):

Caminhante, são teus rastos / o caminho, e nada mais; / caminhante, não há caminho, / faz-se caminho ao andar. / Ao andar faz-se o caminho, / e ao olhar-se para trás / vê-se a senda que jamais se há-de voltar a pisar. / Caminhante, não há caminho, / somente sulcos no mar (Machado, 1999, p.130).

A simbólica da condição itinerante é igualmente rica de implicações mítico-simbólicas, especialmente quando a esta condição se junta "o mais velho gesto do mundo" que é aquele gesto que nós vemos relatado na *Parábola do Samaritano*, que responde à pergunta "Quem é o meu próximo?":

Certo homem descia de Jerusalém para Jericó e caiu nas mãos dos salteadores que, depois de o despojarem e encherem de pancadas, o abandonaram, deixando-o meio morto. Por coincidência, descia por aquele caminho um sacerdote que, ao vê-lo, passou ao largo. Do mesmo modo, também um levita passou por aquele lugar e, ao vê-lo, passou adiante. Mas um samaritano, que ia de viagem, chegou ao pé dele e, vendo-o, encheu-se de compaixão... Qual destes três parece ter sido o próximo daquele homem que caiu nas mãos dos salteadores? Respondeu: "O que usou de misericórdia para com ele". Jesus retorquiu: "Vai e faz tu também o mesmo" (Lc 10, 29-37).

Vemos aqui retratado o gesto do samaritano que se torna próximo de alguém, que lhe é desconhecido, pela ação do seu gesto solidário e fraternal. Fazemo-nos, sim, próximo de alguém pela nossa ação do encontro e pela disponibilidade que sentimos para o encontro para lá de toda a mediação ou mesmo de todo o critério social estabelecido.

Paul Ricoeur (1968, p. 99-111) realça que, nesta parábola, a misericórdia e a compaixão surgem na e pela dialética do "socius e do próximo" que tomam necessariamente conta da pessoa: o sacerdote e o levita representam a categoria do *socius*, ou seja, encarnam o "homem da história" (Ricoeur, 1968, p. 104), enquanto o samaritano representa o "próximo". Segundo ele, o problema não reside em quem é o próximo, mas quem se comportou como próximo, pois este é um comportamento e não um objecto: "Não se tem um próximo; faço-me o próximo de qualquer um" (Ricoeur, 1968, p. 100). E o samaritano é alguém que está aberto

para o outro, sem estar preso a papéis, a cargos, a tradições e a conveniências: "O samaritano é também uma categoria, se se quiser; mas aqui é uma categoria para os outros: é para o judeu pio, a categoria do estrangeiro; não faz parte do grupo (...) É a categoria da não-categoria" (Ricoeur, 1968, p. 100).

O samaritano é alguém livre da hipocrisia e do cálculo, alguém *disponível* para a relação eu-tu, no sentido buberiano (1938). O samaritano, ao contrário dos demais, faz-se próximo da vítima, do despojado, enquanto o sacerdote e o levita presos ao seu papel e função sociais (*socius*) não conseguem sentir-se próximos e, por consequência, não conseguem estabelecer um diálogo movido pela compaixão do gesto e pelo olhar favorável e acolhedor do "menor", ou seja, da vítima despojada:

> [O samaritano] Não está ocupado; não está preocupado por causa de suas ocupações; está em viagem, não se acha debaixo do peso de seu encargo social, pronto a mudar de caminho e a inventar uma conduta imprevista; disponível para o encontro e a presença. E a conduta que ele inventa é a relação direta "de homem a homem". Esta mesma conduta é da ordem do evento, pois se faz sem mediação de uma instituição; assim como o samaritano é uma pessoa pela sua capacidade de encontro, toda a sua 'compaixão' é um gesto para além do ofício (Ricoeur, 1968, p. 100).

Deste modo, podemos dizer que o próximo não se esgota numa mera definição, extravasa-a porque refere-se antes ao comportamento efetivo de se tornar presente a alguém. Não basta, assim, dizer que tenho um próximo, mas faço-me efetivamente próximo de alguém pelo meu gesto de tornar-me presente pela minha própria práxis que, por sua vez, institui um paradigma de ação. Deste modo, esse alguém de quem efetivamente me aproximei de forma pessoal, é o único referencial para se saber do próximo. Faço-me então próximo pelo gesto da compaixão, da solidariedade e pelo olhar favorável que, na sua plenitude, acolhe o desconhecido transformado num irmão de misericórdia!

O samaritano ao contrário do sacerdote e do levita é o excluído social, o estrangeiro. É o anónimo que, a troco de nada, oferece ao outro não somente a sua ajuda material mas também, e é aquilo que mais importa, todo o seu amor, toda a sua disponibilidade para além de toda a mediação social. O outro (a vítima) é encarado pelo samaritano como o seu próximo enquanto categoria ética e esta não deixa de colocar a questão do comportamento e

da atitude que mantém toda a densidade e envergadura da caridade relativamente ao nosso próximo, seja ele estrangeiro, conhecido ou *socius*:

> É preciso, pois, dizer alternativamente: é a História – e sua dialética do próximo e do *socius* – e sua dialética do próximo e do *socius* – que mantém a *envergadura* da caridade; mas é finalmente a caridade que governa a relação ao "socius" e a relação ao próximo, dando-lhes uma intenção comum. Pois a teologia da caridade não poderia ter extensão menor do que a teologia da História (Ricoeur, 1968, p. 111).

Um samaritano que ia no mesmo caminho-percurso-itinerário e que, sem se desviar do caminho, em vez de o ter continuado ou mesmo de ter fingido de não o ter visto, parou e ajudou o homem anónimo caído semimorto e despojado. A sua categoria é não ter categoria: figura de quem socialmente não tem categoria nenhuma, ou seja, está livre de qualquer encargo social e por isso é "o homem do remorso, do sonho, do mito" (1968, p. 104). É-nos dito que está em viagem, pronto a abrir-se ao imprevisto do encontro e do socorro solidário: "o companheirismo em que o essencial da relação humana reside na troca recíproca e a precaridade dos papéis: quem se engana pode um dia socorrer; quem socorre pode, amanhã, perder-se" (Hameline, 1986, p. 132). E a ser assim, a "condição itinerante" dos homens convoca "um dos mais velhos gestos do mundo" (lembramos o texto do nosso começo), e ao fazê-lo deixa já as margens seguras da metáfora para navegar no rio caudaloso da semântica luxuriante do símbolo, cujas funções educativas são postas em evidência por Olivier Reboul (1992). E se o símbolo, como nos ensinou Paul Ricoeur (1988, p. 479-488), "dá que pensar" na poética, na psicanálise e na história das religiões também não dá menos que pensar nas designadas Ciências da Educação, particularmente nas disciplinas que tradicionalmente as constituem, tais como a pedagogia geral, a psicologia, a sociologia, a história e a filosofia da educação (Reboul, 1992, p. 200-201).

No tocante à filosofia da educação, coube a Olivier Reboul (1990, p. 116; 1992, p. 191-219) ter sido o primeiro a dar-se conta que "uma educação sem símbolos face a símbolos sem educação":

> Se a educação se conforma aos símbolos, ela reduz-se ao conformismo; (…) Mas se ela os ignora, ela mutila-se porque o homem não pode passar sem eles. É preciso, portanto, conhecê-los em todos os sentidos do termo 'conhecer': fazê-los conhecer, considerá-los, como também fazê-los compreender em toda a sua riqueza polissémica. Que valores simbolizam o lobo e o cordeiro da fábula. Quando a

educação negligencia os símbolos, os media apoderam-se deles – tal desportista, tal canção, tal cantor – mas sem incitar minimamente a refletir sobre eles. Uma educação sem símbolos face a símbolos sem educação… (Reboul, 1990, p. 116).

Por outras palavras, "uma educação sem símbolos face a símbolos sem educação" tenderia a reduzir a reflexão filosófica educacional a uma espécie de beco sem saída especialmente por duas razões:

– A primeira é que uma educação sem símbolos tornar-se-ia ininteligível porque se a vocação originária da educação consiste, por um lado, em formar o sujeito pela cultura geral e específica, por outro lado também visa iniciá-lo ao mundo dos valores e é aqui que surge a importância do símbolo como linguagem dos valores (Reboul, 1992, p. 191-219);

– A segunda razão é que os símbolos carecem de uma educação de tipo iniciático para melhor revelarem a sua profundidade cosmológica, poética e onírica e não se ficarem num mero nível didático de explicação como acontece, tantas vezes, com a alegoria e mesmo até com a metáfora.

Face às razões agora assinaladas, importa destacar que elas contêm já em si todo um programa hermenêutico-pedagógico prometedor que urge ser levado a sério pela complexa razão que a Natividade ilustra aquilo que pode ser uma educação pelo símbolo, ou seja, graças às qualidades deste passa-se "dos valores sociais aos valores humanos" (Reboul, 1992, p. 217). E a passagem da Natividade conduz-nos quer à compreensão dos valores universais da humanidade, quer àqueles que são caraterísticos da paideia grega (Jaeger, s. d., p. 3-18). É portanto toda a simbólica da Natividade, com todas as implicações éticas e mítico-religiosas, que faz do símbolo um "grande meio de ensino" (Reboul, 1992, p. 201) que visa libertar em cada homem aquilo que o "impede de ser ele próprio, de realizar-se conforme o seu 'génio' singular" (Reboul, 1990, p. 22). E este mesmo "génio singular" diz-se, dá-se e afirma-se pela fala que sempre "define uma instância suprema da pessoa, a última palavra, ou a primeira, da existência na sua espontaneidade, testemunho do ser singular que se afirma e reafirma à face do mundo" (Gusdorf, 1995, p. 105).

Para que cada homem tenha maiores possibilidades de realizar-se conforme o seu "génio singular" importa que não descure os sentidos do seu caminho de modo a que não se sinta tentado a perder-se nos vários labirintos da vida com todas as consequências que daí resultam. Por isso é o sujeito contemporâneo (evitando aqui a querela concetual da pós-

modernidade) que deve restaurar o ritual iniciático como via trans-formadora (*Umbildung*) do *homo viator* (Marcel, 1963) para melhor apreender a via iniciática dos símbolos e não se ficar tão-somente pela sua abordagem meramente didática.

2. Iniciação e palavra

O ritual iniciático, entendido como via trans-formadora (*Umbildung*), assume um papel crucial na *Bildung* do sujeito moderno e tem grandes repercussões numa pedagogia que se pretende iniciática e remitologizadora, além de ocupar um lugar-chave no imaginário educacional (Araújo & Araújo, 2009). A substância dos cenários iniciáticos situa-se no plano da imaginação: "quer dizer que eles transmitem agora a sua mensagem espiritual num outro plano da experiência humana, dirigindo-se diretamente à imaginação" (Eliade, 1976, p. 266). É importante ver que a expressão "diretamente" pode prestar-se a mal-entendidos, pois, e Mircea Eliade sabe-o, há sempre mediação. Interessa, contudo, destacar que a iniciação, enquanto experiência arquetipal típica de toda a existência humana autêntica, não é exclusiva do homem tradicional, pois está sempre ao alcance do homem de hoje reativar, em determinadas condições existenciais e em determinadas etapas da vida, o seu esquema arcaico.

Compete, assim, a uma pedagogia iniciática e remitologizadora ensinar a reativar o *schème* (Durand, 1992) arcaico da iniciação para que o sujeito possa ultrapassar as suas crises existenciais num esforço de recuperar novamente a confiança perdida na vida, a sua vocação, o seu destino. Por outras palavras, que aprenda a olhar a morte como um "novo nascimento" que visa já realizar o desejo da transmutação espiritual sentida pelo ser humano de todos os tempos e de todas as culturas. Ele sente o apelo da mudança e da transformação, é habitado, diríamos, por uma nostalgia de uma renovação iniciática, para se tornar um homem mais realizado, logo mais verdadeiro, o que significa mais espiritual: "Aquilo que se sonha e espera nesses momentos de crise total, é de obter uma renovação definitiva e total, é de obter uma *renovatio* que possa transmutar a existência. É numa tal *renovatio* que culmina toda a conversão religiosa autêntica" (Eliade, 1976, p. 282). Segundo Eliade o homem moderno, independentemente da sua crença, experiencia, em determinados momentos da sua existência, uma nostalgia por uma renovação de tipo iniciático.

Por fim, o desiderato de toda a educação, que se pretende iniciática, deve, seguindo os ensinamentos do labirinto, criar condições para que aprendamos a aprender, e a melhor

compreender, a profundidade que somos. Somente a compreensão do sentido de profundidade que a imagem matricial do labirinto comporta nos poderá ajudar a romper com as máscaras sob as quais nos escondemos aos outros e a nós mesmos. Torna-se pois tão importante, como urgente, romper esse muro que nos impede de aceder "à consciência do infra-eu, espécie de cogito subterrâneo, de um subsolo em nós, o fundo do sem fundo" (Bachelard, 1986, p. 260).

Este "fundo do sem fundo", lembrando o mito em Fernando Pessoa, "um nada que é Tudo", parece-nos bem ilustrado pelo mitologema, ou símbolo do labirinto, que, através da sua função iniciática, conduz-nos para os insondáveis caminhos da trans-descendência, na feliz expressão de Gaston Bachelard (1986, p. 60). Entre a anábase e a catábase, decide-se muito da nossa *Bildung*, que acontece sempre na e pela *Umbildung* do eu nos labirintos da vida, em que os fios de Ariadne estão sempre à espreita, embora, tantas vezes, carecendo de uma pedagogia da escolha e de um Mestre, que não de um professor, que a saiba eleger: "Professores há muitos; mestres, dignos desse nome, raros o são. A palavra consagra, agora, uma qualificação especial, uma força superior, de cuja presença e irradiação irão beneficiar todos os que com ela contactam" (Gusdorf, 1973, p. 10). A vida de um Mestre "impõe-se, a todos ou a alguns, como uma lição de humanidade" (1970, p. 10). E todo o Mestre procura, pela palavra e pelo seu exemplo, ir ao encontro do Outro, enfim do seu discípulo (1970, p. 183-204), numa exigência de autenticidade para melhor dar uma lição de humanidade a todos o que com ele contactavam e, particularmente, com os seus discípulos (1970: 237-265). Nunca esquecendo que é pelo diálogo e pela linguagem que, como nos ensinou Georges Gusdorf, "o ser do homem é levado à consciência de si próprio – abertura para a transcendência" (1995, p. 12). No entanto, é necessário compreender-se que se trata de uma palavra dada, como uma espécie de revelação do ser iluminante da existência do Outro, que exige o respeito dessa mesma palavra. O gesto de dar a palavra, como o Mestre o faz, marca sempre a vida pessoal daquele que a ouve, seja o discípulo iniciado ou um mero neófito. É por isso mesmo que

> O homem capaz de dar a sua palavra, encontra-se pois revestido de uma dignidade profética. Perante o futuro desconhecido, a palavra formula uma antecipação: traça, entre a indecisão das circunstâncias, os primeiros contornos do futuro. No seu universo pessoal, o homem intervém com um poder de iniciativa criadora. (…) A palavra transforma a face da situação, é o penhor e compromisso, a assinatura de um contrato que pode parecer uma alienação da liberdade, mas que, na verdade,

consagra a ascensão do homem a uma liberdade nova pela virtude da obediência (Gusdorf, 1995, p. 106).

Se assim for, perguntamo-nos se o viandante, ao longo do caminho nas sendas do mundo e do seu percurso existencial, não necessitará ele também de "dar a sua palavra", qual "água da vida", para cumprir a sua vocação ontológica de Ser Mais (lembrando aqui Paulo Freire), se não terá ele necessidade de eleger uma pedagogia do caminho sob a batuta iniciática de um Mestre. Trata-se de uma pedagogia que escolha uma bebida salvífica e regeneradora como é a "água da vida" (lembrando "A Fonte da Juventude"), para evocar aqui o "Diálogo com a Samaritana":

> Chegou, pois, a uma cidade da Samaria, chamada Sicar, perto do terreno que Jacob tinha dado ao seu filho José. Ficava ali o poço de Jacob. Então Jesus, cansado da caminhada, sentou-se, sem mais, na borda do poço. Era por volta do meio-dia. Entretanto, chegou certa mulher samaritana para tirar água. Disse-lhe Jesus: 'Dá-me de beber'. Os seus discípulos tinham ido à cidade comprar alimentos. Disse-lhe então a samaritana: 'Como é que Tu, sendo judeu, me pedes de beber a mim que sou samaritana?' É que os judeus não se dão bem com os samaritanos. Respondeu-lhe Jesus: 'Se conhecesses o dom que Deus tem para dar e quem é que te diz: 'dá-me de beber', tu é que lhe pedirias, e Ele havia de dar-te água viva!' Disse-lhe a mulher: 'Senhor, não tens sequer um balde e o poço é fundo... Onde consegues, então, a água viva? Porventura és mais do que o nosso patriarca Jacob, que nos deu este poço donde beberam ele, os seus filhos e os seus rebanhos?' Replicou-lhe Jesus: 'Todo aquele que bebe desta água voltará a ter sede; mas, quem beber da água que Eu lhe der, nunca mais terá sede: a água que Eu lhe der, há-de tornar-se nele em fonte de água que dá a vida eterna'. Disse-lhe a mulher: 'Senhor dá-me dessa água para eu não ter sede, nem ter de vir cá tirá-la.» Respondeu-lhe Jesus: 'Vai, chama o teu marido e volta cá'. A mulher retorquiu-lhe: 'Eu não tenho marido' (Jo 4, 5-15).

Esta passagem do evangelho de S. João diz-nos que Jesus, cansado da caminhada, pediu água a uma mulher samaritana. O Seu gesto de pedir água (e muito haveria a discorrer sobre o valor ontológico deste gesto como metáfora) introduz-nos numa semântica de proximidade, de cumplicidade e de ligação. E esta ligação, que implica sempre uma dialogicidade entre um eu e um tu (Buber, 2007), faz-nos pensar novamente na reflexão de Paul Ricoeur sobre o tema do "socius e do próximo", acima evocada, e do tema da misericórdia em que o Outro (a samaritana) na sua alteridade é acolhido por Cristo como um seu semelhante. Por este gesto,

que envolve sempre um olhar favorável e acolhedor, Cristo oferece o seu perdão e a sua misericórdia à samaritana que se sente supostamente culpada. É, portanto, através da simbólica do olhar e da palavra comprometida que nos aproximamos da compreensão do eu para o tu orientado, senão mesmo modelado, pela misericórdia. Trata-se pois de um olhar e de uma palavra que não congelam o ser do tu, mas que, pelo contrário, o conseguem perturbar de modo a que ele se abra ao Outro e por esta abertura se torne, por conseguinte, mais disponível. E consegue tornar-se mais disponível, mais misericordioso, mais solidário pela dádiva de si e pela palavra dada envolta numa ética do respeito pela palavra devida: "Cumprir a sua palavra é esforçar-se por conservar um certo sentido de si mesmo, que se reconhece ser constitutivo da existência pessoal. […] O homem de palavra não promete exageradamente, mas paga com a sua pessoa" (Gusdorf, 1995, p. 106-108).

Por isso, é um gesto prototípico que, por sua vez, nos convida a que nos foquemos no símbolo da água. Não se trata de uma água qualquer, pois trata-se de uma água clara (simboliza a limpidez e transparência natural) e fresca de um poço (Bachelard, 1993, p. 29-56). A água clara, de acordo com Gaston Bachelard, representa "um símbolo natural para a pureza; ela dá sentidos precisos a uma psicologia prolixa da purificação. (…) é uma tentação constante para o simbolismo fácil da pureza. (…) Pela purificação, participa-se numa força fecunda, renovadora, polivalente" (1993, p. 153-154 e p. 163). Neste contexto, com Mircea Eliade, podemos dizer que a chamada "água da vida" é o protótipo da água (que, por sua vez, reenvia para o outro símbolo capital – a "árvore da Vida" de que fala o *Apocalipse*, 22, 1-2) e, como tal, é "fonte da vida" e "símbolo da vida": a "Água da Vida" é o "Símbolo cosmogónico, receptáculo de todos os gérmenes, a água torna-se na substância mágica e medicinal por excelência; ela cura, rejuvenesce, assegura a vida eterna" (1994: 237).

A "Água Viva" de que fala Cristo sublinha o caráter purificador, curativo e rejuvenescedor da "Água Viva" (como água clara, límpida, fresca, pura, maternal e feminina que é - Bachelard, 1993, p. 132-152) que dá a vida eterna àquele ou àquela que dela beber: "Todo aquele que bebe desta água voltará a ter sede; mas, quem beber da água que Eu lhe der, nunca mais terá sede: a água que Eu lhe der há-de tornar-se nele em fonte de água que dá a vida eterna" – são as palavras do Cristo à Samaritana.

A referência à "fonte de água que dá a vida eterna" reenvia imediatamente para a "Árvore da Vida", atrás referida, e para a "Fonte da Juventude" (a *fontaine de Jovence*). A água

proveniente dela possui efeitos rejuvenescedores e purificadores e harmoniza o tema da imortalidade com o da eterna juventude. Acredita-se que a água, que dela brota, tenha o poder de curar os males dos enfermos e de rejuvenescê-los (veja-se o exemplo das águas minerais e termais). Neste sentido, o doente bebendo a água da "fonte" espera não só ficar curado, mas também vitalizado, ou seja, mais energizado e, por conseguinte, mais jovem: "Ela [a água da fonte] desperta os centros nervosos. Ela tem uma composição moral. Ela desperta o homem para a vida enérgica" (Bachelard, 1993, p. 168).

O doente espera que bebendo da água mágica e salvífica da fonte simultaneamente se salve, se rejuvenesça e que se torne imortal. E porquê? Porque trata-se de uma água que é um leite: "toda a água é um leite" diz Gaston Bachelard (1993, p. 135), daí a crença que a água, tal como o leite, alimente e dê saúde aos fracos e aos enfermos. Além disso, a água, à semelhança do leite, é doce revigorante e tonificante: "A água doce será sempre na imaginação dos homens uma água privilegiada" (Bachelard, 1993, p. 179). Uma água doce e maternal "que faz viver na morte, além da morte" diz Carl Gustav Jung! E não foi isto mesmo que Cristo procurou transmitir à Samaritana? Dar-lhe a beber da "Água Viva" para lhe saciar a sua sede espiritual e permirtir-lhe viver para além da morte? Sabemos bem que a "vida eterna" anuncida por Cristo no seu diálogo com a Samaritana não é a imortalidade que os enfermos mortais ansiavam obter bebendo da água da "Fonte da Juventude", mas se encararmos este tema não só como uma lenda, mas também como uma metáfora, à semelhança de Gaston Bachelard (1993, p. 166), entender-se-á mais pertinentemente a sua "pregnância simbólica" e mesmo o seu alcance espiritual.

Trata-se de uma "Água Viva" eufemizadora capaz de combater o tempo e de transmutar o peso trágico da morte, pelo que, aqui, nos cruzamos com uma das funções capitais da Imaginação que, segundo Gilbert Durand, consiste em lutar "contra a podridão, exorcismo da morte e da decomposição temporal" (1992, p. 472). Por outras palavras, importa que saibamos merecer também beber da "Água Viva e da Vida" como uma água consoladora ou da consolação. Que seria de nós peregrinos, viandantes, sem esta água consoladora ao longo dos caminhos da nossa existência? Que seria de nós sem uma samaritana (eis o nosso próximo!) que dê de beber da água do poço ao Mestre dos Mestres, lembrando aqui a figuras do Mestre evocadas por Georges Gusdorf (*Professores para quê?*, 1973), Georges Steiner (*As Lições dos Mestres*, 2005) e Karl Jaspers (*Os Mestres da Humanidade*, 2003)? E que Este, por sua vez, lhe fale da "Água da Vida" como aquela água que dá a Vida eterna no lugar de

apagar simplesmente uma sede fisiológica e momentânea, pois como Cristo disse: "Todo aquele que beber desta água voltará a ter sede; mas, quem beber da água que Eu lhe der, nunca mais terá sede: a água que Eu lhe der há-de tornar-se nele em fonte de água que dá a vida eterna" (Jo 4, 13-14).

E não será portanto esta "Água Viva" uma consolação que nos ajudará a usar da Palavra ao longo dos caminhos da Vida entrecortados pelas paisagens da existência? Por fim, para recordarmos novamente a figura de Paulo Freire, não será a "Água Viva" um forte estimulante e contributo para que a nossa vocação ontológica de Ser Mais se torne o Graal da nossa condição de peregrinos ? Não será também esta "Água" aquela que ajudava aqueles viandantes que, à semelhança dos reis magos, perscrutavam os céus para melhor se reencontrarem ?

Em forma de conclusão: sob o signo da palavra iniciática

Sentirmo-nos disponíveis para um "tu" torna-se mais compreensível à luz da relação do mestre com o discípulo. Se, por um lado, esta relação "é um diálogo sem comunicação, uma comunhão indireta e sem plenitude, uma fuga cuja solução e resolução será indefinidamente recusada" (Gusdorf, 1973, p. 316), por outro lado o Mestre exprime-se pelo dom da palavra iniciática porque tem como uma das suas principais missões libertar no seu discípulo aquilo que o impede de ser ele mesmo e levá-lo a descobrir o seu destino ou o seu caminho: "Há no mundo um único caminho que ninguém pode seguir a não ser tu. Onde conduz ele? Não o perguntes. Segue-o" (Nietzsche, 1922, p. 11). Por outras palavras, o Mestre assume-se como um educador que sabiamente cria condições para o discípulo realizar, como dissemos citando Olivier Reboul, o seu "génio singular" na procura incessante da verdade. O Mestre está comprometido em cultivar a verdade e que esta irradie como uma luz que remeta "cada um para si mesmo, forçando-o a julgar-se. (…) A sua linguagem exerce uma eficácia intrínseca que leva à adesão dos outros" (Gusdorf, 1995, p. 108).

Nisto o Mestre distingue-se do "professor", se considerarmos que o professor está mais preocupado em saber transmitir os conteúdos científicos de acordo com determinadas orientações pedagógico-didáticas. A esfera do professor pertence prevalentemente ao domínio do cognitivo e menos às esferas ética e ontológica que pertencem naturalmente ao

Mestre. Por outro lado, se admitimos que todo o Mestre é um pedagogo, também realçamos que nem todo o pedagogo é um Mestre: se o pedagogo faz-se e forma-se, a figura do Mestre impõe-se pelo seu olhar, pelo seu silêncio, pela sua Palavra instauradora de sentidos humanizantes prenhes de uma esperança situada sempre num mais "alto"! Do Mestre "irradia uma luz que remete cada um para si mesmo, forçando-o a julgar-se. (…) A sua linguagem exerce uma eficácia intrínseca que leva à adesão dos outros" (Gusdorf, 1995, p. 108).

E como é que um Mestre realiza a sua missão? É verdade que cada Mestre tem o seu estilo singular e a sua visão do mundo – lembre-se Guilherme de Baskerville do *Nome da Rosa* de Umberto Eco (1980), o Mestre de Música da Ordem de Castália, e mesmo Joseph Knecht, da obra *O Jogo das Pérolas de Vidro* de Hermann Hess (1943), a figura do barqueiro do *Sidarta* (1922) do mesmo autor, assim como o Velho Monge do filme de Kim Ki-duk intitulado *Primavera, Verão, Outono, Inverno… e Primavera* (2003) –, mas pode-se realçar algumas características comuns na missão de todos eles: a iniciação pelo silêncio, pela música, pelo diálogo, pelo olhar, pela escuta, pelo uso terapêutico e catártico da palavra: "O grande educador é aquele que espalha em torno de si o sentido de honra da linguagem, como uma preocupação de integridade na presença neste mundo e dentro de si próprio" (Gusdorf, 1995, p. 108). O Mestre vê a unidade e a harmonia além das diferenças, tem o dom da profecia e do sacrifício e concebe a humanidade na sua unidade universal.

Finalmente, com Georges Gusdorf importa realçar que "A mestria começa para lá da pedagogia. A mestria supõe uma pedagogia da pedagogia" (1973, p. 309). Assim, compreende-se que a palavra iniciática é usada com mestria não pelo que é mero educador ou professor, mas por uma espécie de eleitos, isto é, por todos aqueles que veem além da pedagogia. Neste sentido, o Mestre sabe que é sempre, em certo sentido, um eterno discípulo aberto ao mundo da sabedoria, da vida, dos valores, do mistério e do mundo, por isso é que "Faz-lhe horror o espírito de proprietário do pedagogo, e a sua segurança na vida" (1973, p. 310). O Mestre sabe que o epicentro da educação reside na relação de confiança, de partilha e de confidência estabelecida incessantemente entre o mestre e o discípulo, daí que ele seja um iniciador dos valores e da cultura. Ele deve, quanto a nós, assumir-se especialmente como um despertador de consciências e suscitador de reflexões profundas em direção à *eudemonia* (Jaeger, s. d., p. 497-498) e à liberdade: "O despertar da reflexão consagra o advento do homem para si mesmo. Ele descobre então a sua mais alta liberdade, isto é, a sua mais pessoal liberdade" (Gusdorf, 1973, p. 313).

Esta liberdade sempre se busca, conquista-se ao longo das veredas do destino de cada um renunciando a declarar-se mestre: "Mas aquele que renunciou a descobrir a mestria da terra dos homens, esse pode um dia encontrá-la viva e a acenar-lhe, na volta do caminho, sob disfarce mais imprevisto" (Gusdorf, 1973, p. 318). E esta é a condição para que um Mestre seja re-conhecido e aceite como tal, pela simples razão de que a "mestria é um mistério" (Gusdorf, 1973, p. 316) insondável revelado somente a alguns, aos merecedores, aos escolhidos senão mesmo àqueles que encontraram Graça aos olhos do Divino!

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BEING OPEN TO OTHER CULTURES AND BELIEFS CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN THE UNITED KINGDOM

Leonard Franchi[*]

Abstract

Catholic schools exist in a state of uncertainty between their double identity as Church and civic institutions. Political pressure to conform to the prevailing cultural climate can be a source of tension between Catholic school leaders and the educational establishment. The source of this tension often lies in the degree of 'hostility' shown towards religious ideas more broadly. A recent report in the United Kingdom on the place of religion in public life, while reflecting much of the prevailing secular ways of thinking, recognised that religious beliefs have an important role to play in society. This welcome commitment to religious freedom can be aligned to recent developments in Catholic educational thought towards the need for intercultural dialogue in Catholic schools. This move is not without its conceptual challenges: there remain important questions to be addressed regarding the interplay between intercultural dialogue and the mission to evangelise.

Keywords: Catholic school, openness, intercultural dialogue, evangelisation, catholic intellectual tradition

Is it possible for a Catholic school, a place governed by the traditions and principles of one organised religion, to be 'open to others' while remaining anchored in its own rich array of inherited practices? Given the widespread contemporary commitment to equality and diversity in public life, is the Catholic school as a community of faith in danger of becoming an increasingly anachronistic reminder of times now past? Such burning questions must be central to the mind of Catholic educational policymakers and Episcopal Conferences across the Church.

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In broad terms, we can explore 'being open to others' in two ways in the context of Catholic education. First, in terms of admission policies, a Catholic school should be open to pupils from all religious and cultural traditions. Second, there should be an inherent openness to ways of thinking which originate outwith the Catholic tradition. The implications of both statements, especially the second, are reflected throughout the present essay.

Two documents from different sources offer both shared and contrasting perspectives on what openness to others can mean for educational systems and the daily life of schools. Both documents here studied are important indicators of much wider trends in contemporary educational thinking. It is interesting to note that the respective titles are share an interest in the common good and in the promotion of cultural harmony. Furthermore, both see religion, broadly understood, as playing a major role in the strengthening of community bonds. The juxtaposition of two important documents allows us to bring into sharp focus the possibilities for dialogue offered by contemporary educational structures. It suggests that dialogue over the aims and purposes of education can open pathways for shared exploration of the good, the true, the beautiful. As such, both documents deserve to be given a prominent role in all discussions re the relationship between education and religion.

The first document, the report of the Commission for Religion and Belief in British Public Life (2015) is a useful starting point for a necessary exploration of progressive attitudes towards contemporary religious belief. The Report's title, *Living with Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good* (henceforth *Living with Difference*) offers us a broad canvas against which we can map the Church's 'openness to others' in its educational institutions. It is helpful to note that the title of the report provides a useful summary of one way of understanding what being open to others can mean in practice.

Of course, any Catholic school would surely see the promotion of 'community, diversity and the common good' as indispensable features of its mission, although this might be refracted through particular doctrinal lenses. Nonetheless, the report is encouraging as it exemplifies, at least initially, some shared territory between Catholic and secular understandings of education.

The second document, *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic School: Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013) (henceforth *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue*) manifests in broad terms the Church's strengthening of its ongoing commitment to dialogue with other ways of thinking as proposed in *Gaudium et Spes* (1965). *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue* seeks to harmonise cultural and religious differences (itself an interesting aim) and shows some lines of convergence, as well as divergence, with *Living with Difference*. Although rooted in a different worldview, the impact of the Congregation for Catholic

Education's document would not be adversely affected if it were to drop its subtitle 'Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love' in favour of' Community, Diversity and the Common Good'.

It is incumbent on Catholic educators to build bridges and foster informed attitudes to participation in public life. In the context of contemporary educational systems and structures, the present article explores selected issues arising from a desire for openness in Catholic schools. It locates the Church's established commitment to education in the context of *Living with Difference*'s interesting insights on the place of religion in schools. Owing to the school's vital role in offering a 'safe space' for the promotion of community cohesion, we need to think hard about the Catholic school's capacity to offer a necessary openness while retaining a commitment to an established worldview. There is hence a twofold argument at the heart of the present article:

- 'being open to others in Catholic schools' is an indispensable mark of catholicity;
- an option for 'openness' cannot be seen as a conduit for moral relativism and religious syncretism.

Both parts of this argument are developed over three sections. In Part 1, I begin with an exploration of what 'living with difference' could mean for contemporary Catholic schools. In Part 2 I consider how dialogue can be understood as pedagogy. In Part Three I look at how we can develop a rich and meaningful pedagogy of dialogue. Finally, I offer three keys for the future direction of this important and timely debate.

Part 1   Catholic Schools: Living with Difference

While *Living with Difference* is localised in the sense of being of immediate relevance to public life in Britain, its stated attitudes towards religion in schools are reflective of much wider cultural and political currents (Franchi et al., 2016). *Living with Difference* steers a difficult course between the promotion of respect for religion and a commitment to the higher narrative of a secular/religious polity (Cf. White, 2004; Wright, 2004; Aldridge 2015).

Living with Difference groups its arguments around six pertinent themes, or 'Conversations' thus: vision; education; media; dialogue; action and law. Each theme has a checklist of associated action points. In the field of education, two points merit highlighting as summaries of the wider approach adopted: a) there should be a statutory right to education in non-religious worldviews as part of the religious education syllabus (4.27) and b) greater effort should be made to form teachers in matters to

do with religion using a pedagogy of 'encounter' with those from other religious/non-religious traditions (4. 25).

From the perspective of Catholic education, there is much to commend in the approach proposed here, especially the clear understanding of the importance of the study of religion (broadly defined) in schools. The writers of *Living with Difference* are aware that the reach of religious beliefs, so to speak, cannot be reduced to the private sphere as many people with firm religious beliefs continue to play an active role in public affairs across the world. Whatever our views on the tenets of particular religious traditions and the phenomenon of religion itself, it is not possible to label religious belief as peripheral activity of interest solely to those on the margins of society (Jimenez Lobeira, 2014). Furthermore, recent widespread migration across the Middle East/Europe has brought to the fore the centrality of religion and associated culture vis-a-vis the promotion of social harmony.

The commitment in *Living with Difference* to the value of properly-funded and academically rigorous religious education in schools has the potential to be a positive legacy of the report. The recognition of its subject status and the associated need for teachers with increasing expertise in the discipline, does set a high bar for governments and associated policy-makers given the financial and legal commitments this would entail. Of course, this raises the question of curricular content and the underpinning philosophical foundation of any proposed new syllabi in religious education. For policy-makers in Catholic education, it raises the further question of how best to respond to calls which, on the one hand, offer support for the 'religious' dimension of education in schools yet, simultaneously, seem to minimise the importance of the established faith traditions which lie at the heart of Catholic education.

There is much to ponder in *Living with Difference*'s oscillating approach. It steers a fine line between the acceptance of a religious dimension to education while holding on to secular thinking as the final arbiter of what can and cannot be taught in schools. Its comments on the the appropriate *content* of a religious education syllabus bring to the fore an element of tension: the desire to esteem religion sits uneasily alongside the commitment to a so-called neutrality suspicious of firm commitment to a particular *religious* way of thinking. In other words, the welcome offered to religion is conditional on acceptance of the 'superiority' of secular mores.

This tension is further exemplified in the report's proposal that religious education should offer equal space to non-religious (humanist) worldviews (2015, 4.15, 4.27). While it could be argued that non-religious worldviews cannot, by definition, be part of a syllabus of *religious* education, such a reaction on the part of Catholic educators would be inadequate given the many layers of nuance necessary for a mature grasp of the links between morality and religious commitment. A properly

crafted religious education syllabus in a Catholic school, for example, cannot ignore challenges to religious belief. On the contrary, an authentically academic approach to religious education would be inspired by the scholastic method in which the 'case against' a particular proposition is the seed of further study and intellectual exploration. Such a methodological approach, while ambitious and aspirational, is a fine example of a genuine dialogue of ideas.

While *Living with Difference*, as we have seen, offers support for a rigorous study of religious ways of thinking in schools, it cannot escape the conundrum posed by contemporary secular ideology: religion is a socio-cultural phenomenon to be observed and analysed as an expression of difference. Such differences, however, have to fit into a framework moulded by political and cultural ideas themselves rooted in an expressed liberal secularist agenda. In other words, religious belief and associated cultural expressions are permitted as long as they do not offend the self-same secular ideology. Of course, secularism can be either 'benevolent' or 'hostile' in the sense of the level of support it offers to religion's place in the public square (Adhar, 2013). While *Living with Difference* is closer to a 'benevolent' model of secularism, it still fails to deal adequately with how diverse claims to truth can co-exist and work together for the common good.

It would be easy to frame the debate between faith-based religious education and more phenomenological approaches as a challenge by powerful secular bodies to people of religious faith, not just in education but in public life more generally. Given the observed numerical decline in practising Christians in most western countries, we must avoid the temptation to 'close the door' on possible means of dialogue in favour of a fortress mentality. Recent moves in Catholic educational circles reflect a much more robust commitment to the Catholic school as a site of dialogue and religious literacy. While this approach is not without its internal challenges vis-a-vis the relationship between evangelisation and dialogue (see below), it is not necessarily a reaction to wider political and cultural critiques of religion but a thoughtful development of the Church's own rich educational traditions. The following section will explore this new direction with reference principally to *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic School: Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013).

Part 2 Dialogue as Pedagogy

When does a commitment to openness and dialogue in Catholic schools become an embrace of moral and cultural relativism? Before looking further at this pressing question, we consider first what we understand by 'dialogue' in this professional context and whether we can describe dialogue as a form of pedagogy.

To enter into dialogue with another marks a willingness to learn from an encounter with ways of thinking which are not our ways. To take a simple example from another field, a professional dialogue between medical experts over the best way to treat a patient with a rare illness allows different evidence bases and experiential knowledge to come together with, hopefully, a positive outcome for the patient. Who would claim that all points of view would be equally valid if some of the evidence bases were wholly or even partially inadequate?

In educational, moral and cultural matters, authentic professional dialogue is the robust encounter between ideas. This conversation, ideally underpinned by a spirit of amicable openness, is a means to facilitate understanding and, indeed, harmony between contrasting worldviews. Catholic education cannot remain indifferent to this process given the high profile of Catholic schools in many countries. *A fortiori*, Catholic educational institutions should be the leaders of such discussions and not reluctant participants: the mission to 'teach all nations' (Matthew 28:19) limits all possibilities for self-referential and enclosed attitudes to public life. If Catholic educational thought emerges, as it should, from what is known as the *Catholic intellectual tradition* (Royal, 2015), we see how, at its best, Catholic education has the capacity and self-confidence to draw from its own considerable historical sources in order to address the challenges it faces from a range of particular circumstances. In a sense we can state, perhaps curiously, that the Catholic intellectual tradition is an example of Catholicism in dialogue with its own body of thought. As such, it manifests a 'hermeneutic of continuity' which is both forward-thinking but open to insights from tradition.

Of course, it is self-evident that dialogue needs to undertaken with those who are not part of own tradition if it is not to become a monologue. Furthermore, in theological terms, we could rightly ask how a body with a universal reach (a *catholic* Church) could be anything but open to others if it were to remain true to the command to 'teach all nations' (see above). This suggests that the Christian message is worthy of teaching universally because it is of greater 'value' than other worldviews. Two questions necessarily follow from this: do those who, for whatever reason, are not part of the communion of the Church somehow live in a form of spiritual darkness? If this is the case, is the Church's commitment to dialogue no more than a cipher for covert evangelisation of those yet to be enlightened by the Gospel?

A key reference point here is the relationship between the reality of pluralism and the promotion of relativism *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue* helpfully describes this as follows: 'Being aware of the relative nature of cultures and opting for relativism are two profoundly different things'

(Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, 22). It is undeniable that different cultures have particular ethical/moral narratives: difference means a lack of uniformity. To know where these differences lie and the philosophical arguments *pro et contra* certain traditions are the signs of an educated and open minded person. To opt for relativism, on the other hand, is to seek to flatten differences and claim, for example, that different traditions are simply culturally-conditioned expressions of a greater religious reality.

Is it possible to square the awkward circle between holding sincerely to a proclaimed religious truth and exemplifying openness to other ways of understanding the human condition? In educational matters, it is important to test the relationship between evangelisation and interreligious dialogue (Heft, 2011), This contentious issue is as old as Christianity itself. Indeed, Pope Benedict XVI (writing as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger) identified the heart of the theological and cultural 'problem' arising from a proclamation of Jesus Christ as the saviour of all humanity. If other religions are seen as 'preparatory to Christianity' or simply 'insufficient, anti-Christian, contrary to the truth' (2004, p. 19), the potential for dialogue and the possibilities it offers for cross-community cohesion could be limited or even erased from the mind of the believer.

The Catholic school occupies a unique space as it brings the mind of the Church to the world of education. To do so successfully, the proclamation of its message must be integrated within a pedagogy of dialogue which offers the Catholic worldview to all with an interest in human flourishing. Part Three will consider how this pedagogy of dialogue could be developed.

Part 3 Developing a Pedagogy of Dialogue

Educating to Intercultural Dialogue brings together many of the insights on cultural dialogue which have been offered in the Magisterium's recent educational corpus. Indeed, the focus in the title on 'intercultural dialogue' suggests not just a new angle on already established ways of thinking but a significant shift in the DNA of Catholic education.

The document identifies three approaches to dialogue: *relativistic* (22-23), *assimilation* (24-25) and *intercultural* (26-28). Unsurprisingly, it sees the third approach as the most effective for the Christian mission today and suggests that its goal is 'to construct a new intercultural approach, which aims at realizing an integration of cultures in mutual recognition' (2015, 28). The promotion of intercultural dialogue in the school is, perhaps, less easy to achieve than such a sentence would admit. Two difficulties present themselves: what would intercultural dialogue look like when achieved and what

processes would be put in place as the means to this end? Is it the case that the *process* is the actual goal and that to have pre-set plans and/or a fixed outcome in mind is not in the spirit of authentic dialogue?

Before we explore further the scope of 'intercultural dialogue' it is necessary to set out some lines of engagement regarding the implementation of processes and aims of intercultural dialogue. A conceptual challenge lies in the gap between the language and expectations enshrined in Magisterial documents and the lack of examples of what this *could* mean in practice for educational institutions. This leaves open the possibility of a Church with many different cultural 'traditions' co-existing alongside common doctrine. For example, some Catholics retain the practice of abstention from meat on Fridays. While 'fish on Fridays' is often seen as a traditional Catholic practice, the reality is quite different as such a collective form of abstention is no longer part of the lived of many Catholics. This is a challenge, albeit a relatively small one, to catholicity.

If we take the starting position that religious culture in the Catholic school is the practical expression of shared doctrine, we can quickly see that not all aspects of 'Catholic culture' are of equal standing. For example, it should be taught clearly that the Mass is the centre of all Catholic worship but exploration about what the Mass means for the Church could be part of a wider discussion of the nature of religious commitments across different religious traditions. This would show the various ways in which humanity has sought meaning in religion but without necessarily lessening the uniqueness of Catholic sacramental theology. Of course, such a way of working requires committed and well formed teachers who are at ease with Catholic doctrine, confident in their teaching methods and genuinely committed to the integral formation of the student body.

These examples, limited as they are, offer an insight into the potential of intercultural dialogue for the building of a broader religious awareness. While we must be wary of seeing such cross-community dialogue as simply a study of the things other religious people do, it does offer a window into the life of religious believers through the cultural lenses of attitudes to food, dress and the arts. An authentic study of religious culture would not see these as the ends of a discussion but as a door opening into the beating heart of the religion: this is where we would expect further exploration of the nature of the relationship between God and humanity and what it means to live as a committed adherent of a particular religion.

A related aspect is the promotion of knowledge about religion and (associated) religious ways of living. *Living with Difference* is clear on the importance of 'religion and belief literacy' (2015, p. 2) which, it asserts, is a more inclusive term than the common term 'religious literacy' (2015, p. 16). While a debate about the conceptual relationship between religion and belief is for another time, the

importance of clarity when teaching the expressed culture of particular religions needs to be set alongside a knowledge of its principal doctrines. For those involved in education, the continued high level of religious adherence across the world demands a commitment by teachers in Catholic schools to systematic study of the philosophical, theological and cultural bases of (at least) the major monotheistic traditions. This cognitive challenge is not to be seen as a rejection of pastoral approaches to education. Indeed, a questioning of the value of the cognitive dimension to education in favour of more therapeutic pedagogies is to break the pact between the mind and the heart which is central to a pedagogy of religious education. To be clear, we would not wish teachers to be asking children questions such as 'What is the Muslim equivalent of Baptism?' or to teach that Ramadan is the Muslim version of Lent! In a similar vein, it is also necessary to explain why the established Catholic position on 'same-sex' marriage is not grounded in hostility towards anyone but reflects a strong theologically-rooted anthropological vision which cannot be reconstructed to suit the prevailing ideology of a liberal society.

Intercultural dialogue as so understood, when facilitated with nuance and sensitivity in the Catholic school, offers multiple opportunities for the promotion of religion and belief literacy. It serves as a welcome reminder that intercultural education is a process of shared exploration of the human story. Given the complexities arising from any study of what intercultural dialogue means in practice, it would be a grave mistake to narrow Catholic education's frame of reference. Any historical study of Catholic educational traditions reveals that it is much more than a series of systematically-planned catechetical moments or evangelical projects but, at its best, is an inclusive project rooted in 'authentic humanism'. The Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* is one example of how the Church has shaped educational history. The phrase 'authentic humanism' has taken on a fresh impetus in recent years thanks to the work first of Pope Benedict and now Pope Francis. Pope Benedict certainly saw the advocacy of 'humanism', *pace* much secular thinking, as a Christian concept. In so doing he drew on Pope Paul's comments in *Popolorum Progressio* on the need for a humanism which drew people towards God (Pope Paul, 1967, passim). For Benedict, writing in *Caritas in Veritate*, a humanism without God was a charade as only 'the Absolute can guide us in the promotion and building of forms of social and civic life' (2009, 780).

Benedict here proposes that which is inclusive and distinctive in the Catholic understanding of anthropology. The choice of the words 'promotion and building' suggests a strong dialogic process designed to build more a humane society which cannot be aligned too closely with some contemporary cultural fads. We note also how a traditional understanding of Christian anthropology is at the base of Benedict's thinking and, by extension, his understanding of Catholic social teaching: without God, there can be no proper appreciation of the dignity of the human being.

Pope Francis, in turn, has added another layer to the proposal for Christian humanism. He has reminded the Church that the humanism of Catholic tradition is, essentially, Christological. In so doing, Francis takes the divine nature of Jesus as the model: in other words, he is not designing a 'new humanism' but looking afresh at how Jesus taught and lived (Pope Francis, 2015). The position of Pope Francis seems initially to lean more towards the distinctiveness, as opposed to the inclusiveness, of Catholic thinking in education. Therein lies the gist of the conundrum explored in this essay regarding the relationship between openness to others and a stated attachment to a specific religious tradition.

Concluding Remarks: Being Open to the Future

The relationship in Catholic schools between what is distinctive and what is inclusive was, is and will remain an important research theme in Catholic education (Sullivan 2001). Given the tense relationship between dialogue and evangelisation, is it possible to find a way forward? Perhaps we need to think more broadly about what the Church sees as its mission to educate and offer a creative response to the call to evangelise while offering a genuine welcome to all who knock at the door of the Catholic school. How can this be done?

I now suggest three 'keys' to developing a spirit of openness to others in the Catholic school. Each key ends with a question for reflection.

First Key: Intercultural Education as Overarching Theme of Catholic Education

Much of the debate over community cohesion in schools in recent decades in the United Kingdom has accepted that different cultures and religions are almost unrelated features of a modern society: in this multicultural line of thinking, to criticise aspects of the culture of the 'other' is, at best, interference and at worst a form of western cultural imperialism. When this happens, complete autonomy seems to be afforded to expressions of individual cultures and thus squeezes out the possibilities of genuine intercultural dialogue (ibid 23).

Of course, such a binary comparison has clear flaws. We need to think hard about what is understood by intercultural dialogue, especially its limits and its possibilities in the context of a Catholic school in the plural society. *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue* (2013), seems to place increasing emphasis on the need for Catholic schools to act as sites of intercultural education. The advocacy of intercultural education here rests on its ability to promote 'encounter, dialogue and mutual transformation' (2013, 28). Of course, what is not said here is equally important as that which is: what can 'mutual transformation' mean?

Question for reflection. Are we not in danger of sailing too close to relativism and applying a cautious lens to the possibility of the Christian tradition being the energy and the goal of transformative processes?

Second Key: A Commitment to Hospitality in Catholic Schools

The aspect of welcome, or hospitality, is a case in point. It cannot be repeated too often that a Catholic school which seeks only to educate Catholic children is not giving witness to the catholicity of the Church. Cardinal Parolin's important address to UNESCO (2015) began with a reminder to his audience of the Church's traditional commitment to a broader education in its network as opposed to mere catechetical projects:

> La culture et l'éducation n'ont jamais été considérées par l'Église catholique comme de simples instruments pour l'évangélisation mais comme des dimensions humaines dotées d'une haute valeur intrinsèque.

This important intervention highlights the essential *educational* framework of the Catholic school. The speech in general is a reiteration of the themes of *Gravissimum Educationis* for the 21st century. Cardinal Parolin, rightly, makes much of the need for education to be in the front line of universal moves to combat illiteracy, hunger and illness but has something much more profound to say. The mention of the 'haute valeur intrinsèque' cannot pass by without comment. This is a neat summary of the lines of thought sketched out by Popes Benedict and Francis in their many addresses on education and schooling in recent years. For Parolin, education (in the Catholic school) sheds the light of Christianity on the problems of the modern world and proposes the Christian view of the world as a much-needed antidote to educational systems with more than one eye of instrumentalism and economic measurements. To locate this argument in the context of 'being open to others', the good Catholic school should be a magnet which attracts all people and where ideas are explored and critiqued in the spirit of faith and critical thinking which marks the best of the Catholic educational tradition (Chambers, 2012).

Question for reflection. To what extent should the Catholic school see itself as a place of evangelisation?

Third Key: Catholic Schools as Leaven in Society

The recent moves by Pope Francis regarding the importance of encounter—itself a development of the *Courtyard of the Gentiles* initiative of Pope Benedict—suggests that the conceptual framework of Catholic education is moving, albeit at a cautious pace, in the wake of the energy unleashed by

Gaudium et Spes in 1965. To be clear, the substantial advances in Catholic educational thought in recent decades represent a significant reform of one of the principal means of engagement between the Church and the 'world' of which it is part. Nonetheless, it is perhaps time to look again at how the Church can best act as leaven in the world of education given the recent 50th anniversary of *Gravissimum Educationis* and the major challenges facing education from pluralism and secularism. Pope Francis alluded to this in the question and answer session held at the close of the *World Congress on Catholic Education* in Rome (November 2016). His comments on the need for 'informal education' were put in the context of a formal education 'impoverished due to the legacy of positivism'. By this he alludes to those who value most that which can be measured. Catholic schools cannot ignore the political landscape but somehow need to articulate a radical vision of Catholic education which will influence broader educational thought.

Question for reflection. For Pope Francis, the three languages of education—the languages of the head/heart/hands—offer a more rounded, harmonious and humane scholastic experience. This is a big claim: is it justified?

As we consider the best routes for Catholic education to follow in the years ahead, it is important to bear in mind that Christianity is often a sign of contradiction. The tension explored here between dialogue and evangelisation is one indicator of how the Christian message demands hard and deep thinking if it is to be a force for good in society. *Living with Difference* (2015) as we have seen, welcomes the contribution of religious thought to the building of the common good but somehow finds it hard to accept that committed religious believers are just that: *believers* in the truth of their own religion. The desire in the report to flatten religious and cultural differences in favour of a broad 'contribution of religion' is less a sign of openness than an indicator of suspicion towards those who do not follow the liberal narrative. Catholic education, if it is to be increasingly open to other people and ways of thinking, must show an equally robust commitment to its own grand narrative.

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CATHOLIC EDUCATION
AND PRINCIPLES OF OPENNESS

Gerald Grace. KSG[*]

Abstract

As I have argued elsewhere (Grace 2016[b]) the 'aggiornamento thinking'[1] about Catholic education made itself apparent in The Catholic School (CS) publication of 1977 from the Congregation for Catholic Education in Rome. This document powerfully expressed a new spirit which it was hoped would characterise Catholic education internationally in the era of late modernity. Influenced by the Second Vatican Council's call for more openness to the wider world, The Catholic School proclamation may be seen as the foundation chapter or universal mission statement for Catholic schooling in the modern age. It articulated principles of openness and inclusion in educational practice in contrast to principles of closure and exclusion which had been a feature of some Catholic schooling pre-Vatican II[2].

This paper will attempt to clarify the nature of these principles of openness at a theoretical level. It will then discuss the extent to which subsequent research attempts to monitor the translation of these principles in actual educational practice.

Keywords: The Catholic School (1977); Principles of Openness; Other Faiths; The Poor; Pedagogy; Research; Students.

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[1] See my chapter, 'Vatican II and New Thinking about Catholic Education: Aggiornamento Thinking and Principles into Practice' in S. Whittle (Ed). *New Thinking about Catholic Education*: 2016 forthcoming. I follow the definition of 'aggiornamento' used by Father Joseph Ratzinger ie 'bringing up to date' (1966. P. ix.).

[2] Principles of closure and exclusion were particularly apparent in the past for Catholic schools located in predominantly Protestant countries, eg. UK, USA, Canada and Australia. Catholic schools in these locations were regarded as faith bastions against the potentially corrupting effects of Protestant culture in society.

Part 1 . The Catholic school and principles of openness; a theoretical analysis

Openness to other Faiths

The most radical statement of 'being open to others' can be found in paragraph 85 of the 1977 mission statement:-

> 'In the certainty that the Spirit is at work in every person, the Catholic school offers itself to all, non-Christians included, with all its distinctive aims and means, acknowledging, preserving and promoting the spiritual and moral qualities, the social and cultural values which characterise different civilisations'.

This form of openness had only been present in Catholic schools in 'mission territories' in the Middle East, Africa, India and parts of Asia but the principle was now extended to apply to all Catholic schools internationally. The Catholic school was now declared to be a resource for the common good of the communities and societies in which it was located and not simply for the private good of the local Catholic community[3].

Such 'openness to others' marked a dramatic move from previous concepts of what could be called, the 'ghetto Catholic school' to the 'faith school at the service of the community'. From one perspective, this was an example of the inspirational aggiornamento thinking emanating from the Second Vatican Council. From another perspective, it was a development that was likely to provoke many logistical and policy issues as well as cultural and theological concerns in later practice. These concerns will be examined later in this analysis in Part 2.

Openness to 'the poor'

It may seem paradoxical to suggest that openness to the poor was a 'new' principle of the CS document, given that Catholic schooling, especially in those forms provided by Religious Congregations, had been available especially for the poor for many centuries. Clearly, the principle has been long established in Catholic educational practice internationally. What was new in the 1977 mission statement was a warning to the Church that the historical openness

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[3] The unfortunate use of official descriptions in some societies of Catholic schools as 'private schools' reinforced the idea that such schools were not at the service of the whole community. The *Catholic School* 1977 document sought to counter this image by constant reference to the role of Catholic schools in contributing to the common good of society. See CS. paras. 60, 62.

to the poor was in jeopardy. This situation had arisen because Religious Congregations had been unable to maintain the strategic subsidy of resources[4] to maintain the mission for the poor and many national states were unwilling to provide any financial or other subsidy. What the Congregation for Catholic Education observed in the late 1970s was that access to Catholic schooling was increasingly mediated by parental ability to pay annually increasing fees. 'Being open to others' was becoming problematic if those others were economically poor.

This necessary warning to all Catholic educational authorities and providers is given in two places in the CS document. In paragraph 21, under the explicit heading, 'Class Distinction'[5], it states:-

> 'In some countries Catholic schools have been obliged to restrict their educational activities to wealthier social classes, thus giving an impression of social and economic discrimination in education'.

In paragraph 58, under the heading 'A Thirst for Justice' it states:-

> 'This situation is of great concern to those responsible for Catholic education because first and foremost the Church offers its educational service to the poor…'.

Here again is an inspirational call to find ways of returning to the foundational principles of the Catholic educational mission but, at the same time, it is a call that presents many challenges including constitutional, economic, political and ideological questions.

Openness in Educational Practice

One of the strongest criticisms of Catholic schools in the past (and the present) is that they are not centres for true education but rather centres for the indoctrination of the young into

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[4] The strategic subsidy of Religious congregations, especially for the education of the poor, can be defined as, 'providing the physical plant, the personnel, the cultural, spiritual and financial capital to facilitate the mission'.

[5] Concepts of 'social justice' and of 'class divisions', did not enter Catholic Social Teaching until the much quoted encyclical, *Quadragesimo Anno* (1931) of Pope Pius XI. The Second Vatican Council's *Declaration on Christian Education (*Gravissimum Educationis) of 1965 made no reference to either social justice or to class divisions in Catholic education. The use in the *Catholic School* document of 1977 of concepts of 'class distinction' in the provision of Catholic education marked a return to the more radical and explicit language of Pius XI.

the doctrines and practices of the Roman Catholic faith[6]. Their purpose is proselytism rather than cultivation of a critical and open intelligence, is what many secularists assert.

The 1977 mission statement sought to argue that these claims would no longer be valid because Catholic schools, post-Vatican II would be 'truly educative'[7] in these ways:-
'Christian education can sometimes run into the danger of so-called proselytism, of imparting a one-sided outlook. This can only happen when Christian educators misunderstand the nature and methods of Christian education' para. 19.

> 'The Catholic school must develop persons who are responsible and inner-directed, capable of choosing freely in conformity with their conscience'[8]. Para. 31.

For post-Vatican II Catholic education the ideal, as stated by the Congregation in Rome, was a move from the pedagogy of the catechism (a closed pedagogy[9]) to a pedagogy of dialogue and encounter (an open pedagogy). Such a changed classroom culture would have clear implications for 'being open to others'. It would mean, if dialogical teaching became a feature of Religious Education lessons, especially in secondary schools, that Catholic teachers would face greater challenges in their encounters with adolescent students. This context of learning in pluralistic, multi-faith and even non-faith classrooms would result inevitably in being open to those of other faiths and also to the sceptical questioning of those students who had rejected religious faith of any kind[10]. 'Being open to others' in this sense required considerable skill in what can be called 'the new Apologetics' in responding to questions derived from students' reading of the work of 'the new Atheists[11]'. While the principle of a more open and dialogic pedagogy could be expected to bring Catholic schools more in line with modern educational practice, the transition itself would require in-depth

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[6] The writings of Professor Michael Hand in the UK provide one example of this line of argument. See Hand (2003:2004).

[7] The full phrase in the CS document is, 'The need for a truly educative school' para. 31.

[8] Father Joseph Ratzinger when acting as theological advisor to the Second Vatican Council made a strong statement about 'the sacredness of conscience' in these terms:-
'Over the Pope as expression of the binding claim of ecclesiastical authority, there stands one's own conscience, which must be obeyed before all else, even if necessary against the requirements of ecclesiastical authority' Vorgrimler (1967. P134).

[9] *The Baltimore Catechism No. 3*. (1921) consisted of 1,400 questions (and correct answers) to be used in Religious Instruction. *The Catechism of Catholic Doctrine*, approved by Archbishops and Bishops of Ireland in 1951 contained 443 questions (and correct answers).

[10] The serious impact of secularisation and secularism on modern youth was noted in a later publication of the Congregation for Catholic Education ie. *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (*1988)in these terms:-
'Many young people find themselves in a condition of radical instability… They live in a one-dimensional universe in which the only criterion is practical utility and the only value is economic and technological progress….' (pp. 8-10).

[11] 'The New Atheists' refers to the widely read publications of Richard Dawkins, Chris Hitchens A. C. Grayling and Daniel Dennett.

continuing professional development for the teachers faced with 'being open to others' classrooms, a more complex environment.

The Experience of a Catholic education: being open to the voice of students

Under a striking sub-heading entitled 'Constant self-criticism and cooperation', the *Catholic School* mission statement argued that:-

> 'loyalty to the educational aims of the Catholic school demands constant self-criticism and return to basic principles…',

suggesting that:-

> 'Account has to be taken of new pedagogical insights and collaboration with others, irrespective of religious allegiance'…
>
> 'In addition to meetings of teachers and mutual research this collaboration can be extended to the pupils themselves…' para 67.

It can be argued that the conjunction of 'self-criticism'[12] and of collaboration of 'the pupils themselves' implied that post-Vatican II schools should be 'open to others', in this case to self-evaluation research and to the voice of the students as part of the process of self-criticism.

With this advice the authors of the *Catholic school* document were in advance of mainstream secular educational research in which the 'voice of the students' had not yet featured as a serious focus for enquiry[13].

Similarly, the advocacy of 'collaboration with others' proclaimed a degree of openness towards many other constituencies including external educational researchers, the leaders of other Catholic schools and the leaders of other faith schools of the Protestant Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities.

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[12] What the Catholic School document called 'self-criticism' is now referred to in mainstream education as 'self-evaluation'. All contemporary schools are recommended to undertake such analysis.

[13] See Ruddock and Flutter (2000) for an argument that educational research has been impoverished by lack of serious attention to the views and experiences of students.

This particular example of 'being open to others' was radically counter-cultural both to past traditions of Catholic schooling and also to new imperatives affecting many countries that schools should operate on an individualistic success strategy of 'playing the market', proposed by the ideologists of the New Right[14]. Consulting the students broke with a long tradition in which 'pupils' had the lowest place in hierarchical Catholic power relations.

'Collaboration with others', which could also be called Catholic values of community and solidarity, confronted a growing global ideology of marketisation, competition and individual success survival applied to educational practice.

In recent writing, (Grace 2016[a]), I have argued that understanding the views and experiences of students is crucial for all faith-based schools in these terms:-

> 'If mission integrity should be a central concept for the evaluation of faith-based schooling, then it follows that students in faith schools are crucial participants and evaluators of that concept in practice. Faith-based schooling (and all forms of schooling) must be open to the critical evaluation of the students in the system.' (p100).

This theoretical analysis of the principle of 'being open to others' has demonstrated that it represents authentic aggiornamento thinking applied to Catholic education. At the same time, such thinking which involves major religious, cultural, pedagogical and organisational changes raises complex policy and practice issues which will need systematic evaluation and research inquiry. These questions will be examined in Part 2 of this paper.

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[14] See Gamble (1988) for an analysis of the ideology of the New Right and its social consequences. In effect, New Right ideologists claim that individual competition is always more effective than group collaboration.

Part 2

'Open' principles into practice: policy and research issues: a review

While the *Catholic School* proclamation of 1977 was inspirational in advocating new principles of openness for Catholic education, it had little to say about how the considerable cultural and organisational changes it recommended were to be achieved in practice. In other words, it was strong on aggiornamento thinking but relatively weak on implementation issues[15]. As indicated in Part 1, what the Congregation for Catholic Education was proposing amounted to a radical set of changes for the Catholic educational mission in terms of greater openness to the wider world. If implemented, these changes would make it analytically possible to compare the cultures and practices of post-Vatican II schools with an earlier period ie. pre-Vatican II schools[16]. The transformation of educational practice suggested in the 1997 mission statement raised complex issues of a religious, spiritual, cultural, organisational, financial and even political nature. Some attempt will now be made to examine, what can be called, 'the challenges of implementation' in the project of 'being open to others'.

A new relation with other Faiths

For many centuries the theological position of the Catholic Church expressed in the form, 'extra ecclesiam salus non est' (outside the Church there is no salvation) determined that relationships with other Faiths existed only in denunciatory forms or in actual persecutions. The modification of this absolute and inflexible position, resulting from the development of ecumenical thinking in the 20th century had allowed Catholic schools in 'mission territories' to admit students of other Faiths. However the *Catholic School* document had advocated a 'service to the whole community ethic' for Catholic schools internationally. Such schools (subject to available spaces) should be open to the admission of 'non-Christian' students, a more radical form of ecumenical outreach. The implementation issues generated by this new form of openness were considerable and various. Among these issues the most profound was the question, 'what impact will the admission of students of other Faiths have upon the ethos and Catholicity of Catholic schools?' School ethos had long been part of a claim by Catholic schools that their schools possessed distinctive religious and spiritual cultural environment,

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[15] In fairness it must be noted that 6 pages of the document, under the heading of 'Practical Directions' were assigned to cover issues such as 'involvement of Religious in the School Apostolate': the Catholic School in Mission Countries': 'Pastoral Care of Teachers' and 'Economic Situation of Catholic Schools'. However restrictions of space resulted in brief statements.

[16] For a research comparison of pre-Vatican II schools with post-Vatican II schools, see Grace (2002), Chapter 3 and 4

manifested, among other things by Gospel values affecting the social relationships in the schools (teacher-student relations and student-student relations), a strong sense of Catholic Christian Community.

In his important book, *Catholic Education: Distinctive **and** Inclusive* (2007), John Sullivan has examined the tensions which can arise in this area of challenge. On the one hand, distinctiveness, in a strong form, may cause schools to be 'inwards-looking, over-concerned with boundaries and being blind to pluralism' (p159). On the other hand, 'an excess of openness and modification of tradition in order to meet the needs and priorities of each new age might dissolve the distinctiveness of the Catholic identity and undermine the mission of Church schools' (p167). The intention of Sullivan's writing is however to argue that it is possible and desirable for Catholic schools to be distinctive **and** inclusive.

From another perspective, Christopher Jamison OSB (2013) in a thoughtful discussion of the much used concept of 'Catholic school ethos' points to the difficulties in specifying what this actually means, perhaps because relatively few teachers have actually read the documents from the Congregation for Catholic Education which would help more detailed understanding of what some have called, 'an elusive concept'. For Jamison, 'the Catholic school is a school of communion, where all teachers are responsible for the faith formation of the students' (p12).

While both of these writers have assisted us in thinking about the consequences of 'being open to others – of other Faiths', especially in relation to Catholic school ethos, they have at the same time provoked further questions for discussion and ultimately for research enquiry. From Sullivan, arises the question, what would be 'an excess of openness' in a school situation?[17] From Jamison, arises the questions, what type of 'communion' is possible in a multi-faith school? – and how can teachers in a multi-faith school assist in the faith formation of students?' It has to be recognised that there are many research questions which need to be investigated as we begin to try to find answers to the profound question, 'what impact will the admission of students of other Faiths have upon the ethos and Catholicity of Catholic schools?'

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[17] School leaders, (certainly in England) mainly took the view that if non-Catholic students constituted more than (say) 50% of the school population this would be regarded as an example of 'excess of openness'.

One obvious direction for future research would be to interview Catholic school leaders (of some years of experience) of schools which have, over time, become more open to students of other Faiths, for a variety of reasons. Such school leaders would be in a strategic position to comment upon perceived changes in school ethos. One such study has been reported by Fr. François Mifsud, OP. in an article entitled, 'Other faith students in Maltese Catholic schools: responses of school leaders' (2010). Mifsud's research examined a variety of responses 'to the growing number of African students of 'other faiths' who are arriving in the island' (p50. His inquiry has demonstrated in practice the dilemmas for Catholic school leaders as they attempt to maintain the Catholic ethos of the schools, while showing openness and hospitality to those of 'other faiths'.[18]

We need more research studies of this type if we are to begin to understand how 'openness to others' actually affects Catholic school ethos in different locations.

A renewed openness to the Poor

Catholic schools were originally founded in many countries with a mission to be open to the poor but the authors of the *Catholic School* document noted that by the 20th century a serious 'mission drift' had occurred:-

> 'In some countries, because of local laws and economic conditions, the Catholic school runs the risk of giving counter-witness by admitting a majority of children from wealthier families. Schools may have done this because of their need to be financially self-supporting' para 58. As openness to the poor was becoming increasingly difficult, the 1977 authors, under the heading 'Practical Directions' called upon those responsible for Catholic school systems to negotiate with governments to 'enter into agreements, conventions, contracts etc'….(to obtain)…. 'an economic and juridical status similar to State schools' para 81.

In effect the authors were urging Catholic education authorities to seek more financial support for schools (as was the case in the UK, Australia, Belgium, Germany, The Netherlands, Canada and Ireland) in order to meet the mission commitment that 'First and foremost the Church offers its educational service to the poor…' para 58. However, this wish

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[18] It should be noted that Mifsud's research for an MA dissertation involved interviews with only 6 headteachers in Malta and data was collected in 2007. Nevertheless, this is a study of great interest and relevance for current developments, and could serve as a model for further research.

for greater openness for the poor faced many difficulties. In some locations these were constitutional (France, USA), in others ideological and political, where Catholic schools were associated with previous forms of colonialism (Africa, India, parts of Asia and South America).

In 2007 a major world survey of existing research on Catholic schools in 35 countries across the world was attempted to monitor (among other things) to what extent openness to the poor had been facilitated by financial support from governments. While examples of greater financial support were found in some contexts, it was also the case that many barriers remained which prevented easy access of poor students to Catholic schools. 'Being open to poor students' was a mission statement that was far from being realised internationally. In Spain, for instance, Dr. Maria del Mar Griera reported that although government funds were now available in support of Catholic schools, this had not seriously affected the student demography in those schools which remained dominated by middle and upper class young people (Griera, 2008, pp304-306).

A similar situation was reported for Portugal by Joaquim Azevedo et al, where again, despite the help of some government funding for Catholic schools, the Catholic Bishops were still observing that the level of funding did not make it possible for Catholic schools to truly be 'inclusive and comprehensive' (p324).

Many of the research studies reported in the *International Handbook of Catholic Education*, 2 Vols, 2007 show that the option for the poor in Catholic education is a long way from realisation. Brian Croke reporting from Australia (often seen as a progressive context for Catholic schooling) noted the remarks of Bishop Anthony Fisher that:-

> 'our under-representation amongst the poor is a real problem' (p825). Similar reports were received relating to situations of the poor in Argentina, Brazil and Peru and in parts of Africa.[19]

 A combination of ideological, economic and political factors; of the introduction of market forces into educational provision[20]; and of the strategic ability of 'wealthy families' to defend

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[19] See, for instance, the chapter for Zambia (No. 28) by Brendan Carmody, SJ and for South Africa and Lesotho (No. 29.) by Potterton and Johnson.

their own interests in education means that the Catholic Church faces a formidable challenge in attempting the make its education more open in access for the poor. However, the fact that many Conferences of Catholic Bishops are aware of the present contradictions between Catholic education theory and the reality of present practice gives hope that in the longer term, 'being open to poor students' will be achieved internationally as governments increase subsidies, in recognition of the contribution of such schools to the common good.

At this present juncture we have the benefit of the leadership of Pope Francis on these issues. In the Apostolic Exhortation, *Evangelii Gaudium* (2013) the Pope teaches:-

> It is essential to draw near to new forms of poverty and vulnerability, in which we are called to recognise the suffering of Christ. ……. I exhort all countries to a generous openness which, rather than fearing the loss of local identity, will prove capable of creating new forms of cultural synthesis' (p164). While these words have particular relevance to a present need to be open to migrants, it is clear that they apply also to the cultures of Catholic schools and of their response to the needs of poor students in terms of their access to the spiritual and educational benefits of Catholic education.

Openness in Pedagogy and Research

As I argued in Part 1 of this paper the recommended move from a closed pedagogy of catechism to an open pedagogy of dialogue and encounter would create open classroom environments in which teachers would be expected to be questioned by adolescent students. 'Being open to others' in these situations might involve dealing with challenging questions from Catholic students and those of other Faiths, but also questions from senior students who had in fact rejected the teaching of the Catholic Faith. I also argued that these extremely demanding classroom situations would require teachers to undergo continuing professional development courses to be able to respond adequately to these challenges. If such a challenge was successfully accomplished Catholic pedagogy could no longer be accused of being 'a form of indoctrination' because, in fact, it would be a truly educative experience for the teacher and the students.

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[20] Bonal (2003) and Rambla (2003) have undertaken research in Spain that demonstrates the existence of an 'informal educational market' for Catholic schools which results in such schools having a large proportion of students from middle class and upper class social backgrounds. In Spain, public/state schools are more open to the poor than are Catholic schools is the conclusion of these researchers.

The question this generates is, 'to what extent do classrooms, especially in Catholic secondary schools, demonstrate the actual use of a more open and dialogic pedagogy?' It has to be admitted that systematic studies involving observations of classroom teaching in Catholic schools are not extensive.

The classic research study by Anthony Bryk et al (1993) which did report classroom observations in Catholic high schools in the USA noted that there was 'a high level of student engagement' (p93) in the lessons which they observed. Their overall conclusions:-

> 'From this perspective Catholic education represents an invitation to students both to reflect on a systematic body of thought and to immerse themselves in a communal life that seeks to live out its basic principles' (p335) suggests that the pedagogy being used in these American schools was a long way from anything which could be called 'indoctrination'. Whether classrooms in Catholic schools in other contexts display a similar open pedagogy is a matter requiring much more research attention from education researchers internationally. To command the attention and respect of mainstream educational research it will be necessary for classroom research to be conducted also by observers external to the Catholic community. In this situation 'being open to others' will require Catholic schools to be open for investigation by those who will view the data with an objective and (it is hoped) impartial perspective).

Being open to the voice of students

In my research study, *Catholic Schools: Mission, Markets and Morality* (2002), I interviewed 60 Catholic headteachers in three major cities in the UK (London, Birmingham, Liverpool). I also interviewed 50 students in 5 Catholic secondary schools in London. My intention here was 'triangulation' of data ie. having obtained accounts from the headteachers at the top of the school hierarchy, I needed to balance these with the perspectives of students lower in the hierarchy. In the section of the book entitled 'Mission Principles: the perspectives of students' (pp 231-234) I reported the views and experiences of 5 model students (informally called 'the saints') and 5 troublesome school resistors (informally called 'the sinners')[21]. Overall there was more positive endorsement than negative comment that the schools were living out the principles of their mission statements, but, at the same time, there was evidence

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[21] The students involved were unaware of these informal labels.

of a gap between theory and practice in the experience of some students. Some of the students made thoughtful (and provocative) suggestions such as:-

- 'We should have more gathered Masses for the whole school to reflect and pray'.
- 'I think what would make a better school is if all the teachers were Catholic and went to Mass more' (p234).

Given the small sample used in this research, no strong conclusions can be generalised from it. However, I think that it does indicate that Catholic schools would benefit in 'being open to the voice of their students' both 'the saints' and those who are labelled 'the sinners'. The latter group had a strong consciousness that while 'forgiveness' might appear in the schools mission statement[22], it had not occurred in their experience, eg:-

- 'There is no justice. People get blamed for a lot of things they didn't do. I don't feel as if teachers have faith in me'.
- 'Once the school knows something about you, they will put you down – they will make your life, hell' (p232).

Although this group represented a minority view, schools can learn from their student critics.

Conclusion

The 1977 mission statement for post-Vatican II Catholic schools made 'being open to others' a dominant theme for Catholic education in the future. This is apparent in its advocacy for openness to those of other Faiths, for openness to pedagogic practice, for openness in constant 'self-criticism', self-evaluation and research inquiry[23] and in a willingness to hear the 'voice' of the students.

In relation to 'being more open to the poor', the Catholic School document urged schools to find ways to prevent a fee-based admission system in many countries blocking access to Catholic education[24].

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[22] All students were given a copy of the schools mission statement as the basis for the focus group discussion. Many commented that they had not seen the document before. Perhaps mission statement documents ought to be more open to the students.

[23] Archbishop Michael Miller, CSB, Secretary for the Congregation for Catholic Education in 2007 strongly endorsed the need for more research in Catholic education. See Miller (2007, pp. 477-478).

[24] For a more recent research study of this in practice see:-
Guzman, Palacios and Deliyannedes (2012) regarding access to Catholic schools in the USA.

These forms of openness, if actually practised, will not only result in a more authentic, effective and comprehensive provision of educational opportunities for more people[25] but they will also create a Catholic educational system which can refute the polemical claims brought against it by secularists and atheists, thereby meeting ideological assertions with evidence based arguments.

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[25] Pope Francis emphasised this point in his recent address to the Rome Congress on Catholic Education in November 2015 in this way:- 'We must seek to educate humanly and with open, not closed horizons. Any sort of 'closure' does not serve education, that is, confining it to those most able or most able to pay, and not bothering so much with the others'. I am grateful to Dr. Brian Croke for providing me with a report of the Pope's comments.

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LISTENING TO OTHERS: POPE FRANCIS

Henry Wansbrough[*]

1. Listening to others in the Church

From the beginning of the Church listening to others has been a vital pre-requisite of decision-making. It assumes that the Spirit is present in all members of the Church. There is a striking difference between the first meeting of the disciples in the Acts of the Apostles to elect a successor to fill the place of Judas and the next decision-making meetings, the choice of the Seven and the so-called 'Council of Jerusalem' as presented by Luke in Acts 6 and 15. At the first meeting, before the coming of the Spirit at Pentecost, the decision is made by drawing lots, with the implication that the will of God would be shown in this way rather than by discussion or voting by the disciples, who had not yet received the Spirit. However, once the Spirit has come at Pentecost, the procedure is entirely different. When it comes to the commissioning of the Seven, the same interchange continues: the whole assembly listens to the voice of the Twelve and approves; they then make their choice and present the candidates to the apostles.[26] At the Council of Jerusalem the assembly listens to the opposing points of view given by Peter and James, and then give their unanimous decision, 'It has seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to ourselves…' The decision of the community is the decision of the Spirit, reached by listening. Similarly, even in the authoritative Roman world of the Benedict's *Rule for Monks* listening is important. The Prologue to the *Rule* does indeed start with the uncompromising statement, 'Listen, my son, to the precepts of the Master', but when it comes to community decisions Benedict stresses that even the youngest must be given full opportunity to express his views – with a reminder of the wisdom of young Daniel in the trial of Susanna. Benedict himself shows his willingness to learn from others: after several

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[*] Monastery of Christ the Word, Zimbabwe, 28.12.2015

[26] Who then lays hands on them? The manuscripts differ: some texts make clear that the apostles do the laying on of hands, others run more smoothly if the assembly as a whole lays their hands on them. Similarly in Acts 13.3 it seems that the whole Church of Antioch laid hands on Barnabas and Sal to commission them.

chapters of detailed work in apportioning the recitation of the Psalms throughout the week, he generously concedes that others may find another arrangement better (chapter 18).

It would be starry-eyed to maintain that listening has always held the place it deserves in the counsels of the Church. The low point in listening was perhaps reached at the end of the nineteenth century with the *Syllabus of Errors* (1864), promulgated by Pius IX. This ranged over a whole gamut of opinions without even listening to them carefully. It is in fact not always easy to discern behind the condemnations the opinions which were being condemned. The *Syllabus* was indeed couched in terms precisely of refusal to listen to any other voice than that of the Pope and his inner circle: the Church possessed the whole truth, and that was an end of the matter! There was no attempt to see whether other teachings or other formulations might contain a scintilla of truth. It was this attitude which led the ultramontanes of the First Vatican Council to press for a definition of papal infallibility. A loosening in the final decade of the century, and a willingness to listen to alternative voices at the great international Catholic Congresses was reversed by the hysterical reaction to the Catholic Modernist movement, culminating in *Lamentabili sane exitu* in 1907, which stifled open discussion for half a century. Accordingly, one of the most remarkable developments of the late twentieth century, and especially since Vatican II, has been the growing readiness of authorities of the Church to listen to others. The explosion at the opening of Vatican II, when the assembled bishops refused to accept the schemata presented to them by the Preparatory Commissions has become part of the stuff of history.

One of the most important moments in the advance from this position was the treatment of the non-Catholic observers at Vatican II, and the respect with which their opinions were treated. This attitude was given a doctrinal basis in *Lumen Gentium* (#12-13), which detailed the ways in which those outside full communion with the Catholic Church were described as in some sense united with the Church. This implies that their way of formulating their faith or theology is not without its own values; it at least opens the door to the possibility that Catholics might listen and learn from them. Such an attitude has been the basis also of inculturation, a vital listening to others, on the assumption that the traditional European way of celebrating the mysteries and the traditional European use of symbols is not the only possible way. It opened the way also to movements such as those pioneered by two Benedictines in India, Henri le Saux and Bede Griffiths, exploring the great Eastern world

religions, and asking whether their understanding can contribute to Christian understanding or even be translated into Christian terms.

The openness to others pioneered at Vatican II by the treatment of non-Catholic observers and by the prominent part given to the Church Unity Commission bore fruit in the official inter-church dialogues, such as those between Anglican and Roman Catholics and between Methodists and Roman Catholics. They have markedly advanced theological understanding within the Church. By listening to divergent views and attempting to discern the meaning and importance of the teachings of their own communion, theologians on both sides have advanced their own understanding. When Methodists 'reverently dispose of' the remains of the Eucharistic elements, how near are they coming to a doctrine of the real presence of Christ in them? When they do not re-commission a minister who has fallen away and returned again to good standing, how near are they to the idea that priesthood makes an indelible mark on the soul? The depth and clarity of the Agreed Statements, particularly those of the Anglican Roman Catholic International Commission, the fruit of patient listening over many years, has made them texts important in the theological training of clergy in many seminary courses.

Another important advance at Vatican II was the creation of a machinery for local, regional and universal Conferences or Synods of Bishops, making provision for the bishops of the world to meet regularly at several levels to listen to one another about important problems. Such provision for listening and consultation was all part of the recognition in practice that the Bishops were themselves successors of the Apostles and not merely delegates of the Bishop of Rome, though many have lamented the failure in subsequent years to implement this machinery more fully. Indeed, Pope Francis, in his important address on the 50th anniversary of the institution of the Synod (17th October, 2015), speaks of the need to reflect on means 'to increase the spirit of episcopal collegiality which has not yet been fully realized' and outlines possible ways in which the synodal process might develop.

2. *Laudato Si'*

A quite new dimension of listening has, however, come to the fore in the pontificate of Pope Francis. Two aspects of this may be seen in two remarkable changes. The first is the widespread consultation with and learning from Episcopal Conferences which may be

observed in the encyclical *Laudato Si'*. It is a normal feature of Papal Encyclicals that they should quote the Pope's predecessors. The purpose of this is to show that the present teaching is in continuity with the teaching of the Church expressed by earlier papal tradition. But a new feature of listening to others occurs in the current encyclical: on almost every page of the encyclical Pope Francis quotes and genuinely builds on opinions expressed by the Bishops' Conferences around the world. The full list of these shows a staggering breadth of consultation and listening. A quick trawl through the footnotes shows that the encyclical draws explicitly on the Bishops' Conferences of Southern Africa, the Philippines, Bolivia, Germany, Patagonia-Argentina, United States, Latin America & the Caribbean, Canada, Japan, Brazil, Dominica, Paraguay, New Zealand, Mexico, Australia.

In many of these cases the Pope is listening to the pleas of countries which have suffered and are suffering injustices of exploitation. Others, from richer nations, show that the Bishops of those regions have themselves listened to the pleas of the exploited. So the German Bishops are quoted as saying that 'Both everyday experience and scientific research show that the gravest effects of all attacks on the environment are suffered by the poorest' (fn 26). Similarly the Bishops of the United States urge that greater attention be given to 'the needs of the poor, the weak and the vulnerable, in a debate often dominated by more powerful interests' (fn 31) – many of which may well be based in their own country. By contrast, the Japanese Bishops delicately and poetically point out that 'to sense every creature singing the hymn of its existence is to live joyfully in God's love and hope' (fn 56).

Such listening to others, and the very demonstration of such listening, are essential pre-requisites of the Pope's purpose, for in recent times the papacy has taken on more overtly the role of being the universal teacher, not only of the Catholic faithful, but also of people of good will beyond the confines of the Catholic and Christian faith. Listening by the Pope is to be reciprocated by a wider audience than previously; others beyond the explicit boundaries of the Church are being called upon to listen to the Pope. A striking early instance of such world-leadership was the 1988 Assisi World Day of Prayer for Peace, to which religious leaders from many great religions of the world were successfully invited. Another unforgettable instance was the visit of Pope Benedict XVI to Great Britain in 2006. This had been carefully billed by the national press to be the non-event of the year. In fact the Pope's well-studied and tactful teaching and his loving presence from beginning to end stirred the conscience of the nation, perhaps none more profoundly than a fraternal visit to retirees of his

own age, and the historic address about Britain's role in the world, given to the leaders of the nation in Westminster Hall. The message of Pope Benedict was heard gratefully and seriously by many outside his own Roman Catholic flock.

There is no mistaking the objective of *Laudato Si'*; it is addressed to 'all people'. Pope Francis recalls that, 'with the world teetering on the brink of nuclear crisis', Pope John XXIII wrote 'to the entire Catholic world and indeed to all men and women of good will'. He goes on, 'Now, faced as we are with global environmental deterioration, I wish to address every person living on this planet… In this Encyclical, I would like to enter into dialogue with all people about our common home' (#3). To underline the universality of his message he links arms on the one side with the Ecumenical Patriarch Bartholemew (#7-9) and on the other with that ever-popular figure of Francis of Assisi (#10-13). Not only does he link arms with them, but he also listens to them before giving his own message. 'We need a conversation which includes everyone… We require a new and universal solidarity' (#14). Listening himself to the data of scientific research, and to the concerns of Bishops throughout the world, and reading it all in the light of Christian revelation, Pope Francis is calling on all people to listen.[27]

However, Pope Francis in this encyclical does not confine his listening to Church sources. He ranges widely over the problems of 'Care for our Common Home' (the sub-title of the letter). The letter is often dubbed 'the encyclical on climate change', a quite unjustifiable restriction, as a mere glance at the chapter-headings shows; it embraces issues such as pollution, waste, misuse of water and loss of bio-diversity. The Pope's goal is 'not to amass information… but rather to become painfully aware, to dare to turn what is happening to the world into our own personal suffering' (#19). In his listening he refers to scientific data, but carefully refrains from pre-judging issues. So, on the issue of climate change, he limits himself to saying that 'a very solid scientific consensus indicates' a large degree of human responsibility, but at the same time points out that there are other factors, 'such as volcanic activity, variations in the earth's orbit and axis, the solar system', which should be taken into account (#23). It is not the Pope's job to settle scientific questions, and this open-minded listening provides an excellent example of raising important questions.

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[27] Pope Francis is said to have described himself as the luckiest Pope in history because he can listen to the wisdom of his predecessor. It is well known that he is in constant communication with Pope Benedict over important matters and documents.

3. The Synod on the Family

The second, and perhaps more surprising and innovative feature, is the real consultation of the laity which preceded and animated the recent Synod on the Family. It was as though finally the plea of John Henry Newman in his brilliant tract, *On Consulting the Laity on Matters of Doctrine*, had at last come into its own. Newman's contention was that during the fourth-century Arian controversy it was the laity rather than the bishops who vigorously defended and preserved the faith. He used this argument to stress the importance of a theologically educated laity and of Catholic religious education, criticising the rejection by the English Catholic Bishops of the invitation to take part in the negotiations which eventually resulted in the legislation to make provision for education for all. The writing of this booklet has been described as Newman's act of ecclesiastical suicide, for it was fiercely rejected by the Catholic establishment, with the result that Newman remained an object of suspicion in the English Catholic Church for some decades. However, times change, and Newman's stress on the laity played an important part in many of the discussions of Vatican II.

Accordingly, from the beginning of the Synod on the Family consultation of the laity was a prominent feature. Of course the subject-matter of the discussions at the Synod made this even more imperative than for some previous Synods, such as that on the Bible. It would have been absurd to leave the discussions on the family precisely in the hands of a celibate clergy who had little direct personal experience of many of the aspects of family life. Well before the first session of the Synod, in October 2013, questionnaires were sent round to every diocese, asking the opinions and experiences of the laity on 28 different topics to do with the family. Pope Francis called this 'taking the pulse of the Church'. He also decided on holding an extra session of the Synod in 2014 before the ordinary Synod planned for 2015; the purpose of this was precisely to give time and opportunity for listening to the many opinions which would be voiced. The initial stages of consultation were not perfectly implemented, and there was widespread dissatisfaction in some areas, before the first session, at the failure of Bishops' Conferences to publish the results of the questionnaires sent round dioceses and parishes, resulting in the fear that uncomfortable opinions were being simply swept under the carpet. A second consultation before the second session was, at least in some countries, more wisely and more publicly handled, the results and opinions being made more widely available. On the eve of the first session of the Synod the Pope – as he recalled in his address at the 50th anniversary – said, 'For the Synod Fathers we ask the Holy Spirit first of

all for the gift of listening: to listen to God, so that with him we may hear the cry of his people'. He stressed that the Pope in his turn speaks not on the basis of his personal convictions but as the supreme witness to the faith of the Church as a whole.[28]

Most of all, however, the presence of married family members, invited to the Synod of 2015, showed that there was a new wind of the Spirit blowing through the Church. Of the 360 people present less than 280 were clergy, and as many as 51 non-voting observers took part, including 18 married couples. These proportions ensured that it was still evident that the Bishops in communion with the Bishop of Rome were the final arbiters and teachers in the Church, but it put into practice the truth that an important element in the office of bishops is to listen to and evaluate ideas presented to them, rather than initiating all the ideas themselves. When the participants were divided into discussion-groups, each of a couple of dozen participants, according to the five main European languages, care was taken that each group should contain a good number of married laity, and that their views should be asked and honoured. This was no window-dressing exercise, for those who took part were struck by the seriousness with which their views were noted and discussed.

In all this it was clear that the Roman Catholic Church was taking its first, tentative and inexperienced steps in directions which were entirely familiar to the Churches of the Reformation and especially those of the Anglican Communion. In the Anglican Communion the exact polity varies from province to province, but the principle is well-established that the pattern is synodical, that is, discussion begins on the level of a synod, composed of three houses, those of laity, clergy and bishops, and the primate (presiding Bishop or Archbishop) comes into play only at the end of the process. In most provinces the presiding Bishop has only a limited power to block the decisions of the lower houses. For instance in one province the synod voted for women priests three times at three-yearly intervals. The presiding Bishop was able to veto this twice, but not a third time, thus being forced to allow the will of the Synod to pass. By contrast, the Roman Catholic pattern is basically primatial: the initiative comes from the top, and the teaching authority resides in the Bishops in communion with the Bishop of Rome. For Catholics, therefore, the process of consulting the laity and striving to listen to their opinions was a novelty. It was still only a matter of the Bishops listening to the laity – and not many of the laity, less than 15% of members of the Synod. In the matter of

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[28] *Osservatore Romano*, 23.10.2015.

voting on the propositions the place of the laity was still more restricted: the only voting layperson was Herve Janson, the Superior General of the Little Brothers of Jesus, representing the Union of Superiors General! Are we still to expect developments?

BEING OPEN TO THOSE WITH LESS: ACADEMIC OUTCOMES OF DISADVANTAGED PUPILS ATTENDING CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND

Andrew Morris[*]

Abstract

Despite there being significant numbers of state maintained Catholic schools in England, they have proved to be of interest only to a minority of empirical researchers, usually those directly involved in their promotion. Recent government initiatives encouraging further provision of schools with a religious character have proved controversial and have prompted interest in their comparative academic performance. In this paper aggregated attainment data for each of the four Key Stages of the National Curriculum during 2006-2007 are used to compare the performance of Catholic and other schools having differing proportions of socially disadvantaged pupils on roll, where disadvantage is defined as those who are eligible for free school meals (FSM). The data are for all maintained primary and secondary schools that completed the 2007 Annual Schools' Census. There are noticeable differences in the mean attainment levels achieved by pupils in the two sectors. Those comparative differences are consistent in both phases. Pupil attainment in Catholic schools tends to be higher than in other institutions, the differentials between the sectors increasing the greater the proportion of deprived pupils on roll. These findings seem to confirm previously reported performance data for the period 1996-2001. The significance and limitations of the findings are discussed and areas for further study suggested.

Keywords: Catholic schools, socio/economic deprivation; pupil attainment; school culture; ethos.

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Social Deprivation and Attainment

Despite government initiatives in developing new types of school in recent years, the current state maintained educational system in England is both firmly rooted in, and continues to reflect, the provisions of the Education Act of 1944. In the decades immediately following its implementation, the dominating effect of home circumstances on pupil achievement in school was well documented in reports published by both government and independent researchers (see, for example, Ministry of Education, 1954, 1963; Douglas, 1964; Swift, 1965, 1966; Department of Education & Science, 1967). Research indicates that little has changed in the subsequent decades though, of course, not every child from a socially deprived background will, necessarily, have lower than average attainment levels at school. Nevertheless, it is well established that social deprivation has a real and negative effect on children's cognitive development, on their academic attainment at all Key Stages of the National Curriculum and that disadvantage persists into their adult life (Goldstein & Cuttance, 1988; Paterson, 1991; Thomas & Mortimore, 1996; Mortimore & Whitty, 1997; Feinstein, 2003; Blanden et al., 2008; DCSF, 2009).

On the other hand, it has long been recognised that, even where schools may have very similar moral and educational purposes, some have few problems achieving their objectives, while others, drawing pupils from a similar background have many (Clegg, 1962; Shipman, 1968; Clegg & Megson, 1973). Nevertheless, it was not until the late 1970s and 1980s that the first significant empirical studies were published in England suggesting that the academic and social background of pupils were not the determining factors in a child's achievement at school in either the secondary (Reynolds, 1976; Rutter et al., 1979; Smith & Tomlinson, 1989) or primary phases (Mortimore et al., 1988).

A government review of more recent research affirms the strength of those early studies, arguing that "schools are independently important for deprived pupils' outcomes" (DCSF, 2009, p. 67) and points to a number of institutional factors that may contribute to alleviating some of the pervasive and long-term negative effects of social deprivation. However, it has been argued elsewhere that, together with the level of pupils' prior attainment - itself heavily influenced by socio-economic factors – the overall level of social disadvantage can account for as much as 80% of the apparent difference between schools (Goldstein & Sammons, 1997; Saunders, 1998). On the other hand, researchers in both the UK and USA have

cautioned that high correlations between socio-economic status and levels of attainment do not mean they are necessarily causal or that the interaction is straightforward and consistent for every pupil. It is a complex process (Saunders, 1999; Meegan et al., 2002).

Though the school effect may be a relatively small factor in the level of pupils' success at school, that there is some (small) institutional effect has become a focus for central and local government sponsored school improvement programmes and strategies. A number of school-based practices have been identified in a government report that can best support and enhance the learning experience of socially deprived pupils, within individual classrooms and the school as a whole. They include, improving the quality of teaching and school leadership at all levels, the nature of teacher/pupil interaction, and developing positive school/parent involvement (DCSF, 2009). The report also notes that "the creation of a positive school culture is the key factor in the improvement of schools in socio-economically disadvantaged areas" (p. 67). However, it is rather vague as to the composition of that 'positive culture' and the acceptable methods whereby it can be created. Further, while the largest section of the report is devoted to the positive effects that schools can have (DCSF, 2009, Chp. 6), it makes no reference to possible differences between the beneficial, or detrimental, effects that different types or categories of school may have on the attainment levels of socially deprived pupils. In contrast, a significant body of research which has been published in the United States of America over the last twenty-five years which indicates that Catholic schools seem particularly effective with pupils from the lower socio-economic groupings in society, for example, Coleman et al., 1982; Greeley, 1982; Hoffer et al, 1985; Bryk et al, 1993; Reese et al, 1997; Johnson, 1999; Hoffer, 2000; Jeynes, 2000, 2003. Such empirical data are not necessarily applicable in different social and national cultures, of course, and in contrast to the UK, Catholic schools in America are not financially maintained by the state.

This paper considers the position within the public state maintained educational system in England. It compares the average levels of academic performance of pupils attending Catholic and other schools having similar proportions of disadvantaged pupils on roll at the ages of 7, 11, 14 and 16 years, using national test and examination performance data of pupils attending schools during the academic year 2006/2007 provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted).

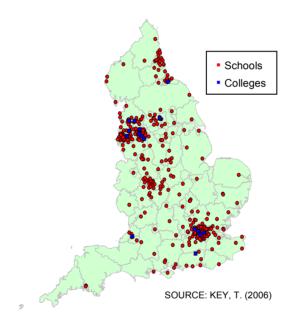**The Catholic Community in England and its Schools**

To understand the place, role and performance of Catholic schools in England today, one has to appreciate the complex history both of the Catholic community and of the state sponsored compulsory educational system that began in the last quarter of the 19th century. Though it was developed from within a predominantly Christian culture where, for the most part, a mutually supportive linkage between education and Christianity was accepted as part of the natural order, disputes about the nature and role of religious belief and instruction in state supported schools were central during the period leading up to the first statutory Education Act in 1870. Some thirty years later, the 1902 Act introduced a national and municipal 'dual system' of educational provision having, broadly, two different types of elementary school. Those provided by the newly created local authorities were maintained by government grants and local rates. Voluntary, or non-provided schools as they were designated, were funded, mainly, by Christian denominations and maintained by them with the assistance of some government grant, but not by local rates. Secular instruction in both types of school was under the directions of the local education authority. Religious instruction was in accordance with the voluntary school's trust deed but strictly non-denominational in local authority schools.

The Education Act 1944 extended the pre-war educational system, making education compulsory for pupils up to the age of fifteen (section 35) in newly created secondary schools. This triggered a vast expansion of provision by local authorities and Church groups. Today, around a third of all state maintained primary schools, and some fifteen percent of secondary schools, are designated as having a religious character, of which there are twenty different types. The vast majority belong either to the Church of England or the Catholic Church, but there are also a small number provided by minority Christian denominations, some Jewish, Muslim and Sikh schools, together with a few joint ventures by different Christian denominations working together in a variety of partnerships.

Today the Catholic dioceses provide a network of voluntary aided primary and secondary schools. Many of the secondary schools specialise in one or more curriculum subjects, some only educate pupils aged 11-16, others from 11-18. There are a few Sixth Form Colleges and, at the time of writing, two Academies. However, the spread across the country is uneven, institutions being located mainly in urban areas, with around 30% in the North-West of

England, between 10-14% in London, with smaller groups in the North-East and West Midlands (figure 1). The total number of Catholic pupils in Catholic maintained schools peaked in 1974 at 0.94 million when a gradual decline in pupil population began. In 1980 there were approximately 0.76 million, in 1990 some 0.68 million, in 2003 there were 0.63 million and in 2007 0.57 million, with a corresponding increase in the percentage of non-Catholic pupils, from around 3% in the 1970s to nearly 30% in 2007. Today, approximately 0.71 million Catholic and non-Catholic children, representing around 9.8% of the total pupil population in England, are educated in Catholic schools (Catholic Education Service, 2008, 2009; DCSF, 2008).

Figure 1 . Catholic Secondary Schools & Colleges in England

SOURCE: KEY, T. (2006)

Despite that structural and geographical diversity, the bishops identify five essential characteristics of all their schools/colleges. They include a *search for excellence* and *education of all*, with a particular duty to care for the poor and disadvantaged (Catholic Education Service, 1996, 1997). That concern for the poor and underprivileged is not new, but rather has formed a central element of the Church's understanding of its educative mission for over 150 years (Marshall, 1850).

Measures of Social Deprivation

Appropriately accurate and reliable measures of socio-economic deprivation are not easy to establish. For educational analyses, government uses two main indicators; eligibility for free

school meals (FSM) and an area based measure, the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI). Both have limitations. Pupils become eligible for free school meals if their parents are in receipt of certain state benefits and have made an appropriate claim for them from the local authority. Though a seemingly clear and straightforward indicator, it does not necessarily give a complete picture since not all eligible parents take up their entitlement. Further, at least one local authority provides free school meals for all its primary school pupils, completely negating FSM as a differentiating measure of deprivation in that area (Ray, 2006). The IDACI is a measure of the overall level of deprivation of the area in which the family resides. While it takes many factors into account and has a broader basis than FSM, it is not an indication of individual parental deprivation.

This paper uses the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) as a surrogate measure of social disadvantage. It is the measure adopted by school inspectors from the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) when attempting to contextualise school pupil intake and performance. The information is readily available, has the advantage of being easy to measure and has a high correlation with pupil performance. However, using proxy measures, such as FSM, for comparing schools can lead to distorted or misleading comparisons. On the other hand, provided one appreciates the nature of the measure and its limitations, some useful insights can be made (Goldstein et al, 2000; Ray, 2006). However, it must be borne in mind that the proportion of FSM pupils varies across the primary and secondary phases; 16.9% and 14.4% respectively in the January 2007 school census returns. Further, eligible pupils do not necessarily remain so throughout their school life. Consequently, though the overall percentages may be fairly constant, the individuals that make up those numbers can vary, by up to 7% in any one year (DCSF, 2009).

Pupil Performance Data

Pupils in maintained schools study a National Curriculum. It is divided into four Key Stages (KS) based on age, and sets standards of achievement expected of pupils at each stage (table1). Pupils take national tests at the end of each Key Stage, their results providing a snapshot of individual academic attainment compared with national standards.

Table 1

The National Curriculum Key Stages

Year Group	Reception	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Normal Age of Pupils	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Key Stage	Key Stage 1			Key Stage 2				Key Stage 3			Key Stage 4	

SOURCE: DEPARTMENT FOR EDUCATION & SKILLS 2004

Those individual results, when aggregated, can provide a measure of the performance of their school, which can, in turn, be used as a measure of comparative school effectiveness.

For most subjects, national standards range from Levels 1-8 and pupils are expected to progress through those levels during their eleven years of formal schooling, though not all will necessarily achieve the highest levels in all, some or any of the Key Stages. At the end of the first Key Stage of the National Curriculum, pupils take tests in three subjects, reading, mathematics and writing. Most 7 year olds are expected to achieve at least Level 2 in each subject. At the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils are aged 11, tests are taken in English, mathematics and science, regarded by government as the core of the curriculum, with most expected to achieve Level 4. The same three subjects are tested at the end of Key Stage 3, when the average 14 year old is expected to achieve Levels 5 or 6. At the end of Key Stage 4, when pupils are aged 16, they will be expected to take General Certificate of Secondary Education examinations in a variety of named subjects (see *www.dcsf.gov.uk/ performancetables* for more details of the levels most pupils are expected to attain in subjects at the four different Key Stages). On average, pupils will follow ten such courses and take examinations in most, if not all, of them. Pass grades are awarded from A*, the highest standard of attainment, to G, the lowest.

Comparative Attainment Levels –This study reports the attainment data taken from school tests and examinations during the academic year 2006/07. It compares the aggregated performance of pupils in differing 'deprivation bands' (based on the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals in January each year) in Catholic and other schools. The data are taken from both the primary and secondary phases and, therefore, record the aggregated performance of different cohorts of pupils. They represent a 'snapshot' of the performance of

a particular cohort at a particular time in their total school career. Consequently, they do not provide a comparison of overall pupil progress from one Key Stage to the next.

Primary Phase - Key Stages 1 and 2

For the purposes of comparison in the primary phase, schools are divided into five 'deprivation bands' as measured by the percentage of FSM on roll, derived from the statistical returns made by schools in January of each academic year; 50% or more, 35-49%, 21-34%, 8-20%, below 8%. The measure of attainment used for comparison is the percentage of the cohort that attain the standard expected of an 'average' pupil aged 7 and 11 at the end of the relevant Key Stage.

Table 2

Catholic & Other Schools – Key Stage 1 Pupil Attainment by FSM 2006/07

| Proportion of FSM band | All Other | | | | Catholic | | | |
	No. of schools in band	% pupils attaining L2+ reading	% pupils attaining L2+ writing	% pupils attaining L2+ maths	No. of schools in band	$^+$/. % attaining L2+ reading	$^+$/. % attaining L2+ writing	$^+$/. % attaining L2+ maths
50%+	598	70	66	81	46	+9	+9	+7
35%-49%	1251	73	69	83	131	+8	+6	+4
21%-34%	2343	78	75	87	269	+5	+4	+2
8%-20%	3538	85	82	91	511	+3	+2	+1
Below 8%	6203	91	89	95	674	+2	+1	+1

SOURCE: DCSF/Ofsted 2008

The depressive effect of social deprivation on levels of pupil attainment is evident at the age of 7, the earliest point at which national testing takes place (table 2). The higher the proportion of pupils on roll who are eligible for free school meals, the lower the proportion obtaining the expected standards in all three subjects. However, in each 'deprivation band' there is a performance differential in all three subjects tested in favour of the Catholic sector. Moreover, that differential increases the greater the overall level of deprivation in the school, again in all three subjects but most noticeably in English.

A similar, though not identical, pattern can be seen in the comparative levels of attainment at age 11, at the end of a child's primary education, where most pupils are expected to achieve

level 4 in the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science (table 3). Again, in all three subjects tested there is a 'performance differential' in favour of the Catholic sector that increases as levels of deprivation increase in four of the five 'bands'. In schools having more than 50% of FSM pupils on roll, however, the differential, though still evident, does not continue the incremental pattern. Nevertheless, with that exception, the differentials in pupil attainment in each of the subjects tend to be greater at age 11 than at age 7, though since the comparisons are with different cohorts it would be unwise to read too much into that observation.

Table 3

Catholic & Other Schools – Key Stage 2 Pupil Attainment by FSM 2006/07

| Proportion of FSM band | All Other | | | | Catholic | | | |
	No. of schools in band	% pupils attaining L4+ English	% pupils attaining L4+ maths	% pupils attaining L4+ science	No. of schools in band	+/. % attaining L4+ English	+/. % attaining L4+ maths	+/. % attaining L4+ science
50% +	600	67	66	78	50	+5	+8	+5
35%-49%	1225	67	66	78	129	+10	+9	+8
21%-34%	2225	73	70	82	271	+8	+7	+5
8%-20%	3320	80	77	88	494	+5	+4	+2
Below 8%	5508	88	85	93	665	+3	+2	+1

SOURCE: DCSF/Ofsted 2008

Secondary Phase - Key Stage 3

When pupils are aged 11 years old, at the end of Key Stage 2, they transfer from their primary schools into the secondary phase of compulsory education. In this instance, because of the greater variety of secondary schools and the differing patterns of pupil numbers eligible for free school meals in the two phases (see above), schools are divided into eight categories, seven 'deprivation bands' linked directly to the percentage of FSM eligible pupils on roll in the particular cohort in January and a separate, eighth, 'grammar school' band. The seven non-selective school bands comprise those having 50% or more, 35-49%, 21-34%, 13-20%, 9-12%, 5-8% and below 5% of the cohort eligible for free school meals. Schools in the 'grammar' band have negligible FSM numbers, on average 2.2% (DCSF, 2008).

There are very few Catholic grammar schools (seven only, none of which are diocesan owned, but run by religious orders), and even fewer Catholic secondary schools in the two

highest deprivation bands (six and fifteen, schools respectively). Consequently, making meaningful comparisons across the sectors for these three particular bands is somewhat problematical.

Table 4

Catholic & Other Schools – Key Stage 3 Pupil Attainment by FSM 2006/07

Proportion of FSM band	All Other				Catholic			
	No. of schools in band	% pupils attaining L5+ English	% pupils attaining L5+ maths	% pupils attaining L5+ science	No. of schools in band	+/. % attaining L5+ English	+/. % attaining L5+ maths	+/. % attaining L5+ science
50% +	68	57	60	52	6	+2	+2	+4
35%-49%	197	57	59	53	15	+11	+7	+5
21%-34%	446	63	66	61	50	+11	+8	+8
13%-20%	492	68	71	67	57	+9	+7	+6
9%-12%	418	75	76	74	60	+6	+5	+4
5%-8%	607	79	81	79	87	+7	+4	+4
Below 5%	440	86	87	86	50	+5	+3	+4
Grammar	152	99	99	99	7	=	=	-4

SOURCE: DCSF/Ofsted 2008

The comparative measures of attainment at the end of Key Stage 3, when pupils are aged 14, are based on national tests in three subjects, English, mathematics and science, as is the case at the end of their primary schooling. Leaving aside for one moment the comparative performance of grammar schools, the differential pattern is consistent in each subject, and at each level of deprivation.

There are clear similarities with the primary phase findings. Again, a greater proportion of pupils attending Catholic schools achieve the levels expected of them at the end of the Key Stage and, it seems that the greater the level of overall deprivation within schools, the greater the difference in overall levels of attainment in the two sectors, though this trend is not maintained in the two highest deprivation bands. Whether this change in the pattern observed so far is a result of the small number of Catholic schools in these categories or is indicative of some other phenomenon is not possible to ascertain from this data set.

Comparisons of the pattern of performance in the three core subjects, albeit from a different cohort, are similar for pupils aged 11 and 14. The English test results show the greatest differential in favour of the Catholic sector schools; science (marginally) the least. It is,

perhaps, a little surprising that differentials are not the same, or very similar, in all three subjects. However, it is consistent with research using a multilevel modelling technique suggesting that while pupils attending Catholic schools clearly outperform those in non-religious schools in English at Key Stage 3 across the whole of the ability range, there is less of a difference in mathematics and science (Schagen et al, 2002).

Secondary Phase - Key Stage 4

At the end of each of the first three key stages, although pupils have been taught all subjects that comprise the National Curriculum, the tests are limited to three core subjects. Consequently, the measures of comparison are limited. At the end of Key Stage 4, the vast majority of secondary school pupils will take examinations in various General Certificate of Secondary Education (or equivalent) examinations (for more details see www.dcsf/performancetables). Government has used various measures means of comparing school performance since the first league tables of raw examination scores were first published in 1992.

Table 5

Catholic & Other Schools – Key Stage 4 Pupil Attainment by FSM 2006/07

	All Other				Catholic			
Proportion of FSM band	No. schools in band	% pupils attaining any GCSE qualific'n	% pupils attaining 5+ A*-G GCSE (any subjects)	% pupils attaining 5+ A*-C GCSE (inc English & maths)	No. schools in band	$^+/_-$ % attaining any GCSE qualific'n	$^+/_-$ % attaining 5+ A*-G GCSE (any subjects)	$^+/_-$ % attaining 5+ A*-C GCSE (inc English & maths)
50% +	69	97	87	49	6	-4	-3	+4
35%-49%	198	96	84	45	15	+1	+5	+11
21%-34%	442	97	88	49	50	=	+3	+10
13%-20%	483	97	90	51	58	+1	+3	+10
9%-12%	409	98	92	57	59	+1	+2	+8
5%-8%	591	99	94	63	87	=	+2	+8
Below 5%	4740	99	96	72	49	=	+1	+7
Grammar	152	100	100	98	7	=	-1	-1

SOURCE: DCSF/Ofsted 2008

While it is generally recognised that such measures do not take into account all the factors known to affect pupils' academic attainment, and do not, therefore, give a full picture of the comparative effectiveness of a school, they are, nevertheless, used by parents and

government as measures of school effectiveness. Indeed, at the time of writing, should the percentage of pupils attaining 5+ A*-C grades at GCSE fall below 30%, the school may well be subject to government intervention or even closure. Consequently, despite the limitations of the measures, they can be, and sometimes are, used as institutional comparators, and those comparisons when made can have significant implications.

As one might expect, nearly all pupils, irrespective of the type of school they attend and the level of social deprivation within the cohort, obtain at least one examination qualification at the end of eleven years of formal schooling. It is, after all, a very minimum standard. The numbers achieving the much more challenging benchmark of five or more GCSE examination passes, including English and mathematics, at Grade C or above, are considerably lower in both sectors. Nevertheless, even at the minimum level of attainment, as the proportion of socially disadvantaged pupils in a cohort (as measured by their FSM eligibility) increases, there is an adverse effect on attainment, albeit marginal. When using the more rigorous measures of academic attainment favoured by government, the depressive effect is more noticeable.

When one compares the sectors on the two more demanding measures of attainment, in all deprivation bands, other than in grammar schools, a higher proportion of pupils attending Catholic schools tend to achieve the expected standard. That differential, in favour of the Catholic sector, tends to increase the greater the proportion of FSM eligible pupils in the cohort, and is most apparent in the most demanding of the three measures. However, there are anomalies evident in the general trends noted above. Pupils attending Catholic grammar schools perform marginally less well than their counterparts in secular institutions. This finding may be a function of the very small sample of Catholic schools, or, and this may be connected to the slightly smaller cohorts in Catholic schools generally (Ofsted, 2002; Catholic Education Service, 2003), the academic entry requirements for admission to the Catholic grammar schools may be lower than for other selective schools in order to achieve viable numbers. These are, however, merely possibilities and such hypotheses need to be tested.

At the extreme end of the deprivation band, that is, schools having more than 50% of their pupils eligible for free school meals, the performance of pupils attending Catholic schools at the two lower levels of overall attainment is poorer than those in other similar institutions.

Again, the explanation may lie with the size of the Catholic school sample or, perhaps, with other non-observed social factors. The available data does not allow any definitive conclusions to be drawn and further research of the phenomenon is required.

Discussion

The findings of this study relate to one academic year only so, taken in isolation, too much should not be read into them. Nevertheless, their general thrust confirms numerous studies showing social deprivation (however measured) to have a negative effect upon children's academic attainment, leaving them with fewer and poorer qualifications at the end of eleven years of compulsory schooling, thus diminishing their future employment potential and risking a perpetuation of that cycle of deprivation. It is no surprise, therefore, that the findings also confirm that increases in the percentage of pupils from deprived home backgrounds on a school roll increase the likelihood of lower average levels of academic attainment by that cohort of pupils. In other words, it becomes more difficult for schools to mitigate the pernicious effects that social deprivation have upon pupils' academic careers.

On the other hand, while this study confirms the consistent depressive effect of social deprivation across all types of maintained school, the findings seem to show that socially deprived pupils attending Catholic sector schools are likely to achieve higher levels of academic attainment than similar pupils in other schools, and that attainment differential between the sectors increases the greater the percentage of deprived pupils on roll. These findings do seem to be consistent with results reported in earlier studies of pupil performance in primary (Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, 1997) and secondary schools (Bishops' Conference of England & Wales, 1999; Morris, 2005). All three studies used school performance data provided by Ofsted Research and Analysis and, as such, give a useful longitudinal perspective of comparative institutional effectiveness, suggesting that the findings from this study may be indications of a real phenomenon.

If that is the case, what might be the contributing factors in explaining the seemingly superior performance of Catholic sector schools with disadvantaged pupils? The report cited at the beginning of this paper (DCSF, 2009) suggested the quality of teaching and school leadership as possible causes. There seems no obvious reason why the quality of teaching or leadership should be qualitatively better in Catholic schools, and the evidence there is from Ofsted

inspections suggests that any such differences in favour of the Catholic sector are marginal and not particularly consistent over time. On the other hand, inspection data presented elsewhere suggest that Catholic schools are more able to generate an ethos supportive of effective learning and have better home/school links (Ofsted, 2001; Morris, 1998, 2010; Key, 2006; Catholic Education Service, 2006). Exactly why this should be the case is still a matter of some speculation.

Ability to Generate & Sustain Community

It has been argued that causes may lie in the characteristics of the relationship between parents and children's schools. Where such relationships are poor, they can be categorised as deficiencies in ability of parents to create the necessary supportive environment at home that will enable their children to thrive at school – family deficit – or an inability of the school to develop pupils' potentialities – educational inadequacy (Cairney, 2000). Such a categorisation, of itself, does not, of course, provide an explanation for the observed sector differences. However, there may be discernible effects arising from differing socio/cultural practices of schools and parents that impact upon their ability to generate social and educational capital and the learning capabilities of pupils. It has been suggested, for example, that where families are part of a recognisable community, in the sense of them sharing, for example, specific cultural and/or religious values, and their children attend schools provided by and for that community, there is the potential for a high degree of parental support (Strike, 2003).

It has also been argued that where a school succeeds in being a community, in the sense that those involved subscribe to a set of constitutive values, or conception of human nurturing, the greater the chances that the manifest values or culture of the school will be closely matched by the latent values of all those adults involved, and this, in turn, will generate and support productive educational activity (Becker & Greer, 1960; Bruner, 1986; Schagen et al., 2002; Strike, 2003). In other words, as pupils are acculturated into formal education, the greater the congruence between the attitudes and practices of the school with that of parents, the greater the likelihood of successful pupil outcomes. The Cultural Theory of risk, which explores holistic ways of analysing the formative activities and understandings of different group typologies contained in the work of Douglas (1992) and Wildavsky et al (1998) may, if

applied to the structures and culture of education, also provide some insight into possible causal factors.

Conclusion

The commitment of the Catholic bishops in England to their schools suggests that they are convinced of the academic benefits such schools provide for the more deprived pupils, both in their own faith communities and, given the increasing numbers of non-Catholic children being enrolled in Catholic schools, in the wider society. However, in his survey of published research Hyde (1990) noted a lack of empirical evidence at that time to justify their confidence or, on the other hand, to give support to groups and individuals opposed, in principle, to state support for religious based education.

While it is recognised that one must be cautious when making institutional comparisons based on non-contextualised aggregated data, the chosen methodology for this study allows us to obtain some indication as to whether the principles espoused by the Catholic bishops to support socially and academically disadvantaged youngsters in their schools are being realised in practice.

The data presented in this small-scale study, which is consistent with the findings of earlier studies, suggest that Catholic sector schools seem able to generate and sustain a positive school culture that can mitigate the effects of deprivation (of the type suggested by DCSF) more easily than the generality of other schools, and that the confidence of the bishops is reasonably well-founded. However, the probable causal reasons for the findings are still speculative and, as such, require further investigation.

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MAN AS A NEIGHBOUR:
AN ANTHROPOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Tomáš Jablonský[*]

Abstract

This paper strives to seek an answer to the question - who is my neighbour, from the perspective of anthropology. We want to emphasise that the intellectual and cultural development of an individual person can only happen in collective cooperation with others.

Viktor E. Frankl, the founder of logotherapy, called the 20th Century, the century of meaninglessness. Man seeks only his happiness. Happiness, however, cannot be the goal of human life. Happiness is a part of our lives, but it is also part of our struggles, part of giving up many illusions. Happiness goes hand in hand with a search for a meaning in that situation, in which a mutual relationship is being built.

Currently, there is much talk about global issues that threaten man, especially in his physical existence. Less relevant are the ethical and behavioural problems, which threaten man in his spiritual existence. Many diverse cultures exist, thus also different ideas about the correct way of life. Becoming stronger, however, are also the voices, which emphasise the generally accepted principles.

As already mentioned, we want to point out that the intellectual and cultural development of an individual person can only happen in collective cooperation with others. Social pedagogy is such a platform of social services, in which takes place a tangible expression of love

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towards one's neighbour. As stated by Catherine of Siena, "... we lack different things, so we miss the various people, who mediate them to us... ". We are reliant upon each other. According to this diversity of who received what, also the giving and contributing to the common good will be diverse. We think that rightly a quality education, which is the second birth of man, may be one of the most important bearers of these changes.

One of the essential questions of today becomes the question of Immanuel Kant, of whether the human race moves forward for the better. A tendency to give up on moral values and norms is becoming stronger. We lose faith that it makes sense to adhere to these norms. The constantly increasing desire of man for power reduces his ability to determine the order of values. In this situation, it is extremely important to have fixed points or milestones, which determine the path. Their reliable knowledge is one of the prerequisites of a successful education.

Modern times place high expectations on each one of us, not only work expectations, but also emotional ones. Although the exact technique opens a world of unknown possibilities to man, as a consideration for this knowledge, it repeatedly offers a depletion of most natural manifestations, which stem from human relations full of thoughtfulness, empathy, attention and cordiality.

On the walls of one European city, someone wrote these words:

Your car is Japanese

your pizza, Italian

your democracy, Greek

your coffee, Brazilian

your vacations, Turkish

your numbers, Arabic

your letters, Latin

- only your neighbour is still a foreigner?

This text expresses that which is at the centre of today's debate on the topic - who is my neighbour?

Someone or other said that man today is a "happy Sisyphus", who pushes the boulder of his life up a steep hill, without knowing why he does so and still laughing while he does so... It is a type of modern oblivion for the many problems, which are gradually growing for us and perhaps also, therefore, every day we try to forget or tear from our chest, Augustine's "cor inquietum". During this effort, however, quite the opposite usually occurs. A refusal to seek the truth about life and about the most important principles within it brings restless loneliness and fear. Stepping away from man and his problems.

Not by chance, is our time a time of fear. The fear of tomorrow, the fear of others (from the immigrants, from that which is different) and also from the fear of ourselves. All of these are expressions of concern about the truth. But that is what it is about in each of our lives.

According to Emmanuel Levinas (French philosopher of the 20th Century, who spent his childhood in Lithuania, later in Ukraine, and who after his arrival in France, studied at the University of Strasbourg, and from 1973 was a professor at the Sorbonne), we have forgotten the phenomenology of the human face, the face of our neighbour. The face, which is the first reality with which we encounter, when meeting with people.

According to him, the meeting with a human face is an ingrained ethical issue. In fact, when we see the nose, eyes, forehead, when we see them and we can describe them, that is when we turn to the other person, not only as a subject. In fact, the face of man is not first and foremost something that is intended solely for perception, which may be reduced only to perception. There is above all, a directness and openness of the face itself, its direct and defenceless exposure. The face is that which is for man the most naked, most exposed.

And yet precisely it is the face, which can stop another from a violent act. From war narratives, it is actually known how hard it is to kill someone, who looks into the person's face. According to Levinas, the face thus has its absolute meaning, namely **significance without context**. This note is very important.

Almost always, we are with people in some kind of "context", as professors, teachers, labourers, as children or parents, we act according to that which is contained in the passport, we dress up in that way, we present ourselves in that way. We have our significance in the context of life's tasks. Is that the most important thing? Levinas claims that it is not. All this

may be the reason for the division of people into social classes, community and interest groups. The human face has, on the contrary, a sense in itself. You are simply you. The human face is difficult to classify. It is something that cannot happen through intellectually graspable content. The face is unattainable; it leads us "behind". While the look is always seeking adequacy, a relationship towards the face is always an ethical issue.

The ancient biblical question of who is my neighbour is actually a question of the recognition of the immediate, what makes us human. It is thanks to Levinas that the current generation of people, who live in the middle of their problems and dilemmas (anti globalisation fights, an anti-immigration tendency in the West, religious intolerance, anti-value tendencies, pathological problems in society...), recalling a sense of the questions in this very topical and lively form. Because the human face is a second person, who speaks to me, and to whom I am speaking. (Leščinský, 2012) A man with a face, in which gleams absolute and which constantly refers to us - do not hurt, help!

Precisely one of the aims of a Christian education is to help man - a neighbour, help in dealing with problems in life, focusing on the shaping of a positive pro-social value orientation.

Such education requires goodness, kindness and an ability to help, but also to forgive or to strive to get better. Only in that way can he make his own life better, more humane. Precisely, the "golden rule" - *"Whatever you want done to you, do to others, whatever you do not want done to you, do not do to others"* as the basic moral rule expresses universal human reciprocity, a moral equality and, at the same time, lays down a moral claim on man as a personality. (Lencz, 1992) Such a personality expresses empathy with people who have difficulties, looks forward to bestowing to someone or sharing with someone, effortlessly in favour of other people, has sympathy with the problems of loved ones, experiences with other people their worries and joys

A long and arduous journey leads to such a notion of context, a journey of a change to the mental schema and yet an established approach, in order for risks, which lead to a collective or individual egoism, not to become the starting point of further measures, which threaten the existence of human civilisation at its deepest roots.

A part of this process will also certainly be a growing of the problems. But problems are increasing precisely the closer man gets to his destination. And he, who has started, as Horace says, is already half way there.

In conclusion, allow me to briefly quote the Indian poet, Rabindranath Tagore, in the West known under the name, Thākura (b. in Calcutta, 1859 to 1941):

> *"I dreamt that life is joyful.*
> *I woke up: it was the service...*
> *I served, therefore, and in the service I found joy..."*

This is an intrinsic apostolate, supremely current and needed in our time. Because help, service for another, or giving, comes from the heart and not from wealth.

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BEING OPEN TO OTHER GENERATIONS:
A RESEARCH ON - AND - WITH ADOLESCENTS
IN MANTOVA (ITALY).

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ABSTRACT: The research which is presented in this article has been developed in the last school year with adolescents in the secondary schools in Mantova and was sustained by Regional office for education in Lombardia, Lions club Mantova Ducale, CreadaItalia onlus, and chair of Family Pedagogy in Catholic University of Sacred Hearth in Milano. The origin of the project was related to the idea that men and women nowadays need educational help to construct their relationships in a correct way in this changing society and the adult educators must reflect on the new educational needs of the adolescents, in order to educate them to the value of reciprocal RESPECT. The chosen method was to investigate students through an "ad hoc" questionnaire prepared and with the CASI system in the computer classroom, with the presence of a researcher involved in the project. The collected data have been analyzed in order to understand the character of these adolescents and the values to which they testify in everyday life with reference to male: female relationships. The result of this research has been published in a book presented to the town, useful to educators in schools and out of schools; and this year there will be a programme of education offered to parents, teachers and students and other adults together.

Keywords: educations, adult and adolescents relations, family education, family and school relations, out of school education, media education, affective and sexual education.

1. The idea and the proposal of the research project

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The research project took place in the school year 2014 -2015 and was proposed by the research centre CREADA, founded and directed by Prof. De Natale. CREADA (Centre for educational relations among adults and adolescents) find its roots in 2006 with the aim to be a place where all adults, who are in relationship with adolescents: parents, teachers, doctors, out of school educators, could go to discuss about educational problems and where they could receive educational support for their life. It is evident that the intergenerational dialogue among adults and adolescents is difficult because the educators are not prepared to understand the way in which young people act. Creada is characterized by interdisciplinary experts, not only informed by human sciences, but also by medical sciences. For Creada staff, education is *salus*, health, seeking health, through education, in order to improve the whole personality of each one in his physical, psychological, cultural and relational needs, and in the hidden need to take part in a conscious way to the human life in order to give a contribution to the common good. To be in good health means to be in equilibrium with ourselves, with our world, and with our time; that is to say to live a dynamic equilibrium which is different for each person. Good health is a condition which allows us to live the human experience in a whole and complete way (M.L. De Natale, 2008). This Creada approach is referred to the anthropological ideas of "Personalism", that is to say that each human being is of value in himself and has his own dignity which is a basic right and responsibility. This is because we have a responsibility to look for a meaning in the personal lives, and this is the educated way to live.

The theoretical and anthropological basis of this research project is "personalism", which operates in the light of what it is to be fully human: it means to place value on the importance of processes of education, including participation, involvement and commitment in time and space… the light of which is not to be prescriptive, but pays attention to a pedagogy designed to be at the service of the person. "It becomes an aid that can and must be guaranteed in relation to a developing person, becoming aware of the demiurgic forces and self-organization that is formed with reason, freedom and the Word which form the individual in his/her development." (E. Mounier, 1982, p.103). Personalism linked to man as a person, with its potential values, ideas, resources, is a way of responsible growth, in which the person acquires through education the capacity of freedom -a free membership to values that one must learn to know, recognize and make guidelines for their own lives. According to Guardini, in this respect, the pedagogical activity "was born from an impulse and an energy that have roots in the deepest dimension of the human being" (R. Guardini, 1987, p.54).

This Creada centre is engaged in counseling, research and programmes of formation. The research is focused on adolescents' problems at national and international level; research on new methods for adult education; and courses for all people interested in improving their own educational competencies. The method is action research, in order to involve educators to take part to the research project together with Creada researchers, so the educators can be helped with scientific instruments which are created just for their use. The idea of this method is: as long as I learn I change myself, because each researcher studies the human phenomenon in reality and then he tries to act on it and to introduce in it some different ways of behavior. Creada staff are close to educators and offer an educational support so that the educators could overcome the feeling of being alone with difficult adolescents. (M.L. De Natale, 2007). The scientific foundations on which the Creada research is based are attributable to "Transformative Learning theory" by J. Mezirow and to "Community of Practices method" by E. Wenger. The first theory, coming from Teacher College in Columbia University in New York, allows us to understand that adults can learn only through reflection on their direct experiences that enable them to modify their personal theoretical assumptions. It is a necessary process which starts with a "disorienting dilemma" on daily life and which opens to the "reflective thinking" and then to the possibility to change the guiding principles of personal life. "Transformation is a process whereby we move over time to reformulate our structures for making meaning, usually through reconstructing dominant narratives or stories. This provides us with a more dependable way to make meaning within our lives, since we are questioning our own point of view, looking and reflecting on alternative points of view, and often creating a new more reliable and meaningful way of knowing that may be different from our old habits of the mind. This requires us to become open to the points of view of others and to be able to reflect on new points of view and information and often go back and reconstruct what we know and how we know it" (J. Mezirow, 2003, p. 20). Etienne Wenger has demonstrated as adult can learn if they are together in groups with a common interest and can share experiences, "communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly" (E. Wenger, 2006, p.15). What is necessary is a shared domain of interest, that is to say, a common shared competence, the community, in order to build relationship which enable them to learn from each other, the practice, that is to say that this group develop a shared repertoire of resources in their practice. The combination of these three elements constitutes a community of practice. The adults educators: teachers, parents, need to construct a

community to reflect together on their educational needs. On this basis the idea of this research project was to investigate how adolescents, men and women, live their relations: if there is place for the importance of the <u>respect</u> as the most important educational category for the new generations who seem to live the male female relationship in ways that are not always correct (see the many femicides in Italy), if the equality man woman can be promoted by appropriate educational interventions in the period of adolescence. This idea was accepted by Lions international group Mantova Ducale directed by Dr. G. Odini, who shared the research project and supported the research together with the The Regional Office for the schools which enabled Creada staff to enter into the schools. (M.L. De Natale and others, 2015)

2 - The research: methods and procedures

The Creada group prepared a specific questionnaire to administer to students in the secondary schools, with the survey monkey platform, that is to say through CASI (computer –assisted self interviewing) and the students were required to fill the questionnaire simultaneously in computer classroom of the school with the presence of a Creada researcher, as tutor to answer to some possible difficulties of students. With this method the questionnaire is administered through a computer programmed to submit applications in a certain order and in a programmed time. The answers are recorded directly by the computer system with the advantage of directly enforce quality control of the data and the responses in the moment of entry of information. The questionnaire was on line in the creada website (0_Educa_2.docx*http://www.creadaitalia.it*) in a protected section dedicated to schools. This procedure guaranteed the authenticity, uniqueness, and quality of the data collected. In order to analyze data from a pedagogical point of view the informations have been processed by a computer expert in the staff Creada who has guaranteed the quality of the user data to their normalization. (M. Mascheroni, in M.L. De Natale and others, 2015, pp. 53-65). This normalization of the data provides a process of verification of the data and its reclassification without alteration of the meaning of subjective response provided by the respondent. The questionnaire is structured in 60 questions divided into different sections, each of which contains specific questions to analyze attitudes and behaviours of the research object. The first part of the questionnaire, together with some statistical information, was referred to a personal family life, as the students judge the relationship between men and women in family, as parents or as brothers and sisters. In the course of evolution and mutation of

historical time, the face of the family has changed adapting to new settings derived from scientific experience, from the revolution of the customs and the change of paradigms. The perspective is to reflect on the profound socio-cultural and anthropological transformation, in order to emphasize the educational needs of the families which feel the duty to educate their own children and self-educate themselves. (M.L. De Natale, C. Simonetti, 2014). Mounier emphasizes "Education must prepare the ground. Today too often reduced to the surface distribution of knowledge and consolidation of social divisions or values of a dying world, it must break with these schemes dead to process a total formation of man, offered equally to all, which leaves everyone free of its latest prospects, to prepare common City balanced men, used to be fraternally with each other." (E. Mounier, 1948, p.115). Education and the family need to be reevaluated as one indivisible task, as an indispensable right and duty, as an activity to be committed to, exploring their personal qualities of sensitivity, of careful preparation and reflection. This last aspect becomes always more necessary according to the growth of children, because the educational commitment differs over the years, from childhood. Within the family environment, if there is a building-up of the values that will serve as a basis for the development of man, if there is complicity, friendship, love in family relationships, there will be less chance of developing individuals who become violent. The care of children through the family naturally has an educational character. Education has a vital role in the cultural and social production and reproduction and begins in the family. As a method of socialization, education has two dimensions: social, in the transmission of a cultural heritage to the new generation through the work of various institutions, and individual, in the formation of outlooks and visions, acquisition of knowledge, skills and values. In state education systems the individual dimension is subordinated to the social dimension in the context of interests, goals and relations of power and respect, in this case, based on the category of age-generation, whether in the family or in education. Formerly, to educate meant to care for, being restricted to physical care. From the outset, therefore, education is a job and a word gendered, which corresponds to the sexual division of labour in the patriarchal society: the reproductive work of women and the productive and intellectual work of men. Etymologically, in Latin, education referred to a female subject, while teaching and instruction referred to a male subject. This distinction refers to two places: an original place of physical and spontaneous affective relations, of silent nutrition, as in the context of child development – home, family; and the other place of intentional and rational relations, of specific training, and of explicit regulations and control, which expresses a masculine vision of education, namely, the school. The modes of education and of social reproduction vary

throughout history and in different societies, as well as among the groups and classes of the same society. Historically, to educate, in the general sense of caring, is not the exclusive role of biological fathers/mothers or of the family or of the school. The care of sons and daughters to early adolescence, from pre-teens into adolescence and youth, in which the parental action is fundamental and underpins not only instrumental and psychosocial values but also values linked to the sense of life, otherness and solidarity, respect. The family represents a fundamental place for humanization, each individual finding a way that is conducive to the development of rationality and freedom. Man, who is in constant search for his own identity, with the aim of being able to act autonomously and with responsibility, recognizes through family his own value. (L. Musaio Somma, in M.L. De Natale and others, 2015, pp.123-141). Those who are primarily responsible for this style of behaviour are the parents, who become the reference for in-depth reflection, promoters of life choices: in the lives of the couple nowadays, there should emerge an educational reflection. Then the questions ask the students to make judgements and emotions regarding relationship with their peers and emotional situations that each faces in his personal life path. These questions respect privacy and were organized in a logical and chronological succession. This second aim of the questionnaire was referred to the ways of communication among boys and girls, with reference to stereotypes and prejudices, A third aim was concerned to the personal criteria of the choice for a boy/girl friends and to the characters in the emotional relationship which produce happiness - with questions on intimacy, sexual relations, and motivations in the aftermath. Some important questions were referred to online relation and paid sex among adolescents, about the difference with a relationship face to face. The last part of the questionnaire was referred to the personal couple relationship, if students have and how it was lived, and about the reaction in case of interruption because of a case of treason. In the end the questions ask the personal reaction in front of situations of violence, and as each one dreams the personal life as a couple. The students involved were 439 and were aged between 16 and 18 years old. (L. Odini in M.L. De Natale and others, 2015, p.99-122).

3. Some emerging reflections

Many educational reflections are emerging from the analysis of the responses offered by students. The male female relationship is generally lived on an equal footing, which is an expression of balance in social life, but it is interesting to observe that this relationship is different for adolescents who form a distinctive group according the answers in the questionnaire. It is known that the group plays in adolescence a function of socialization of

the interest and proper behavior for heterosexual relationships both because it allows the subject to identify the re-definition of the qualitative aspects of the "self concept", both because it allows processes of differentiation. The group membership always is lived as an experience of freedom, is a space in which each one can experience transgressive acts, new social behaviours, where the adolescent is not just alone in the changes that reality imposes. The group offers support when behaviors supported by parental models should be taken independently, helping to overcome the uncertainty, the anxiety, and sometimes the guilt that often accompanies the restructuring of the personality on the basis of autonomy. The composition of mixed groups is typical of adolescence because in this age interpersonal relationship undergo decisive changes mainly due to the attraction between the sexes and to a larger opening secretive plot between male and female. The perceptions of subjective identity is born from" the reflection in other" through friendship between people of the same gender and the "other's gaze" that identifies the subjective gender belonging. (B. Ravasio, 1998). The mixed group in this age is a privileged occasion of meeting, that also could generate conflicts and ambiguity but in the same occasion permits comparison and knowledge on how people operate in different and complementary manner, and that guides future meeting between men and women. What is surprising is that the category of sincerity is not in the language of youth, it appears when they refer about the relationship in social network and it is presented in a contradictory way, for some this way of relationship is more honest, for others, in the social network it is possible to lie better. These responses denounce a situation of uncertainty, confusion, it seems that adolescents in Mantova have not a clear direction, nor moral compass guide them. If it remains as in the adolescents of all generations the desire to form a beautiful, loving couple, where exchange their first sexual and sentimental experiences, the new approaches show greater reluctance and caution than forms of involvement in a reality of a couple. The changes that adolescents must live with include new forms of communications among people. These create uncertainty how to interpret each person's subjective experience, which they do not like in relation to family norms. It is just the search for their identity which is at the heart of seeking new norms in their social life, in interaction with friends in the same age with whom to share a common journey of life.

In analysing a loving relationship, there is a little space for the shared planning, (only 43%) and that is important from a pedagogical point of view since it is possible that in this period of life during which the adolescent is engaged in looking for the meaning of his own life, to choose values, to define his own identity in relation with others, in building his personality,

they cannot think of a shared planning as couple, but only of his own life project. It is possible that the relationship is referred to as more to *hic and nunc*, here and now, because of the uncertainty that characterizes all spheres of life, and the relationship is linked to the emotions of the present moment and it is unable to project into the future. In both cases it is responsibility of educators to propose dimensions of meaning, to the person's tools, to think critically about reality, to connect past, present and future, because each teenager could take a proactive and planning role in the reality of his life. In the inner life of this teens there is the need for finding profound meaning, even if someone believes that happiness is related over all to sexual pleasure, because when that is over every other aspect of the relationship cannot last. (M.L. De Natale, 2015, pp. 129-131).

Sexual relationships appear as a new category for a social relationship, because the sexual pleasure and the sexual exercises are autonomous criteria to judge a relationship, and that means that sexuality is separate from self- respect and other respect, : it is evident that the sexual behaviour in the adolescents is changed quickly compared to the past and it is without any moral reference point.

There is not a pedagogy of feelings by adults and it is always more urgent education to love, to sexuality in the itinerary of self building as responsible person. Even paid sexuality has been justified by 47 on 414 students as a free choose of the subject and such as legitimate, but to the majority the meaning of *eros* is connected to a love relationship. (L. Musaio Somma, in M.L. De Natale, and others 2015). Education directed to feelings can lead young people to understand what love is, how to prepare it even when each one is seeking for his identity, knowing that each person is a complex system that requires knowledge and self- awareness, in relation to others, that each one is constantly evolving and the feelings and emotions too have evolutionary character. Young people need help in order to reflect on the lovely relationship as a complex phenomenon which requires equality, between free persons, aimed to human fullness but without depending one by the other, autonomous persons. It is necessary to understand that love has its roots on respect for freedom and sensitivity of each one, in a relationship that is not ownership but reciprocity, correspondence, parity. If adolescents are invited to reflect on that, they could decide if they choose to recognize the value of the person for themselves and the others and which approach the like to choose in their emotional relationship.

To conclude:

The educators, parents, teachers, adults, are invited to promote a culture of responsibility, so that young generation could keep the responsibility for the present and the future, and could gain their real freedom in this world where our freedom is always threatened by continuous social change.

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RAPPORTO TRA *IDENTITÀ* E *CULTURA*,
UNA COORDINATA ESSENZIALE
PER «COMPRENDERE L'ALTRO»
NELLA PROSPETTIVA DELL'INTERCULTURA

Pina Del Core[*]

L'articolo prende in esame il rapporto identità e cultura. Esso costituisce una scelta necessaria per "comprendere l'altro" e consente di individuare percorsi di formazione tali da rendere le persone capaci di interazione costruttiva con l'altro, con il diverso, soprattutto sul versante culturale. La necessità di riconsiderare il problema del rapporto tra identità personale e cultura, in vista delle implicanze sul piano dell'educazione e della formazione, nasce dalla consapevolezza che per realizzare corretti processi di educazione interculturale che partano dall'imparare a comprendere l'altro occorre mettere in atto percorsi di rielaborazione critica e continua della propria identità e di riappropriazione dei segni della cultura su cui si sono costruite le proprie radici.

L'educazione interculturale deve creare alcune condizioni perché le persone imparino a decentrarsi dal proprio abituale atteggiamento etnocentrico, a modificare le percezioni e gli schemi cognitivi con cui generalmente si rappresentano gli altri, soprattutto se 'stranieri' o 'diversi', e a superare stereotipi e pregiudizi.

Parole chiavi: identità personale, identità culturale, identità etnica, cultura e culture, educazione interculturale, identità e alterità, percorsi di costruzione dell'identità, stereotipi e pregiudizi

Abstract

This article examines the relationship between identity and culture. This constitutes a necessary choice for "understanding the other person", and allows one to indicate specific paths for formation to enable each individual to constructively internalize the "otherness" with its diversity, especially in its cultural dimension. There is a need for reconsidering the issue of the relationship between culture and the individual's identity, particularly its formation and educational implications. This comes from the

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understanding that, in order to carry out the correct intercultural educational processes which begin with learning in order to understand the other person, is necessary to outline ways for a critical and continuous re-elaboration of one's own identity, and being able to assume those cultural signs that are part of one's roots.

Intercultural education must create conditions for people to learn to assume to decentralize themselves from their ethnocentric attitude, to change their perceptions and cognitive schemes which they generally perceive as representation of the other, especially those 'foreign' or 'different', thereby overcoming stereotyping and prejudices.

Keywords: personal identity, cultural identity, ethnic identity, culture and cultures, intercultural education, identity and otherness o alterity, paths and the processes of identity construction, stereotypes and prejudices

Introduzione

'Comprendere l'altro' nella prospettiva dell'intercultura richiede come premessa indispensabile una riflessione sulla questione dell'*identità* e del suo rapporto con la *cultura*.

Nel presente contributo intendo evidenziare, a partire da un prospettiva psicologica, come il rapporto tra *identità* e *cultura*, costituisca una coordinata essenziale su cui riflettere per impostare correttamente percorsi di costruzione dell'identità in un contesto di pluralismo e di complessità divenuti ormai una condizione umana comune che sfida continuamente l'educazione.

Il tema dell'*identità* messa in rapporto alla *cultura* è di grande rilevanza e criticità nella cultura contemporanea, soprattutto a motivo dei processi di globalizzazione e di omologazione da un lato, di frammentazione e di individualizzazione dall'altro, che toccano in particolar modo gli adolescenti e i giovani, è soprattutto quanti si trovano a dover costruire la propria identità in contesti culturali diversi da quello di origine e che sono immersi in ambienti ormai divenuti multiculturali.

In questo senso, la tematica va accostata in una *prospettiva educativa*, sia per una corretta lettura interpretativa del fenomeno sia per ritrovare vie di soluzione o strategie preventive da mettere in atto nei processi educativi. Ciò mentre impegna la ricerca e lo studio dal punto di

vista teorico, interpella fortemente gli educatori e quanti si interessano all'educazione delle nuove generazioni.

L'analisi dell'*interazione tra identità e cultura* costituisce una scelta necessaria per 'comprendere l'altro', una via privilegiata per individuare percorsi di formazione tali da rendere le persone capaci di interazione costruttiva con l'altro, con il diverso, soprattutto sul versante culturale. Tale riflessione, inoltre, può offrire una chiave di lettura interessante della situazione di disagio diffusa nella società a diversi livelli, tra giovani e adulti, uomini e donne, popoli e nazioni, in questa fase di transizione storica. Si tratta di una categoria che, tradotta in termini pedagogici, consente di individuare modelli formativi e itinerari di crescita molto più aderenti alla realtà e alla storicità della persona.

Sono chiamati in causa i percorsi di costruzione dell'identità, soprattutto in adolescenza, che toccano non solo l'appartenenza di genere, ma riguardano la relazionalità globale, cioè la capacità di entrare in relazione con l'altro, con le molteplici alterità che abitano le nostre città, divenute punti di incontro di stranieri, di persone 'diverse da noi' provenienti da diversi paesi con culture, lingua, tradizioni, valori diversi. Assumendo l'ipotesi che la differenza, o meglio la diversità, sia *una risorsa comunicativa* importante nell'ambito dell'*esperienza di sé* verso l'altro che getta le basi per una positiva interazione tra l'identità e l'alterità, occorre tuttavia considerare che l'elemento 'cultura', con le sue identità e le sue differenze, costituisce un punto cruciale per la crescita dei giovani, in quanto l'essere diversi dall'altro può assumere peso e significato innanzitutto per sé e per la propria costituzione identitaria.

La necessità di riconsiderare il problema del rapporto tra identità personale e cultura, e delle sue implicanze sul piano dell'educazione, nasce dalla consapevolezza che per realizzare corretti processi di educazione interculturale che abbiano come punto di partenza l'imparare a comprendere l'altro occorre realizzare percorsi di rielaborazione critica e continua della propria identità e di riappropriazione dei segni della cultura su quali si sono costruite le proprie radici.

Lo studio dei processi e dei percorsi di formazione che connotano la crescita della persona perché possa pervenire a un'identità 'compiuta', in cui l'identità personale e culturale si integrano nell'insieme della personalità, è al centro dell'attenzione delle scienze psicologiche e sociologiche. Tuttavia la ricerca in questo ambito sembra non aver ancora messo a fuoco

con chiarezza il tema del rapporto identità-cultura con tutte le sue implicanze teoriche e pratiche.[29]

L'ottica con cui viene affrontato l'argomento si fonda su alcuni *assunti principali* attorno ai quali si articola la riflessione:

- l'identità si costruisce dentro una cultura o una molteplicità di culture derivanti dall'appartenenza a gruppi differenti (familiare, di genere, di generazione, di ceto, di status socioeconomico, ecc.) che connotano appunto l'identità personale;

- la cultura a sua volta costruisce le identità personali attraverso le sue molteplici forme di comunicazione, i suoi significati e valori, le tradizioni e le ritualità proprie dei diversi gruppi che la compongono;

- alle radici di ogni cultura e di ogni formazione dell'identità c'è l'interazione umana che si visibilizza nei simboli o nei gesti che vengono interpretati secondo dei parametri anch'essi appresi tramite le interazioni sociali.

L'identità e il suo rapporto con la cultura nel contesto di una società 'liquida'

In un mondo dove tutto è sfuggente e nel contesto di una 'società fluida', la questione dell'identità nella discussione pubblica e nel dibattito culturale è divenuta sempre più rilevante, se non proprio una vera ossessione per cui le ansie, i dolori e i sentimenti di insicurezza, derivanti dalla precarietà del vivere, trovano i singoli e le comunità sempre più spaesati o smarriti (Bauman 2003, p. VII).

La questione dell'identità – coma sostiene il sociologo Bauman - costituisce un 'rompicapo tra i più intriganti' per la sociologia, un rompicapo, nonché una sfida. L'identità, in altre parole, è la questione all'ordine del giorno, un argomento di scottante attualità nella mente e sulla bocca di tutti, un *problema* e principalmente un *compito,* «un compito non ancora

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[29] La riflessione sul *rapporto identità-cultura* ha dei riflessi rilevanti anche sui processi di scelta sia professionale che vocazionale. È interessante allora comprendere quali siano le ricadute sull'orientamento alle scelte e sulla formazione: a questo livello si avverte l'urgenza di individuare nuovi percorsi di ricerca, anche se tuttavia restano ancora una serie di interrogativi aperti [cf Del Core P. (2003), L'identità personale, culturale e vocazionale in un mondo globalizzato. Quali percorsi di formazione?, *Rivista di Scienze dell'Educazione*, XLI (2), 261-279].

realizzato, non compiuto, come un appello, come un dovere e un incitamento ad agire» (Bauman 2003, p. 19). [30]

La riflessione sull'identità personale e culturale in un'epoca segnata da fenomeni di grande portata, come la globalizzazione e la rivoluzione tecnologica provocata dai *new media,* non è nuova. Accanto alle nuove possibilità di sviluppo umano e sociale tutto ciò sta mettendo in discussione non solo le concezioni tradizionali di identità e di cultura, ma la natura stessa delle medesime, modificandone quasi radicalmente i processi di formazione. La globalizzazione, infatti, ha innescato una serie di trasformazioni profonde che non toccano soltanto la vita sociale: esse hanno ristrutturato quasi totalmente il nostro modo di vivere, per le sue ripercussioni significative sugli atteggiamenti etici, sul modo di vivere il tempo e la progettualità, la corporeità e la sessualità, le relazioni e, dunque, la stessa identità (Giddens 2000, p. 24).

I mutamenti radicali prodotti dalla globalizzazione sembrano ormai irreversibili: essi hanno coinvolto gli ordinamenti statali, la condizione lavorativa, i rapporti tra le nazioni, le soggettività collettive, il rapporto Io-Altro, la produzione culturale, le identità dei singoli e delle istituzioni e la vita quotidiana di tanti uomini e donne.

Il fitto reticolo di società multietniche, multiculturali e multireligiose, che si è costituito nel mondo attuale, è un processo che sollecita a sviluppare inediti moduli di convivenza e un nuovo modo di fare educazione e formazione, anche se sul piano dei processi soggettivi la logica della 'monocultura' stenta a scomparire. Basti pensare al ritorno di forti tensioni d'identità, al riemergere di una forte nostalgia dell'appartenenza, della piccola patria, delle culture locali che sta rendendo sempre più difficile la reciproca tolleranza e la convivenza tra popolazioni della stessa area culturale, ma contrassegnate da differenti tradizioni, valori e consuetudini.

Una delle obiezioni più stimolanti in proposito è l'idea che il dialogo interculturale possa danneggiare le singole identità culturali, che il pluralismo porti al relativismo o alla perdita dei sistemi di significato e di valori. Pluralismo e dialogo non comportano necessariamente la perdita dell'identità, ma aprono all'alterità e, dunque, alla ricchezza delle diversità. E perché ciò avvenga si esigono dei percorsi di *educazione interculturale* che favoriscano il riconoscimento e la ri-appropriazione della propria identità per saper interagire con altre identità.

C'è un nesso tra l'identità e il costante mutamento sia a livello di sviluppo psicologico individuale sia nell'ambito dei processi di costruzione dell'identità sociale e culturale e quindi dell'appartenenza. Ciascuna forma di identità, infatti, è frutto di un processo di costruzione e, contrariamente alle acquisizioni scientifiche del passato, l'identità non sembra

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[30] L'identità - scrive Bauman - è un grappolo di problemi piuttosto che una questione unica e ci si rivela «come qualcosa che va inventato piuttosto che scoperto; come il traguardo di uno sforzo, un 'obiettivo', qualcosa che è ancora necessario costruire da zero o selezionare tra offerte alternative, qualcosa per cui è necessario lottare e che va poi protetto attraverso altre lotte ancora» (Bauman 2003, p. 13).

essere più legata all'ambiente delle origini o a tutti quegli elementi che potevano contribuire a definirla, come la cultura delle origini, la lingua, la religione, ecc. ma può essere rimodellata dalle esperienze vissute, dalle persone con cui si viene a contatto e dalle varie appartenenze. Dunque, si tratta di un *processo costruttivo e dinamico* che si sviluppa di continuo e, come afferma Bauman, «l'appartenenza e l'identità non sono scolpite nella roccia, non sono assicurate da una garanzia a vita, sono in larga misura negoziabili e revocabili» (Bauman 2003, p. 6).

A rendere più complessi, e forse problematici, tali processi sociali e culturali, ma anche evolutivi e formativi è il contesto di mobilità, di flessibilità e mutevolezza, tipico della *modernità liquida*. Di fatto, il compito di costruire la propria identità risulta molto più difficile in una società in cui tutto si muove e tutto cambia con rapidità, non potendo più fare affidamento su dei punti di riferimento solidi che in qualche modo vengono rifiutati nel timore di incontrare la rigidità e la limitatezza, ma soprattutto per l'impossibilità di adattarli alle nuove e cangianti esigenze degli individui (Bauman 2003, p. 28).

L'analisi delle profonde trasformazioni avvenute nella società in questa fase di *liquidità*, in cui ogni realtà è sottoposta a *un processo di "fluidificazione"*, mediante il quale per effetto dei fenomeni globali, qualsiasi entità passa dallo stato solido allo stato liquido, perdendo i suoi contorni chiari e definiti, fa emergere come siano molteplici gli ambiti della vita umana ad esserne investiti. Comportandosi come i fluidi che, non avendo forma propria, assumono quella del contenitore, l'affettività e le relazioni, la sessualità, l'identità personale e culturale, in particolare l'identità maschile e femminile, continuano a trasformarsi e la loro forma viene continuamente ridefinita dalle situazioni.

Sicché, l'identità, come ogni altra realtà umana, fa parte di un flusso che corre incessantemente, che si compone e si ricompone in un processo di rielaborazione continua. Il carattere mutevole e flessibile, la dinamicità di tali processi fa sì che le identità e le differenze siano flessibili e sempre suscettibili di ulteriori cambiamenti e sperimentazioni e tutto questo per non limitare la libertà individuale e il continuo processo di costruzione e di definizione dell'identità, ma soprattutto della possibilità di mutare continuamente all'interno di un contesto anch'esso in costante trasformazione (Semprini 2003, p. 86-87).

«Nella nostra epoca di modernità liquida in cui l'eroe popolare è l'individuo libero di fluttuare senza intralci, l'essere 'fissati', 'identificati' inflessibilmente e senza possibilità di ripensamento, diventa sempre più impopolare» (Bauman 2003, p. 31).

Crisi delle tradizionali concezioni di *identità* e di *cultura*

Il processo di globalizzazione, come suo primo effetto, ha generato l'omologazione delle culture, spegnendo le particolarità e penalizzando le diversità, mettendo in crisi le identità personali e culturali, creando complessi di inferiorità/superiorità tra le culture. In tale contesto, che porta con sé esigenze di pluricentrismo e apertura interculturale, l'identità complessa delle persone e delle istituzioni richiede un processo di inculturazione che, se da una parte implica mettere al centro l'alterità delle differenze e delle culture, nello stesso tempo riporta all'essenziale dell'essere, a un'identità dinamica che si confronta e si affida (Perotti 1994, p.18).

La crisi delle concezioni di *identità* e di *cultura* ha favorito il passaggio da una visione statica e predefinita a una visione dinamica e costruttivista; da concezioni pregiudiziali e fortemente unitarie a una concezione aperta e interattiva, situata tra il globale e il locale, l'universale e il relativo.

In tale contesto, l'identità e la sua formazione è divenuta piuttosto problematica. Sia a livello individuale che a livello di gruppo, di nazione e di civiltà, l'identità sembra costituire il «tentativo talvolta eroico (e irrinunciabile) di salvazione rispetto all'inesorabilità del flusso e del mutamento» (Remotti 2001, p. 10). L'identità può tendere a irrigidirsi e a cristallizzarsi fino al punto di chiudersi e di misconoscere le connessioni con lo sfondo cui appartiene e con il flusso che permane al fondo di ogni vicenda.

Del resto, l'*identità personale* si costruisce e si elabora *dentro una cultura,* che rappresenta lo sfondo e il luogo privilegiato che permette di dare specificità e 'colore' ad ogni persona. L'identità non è 'data fin dall'inizio', come una dotazione che si riceve alla nascita, ma rappresenta il risultato laborioso e complesso di una storia personale, costruita all'interno di una trama di relazioni interpersonali e d'interazioni molteplici con l'ambiente, a partire dall'elaborazione dei modelli culturali e delle differenti esperienze di vita.

Secondo le acquisizioni della psicologia, della sociologia e antropologia culturale, l'identità non è più considerata come un'*entità* o una *struttura*, come 'ciò che rimane' al di là del fluire degli eventi e circostanze, degli atteggiamenti e delle esperienze, ma come una realtà *costruita*, *ricercata*, '*inventata'*. Essa ha un carattere di 'costruzione' che implica un lavoro di

differenziazione, cioè di separazione e assimilazione, che si realizza sulla base di un continuo flusso e mutamento. Perché l'identità possa manifestarsi, è necessario che la persona percepisca se stessa come un tutto unitario ed impari a riconoscere la propria separata diversità di individuo (*processo di individuazione*), in un continuo 'separarsi da' e 'riconoscersi in', riconoscendosi uguale a se stesso e diverso dagli altri, al di là di tutte le trasformazioni che possono mettere in crisi tale uguaglianza e tale diversità (Erikson 1974, p. 58).

Tuttavia, è l'*identità culturale* che attraversa una crisi profonda per effetto del processo di omologazione dei media, del crescente distacco dalla tradizione (memoria storica scritta e orale) e del processo di sradicamento dovuto all'emigrazione, alla mobilità territoriale per la ricerca di lavoro o di una patria o per fuga da situazioni politiche, economiche e di vivibilità impossibili (migrazioni dei popoli).

Per uscire dall'*impasse* della crisi è necessario promuovere dei processi formativi che aiutino a ridefinire e rielaborare, dall'interno del proprio sistema culturale, i tratti fondamentali dell'identità culturale, liberandola da ciò che può ostacolarne lo sviluppo. Il processo di rielaborazione e ri-definizione dovrà realizzarsi all'interno del proprio contesto culturale e dei propri modelli culturali fino alla ri-appropriazione degli stessi e alla sua reinterpretazione. Così potrà svilupparsi una capacità selettiva che consentirà di far fronte a tutti gli altri modelli che arrivano e s'impongono 'dal di fuori'.

Quale *cultura* e quale *identità?*

I processi di trasformazione che hanno messo in crisi le nozioni di *identità* e di *cultura* rendono più cauti nell'affrontare le problematiche ad essi connesse, per questo è opportuno, per evitare ogni equivoco, chiarire di quale *cultura* e di quale *identità* si intende parlare.

In genere quando si parla di *cultura* ci si trova dinanzi a descrizioni molto ampie, tanto da farla coincidere con l'intera gamma delle attività umane, dai molteplici rapporti tra l'uomo e la natura (procacciarsi e conservare il cibo, assicurarsi il riparo dalle forze naturali, i diversi modi con cui l'uomo domina e controlla l'ambiente naturale) alle interazioni tra simili e tra diversi gruppi sociali, tra i sessi, tra anziani e giovani, ecc., fino all'organizzazione politica e religiosa e agli atteggiamenti di fronte alla vita e alle valutazioni o visioni del mondo e della

realtà (etica, estetica, religione). Tali definizioni hanno il carattere di *universalità* (un'idea generale dell'umanità e della capacità di scambio) che sembra in contrasto con una modalità *relativista* di concepire la cultura come una combinazione di diverse culture e sub-culture particolari che possono portare ad una vera localizzazione (localismi, nazionalismi, regionalismi, etnocentrismi, ecc.) della dimensione universale della cultura.[31]

La crisi della concezione tradizionale di *cultura* sollecita un ripensamento critico delle differenti posizioni, soprattutto nei confronti delle immagini di cultura suggerite dal processo di globalizzazione: «la prima immagine implica l'estensione al di fuori di una particolare cultura verso il proprio limite, il globo. Culture eterogenee si incorporano e si integrano in una cultura dominante che alla fine ricopre il mondo intero. La seconda immagine si riferisce alla compressione delle culture: elementi precedentemente isolati sono ora portati al contatto e alla giustapposizione. Le culture si ammassano l'una sull'altra senza chiari principi organizzativi, troppa è la cultura da ordinare e organizzare in sistemi coerenti di credenze, in strumenti di orientamento e conoscenza pratica (Smith 1998, p.17).

Ciò ripropone in maniera drammatica il problema dell'*identità etnica* (o *etnicità*) che va salvaguardata in primo luogo dalle minacce di 'costruzioni mentali' - spesso di natura ideologica o politica - tendenti o ad omologare oppure a dividere/separare (*noi ↔ loro*) ciò che invece va ricomposto in unità.

Il processo di enfatizzazione dei tratti culturali idiosincratici (*identità etnica*), infatti, è pericoloso se non si tiene conto della dinamica di cambiamento cui sono sottoposte le identità: un continuo processo di definizione e di 'riaggiustamento' nella direzione di un'ulteriore differenziazione dalle altre identità (o di fusione) nel contatto e nello scambio con 'l'esterno' con altre culture (*interno/esterno, identità/apertura*). Non è facile pervenire, dal punto di vista pedagogico, ad un armonico equilibrio tra bisogno di identità/appartenenza e bisogno di apertura ad altre culture, tra educazione nazionale ed educazione alla mondialità. Ogni identità, che è concepita in maniera omogenea e totalizzante, sia essa individuale o comunitaria, è pericolosa o falsa: può diventare uno strumento in mano ai movimenti

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[31] Nell'attuale complessità culturale il concetto tradizionale di *cultura*, inteso come l'insieme di valori, credenze e pratiche largamente condivise e integrate in una visione unitaria, risulta inadeguato, soprattutto se si parte dal presupposto 'pregiudiziale' della superiorità della cultura occidentale. Secondo Smith una *cultura globale* non ha ragion d'essere perché non potrebbe garantire ciò di cui un gruppo sociale o una comunità ha bisogno per sviluppare un'identità, vale a dire il senso di continuità, una memoria storica condivisa e il senso di un destino comune. «Non vi sono 'memorie mondiali' che possano essere usate per *unire* l'umanità» (Smith 1998, p.180).

ideologici o politici che pretendono di definire l'identità in maniera predeterminata, per opposizione ed esclusione nei confronti di altri gruppi ed individui.

Per questo è indispensabile ripensare la *nozione di identità in maniera pluralista e dinamica*, dal momento che essa condiziona il modo con cui le persone e i gruppi si pensano, si definiscono nelle loro somiglianze/differenze con altri individui e gruppi, e si relazionano.

Francesco Remotti, nel già citato libro intitolato *"Contro l'identità"*, osserva come nel dibattito culturale attuale sia presente un uso strumentale e distorto del concetto di identità. Egli mette in evidenza che non esiste un'identità come essenza originaria e monolitica. L'identità è un costrutto culturale, un processo aperto all'incontro, allo scambio, alla contaminazione. Egli mette in guardia contro il pericolo di assolutizzare la questione dell'identità, soprattutto dal rischio della reificazione, dell'etnicizzazione e della biologizzazione dell'identità. Sollecita invece lo sviluppo di un pensiero 'plurale', dialogico ed aperto, che vada 'oltre l'identità' (Remotti 2001, 59-67).

Non bisogna dimenticare inoltre che l'identità nella sua costruzione è strettamente collegata all'appartenenza o alle molteplici appartenenze che la persona nel corso della sua storia e della sua biografia personale incontra. Si ha a che fare con una serie di *identità collettive* che gradualmente la persona lungo il suo percorso di crescita deve poter riuscire a comporre in unità. Ora, nel momento in cui l'identità perde i suoi ancoraggi sociali che la fanno apparire 'naturale', predeterminata e non negoziabile, l'identificazione sta divenendo sempre più importante nell'individuo che cerca disperatamente un 'noi' in cui entrare a far parte. Le appartenenze già predefinite o ereditate dalla tradizione o legate allo *status* e condizione sociale, stanno divenendo sempre più fragili e alterate, specialmente nelle nuove generazioni. Da qui deriva l'esigenza, oggi divenuta sempre più forte, di trovare o fondare gruppi o comunità che diano ai propri membri un senso di appartenenza e così facilitare la costruzione di un'identità. Tali gruppi o comunità, oggi prevalentemente quelli mediati elettronicamente dalle nuove tecnologie comunicative, non riescono ad assicurare la formazione di quel sentimento del 'noi' derivante solitamente dall'esperienza del contatto reale, ravvicinato con un gruppo o una comunità di appartenenza (Bauman 2003, p. 25-26).

Identità e alterità, un intreccio irrinunciabile

La questione controversa dell'identità culturale ed etnica, fa riaffiorare un altro problema di fondo: l'enfatizzazione di una logica puramente identitaria, chiudendosi in forme elitarie, narcisistiche ed autoreferenziali, perdendo di vista l'apertura all'alterità, che è coessenziale con l'identità.

Per comprendere l'altro, infatti, occorre andare 'oltre l'identità', uscire dall'identità, perché nessuna società, come del resto nessuna persona, ha costruito la propria identità senza il confronto, l'apertura ad altre identità, ad altri influssi provenienti da 'altrove'. Scrive Remotti in proposito: «Vi è tensione tra identità e alterità: l'identità si costruisce a scapito dell'alterità, riducendo drasticamente le potenzialità alternative; è interesse perciò dell'identità schiacciare, far scomparire dall'orizzonte l'alterità. La tesi che si vuole sostenere è che questo gesto di separazione, di allontanamento, di rifiuto e persino di negazione dell'alterità non giunge mai a un suo totale compimento o realizzazione. L'identità respinge, ma l'alterità riaffiora. L'alterità viene spesso concettualmente emarginata, ma essa riemerge in modo prepotente e invincibile. Vi è da chiedersi se l'emarginazione e la negazione dell'alterità non siano gesti dovuti al fatto che l'alterità si annida nel cuore stesso dell'identità» (Remotti 2001, p. 61-62).

L'identità e l'alterità costituiscono un importante snodo per educare all'intercultura, un intreccio irrinunciabile per la comprensione dell'identità culturale e dei suoi dinamismi di costruzione.

L'identità racchiude in sé concetti diversi, dinamicamente integrati, come continuità e sviluppo, stabilità e cambiamento, uguaglianza e diversità, identificazione e differenziazione, fedeltà alle tradizioni e apertura all'innovazione, maturazione personale e sociale. Nella sua configurazione essenziale, essa potrà dirsi delineata quando la persona è in grado di collocarsi di fronte ai propri cambiamenti, quando è giunta a una sufficiente chiarezza con se stessa, nei gruppi di appartenenza e, più in generale, all'interno del proprio ambiente sociale e culturale.

L'identità è una realtà *personale* ma anche *psicosociale*, perché ciascuno si sente se stesso lungo il tempo, pur percependosi cambiato per molti aspetti, e ciò avviene sia se si venga o no riconosciuti come tale dagli altri. Ciascuno trova conferma o disconferma della propria identità nell'incontro/confronto con gli altri, persone, gruppi, ambiente, cultura. Per svilupparsi armoniosamente nella propria identità la persona ha bisogno di essere strutturata contemporaneamente dalle proprie appartenenze sociali, territoriali, etniche, linguistiche e

culturali e deve essere capace di assumere anche le 'identità collettive', integrandole nell'insieme. [32]

Ogni *identità* ha sempre a che fare con l'*alterità*, infatti, «la visibilità dell'alterità legata all'appartenenza etnica (colore della pelle, lingua...) e all'appartenenza religiosa (pratiche e riti propri delle diverse religioni di provenienza) può influenzare il processo di identificazione collettiva. Spesso sono questi gli aspetti che risultano più carichi di pregiudizi e di stereotipi nell'immaginario sociale» (Del Core 2000, p. 206).

La centralità dello studio dell'alterità ha permesso di evitare il rischio di sottovalutare il valore della differenziazione, della diversità nell'esistenza dei singoli e delle comunità, nella storia e nelle società, anche se l'esasperazione della diversità ha portato ad accentuare etnocentrismi, orgogli nazionalistici, integralismi religiosi, antagonismi tra culture e civiltà, atteggiamenti razziali. Ciò condurrebbe ad accentuare quegli aspetti di lacerazione e di conflittualità piuttosto che di comunione e di dialogo.

Alla radice dei molti problemi c'è il sospetto o l'equivoco che l'integrazione debba procedere verso una progressiva spoliazione dell'identità dell'altro. Al contrario, perché la differenza sia valorizzata e mantenuta nella sua integrità, è necessario che l'identità dell'altro (l'alterità) sia messa al centro dell'attenzione e dell'intervento formativo. Ciò non è possibile senza un percorso personale di crescita, che necessariamente passa attraverso l'accettazione dell'alterità, quella che è in noi e quella che è fuori di noi, proprio perchè l'alterità è parte integrante dell'identità: l'Io si costruisce nella relazione con l'altro in un processo di identificazione/affermazione interno e di differenziazione esterno.

Una lettura psicodinamica delle comunità multietniche e delle rispettive dinamiche relazionali fa emergere la necessità di scoprire e amare lo *straniero* (*l'alterità*) che è in noi. E questo implica un cammino che comporta la possibilità di 'perdersi': perdere lo *status* di *stranierità* (*alterità*) che ci abita come oscura paura di perdere il senso di sé, in una fusione

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[32] La rielaborazione dell'immagine di sé che si avvia nell'adolescenza mediante il confronto e la conoscenza del proprio gruppo e di altri gruppi, si pone in continuità con la ricerca della propria identità e porterà al rafforzamento della consapevolezza della propria identità culturale e quindi ad atteggiamenti più chiari nei confronti della diversità. È l'estensione dei confini identitari al di fuori della propria città o regione o nazione, verso l'internazionalità e la mondialità che rende più facile il gioco delle multi-appartenenze e lascia sperare una maggiore apertura nei confronti delle diversità (BESOZZI 1999; PHINNEY 1990).

tale da confondere i confini di appartenenza, di identità, di definizione della propria comunità di appartenenza e della comunità dell'altro (Di Maria F., Lavanco G., Novara C 1999).

L'intreccio *identità-alterità* diventa perciò l'asse tematico centrale e unificante i diversi percorsi formativi ed è indispensabile per un'autentica educazione interculturale.

Processi di rielaborazione dell'identità culturale

La formazione dell'identità personale e culturale è uno dei *compiti di sviluppo* centrali nella crescita, non solo nell'adolescenza ma nell'intero ciclo vitale. Il senso di individualità e unicità è il risultato finale di un corretto sviluppo della personalità, fonte da cui si genera un'azione sociale consapevole e adeguata. Ciò è possibile solo in un costante dialogo con il contesto, interiorizzando le norme culturali, interpretando differenti ruoli e mediante il riconoscimento degli altri e della società.

Sovente, nello studio sull'identità, si è trascurato l'impatto e le conseguenze che l'incontro con culture diverse dalla propria possono avere sui processi di rielaborazione dell'identità culturale. È difficile, pertanto, distinguere le componenti dell'appartenenza territoriale/geografica da quelle propriamente etniche e culturali. Non sempre si tiene conto dell'aspetto evolutivo dei percorsi identitari, per cui non si pensa che adolescenti di un determinato contesto, specie se appartenenti a una cultura di minoranze immigrate, possano incontrare delle difficoltà di elaborazione della propria identità culturale, non solo perché di una cultura diversa da quella ospitante, ma perché la loro identità è ancora in costruzione, con tutte le incertezze che questo comporta.

La dimensione etnica dell'identità si sviluppa attraverso un processo di elaborazione e di consapevolezza che s'intreccia con altri processi evolutivi legati al concetto di sé e alla capacità di apertura all'altro. È essenziale allora domandarsi quali sono le modalità d'integrazione dell'appartenenza etnico-territoriale, qual è l'orientamento nei confronti dei rapporti con persone appartenenti ad altre culture, nei confronti dell'altro etnicamente diverso da sé. [33]

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[33] I risultati di ricerche italiane e americane hanno evidenziato che l'apertura nei confronti di chi è etnicamente diverso da sé tende ad aumentare significativamente con il crescere dell'età e il contatto con persone culturalmente, etnicamente e/o territorialmente diverse.

I principali *processi di elaborazione* dell'identità culturale da tenere presenti per individuare percorsi educativi adeguati sono:

1. *l'identificazione*, quel sentimento di affermazione, appartenenza e valorizzazione del gruppo etnico-territoriale al quale i soggetti appartengono;

2. *l'esplorazione*, quell'attività di ricerca e valutazione delle alternative identitarie possibili, mediante l'immersione nella propria cultura o mediante attività di vario genere che portano alla comprensione e all'apprezzamento della propria etnicità;

3. l'*impegno* che consiste nel prendere in considerazione l'importanza dell'appartenenza etnico-territoriale per l'elaborazione dell'immagine di sé e il rispettivo investimento di energie per tradurlo in essere;

4. il *confronto sociale e culturale* con gli altri gruppi.

Altri processi riguardano le *modalità d'integrazione* che si mettono in atto quando ci si inserisce nel contesto di altre culture o ci si immerge nella cultura del proprio tempo.

1. *Assimilazione*, mediante la quale si tende a privilegiare la cultura ospitante a quella di origine e ciò può facilitare *l'acculturazione* e *l'integrazione* (frequente è il *bi-culturalismo*). La persona tende ad adeguarsi alle aspettative dell'ambiente culturale in cui deve inserirsi, con il rischio di dimenticare la propria appartenenza e la propria cultura, diventando 'come gli altri', perdendo così ogni colore e specificità pur di 'sopravvivere' nell'impatto con gli altri.

2. *Integrazione* è un processo che si fonda sul presupposto che la società sia qualcosa di culturalmente omogeneo, il risultato dell'adattamento degli individui 'diversi' e del cambiamento del loro modo di vivere e di pensare tanto quanto basta per sentirsi a loro agio con lo stile di vita dell'ambiente in cui si inseriscono. Da qui la sollecitazione a non pretendere l'abbandono totale della propria cultura o della propria identità ma a tollerare le differenze.

3. *Separazione* è un processo dinamico opposto ai primi due, perché si privilegia l'appartenenza alla cultura d'origine e ci si colloca in una posizione di *marginalità* e di isolamento che non solo impoverisce sul piano culturale, affettivo e relazionale, ma può portare a conflittualità 'distruttive' (*noi* contro *gli altri*).

L'incontro con l'altro diverso da sé costituisce nell'adolescenza una delle condizioni essenziali per quel processo di confronto, senza il quale anche la costruzione dell'identità etnica non approda ad esiti di tipo identificatorio, bensì a forme di chiusura dell'identità.

Per non confondere l'integrazione con pseudo-forme di assimilazione è indispensabile individuare delle modalità di integrazione che salvaguardano il rispetto della diversità e nello stesso tempo garantiscano il dialogo e la comunione.

Gli studi e le ricerche condotte finora hanno evidenziato, oltre al *carattere interattivo e dinamico dell'identità,* anche *il ruolo dell'altro* nella rappresentazione dell'identità culturale. C'è una specificità collettiva costituita da tratti distintivi e significativi, che, pur conservando la propria originalità, inevitabilmente si modificano e si trasformano nell'interazione. Nel contatto con altre culture avviene una riorganizzazione dei tratti distintivi identificatori che non è scontata.

Occorre fare attenzione ai meccanismi d'identificazione proiettiva o di valutazione selettiva che si possono instaurare nell'incontro con l'altro, ma anche a creare delle condizioni di tempo e spazio perché le persone apprendano un complesso di regole, codici e simboli in base ai quali potersi orientare nel 'nuovo spazio' e nel 'nuovo tempo', in modo da costruire dei contenitori sufficientemente protettivi e difensivi della propria identità.

Nell'esperienza di riappropriazione dell'identità culturale tre sono i referenti 'spaziali' che vanno in ogni modo salvaguardati nell'itinerario educativo: lo *spazio geografico* dove si iscrive lo spazio ambientale, soprattutto quello familiare con le sue simbolizzazioni e immaginazioni; lo *spazio corporeo* che corrisponde all'esperienza del sé corporeo (ogni cultura possiede una sua modalità di concepire lo spazio corporeo: le frontiere dell'intimità, le condizioni della conversazione, i modi di ricevere, mangiare, curare l'igiene del corpo); lo *spazio linguistico* che, oltre la lingua, comprende i sistemi di comunicazione non-verbali, i mondi vitali e di significato.

La formazione dell'identità culturale si realizza nel tempo e nello spazio attraverso due momenti processuali essenziali:
1. *Ri-definizione della propria identità personale* in un continuo processo di consolidamento. Nell'impatto con 'nuove' identità è necessario *ri-definire* la propria identità e ciò presuppone già una certa *definizione di sé (Chi sono io?)* e una certa *stabilità* (un nucleo interiore) nonostante le trasformazioni a cui l'Io è sottoposto nel tempo e nel contatto con gli altri e con l'ambiente.

2. *Ristrutturazione progressiva dell'identità nel corso della vita.* L'identità va continuamente 'negoziata'. Spesso si osservano degli arresti dell'identità, sia nel contatto con altri gruppi, comunità o culture, sia lungo le stagioni della vita, specie in relazione ai vari cambiamenti (culturali e non). Ciò implica l'abbandono delle precedenti identità, e talvolta la 'rottura', per integrare le nuove strutture e relazioni derivanti dalla mutata situazione. Il mettersi a confronto con «l'arcipelago delle nostre tante identità distribuite nel corso del tempo» (Demetrio 1996, p. 34) è un percorso obbligatorio per sollecitare processi di consapevolezza di sé e di riconciliazione che conducono poi all'unificazione di sé.

Conclusione

Comprendere l'altro nella prospettiva dell'educazione all'intercultura non significa indicare soluzioni preconfezionate ma piuttosto aprire una strada individuando percorsi e strategie. Questo presuppone in primo luogo affrontare la questione complessa del relativismo assoluto e dell'universalismo astratto, spesso tra loro contrapposti e inadeguati ad affrontare le problematiche poste dalla convivenza multiculturale.

È necessario, pertanto, creare le condizioni perché l'educazione interculturale abiliti le persone a decentrarsi dal proprio abituale atteggiamento etnocentrico, a modificare le percezioni e gli schemi cognitivi con cui generalmente si rappresentano gli altri, soprattutto se 'stranieri' o 'diversi', e a superare stereotipi e pregiudizi.

Su questa vasta e 'intrigante' realtà esistono molteplici studi e ricerche, come pure delle pratiche educative, che però si muovono in direzioni talvolta unilaterali e opposte, non avendo come punto di partenza prospettico una chiara visione antropologica che tenga conto della integralità della persona e della sua inequivocabile e universale dignità.

Si tratta di ripensare l'educazione all'intercultura in un'ottica multidimensionale e la tematica va affrontata necessariamente mediante un approccio interdisciplinare. Tutto ciò dovrebbe essere tradotto in "laboratorio" perché la teoria, il pensare critico sull'educazione al dialogo interculturale si trasformi in 'esperienza', in modo da diventare un "laboratorio permanente" di interculturalità vissuta concretamente.

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BEING OPEN TO THE EDUCATIONAL COMPETENCIES ON THE COMMUNITY LIFE EXPERIENCE

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Abstract: Social transformations in times of economic crisis suggest the need to re-evaluate (upgrade) the educational role of parents, educators, teachers, and social workers. The new social emergencies sometimes obscure the importance of education as an indispensable instrument of social, cohesion, integration policies, and economic and human development. The present study describes the theoretical pedagogical context in which the research project on the socio-educational competences of educators in a community for unaccompanied foreign minors was developed. Lifelong learning, remaining active, improving individual creativity and generativity are the ways to train young educators today to invest in the development of skills for individual growth, economic participation and the social inclusion (literacy).

Keywords: capability approach, educational expertise and resources, planning, territorial education cooperation

1. Social transformation and education responsability

Even knowing how to teach the concept of "being for oneself" and knowing how to distinguish the epistemological and ontological plane of being from the concept of "being for the other" is a capability that requires high commitment and great educational ability. It is a capability that previously required the adult to have the ability to reflect on the experience and then to be able to manage educational problems in every situation and life context (family, professional, social). An example from the field of social educational services is

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when the concept of desire had to be interpreted in view of the exclusion of the subject from the sense implied in different life events.

As recently as 2003, C. M. Mozzanica held that the word of "desire" were unknown to traditional welfare ". Desire, unlike "need", evoked a sense of expectation and relationship (professional, interpersonal, empathy). Need, on the other hand, evoked satisfaction in the forms of what was guaranteed, and demanded the protection of the law as a right which demanded a response. Similarly, different approaches could be found for the study of disease, suffering and old age, death, disability. Disease could be considered as something to be freed from rather than something to be understood"; suffering as something to which we become silent impotent spectators; old age was not accepted as a time of life and death, an "unspeakable event"[34] .

After a decade, the issue of exclusion of the person from the search for existential meaning, appears in the context of socio-cultural scenarios that have characteristics similar to the approach described above. However, overshadowing this same horizon, now there is the risk inherent in the loss of sense not only in the search for existential meaning but also in the exclusion of the person from the world. Among the most interesting analysis on this transformation is that carried out by Z. Bauman, which invites us to reflect on the concept of "negative globalization".

In its current purely negative form, globalization is parasitic and predatory that postmodernism has changed over time. It has progressively fed on the poison of fear, lawlessness, terrorism, surveillance and drying up of solidarity. For Z. Bauman this transformation is leading inevitably to alarming consequences. Most of all, is an inability "to slow the astounding rate of change, let alone to predict and control its direction." The fear of uncertainty in a world that appears increasingly liquid and impenetrable leads us to the idea of minimizing the risk of existence: "We are all looking for the " Seven Signs of Cancer "or" Five Symptoms of Depression ", exorcise the specter of "high blood pressure or cholesterol levels, stress or obesity" without realizing that this feeds in us that sense of disorder and widespread insecurity that is very lucrative for advertisers whose increased sales of

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[34] Mozzanica C.M., 2003. I contesti della progettazione educativa, in M.Santerini, C.M.Mozzanica, R.Sidoli, G.Vico, (a cura di), *Formazione e progettualità nei servizi educativi*, Milano: Franco Angeli.

superluxury SUVs have become a symbol of sicurity[35]. It's clear that we feel threatened and the worst thing is not the fear of danger but what this fear can turn into. In keeping with the idea of the future, we think we live in a time when the rule of fear leads us to a defensive attitude, contrary to the principles of education inspired by the virtues of faith, hope, openness to the next person. The matrix of actions inspired by fear seems to take root in the unstable ground of an uncertain future that puts a strain on the self-esteem and sense of confidence that is needed to educate, to live, to be generative. If we analyze how we managed this fear, we see that it appeared in two phases in the period of "solid modernity". The first marked the disappearance of solidarity, where associations, unions and the collettivity "tended to replace the natural ties "damaged beyond repair" The second phase, marked the end of freedom from fear, with the return of "dangerous classes", meaning those classes consisting of redundant groups, temporarily removed from society but still potentially reintegrable. Today, new "dangerous classes" make their appearance as one of those social groups commonly considered inadmissible, unfit to be reinstated because no useful function can be found for them to play after " rehabilitation. " In this context, the new generations will have to confront not only these classes, but also those considered superfluous and permanently excluded (...). In the future, as Z. Bauman explains, the exclusion, will not be perceived as something temporary and potentially remediable, but as a permanent process actively encouraged by the liquid modernity. Increasingly exclusion tends to be "one-way street (and be perceived as such)". Its main attribute will be, but in fact already is irrevocability: "a direct consequence, even if unexpected of the decomposition of the welfare state, as the web of established institutions, but perhaps in an even more significant way is an ideal project by which to judge reality and incite action"[36].

From these statements what is more important to the purposes of our pedagogical reflection springs from the idea of the project. It is an idea that includes the need to hope for a better future which does not corrode talents, human qualities, ideals and does not smother expectations, so isolating humanity itself from the world in a process of general indifference.

It would be a terrible defeat if the project of the welfare state faltered due to its unability to define its objectives eliminating opportunities for redemption, as well as the possibility of recovery and social reintegration.

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[35] Bauman Z., 2014. Il demone della paura, Roma: Laterza.
[36] Ibid., p. 27.

It is a project that loses its ability to influence the social context. Faced with this framework of uncertainty, how can you educate the principles of Christian personalism when already with the idea of the withdrawal of social recovery is implicit gradual reduction of hope and weakening of will[37].

If educating means learning to live with dignity, respect and responsibility, what image will the young have of the adult when they have to measure up to the consequences of the culture of waste and the dematerialization of work? Today, "not having a job is increasingly perceived as a state of "redundancy" (discarded, labeled with the brand of unnecessary, useless, unemployable and condemned to remain "economically inactive") rather than as a condition of "unemployment" (a term that indicates a departure from the norm, which is that of '"being employed". Being unemployed means being disposable, perhaps having already been disposed of once and for all, thrown on the scrapyard of "economic progress" (...). Being unemployed means not only being stigmatized but seeing themselves categorised as waste, namely in those categories which, from our point of view, clearly separate the adult world from that of the present generation. The first category "separates the unemployed, particularly the long-term unemployed, from the black hole of "the underclass": men and women who do not fit into any legitimate social division, individuals outside classes and who have no recognized, approved, useful or essential function performed by members of 'normal' society: people whose contribution to the life of society is zero, with whom society could do without and from whose disappearance it would only gain.

The second category separates those declared "redundant" from what are called criminals: the "underclass" and "criminals" are none other than two sub-categories of the excluded, the "socially unsuitable" or even "anti-social elements", differing from each other more by social classification and the treatment that they receive than by their attitude and conduct[38].

Just like people out of work, the criminals (those jailed, charged and awaiting trial, watched by the police, or simply on a police file) are no longer seen as temporarily excluded from normal social life to be "re-educated", "rehabilitated" and "returned to the community" at the first opportunity, but as individuals who have been permanently marginalized, who are unfit

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[37] Ibid., p.28.
[38] Ibidem.

to be "recycled socially" and destined to remain long out of trouble, separated from the community of citizens law-abiding[39].

Educating in the era of waste, of exclusion by the same rules that govern the coexistence of peoples, cultures and generations, means taking note of the consequences arising from the existential emptiness, the absence of work, and the inactivity, and taking a step forward until, along the path of life, everyone can walk with dignity regardless of their existential condition of difficulty, hardship or inefficiency. The active involvement of youth, adults and the elderly depend on the ability to push to act on skills in the sense that we have given in the assumptions of the capability approach.

This theory takes into account what determines the opportunities of life and is based on the development of substantive freedoms, but also on the reasons behind the more entrenched social injustice and inequality, particularly discrimination, marginalization and the lack of capability.   Recognizing the ability to act and to be, as M. Nussbaum says, will generate greater confidence in man and recognition of human dignity[40].

In this perspective we present the idea of an educational research project that is currently underway and is being implemented in a Community for Italian and unaccompanied foreign children. The Kayròs Community was set up in 2000 in the Lambrate suburb of Milan by religious and lay volunteers from the parish of San Martino and hosts minors in difficulty, referred by the Juvenile Court, the Social Services and by the local police in the area. Kairos derives from the Greek and means "appropriate time", "the right time to", "unique opportunity", "decisive event". On this concept it is placed on educational work in the Community . A place where every child is given the right to live the time of the responsability, the sharing, the welcome and not only of " rehabilitation.

2. Research into the Kayròs community cross-generational skills'

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[39] Ibid., 29.
[40] Nussbaum M., 2000. Women and human development. The capabilities approach, New York: Cambridge University Press; trad. it. Diventare persone. Donne e univesrsalità dei diritti, Bologna: Il Mulino, 2004; Cfr. M.L. De Natale, 2013. Bisogni educativi e risorse nel ciclo di vita delle famiglie. Una ricerca nella realtà di Verona, Bari: Ed Insieme; G. Alessandrini, 2014, La "Pedagogia di Martha Nussbaum. Approccio alle capacità e sfide educative, Milano: Franco Angeli

In recent years there have been major changes in perspective in research on adults with regard to the objectives, the reference theories and the definition of the field of investigation: According to a widely-held point of view, we should talk about lifelong education – all the educational processes that occur during life – rather than andragogy and relatively circumscribed age-ranges. The research in the Kayròs Community moves from this very horizon of studies on adult education and has renewed interest in the life stages of adolescence and post adolescence.

2.1 General aims

The investigation sought to highlight the social and educational skills of educators and trainers by placing them in a capability-approach perspective.

We present the process of development of the educator's personal and social skills from his first educational experiences with children from the Community to an exploration of the skills that have consolidated his awareness of his role and his educational professionalism.

The identification of skills is not intended to reduce the experience of the individual educator to a catalogue of capacities and educational resources or to a simple cataloging of his repertoire of educational ability but aims to raise the value of personal experience to make it concretely recognizable in terms of 'adult learning and educational reflection on foreign children in adolescence.

2.2. Research objectives

The research project "The educational skills in the Kayròs Community" moves from 'intent to investigate the educational models, behaviour, and educational strategies that aim to promote the full development of the growth of the children and educators of the community, the programming/reformulation of the community educational project with the intention of submitting proposals for educational and cultural promotion projects as well as projects in human dignity education.

The object of detection relates to the particular responsibilities of educators at different stages of the educational work in the Community (e.g. reception of unaccompanied foreign minors,

accompanying, etc.), excluding planned interruptions of the educational project provided for by the managers of the Community of pratice[41].

General objectives:

Investigate the educational skills of educators belonging to a community for minors; identify the educational problems and relationship between the educational skills already recorded and those still be detected.

Specific objectives:

• Review the learning (knowledge, skills, abilities, value system, the conditions, expectations, desires, behaviours) in the context of the structural dimensions of knowledge and review the relationship between learning already acquired during the educational experience and learning considered as structural and functional to the educational work of the community. The structural and functional learning of educational work will be analysed. The research aims to investigate the learning that has been learnt and "transferred" in the educational activity and those learnt but not yet recognised by the person and the group of educators as effective educational skills of work in the community. In the research process data acquired through the method of *Bilancio di competenze* will be compared with data from the elaboration of exercise on the auto-narration of an experimental educational learning (whose outcome will contribute to building the reward path of the individual educator) with the comparison of educational categories (intentionality, caring relationships).

• Investigate (from the perspective of the "capability approach") the capacity, abilities and skills of educators in the processes of reception, design and implementation of pathways to integrate children into the community, integration of programs with local educational services, cultural promotion of the educational service of the Community.

• Analyse the organizational processes of the Kayros Community for enhancement of the educational and cultural heritage of the educators and their effectiveness in relation to application tools that are used in personalized planning and in the education and training projects of minors (Stauto, PEI, etc.).

• Explore the educational models and skills of educators in integrated community settings and their adaptation to the activation of networks of institutional learning in formal, non-formal and informal local setting.

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[41] E.Wenger, 2006. Comunità di pratica, Milano: Cortina; J. Mezirow J., 2003. Apprendimento e trasformazione, Milano: Cortina.

• Identify the strategic tools that are used to set paths of creativity, mediation and customised educational planning with new language and innovative forms for the dissemination of the arts and culture to promote greater social cohesion and to strengthen the sense of belonging of the educators to their place of work in the community.

• To promote social mediation, as a transformative learning experience, between educators, coordinators and top management of the Community, in order to develop knowledge and appreciation of the origins, history and cultural identity of the minors' original cultures.

• Highlight the educational skills related to the functions of coordination and pedagogical design.

• Identify the problems relating to the application of the tools of coordination and planning.

2.3. Lines of action

In relation to the requirements of design tools the following activities have been identified:

Line 1. Initiatives of educational relevance and of socio-educational impact

Initiatives to promote pedagogical competence, enhancing the value of educational communities with particular attention to the diffusion and improvement of educational programs that combine social and cultural identity development of the children with educational issues concerning the educational problems of adults and the elderly.

Line 2. Analysis of educational resources for the enhancement of the cultural identity of young immigrants and for the dissemination of knowledge about their traditions.

In this respect, the research project intends to organise initiatives to meet and reflect on the educational skills of young people to promote (not only within the Community, but also externally) the acquisition and utilisation of historical memory and cultural traditions that characterise and distinguish the context of origin of young immigrants (eg. the promotion and enhancement of the source language to create cultural integration in the Kayròs Community).

Line 3. Macro-territorial Initiatives

The research project aims to promote initiatives for the development of the educational cultural heritage of the Kayròs Community, such as a permanent open laboratory for the dissemination of education research and for the realisation of exchanges and initiatives for Colloboration in project activities that promote the cultural heritage and artistic area of the historical centre of the City of Milan, with particular attention to areas affected by the Movida phenomenon.

2.4. The research methodology

As part of educational attention paid to the Kayròs Community educators (, etc.), the methodology aims to investigate the instances related to the social needs of the community leaders, coordinators, educators, involved (educational, training, cultural) through the use of educational content applied to scientific research that allows people and groups to be self-motivating and to learn to maximise their subjective personal development, critically and creatively. The methodology intends to make use of pilot sample groups and, for this purpose, uses qualitative and quantitative tools, such as questionnaires, narrative interviews, educational skills assessment and the community of educational practise.

2.5. Instruments

Quantitative tools: forms structured for the target audience and the questionnaire for the educational skills survey.

The structure of the questionnaire for the assessment of the "Social and educational skills of educators in the Kayros Community" was inspired by studies of the writings of Martha Nussbaum, a philosopher and expert on law and ethics. She has coined the term "human capabilities", which seeks to convey the wealth of potential that belongs to each individual and that must be the subject of care on the part of the human community and international organisations.

Qualitative tools: workshop meetings for each target may be proposed with differentiated proposals for group of educators, volunteers, leaders of the Community to make the participants protagonists.

3. The researchers' findings

To clarify the results of the detection path that is currently under way, the following brief summary is offered of the procedures for participation in research and the necessary processes of involvement of educators that fully satisfy the information requirements:

- A prize will be awarded to the educator who best writes an account of the educational experience.

The winner will have achieved the following capabilities:

1. processing and transformation of their educational experience in social skills that will have to be made available to the whole Kayros Community (with the innovative promotion of new activities planned. Examples: preparation of the community magazine; workshops of music, art, writing, meditation, video productions for educational purposes; permanent updating services of career guidance policies, cultural medium library services, the library, the person etc.).

2. cooperation in educational and training initiatives that will foster cultural exchange between the inhabitants of the suburbs and the centre of the City of Milan;

3. design of territorial cooperation paths for the Education for human dignity.

At the end of the search path, and in collaboration with the trainer/researcher and to panel of experienced educators who have been chosen from among the various educational figures that operated both inside and outside the community, educators will receive "The educational creativity awards" as a token of trust and as an incentive to lifelong learning and the development the social life of the community.

NARRATIVES OF OPENNESS:
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES
IN A BRITISH ECUMENICAL UNIVERSITY AND ITS CITY

Bignold, W. [*]

Abstract

Liverpool Hope University prides itself on being a strong community which values students and staff from different places, locally, nationally and internationally. This paper tells the stories of international students and alumni, a significant part of the community, and explores their lived experiences. It does this through narrative accounts written by the students and in doing so gives them a voice which enables us to experience the openness they feel towards them, or a closed attitude, from those they meet in the University and its city.

Keywords: Student voice, openness, community, narrative, lived-experience

Introduction

There are over seven billion people in the world today, living in 194 countries and speaking over 6,500 languages. With recent developments in technology we are more interconnected than ever before; the world is huge, but the world is tiny. In our increasingly globalised world it is important to understand other cultures and values, to be open to others (Bignold & Rai, 2015). Being open to others is about being open to different ways of thinking, of being, of doing. A university can plan how it will be open to others; it can set this as a strategic goal or a marketing strap-line. It can set out to measure its openness and declare this as a key performance indicator. It can plan its curriculum and its learning and teaching strategy to maximise its openness in its taught sessions and its enrichment activities, but even if planned

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to the finest detail these can be meaningless or unopen opportunities – closed. It is the personal relationships that really matter; this is where we are truly open to others, in the everyday encounters we have with those we work with, those whom we teach or support, those whom we serve. It is in the humanity of personal interactions that we render ourselves open, ready to accept, to welcome, to respect, to honour, to love.

In sharing narratives of openness this paper draws its inspiration from Corinthians 1, 13:4-5 which tells us "*Love is patient and kind: love does not envy or boast; it is not arrogant or rude. It does not insist in its own way; it is not irritable or resentful*". An openness to others might be seen in the daily encounters with professors, but equally with gardeners, with cleaners, with security staff, with librarians and with those from our neighbourhood communities that have the most impact on our students. It is the little things that quietly signal our openness to others, our shared humanity, our willingness to be part of the world; often we may not even notice our signals but someone else does, a student from another country, a peer from another institution, a visitor from an allied profession. Their status is not important and neither is ours; it is the look in our eyes, the openness, the warmth which they see and which causes them to smile, to feel at home, to feel valued, to feel safe in this new place, to feel a part of the human race. In a world of turmoil, of distrust, of anxiety and sometimes of terror, that warm feeling of belonging, of acceptance, of love is so important; it is a basic human need. Until this is met a student is unable to relax into his/her lessons and be ready to learn.

This paper explores the stories of international students and alumni and considers their experiences of a UK Christian university as they arrive there and their experiences in the city surrounding it. In particular, in considers whether or not they experienced an 'openness' to them. It tells some of their stories in an attempt to identify what it is that makes a university and its home city open, welcoming, a place to feel at home, a place to be oneself, a place to learn. International students are a student cohort who are might be described as marginalised, a minority group in an unfamiliar context. It is particularly important that groups such as this are listened to and are given a voice. The stories here then are written by the students themselves as a means of sharing their lived-experiences. This papers draws on a narrative research project at Liverpool Hope University and discusses the importance of such a methodology as a means of hearing real stories from real people. It then examines themes

within the stories which illustrate an openness; a particular focus is given to the openness of Liverpool and Liverpudlians as the students' new community and neighbours.

A university cannot plan to be open to others at any level of real meaning because being open is not something which can be implemented or measured, but it can invest in its people and its community and achieve this ideal through them. It is not just about those on campus, in the lecture theatres, the halls of residence, the gardens or the sport-halls; it is equally about those in the wider community, the neighbourhood, the shopping arcades, the places of worship and the city. Liverpool Hope University is the only ecumenical university in Europe. Founded on gospel values and still driven by them today, it prides itself on being a collegial community and this aspiration is written into its strategic plan. It is reviewed regularly and progress towards this goal is measured and evaluated but it is in the relationships between the individual members of the University community where it is real, where its values are lived out. Those outside of the immediate campus community, those who live in the city, are equally important; to the international student who arrives in a new place, to study and live, the openness of the city they come to is of great importance too. Liverpool is a port city; it has welcomed travellers for hundreds of years and continues to do so today.

Methodology

International students are sometimes overlooked as individuals and as groups by universities who are driven by the needs of home students as they form the dominant 'consumer' group. Higher education is increasingly based on a consumerist model (Coate & Rathnayake, 2013); this is true for internationalised higher education as well as that aimed at the home market and international student mobility continues to increase rapidly (Ryan, 2013). This emphasises a business model of education rather than a model of education based on relationships. Coate & Rathnayake argue that this emphasis on students as consumers has removed the moral basis for relationships with international students. If we do not build these relationships then this is a student cohort whose voices are less likely to be heard. Indeed Marginson (2013) identifies them as a group already marginalised as they are regarded by their host communities, both inside the universities and outside as "strangers", "outsiders", "social isolates" with "linguistic deficit". These are negative connotations which can lead to a shutting off, being closed to them rather than open.

Universities now rush to hear the student voice (indeed their openness to it is judged by the government in their QAA inspections), but this is often a young voice from the UK. While this domestic voice is important, for both the individual who is speaking and the group he or she belongs to, it can sometimes drown out the minority voice. This paper seeks to provide a platform, or a megaphone, for those who are not always heard so loudly. In this study international students and alumni were invited to simply tell their stories, their journeys essentially, from home to Liverpool and then through their time at Liverpool Hope. Twenty three people participated in the project, from fourteen different countries including Afghanistan, America, China, France, Germany, Ghana, Kurdistan, India, Nepal and Nigeria. They included undergraduate students, study aboard students, postgraduate students and alumni from all three categories. Their narratives were collected and presented as an anthology of stories.

Despite universities' commitments to student feedback in all areas of activity the student voice is not always sufficiently heard (Brennan, 2010). There is a focus on induction questionnaires, mid-course evaluations, end-of-course evaluations, accommodation surveys, forum debates even, but these tend to be driven by the university not the student. They are often related to strategies to improve a ranking or position in a league table. Brennan acknowledges that many students feel frustrated by the usual student feedback mechanism:

> *Notwithstanding the industry has developed around student feedback, the questions asked and the analyses undertaken may sometimes 'miss the point' as far as many students are concerned. The annual national student survey seems to report mostly high levels of student satisfaction with their courses. But this simple point seems often to be missed in the near obsessive concern with rankings and league tables. (Brennan, 2010, p.194)*

Narrative accounts written by students enable us to see beyond questionnaire responses or forum minutes. A narrative methodology was used in this research project because of the authenticity of narrated accounts. In these narratives it is the student's own voice and not the researcher's hearing of it or analysis of it. Indeed one student wrote

> *Yes, no one is better than ourselves to tell our stories and to remember them.*
> (Undergraduate alumni from China)

There has been a growth in narrative research in the social sciences, and particularly in Education, over the last twenty years, as a means to capture individual or group experiences (Sparkes, 2002). Narrative enquiry gathers and presents data through the process of communication. It is based on the premise that each party involved in the communication is acting and interacting rationally in an attempt to build mutual understanding with others (Habermas, 1984). When gathering data the researcher receives texts or oral accounts which are situated in time and place, as told by the participant. The researcher makes judgements about the validity of the data using an agreed methodological introspection. In sharing their lived experiences the participants reconstruct their experiences based on their understandings of the time and place in which they occurred, influenced by their understandings of the time and place in which they now live, the past and the present connected (Bignold & Su, 2013). In autobiographical narrative the participant becomes the narrator and reconceptualises his/her lived experiences, making them accessible to others, enabling others to understand the lived experience. The value of the narrative is in the authenticity of the story itself and the opportunity it gives for that experience to be taken to a wider audience. Therefore the narrative accounts have not been deconstructed and measured, that would be meaningless. Instead a thematic analysis of these narrative accounts has been undertaken to identify acts of openness and to understand the impact it has on the student.

Being Open to Others: The University

As university students it is unsurprising that they wrote about supportive, welcoming staff who eased them though unfamiliar situations on arrival. Student ambassadors waiting to greet them at the airport in those initial moments of anxiety of arriving somewhere new, who gave them a welcoming hug and took the luggage trolley and bought them a coffee to drink in the taxi to campus, was one example. In these early days orientation courses and induction programmes feel welcoming, but it is the support manager who gives up her Saturday to take them to the city centre on the bus and shows them round with her son so they get their bearings who sticks in one student's mind. A student writes of "dedicated and committed" reception staff; it is not only tutors who are key to student experience. All members of the university community, regardless of their role or seniority, can have a positive impact, listening to their needs, supporting them and looking for solutions when problems occur, as this extract illustrates:

> *I had broken my shinbone, lost some bone and it required a long series of procedures to get me back on my feet... It was obvious I couldn't continue, I had*

to stop University – I had to quit. But wait... After a series of conversations the Student Support and Well-being department were ready and prepared to support me to finish my programme if I was willing to continue. (Postgraduate student from Ghana)

Welcoming international students into the university community and being open to their cultures and traditions, valuing them enough to give them a platform to share them with the community can make a long lasting impression on a student:

In Liverpool Hope University we had every opportunity, to begin with the festival that is held in March of every year and it's called the Culture Carnival. In fact it is a very good opportunity for all international students to exhibit their culture, traditions and foods. It was an honour for me to represent my country's culture and foods for the first time in Liverpool Hope University. I also showed a keen interest in holding a stall to show my country's great culture and traditions to all students, since they got a different image of Afghanistan and that is the image of war, so it was an opportunity for me to show that there is more about Afghanistan and an Afghan apart from war. We have a great nation, great culture and a history of 5,000 years. I wanted to show everyone that since a long time ago we have been the victims of war and terrorism. Everyone in Afghanistan, from children to elderly people, men and women, are thirsty for peace and love. (Postgraduate alumni from Afghanistan)

This extract illustrates the impact such an event can have on someone's sense of self-worth and the pride he has in his country; he feels valued.

A common theme which students wrote about was their tutors who they found to be motivating, encouraging and supportive. One student told how her tutor in an MA Education class had given her confidence in her new situation by asking her about education in Kurdistan, her homeland, and her experiences of teaching there. This illustrates an attitude of equality from the tutor who created an atmosphere where students felt valued, equal to each other and their tutor, sharing their professional experiences and knowledge with each other. Of course, this could be seen as academics who are just being professional but it is not just in the classroom or the lecture hall that students felt welcome. There were examples of personal interactions of lasting impact outside of these places as this Theology student recounts:

My tutor gave me a shock! The class finished at 9.00pm one day. As I was making my way for the door he called out to me. I was thinking now that I would miss my bus but waited to speak to him all the same. When he was done he strapped his bag on and said "It's cold, I'll take you." In that breezy cold of December he drove me through the streets of Liverpool right to the gate of my Aigburth residence. That was kindness and thoughtfulness that could only come from a humble British reverend. (Postgraduate alumni from Nigeria)

Such acts of openness were not specific to Christian members of the University; of course someone's religion is not always obvious to others, but I would hope that a Christian university which encourages gospel values in all its staff and students regardless of their religion sees a great number of such interactions in its community.

Being Open to Others: Student Peers

Within the University community another common theme within the narratives was that of peer support or openness. For many international students one aim of studying in the UK is to meet British people and make new friends. This is regularly given as a motivator by Study Abroad students in particular who come to the UK for one semester (Bignold, 2014). An openness of the student body to welcome in new peers and to make them feel at home can help an international student to settle more quickly:

The welcome my fellow internationals and I were given could not have been warmer and more cordial. Getting to know other students in halls could not have been more amicable. A "mate" here or an "Ask me whenever you need me" there was surely meant. (Study Abroad alumni from Germany)

Feeling like a family is important when you have travelled half way round the worlds and left your own family and friends behind. The human need to feel loved and to belong does not diminish, if anything it gets stronger and a peer group can provide a temporary fix at least. When you are away from home in an unfamiliar place you often crave familiarity; food can take on deep significance as it can provide that link with home, a favourite meal can be reassuring. Students wrote about living with their peers, both home students and other internationals. Cooking together and for each other was a popular theme; the importance of sharing food as a means of bonding; taking it in turns to cook traditional dishes and to serve

one another. The simple gesture of serving food does much to signal one's openness, one's willingness to serve others.

> *I met three nice ladies in the flat who eventually became very good friends. Ping from Singapore and two Brits; Bernadette and Rebecca. My new friends assisted me so well and were so helpful. It was a good time to study each other's culture as well. We cooked for each other and shared our favourite dishes. I laughed to see them eating my rice and beans.* (Postgraduate student from Ghana)

Of course sharing in each other's culture, being interested in it, valuing those who are different, who come from different places, different lives, as equals can be hugely empowering to those we welcome but also to those who are welcoming them as we ourselves are part of something bigger, that does not revolve only around us. For UK students like Bernadette and Rebecca, such opportunities as that described above can be of great importance in their own growth and development as members of a global society (Killick, 2015).

One student wrote about his pleasure when his British peers voted him as president of the Cricket society in his first year. He came from a cricketing nation and had been passionate about cricket his entire life. His peers and fellow players recognised this commitment to the sport, his talent and knowledge and put him first before themselves; a different example to the one above but another example of how acts of openness can create a sense of well-being in others.

In the collection of narratives submitted one student did not experience an openness amongst his peers and his pain in this can be felt in these few words:

> *I arrived at my University accommodation and was met by my resident tutor with a smiling face.. I arrived on a Saturday and the next day was a boring and lonely Sunday for me as I had no one to talk to... Monday morning came still with no friends or company.* (Postgraduate Alumni from Nigeria)

Not everyone is open to others and the impact of feeling lonely for an international student can be deeply demotivating; fortunately the situation for this student changed once he was in his class.

Being Open to Others: The City

This paper has not sought to measure the openness of a university or its city to international students or to measure the impact of openness on this student cohort. Instead it has simply sought to give voice to the lived experiences of openness by international students, an often marginalised group in higher education, despite their economic value in a consumer-based model. The narratives shared here have given evidence that staff and students of an English ecumenical university are open to those from other countries as they arrive in a new location seeking to feel at home.

As the evidence has shown, this openness often manifests itself in small acts of kindness which make the receiver feel welcomed, valued, loved, human.

Common themes which can be drawn out about the wider community and those encountered in the city were about the kindness of people whom students came into contact with in their daily lives. Public transport workers were the main focus of the narratives interestingly. One student described how, when she first arrived in Liverpool late on a dark winter's night and could not locate the house she had rented a "friendly" taxi driver her round and round until they did find it at no extra charge. A similar experience is shared here:

> *I first arrived in Liverpool at Lime Street Station, two large suitcases in hand and a weary demeanour after twenty four hour worth of travelling. Unfortunately the Central Line was close so I enlisted the help of the Transport Police in order to find the appropriate bus to Aigburth Park. Though no one could tell me off the top of their heads, one officer was kind enough to take one of my bags and wheel it around downtown Liverpool while he asked almost every bus driver he could find. After about an hour of walking he located the bus and put me on it.* (Study Abroad alumni from America)

It is in our practical dilemmas when we can feel most vulnerable, lost in an unfamiliar city in the dark, struggling to make sense of local transport on a cold, wet day. At these times students come into contact with those working in these environments, bus drivers, taxi drivers, police officers, often at the start of a long day or the end of a busy shift. It is these embers of our communities who can have the most impact on an international student by making time to help them in a friendly way. Yes, it is part of their job, they are being professional, but the narratives gave many accounts of professionals who had gone beyond

what might be expected of them and showed human kindness in small acts of great significance.

I learned to appreciate what was around me: The kindness of a stranger taking time out of their busy day to show me how to read the bus schedule. A police officer going above the call of duty to make sure I wasn't stranded in Lime Street Station. A bus driver who didn't laugh at the silly Americans who got on a bus going the opposite direction to their destination and became their unofficial tour guide. (Study Abroad student from America)

Interestingly, as well as experiencing such generosity and warmth three of the narratives included observations of such openness to other people. This reinforced the warmth of character of Liverpudlians and such witness appeared to have as much impact as if the student had experience the act of kindness himself. This is illustrated in this longer extract:

Bus line 86C takes me back to Hope Park. We approach a bus stop but nobody is waiting at it. Instead a man is jogging towards it, trying to wave down the bus. Our driver has not seen him and we are going too fast for him to reach the stop in time – he will miss the bus. Maybe he is in a hurry or maybe the next bus would still get him to his destination in time. Things a fellow passenger on the bus has not been thinking about. He goes up to the driver, says a few words while pointing at the pavement. The driver brings his vehicle to a quick halt and opens its doors to the jogger.

I spent five months in Liverpool. I went on countless trips to cities in the UK. I met people from countries all over the world. Yes this seemingly minor event has stayed in my mind as a prominent memory. Waving down a bus was new to me when I came to England, but that is not the point. Stopping the bus for someone unknown – that is the point. The fellow passenger could have been lost in his own thoughts. He could have ignored the other man. Instead he told the bus driver to stop for a stranger on the pavement. It was a selfless, considerate act of solidarity. I do not remember the face of this man. I do not even recall his rough age. However, he is to me the epitome of Liverpudlian values. (Study Abroad alumni from Germany)

Students wrote about the openness they experienced from teachers in placement schools over staff room coffee, shop-workers who called them "love" or "sweetheart" as they passed

through a busy supermarket checkout; those few seconds of seemingly insignificant banter being deeply significant to those far from home. One wrote of a waitress in a cafe who did not charge for a second or third cope of tea on a wet day February afternoon; another simple act of friendliness which Liverpool is famous for, at least amongst those who live there:

> *I was surely stunned, perhaps even a little intimidated by the friendliness and familiarity I met with. The first two weeks showed that the Scouse mentality involves openness, friendliness and support.* (Postgraduate alumni from Denmark)

Not a common theme, but interesting none the less, were two examples of openness from the participants themselves; one is given here:

> *I am part of a monthly organised Contact the Elderly charity tea event for the senior citizens in the community at Hope Park. I have been consistently supporting this wonderful event from its very first tea party till the present. Contact the Elderly has been a great way to create a bridge between the young generation and the senior citizens of the community for interaction and cherished talk about the changes now and then.* (Postgraduate student from Nepal).

Wanting to be part of the community or to give something back, whatever the motivation for making such a commitment as this, the example reminds us that being open to others goes across generations, cultures and faiths. It is not the preserve of one group over another, but is illustrative instead of a person's commitment to humanity.

Discussion

Some international students choose a Christian university not because they are Christians themselves but because of the strength of true community in such institutions and its underpinning values which reassures them of being welcomed and valued because they are the values of the Gospel (Bignold, 2014). Public institutions should be open and welcoming to all citizens, particularly institutions of education, and church foundations, which Liverpool Hope is, in particular (Pillay, 2010). Feeling welcomed was a recurring theme in the narratives, the importance of belonging and feeling at home by being part of the community. This extract sums this up:

> *This was a followed by a routine of going to the University's library, using the University gym and some Wednesdays volunteering in serving foods for the poor and homeless people through Chaplaincy. My university felt like my home away*

from home. Imagine how hard it would be for an individual like me who comes from a country which has been the victim of war and whose citizens are identified by the war. (Postgraduate alumni from Afghanistan)

The narrative extracts shared here have provided evidence of openness to international students amongst university staff, student peers and the local community:

Thanks Liverpool for showing me a world of beauty and kindness. (Study Abroad alumni from North America.)

The positive impact that these acts of openness can have on international students has been made clear by the participants' recounting of various acts of "kindness" they have experienced. There are recurring themes in the narratives, ways in which the different acts of openness made the students feel. These include removing anxiety at times of stress, such as being lost in a new city, being helped when in a difficult situation, such as having an accident and being friendly and taking an interest in the newcomer. The themes are not particular to staff, peers or community but all three groups appear in more than one narrative. It is the City which is written about with most frequency, or the people within the community.

Always asking if you need help, listening to us, acting for us and being there for us. I thought this extreme show of kindness was just for the moment but as time passes I realize it is actually the culture of Liverpudlians to be hospitable, loving and caring; expressed in their communication with others, such as sweeties, my love, honey and all sorts of kind gestures. To say the least, never in all the countries I have visited, even some parts of the United Kingdom have I seen such gestures. Many times I got lost trying to locate a place and I have people leaving their own destination to help with mine and afterwards asking if I am alright before leaving. A virtue that I have not seen anywhere else in the world. Caring for people's satisfaction is their passion and lifestyle with no strings attached. (Postgraduate alumni from Nigeria)

When selecting a university, the course syllabus and the academic reputation are key factors (Bignold) as may be any faith-based dimension, but so too is the reputation of the city it is located in. Aarts (2011) acknowledges the importance of location to a university.

I am not suggesting that Liverpool is unique within the UK in its openness to those from outside of it, as I am not suggesting that Liverpool Hope is unique amongst universities. However I do think there is something significant about being the only ecumenical university in Europe which attracts staff, and some students, to its shared Christian values and traditions. Similarly, there is something special about Liverpool, examples of it have been given here. Perhaps it is because it is a port city, or a city that built its wealth on the slave trade and is still coming to terms with that part of its history. Perhaps it is the economic hardships it faced at the end of the twentieth century or the ongoing influence of the Beatles that constantly remind its citizens that "All you need is love"! Whatever it is, Liverpool has it and its international students appreciate it:

> *You may be black, white, Asian or American, but if you identify as a Liverpudlian, the whole city will hold you up when you are down. I cannot say I have ever met another city that lives in everlasting solidarity with those who come to it, who are part of it... By blood and/or by choice the occupants of this city are welcoming and ready to stand tall to anyone who tries to belittle their own, even those who are just visiting.* (Postgraduate alumni from North America)

Of course those students who were motivated to take part in the project were motivated by their positive experiences. It may be that others, who had a negative experience, who felt a lack of openness chose not to take part because they felt less of a connection or commitment to the University or the City.

Openness is good for the individual student who experiences it. It impacts positively on her/his sense of self-worth and belonging as the extracts here show, similarly an absence of openness can impact negatively and create feelings of loneliness, but it goes beyond this and the individual who has experienced it. Staff, peers and community members who are open to others and the students who respond to this are furthering the community in the University and the City. The openness to international students in particular, as evidenced here, creates a community that is serious about world issues and globally alert. It enables those of us in the community who are living 'easy' lives, removed from conflict, poverty, religious persecution, for example, to share some of the pain of people who have left such environments behind. It enables us to share the joys of those who have left loving families, rich cultural traditions and fulfilling professions behind too. It enables each of us to be a little more educated about the world we live in.

Conclusions

This paper has not sought to measure the openness of a university or its city to international students or to measure the impact of openness on them. Instead it has sought simply to give voice to the lived-experiences of international students, an often marginalised group, despite their economic worth, in a consumerist model of higher education. The narratives shared here have given evidence that staff, students and the wider community of an English ecumenical university where the research was conducted, are open to others. As the evidence has shown, this openness often manifests itself in small acts of kindness which can make an international student feel welcomed, listened to, valued, loved, human:

> *Liverpool has been a nice place to live and study in. I love the way people smile at strangers.* (Postgraduate student from Nigeria)

This paper has listened to the stories of the international students, it has heard their experiences of openness and the feelings it has created in them. Perhaps the greatest impact is on those of us who are open and who have the pleasure of hosting international students in our community though. How else can we understand the experiences of those living in other communities of our interconnected world? We should look beyond ourselves in order that we may grow and serve the wider world more fully, but that is a focus for another set of narratives...

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BEING OPEN TO OTHERS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Leonard Franchi[*]

Abstract

Catholic schools exist in a state of uncertainty between their double identity as Church and civic institutions. Political pressure to conform to the prevailing cultural climate can be a source of tension between Catholic school leaders and the educational establishment. The source of this tension often lies in the degree of 'hostility' shown towards religious ideas more broadly. A recent report in the United Kingdom on the place of religion in public life, while reflecting much of the prevailing secular ways of thinking, recognised that religious beliefs have an important role to play in society. This welcome commitment to religious freedom can be aligned to recent developments in Catholic educational thought towards the need for intercultural dialogue in Catholic schools. This move is not without its conceptual challenges: there remain important questions to be addressed regarding the interplay between intercultural dialogue and the mission to evangelise.

Keywords: Catholic school, openness, intercultural dialogue, evangelisation, catholic intellectual tradition

Is it possible for a Catholic school, a place governed by the traditions and principles of one organised religion, to be 'open to others' while remaining anchored in its own rich array of inherited practices? Given the widespread contemporary commitment to equality and diversity in public life, is the Catholic school as a community of faith in danger of becoming an increasingly anachronistic reminder of times now past? Such burning questions must be central to the mind of Catholic educational policymakers and Episcopal Conferences across the Church.

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In broad terms, we can explore 'being open to others' in two ways in the context of Catholic education. First, in terms of admission policies, a Catholic school should be open to pupils from all religious and cultural traditions. Second, there should be an inherent openness to ways of thinking which originate outwith the Catholic tradition. The implications of both statements, especially the second, are reflected throughout the present essay.

Two documents from different sources offer both shared and contrasting perspectives on what openness to others can mean for educational systems and the daily life of schools. The report of the Commission for Religion and Belief in British Public Life (2015) is a useful starting point for a necessary exploration of progressive attitudes towards contemporary religious belief. The Report's title, *Living with Difference: Community, Diversity and the Common Good* (henceforth *Living with Difference*) offers us a broad canvas against which we can map the Church's 'openness to others' in its educational institutions. It is helpful to note that the title of the report provides a useful summary of one way of understanding what being open to others can mean in practice.

Of course, any Catholic school would surely see the promotion of 'community, diversity and the common good' as indispensable features of its mission, although this might be refracted through particular doctrinal lenses. Nonetheless, the report is encouraging as it exemplifies, at least initially, some shared territory between Catholic and secular understandings of education. The publication of *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic School: Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013) (henceforth *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue*) manifests in broad terms the Church's strengthening of its ongoing commitment to dialogue with other ways of thinking as proposed in *Gaudium et Spes* (1965). *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue* seeks to harmonise cultural and religious differences (itself an interesting aim) and shows some lines of convergence, as well as divergence, with *Living with Difference*. Although rooted in a different worldview, the impact of the Congregation for Catholic Education's document would not be adversely affected if it were to drop its subtitle 'Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love' in favour of' Community, Diversity and the Common Good'.

It is incumbent on Catholic educators to build bridges and foster informed attitudes to participation in public life. In the context of contemporary educational systems and structures, the present article explores selected issues arising from a desire for openness in Catholic schools. It locates the Church's established commitment to education in the context of *Living with Difference*'s interesting insights on the place of religion in schools. Owing to the school's vital role in offering a 'safe space' for the promotion of community cohesion, we need to think hard about the Catholic school's capacity to offer a necessary openness while retaining a commitment to an established worldview. There is hence a twofold argument at the heart of the present article:

- 'being open to others in Catholic schools' is an indispensable mark of catholicity;
- an option for 'openness' cannot be seen as a conduit for moral relativism and religious syncretism.

Both parts of this argument are developed over three sections. In Part 1, I begin with an exploration of what 'living with difference' could mean for contemporary Catholic schools. In Part 2 I consider how dialogue can be understood as pedagogy. In Part Three I look at how we can develop a rich and meaningful pedagogy of dialogue. Finally, I offer three keys for the future direction of this important and timely debate.

Part 1   Catholic Schools: Living with Difference

While *Living with Difference* is localised in the sense of being of immediate relevance to public life in Britain, its stated attitudes towards religion in schools are reflective of much wider cultural and political currents (Franchi et al., 2016). *Living with Difference* steers a difficult course between the promotion of respect for religion and a commitment to the higher narrative of a secular/religious polity (Cf. White, 2004; Wright, 2004; Aldridge 2015).

Living with Difference groups its arguments around six pertinent themes, or 'Conversations' thus: vision; education; media; dialogue; action and law. Each theme has a checklist of associated action points. In the field of education, two points merit highlighting as summaries of the wider approach adopted: a) there should be a statutory right to education in non-religious worldviews as part of the religious education syllabus (4.27) and b) greater effort should be made to form teachers in matters to do with religion using a pedagogy of 'encounter' with those from other religious/non-religious traditions (4. 25).

From the perspective of Catholic education, there is much to commend in the approach proposed here, especially the clear understanding of the importance of the study of religion (broadly defined) in schools. The writers of *Living with Difference* are aware that the reach of religious beliefs, so to speak, cannot be reduced to the private sphere as many people with firm religious beliefs continue to play an active role in public affairs across the world. Whatever our views on the tenets of particular religious traditions and the phenomenon of religion itself, it is not possible to label religious belief as peripheral activity of interest solely to those on the margins of society (Jimenez Lobeira, 2014). Furthermore, recent widespread migration across the Middle East/Europe has brought to the fore the centrality of religion and associated culture vis-a-vis the promotion of social harmony.

The commitment in *Living with Difference* to the value of properly-funded and academically rigorous religious education in schools has the potential to be a positive legacy of the report. The recognition of its subject status and the associated need for teachers with increasing expertise in the discipline, does set a high bar for governments and associated policy-makers given the financial and legal commitments this would entail. Of course, this raises the question of curricular content and the underpinning philosophical foundation of any proposed new syllabi in religious education. For policy-makers in Catholic education, it raises the further question of how best to respond to calls which, on the one hand, offer support for the 'religious' dimension of education in schools yet, simultaneously, seem to minimise the importance of the established faith traditions which lie at the heart of Catholic education.

There is much to ponder in *Living with Difference*'s oscillating approach. It steers a fine line between the acceptance of a religious dimension to education while holding on to secular thinking as the final arbiter of what can and cannot be taught in schools. Its comments on the the appropriate *content* of a religious education syllabus bring to the fore an element of tension: the desire to esteem religion sits uneasily alongside the commitment to a so-called neutrality suspicious of firm commitment to a particular *religious* way of thinking. In other words, the welcome offered to religion is conditional on acceptance of the 'superiority' of secular mores.

This tension is further exemplified in the report's proposal that religious education should offer equal space to non-religious (humanist) worldviews (2015, 4.15, 4.27). While it could be argued that non-religious worldviews cannot not, by definition, be part of a syllabus of *religious* education, such a reaction on the part of Catholic educators would be inadequate given the many layers of nuance necessary for a mature grasp of the links between morality and religious commitment. A properly crafted religious education syllabus in a Catholic school, for example, cannot ignore challenges to religious belief. On the contrary, an authentically academic approach to religious education would be inspired by the scholastic method in which the 'case against' a particular proposition is the seed of further study and intellectual exploration. Such a methodological approach, while ambitious and aspirational, is a fine example of a genuine dialogue of ideas.

While *Living with Difference*, as we have seen, offers support for a rigorous study of religious ways of thinking in schools, it cannot escape the conundrum posed by contemporary secular ideology: religion is a socio-cultural phenomenon to be observed and analysed as an expression of difference. Such differences, however, have to fit into a framework moulded by political and cultural ideas themselves rooted in an expressed liberal secularist agenda. In other words, religious belief and associated cultural expressions are permitted as long as they do not offend the self-same secular ideology. Of course, secularism can be either 'benevolent' or 'hostile' in the sense of the level of support it offers

to religion's place in the public square (Adhar, 2013). While *Living with Difference* is closer to a 'benevolent' model of secularism, it still fails to deal adequately with how diverse claims to truth can co-exist and work together for the common good.

It would be easy to frame the debate between faith-based religious education and more phenomenological approaches as a challenge by powerful secular bodies to people of religious faith, not just in education but in public life more generally. Given the observed numerical decline in practising Christians in most western countries, we must avoid the temptation to 'close the door' on possible means of dialogue in favour of a fortress mentality. Recent moves in Catholic educational circles reflect a much more robust commitment to the Catholic school as a site of dialogue and religious literacy. While this approach is not without its internal challenges vis-a-vis the relationship between evangelisation and dialogue (see below), it is not necessarily a reaction to wider political and cultural critiques of religion but a thoughtful development of the Church's own rich educational traditions. The following section will explore this new direction with reference principally to *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic School: Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013).

Part 2 Dialogue as Pedagogy

When does a commitment to openness and dialogue in Catholic schools become an embrace of moral and cultural relativism? Before looking further at this pressing question, we consider first what we understand by 'dialogue' in this professional context and whether we can describe dialogue as a form of pedagogy.

To enter into dialogue with another marks a willingness to learn from an encounter with ways of thinking which are not our ways. To take a simple example from another field, a professional dialogue between medical experts over the best way to treat a patient with a rare illness allows different evidence bases and experiential knowledge to come together with, hopefully, a positive outcome for the patient. Who would claim that all points of view would be equally valid if some of the evidence bases were wholly or even partially inadequate?

In educational, moral and cultural matters, authentic professional dialogue is the robust encounter between ideas. This conversation, ideally underpinned by a spirit of amicable openness, is a means to facilitate understanding and, indeed, harmony between contrasting worldviews. Catholic education cannot remain indifferent to this process given the high profile of Catholic schools in many countries. *A fortiori*, Catholic educational institutions should be the leaders of such discussions and not reluctant participants: the mission to 'teach all nations' (Matthew 28:19) limits all possibilities for self-referential and enclosed attitudes to public life. If Catholic educational thought emerges, as it should,

from what is known as the *Catholic intellectual tradition* (Royal, 2015), we see how, at its best, Catholic education has the capacity and self-confidence to draw from its own considerable historical sources in order to address the challenges it faces from a range of particular circumstances. In a sense we can state, perhaps curiously, that the Catholic intellectual tradition is an example of Catholicism in dialogue with its own body of thought. As such, it manifests a 'hermeneutic of continuity' which is both forward-thinking but open to insights from tradition.

Of course, it is self-evident that dialogue needs to undertaken with those who are not part of own tradition if it is not to become a monologue. Furthermore, in theological terms, we could rightly ask how a body with a universal reach (a *catholic* Church) could be anything but open to others if it were to remain true to the command to 'teach all nations' (see above). This suggests that the Christian message is worthy of teaching universally because it is of greater 'value' than other worldviews. Two questions necessarily follow from this: do those who, for whatever reason, are not part of the communion of the Church somehow live in a form of spiritual darkness? If this is the case, is the Church's commitment to dialogue no more than a cipher for covert evangelisation of those yet to be enlightened by the Gospel?

A key reference point here is the relationship between the reality of pluralism and the promotion of relativism *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue* helpfully describes this as follows: 'Being aware of the relative nature of cultures and opting for relativism are two profoundly different things' (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, 22). It is undeniable that different cultures have particular ethical/moral narratives: difference means a lack of uniformity. To know where these differences lie and the philosophical arguments *pro et contra* certain traditions are the signs of an educated and open minded person. To opt for relativism, on the other hand, is to seek to flatten differences and claim, for example, that different traditions are simply culturally-conditioned expressions of a greater religious reality.

Is it possible to square the awkward circle between holding sincerely to a proclaimed religious truth and exemplifying openness to other ways of understanding the human condition? In educational matters, it is important to test the relationship between evangelisation and interreligious dialogue (Heft, 2011), This contentious issue is as old as Christianity itself. Indeed, Pope Benedict XVI (writing as Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger) identified the heart of the theological and cultural 'problem' arising from a proclamation of Jesus Christ as the saviour of all humanity. If other religions are seen as 'preparatory to Christianity' or simply 'insufficient, anti-Christian, contrary to the truth' (2004, p. 19), the potential for dialogue and the possibilities it offers for cross-community cohesion could be limited or even erased from the mind of the believer.

The Catholic school occupies a unique space as it brings the mind of the Church to the world of education. To do so successfully, the proclamation of its message must be integrated within a pedagogy of dialogue which offers the Catholic worldview to all with an interest in human flourishing. Part Three will consider how this pedagogy of dialogue could be developed.

Part 3 Developing a Pedagogy of Dialogue

Educating to Intercultural Dialogue brings together many of the insights on cultural dialogue which have been offered in the Magisterium's recent educational corpus. Indeed, the focus in the title on 'intercultural dialogue' suggests not just a new angle on already established ways of thinking but a significant shift in the DNA of Catholic education.

The document identifies three approaches to dialogue: *relativistic* (22-23), *assimilation* (24-25) and *intercultural* (26-28). Unsurprisingly, it sees the third approach as the most effective for the Christian mission today and suggests that its goal is 'to construct a new intercultural approach, which aims at realizing an integration of cultures in mutual recognition' (2015, 28). The promotion of intercultural dialogue in the school is, perhaps, less easy to achieve than such a sentence would admit. Two difficulties present themselves: what would intercultural dialogue look like when achieved and what processes would be put in place as the means to this end? Is it the case that the *process* is the actual goal and that to have pre-set plans and/or a fixed outcome in mind is not in the spirit of authentic dialogue?

Before we explore further the scope of 'intercultural dialogue' it is necessary to set out some lines of engagement regarding the implementation of processes and aims of intercultural dialogue. A conceptual challenge lies in the gap between the language and expectations enshrined in Magisterial documents and the lack of examples of what this *could* mean in practice for educational institutions. This leaves open the possibility of a Church with many different cultural 'traditions' co-existing alongside common doctrine. For example, some Catholics retain the practice of abstention from meat on Fridays. While 'fish on Fridays' is often seen as a traditional Catholic practice, the reality is quite different as such a collective form of abstention is no longer part of the lived of many Catholics. This is a challenge, albeit a relatively small one, to catholicity.

If we take the starting position that religious culture in the Catholic school is the practical expression of shared doctrine, we can quickly see that not all aspects of 'Catholic culture' are of equal standing. For example, it should be taught clearly that the Mass is the centre of all Catholic worship but exploration about what the Mass means for the Church could be part of a wider discussion of the nature of religious commitments across different religious traditions. This would show the various ways in which humanity has sought meaning in religion but without necessarily lessening the uniqueness of Catholic sacramental theology. Of course, such a way of working requires committed

and well formed teachers who are at ease with Catholic doctrine, confident in their teaching methods and genuinely committed to the integral formation of the student body.

These examples, limited as they are, offer an insight into the potential of intercultural dialogue for the building of a broader religious awareness. While we must be wary of seeing such cross-community dialogue as simply a study of the things other religious people do, it does offer a window into the life of religious believers through the cultural lenses of attitudes to food, dress and the arts. An authentic study of religious culture would not see these as the ends of a discussion but as a door opening into the beating heart of the religion: this is where we would expect further exploration of the nature of the relationship between God and humanity and what it means to live as a committed adherent of a particular religion.

A related aspect is the promotion of knowledge about religion and (associated) religious ways of living. *Living with Difference* is clear on the importance of 'religion and belief literacy' (2015, p. 2) which, it asserts, is a more inclusive term than the common term 'religious literacy' (2015, p. 16). While a debate about the conceptual relationship between religion and belief is for another time, the importance of clarity when teaching the expressed culture of particular religions needs to be set alongside a knowledge of its principal doctrines. For those involved in education, the continued high level of religious adherence across the world demands a commitment by teachers in Catholic schools to systematic study of the philosophical, theological and cultural bases of (at least) the major monotheistic traditions. This cognitive challenge is not to be seen as a rejection of pastoral approaches to education. Indeed, a questioning of the value of the cognitive dimension to education in favour of more therapeutic pedagogies is to break the pact between the mind and the heart which is central to a pedagogy of religious education. To be clear, we would not wish teachers to be asking children questions such as 'What is the Muslim equivalent of Baptism?' or to teach that Ramadan is the Muslim version of Lent! In a similar vein, it is also necessary to explain why the established Catholic position on 'same-sex' marriage is not grounded in hostility towards anyone but reflects a strong theologically-rooted anthropological vision which cannot be reconstructed to suit the prevailing ideology of a liberal society.

Intercultural dialogue as so understood, when facilitated with nuance and sensitivity in the Catholic school, offers multiple opportunities for the promotion of religion and belief literacy. It serves as a welcome reminder that intercultural education is a process of shared exploration of the human story. Given the complexities arising from any study of what intercultural dialogue means in practice, it would be a grave mistake to narrow Catholic education's frame of reference. Any historical study of Catholic educational traditions reveals that it is much more than a series of systematically-planned catechetical moments or evangelical projects but, at its best, is an inclusive project rooted in

'authentic humanism'. The Jesuit *Ratio Studiorum* is one example of how the Church has shaped educational history. The phrase 'authentic humanism' has taken on a fresh impetus in recent years thanks to the work first of Pope Benedict and now Pope Francis. Pope Benedict certainly saw the advocacy of 'humanism', *pace* much secular thinking, as a Christian concept. In so doing he drew on Pope Paul's comments in *Popolorum Progressio* on the need for a humanism which drew people towards God (Pope Paul, 1967, passim). For Benedict, writing in *Caritas in Veritate*, a humanism without God was a charade as only 'the Absolute can guide us in the promotion and building of forms of social and civic life' (2009, 780).

Benedict here proposes that which is inclusive and distinctive in the Catholic understanding of anthropology. The choice of the words 'promotion and building' suggests a strong dialogic process designed to build more a humane society which cannot be aligned too closely with some contemporary cultural fads. We note also how a traditional understanding of Christian anthropology is at the base of Benedict's thinking and, by extension, his understanding of Catholic social teaching: without God, there can be no proper appreciation of the dignity of the human being.

Pope Francis, in turn, has added another layer to the proposal for Christian humanism. He has reminded the Church that the humanism of Catholic tradition is, essentially, Christological. In so doing, Francis takes the divine nature of Jesus as the model: in other words, he is not designing a 'new humanism' but looking afresh at how Jesus taught and lived (Pope Francis, 2015). The position of Pope Francis seems initially to lean more towards the distinctiveness, as opposed to the inclusiveness, of Catholic thinking in education. Therein lies the gist of the conundrum explored in this essay regarding the relationship between openness to others and a stated attachment to a specific religious tradition.

Concluding Remarks: Being Open to the Future

The relationship in Catholic schools between what is distinctive and what is inclusive was, is and will remain an important research theme in Catholic education (Sullivan 2001). Given the tense relationship between dialogue and evangelisation, is it possible to find a way forward? Perhaps we need to think more broadly about what the Church sees as its mission to educate and offer a creative response to the call to evangelise while offering a genuine welcome to all who knock at the door of the Catholic school. How can this be done?

I now suggest three 'keys' to developing a spirit of openness to others in the Catholic school. Each key ends with a question for reflection.

First Key: Intercultural Education as Overarching Theme of Catholic Education

Much of the debate over community cohesion in schools in recent decades in the United Kingdom has accepted that different cultures and religions are almost unrelated features of a modern society: in this multicultural line of thinking, to criticise aspects of the culture of the 'other' is, at best, interference and at worst a form of western cultural imperialism. When this happens, complete autonomy seems to be afforded to expressions of individual cultures and thus squeezes out the possibilities of genuine intercultural dialogue (ibid 23).

Of course, such a binary comparison has clear flaws. We need to think hard about what is understood by intercultural dialogue, especially its limits and its possibilities in the context of a Catholic school in the plural society. *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue* (2013), seems to place increasing emphasis on the need for Catholic schools to act as sites of intercultural education. The advocacy of intercultural education here rests on its ability to promote 'encounter, dialogue and mutual transformation' (2013, 28). Of course, what is not said here is equally important as that which is: what can 'mutual transformation' mean?

Question for reflection. Are we not in danger of sailing too close to relativism and applying a cautious lens to the possibility of the Christian tradition being the energy and the goal of transformative processes?

Second Key: A Commitment to Hospitality in Catholic Schools

The aspect of welcome, or hospitality, is a case in point. It cannot be repeated too often that a Catholic school which seeks only to educate Catholic children is not giving witness to the catholicity of the Church. Cardinal Parolin's important address to UNESCO (2015) began with a reminder to his audience of the Church's traditional commitment to a broader education in its network as opposed to mere catechetical projects:

> La culture et l'éducation n'ont jamais été considérées par l'Église catholique comme de simples instruments pour l'évangélisation mais comme des dimensions humaines dotées d'une haute valeur intrinsèque.

This important intervention highlights the essential *educational* framework of the Catholic school. The speech in general is a reiteration of the themes of *Gravissimum Educationis* for the 21st century.

Cardinal Parolin, rightly, makes much of the need for education to be in the front line of universal moves to combat illiteracy, hunger and illness but has something much more profound to say. The mention of the 'haute valeur intrinsèque' cannot pass by without comment. This is a neat summary of the lines of thought sketched out by Popes Benedict and Francis in their many addresses on education and schooling in recent years. For Parolin, education (in the Catholic school) sheds the light of Christianity on the problems of the modern world and proposes the Christian view of the world as a much-needed antidote to educational systems with more than one eye of instrumentalism and economic measurements. To locate this argument in the context of 'being open to others', the good Catholic school should be a magnet which attracts all people and where ideas are explored and critiqued in the spirit of faith and critical thinking which marks the best of the Catholic educational tradition (Chambers, 2012).

Question for reflection. To what extent should the Catholic school see itself as a place of evangelisation?

Third Key: Catholic Schools as Leaven in Society

The recent moves by Pope Francis regarding the importance of encounter—itself a development of the *Courtyard of the Gentiles* initiative of Pope Benedict—suggests that the conceptual framework of Catholic education is moving, albeit at a cautious pace, in the wake of the energy unleashed by *Gaudium et Spes* in 1965. To be clear, the substantial advances in Catholic educational thought in recent decades represent a significant reform of one of the principal means of engagement between the Church and the 'world' of which it is part. Nonetheless, it is perhaps time to look again at how the Church can best act as leaven in the world of education given the recent 50th anniversary of *Gravissimum Educationis* and the major challenges facing education from pluralism and secularism. Pope Francis alluded to this in the question and answer session held at the close of the *World Congress on Catholic Education* in Rome (November 2016). His comments on the need for 'informal education' were put in the context of a formal education 'impoverished due to the legacy of positivism'. By this he alludes to those who value most that which can be measured. Catholic schools cannot ignore the political landscape but somehow need to articulate a radical vision of Catholic education which will influence broader educational thought.

Question for reflection. For Pope Francis, the three languages of education—the languages of the head/heart/hands—offer a more rounded, harmonious and humane scholastic experience. This is a big claim: is it justified?

As we consider the best routes for Catholic education to follow in the years ahead, it is important to bear in mind that Christianity is often a sign of contradiction. The tension explored here between dialogue and evangelisation is one indicator of how the Christian message demands hard and deep thinking if it is to be a force for good in society. *Living with Difference* (2015) as we have seen, welcomes the contribution of religious thought to the building of the common good but somehow finds it hard to accept that committed religious believers are just that: *believers* in the truth of their own religion. The desire in the report to flatten religious and cultural differences in favour of a broad 'contribution of religion' is less a sign of openness than an indicator of suspicion towards those who do not follow the liberal narrative. Catholic education, if it is to be increasingly open to other people and ways of thinking, must show an equally robust commitment to its own grand narrative.

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EDUCATION AS A MISSION THAT IS INCLUSIVE

Joseph Varghese Kureethara[*]

Abstract

Christianity as a religion focussed mainly on the spiritual transformation of human beings in the first millennium. In the second millennium, it realized the unique role of reason in the emancipation of individuals. Hence, it augmented the establishment of institutions that catered to the sharpening of reason. In every part of the world, direct or indirect influence of the Church is seen in the spread of education. India is not an exception. Christianity in India was bit hesitant to open up educational ventures until 19th century. Openness to the world outside the walls of the Church in India was beyond one's reason especially in the Catholic Circles of India. There came a prophet of change in the person of Saint Kuriakose Elias who opened the first school India in 1846 for people of all walks of life with a mission of social inclusion. Later, he was instrumental in commanding all the Churches under his jurisdiction under the threat of closure, to open schools attached to them. These two pioneering and daring steps taken by him could be considered as the most crucial steps that later helped Keralam, a state in the southern-most tip of India, to be on par with developed nations of the world in many human development indices including literacy.

Introduction

India is a large mosaic of cultures. Every culture in India is highly influenced and shaped by many regional, religious and rational elements. Politically, India is a union of three dozens of states and territories. Among the states of India, there is a unique one that is located between the Arabian Sea and mountain ranges on its west and east respectively. Among the many unique features of this small state, Keralam, with a population of 33 million, is its high literacy rate 94% against the national literacy rate of 74%. (States, 2011) Vice President of India, Hamid Ansari on January 13, 2016 declared Keralam as the first Indian state to have achieved total primary education. (Vice-President declares Kerala a total primary education state, 2016)

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Literacy is not an overnight achievement. There are many factors that lead to the high literacy rate of Keralam. Some attribute it to the effective measures taken from the beginning of the 19th century by the rulers of the princely states that formed Keralam. Some others attribute it to the pivotal social movements of the second half of the 19th century. There are some others who attribute it to the policies and implementations of the political leaders of Keralam after its formation since 1 November 1956. This article is a humble attempt to narrate the attempts of Kuriakose Elias, a Catholic saint who lived in the 19th century whose initiatives have strong impact in the later centuries. His vision and mission is a remarkable example of the Christian influence in transforming a society through the magic wand called "Education." He is one of the first Indian Christian leaders who was bold enough to effectively use education as a tool of social inclusion.

Keralam in the 19th century

Kuriakose Elias hailed from a remote waterlogged village of Keralam, called Kainakari. It is interesting to note that even as of December 2015, one cannot reach his place of birth by road. He was born on February 8, 1805 to a social situation where only boys of upper caste of Hinduism were given formal education that too through the local school known as *Ezhuthu Kalari* (Writing School). (Onakkoor, Sarvavijnana Kosam (Encyclopaedia), 1987) They were mostly single tutor owned family owned schools. A predominantly agrarian society, known in the West as Pepper Kingdom, Keralites never could have felt the need of formal education until 19th century. Business could effectively be handled through arm and fist topped up by practical wisdom rather than academic intelligence. This was one of the reasons why the Europeans could take control of all the business within a short span of time after their arrival in India. Though, Mathematics (Joseph, 2009) and Health Science (World Health Organization, 2010) (*Ayurveda*) (Wujastyk, 2003) have flourished in Keralam during the middle of the second millennium, the access was limited to a nearly negligible minority of the population.

Though Malayalam was the medium for communication, most of the literature was in Sanskrit. As a classical language, Sanskrit kept its elitism and hence was away from the reach of common man. One of the most powerful princely states which is part of the present

Keralam was Travancore. In the beginning of 19th century Travancore yielded to the patronage of the English East India Company.

Queen Gowri Parvathy Bhai of Travancore, with the help of the British Colonel Munro, established vernacular schools in 1819. (Onakkoor, Sarvavijnanakosham (Encyclopaedia), 1992) This was a remarkable decision in the history of Keralam. Though the implementation was very slow it brought radical changes in every aspect of the social life of Keralites. During this period, Church Missionary Society and London Missionary society founded several faith schools in various parts of Travancore. Swathi Thriunal Maharaja who ruled Travancore from 1829 to 1846 brought English education in Travancore. (Onakkoor, Sarvavijnanakosham (Encyclopaedia), 1992)

Catholic Church in Keralam in the 19th century

Christianity the third largest religion and is close to a fifth of the population of Keralam. There was only a single Christian Community in India until the 15th century. However, after the arrival of the European missionaries and merchants and by the middle of the 17th century, divisions in the Christianity were not unusual. One of the largest sections of the Christians was the section that was ruled by the missionaries sent by the Pope and the Portugal ruler under the systems called the *Propaganta Fide* and *Padroado* respectively. Neither these missionaries had university education nor did they promote education among the native Christians. This was a general situation across the continents. L. Stone puts it in this way: "In the early sixteenth century, the Catholics were fearful of heresy because of Bible study, whereas the Reformers were fearful of the superstition because of lack of Bible Study." (Stone, 1969) Hence, the Syriac Catholics (present day Syro Malabar Catholics) continued to be illiterate. They were one ethnic group with least higher education. The infamous Synod of Diamper which consolidated the rule of Western missionaries over the native Christians implemented several decisions including those on education. The Synod prohibited Syrian Catholics learning from the people of other religions. (Zacharia, 1994) It also insisted that Syriac Christian tutors should not try anything particular to attract the children of other faiths. (Zacharia, 1994) This narrowed down the scope of educational opportunities for the native Christians.

A 19th century report of a Papal Visitor Ignatius Persico states that "the Carmelites who rule the Syriac Christians have not done anything considerable in the educational field. (Paingott, 1996) Though Christians were experts in agriculture and business, there was no significant contribution by Christians in literary circles until 19th century." (Paingott, 1996)

Establishment of the Monastery at Mannanam

Kuriakose Elias joined the seminary after his informal education in an *Ezhuth Kalari* in his village. He was ordained priest at the age of 24 in 1829. (Vellian, 1992) The young priest Kuriakose responded valiantly to the deplorable situation of his community. He collaborated with two other priests to establish the first indigenous catholic religious congregation of India, the Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI) in 1831. Though he did not have the fortunes to see the corridors of higher educational institutions, he paved way for one of the largest social movements of the history of Keralam that transformed it to a society with high human development indices. (Kilichimala, 1971) The roles the institutions he founded and nurtured in building up a Christian vision of ethics in identifying and responding to moral and immoral acts, is not small. (Pattassery, 1989)

Seminaries for Priestly Training

Every religion as a social organization has lot to do with the type of priests it has. There is a crucial role for priests in building a respectable image of their religion. If the priests are not trained and formed properly, the collapse of any religion is imminent. Seminaries are centres of training of the clerics. The present day seminary system was originally established by the Synod of Trent (1545-1563). However, many seminaries just did not confine to academic walls of theology and philosophy. It can be seen that many of the famous and ancient European and American Universities were originally established as institutes of clerical training. (Hodge, 2007)

Kuriakose Elias strongly felt the need of proper training centers for the priests of his community. Immediately after founding a monastery at Mannanam in 1831, his attention was to set up a seminary for training priests. He had the strong feeling that only erudite, scholarly and well formed priests could lead the community and augment the society to progress. In 1833, he established the first Seminary of Syriac Christians at Mannanam. This was followed

by the establishment of Seminaries at Vazhakulam in 1866 and Elthuruth in 1868. (Pattassery, 1989)

History repeats itself. Mannanam, Vazhakulam, Elthuruth and Pulincunnoo became leading educational centres of Keralam in the beginning of 20th century. The seminary at Mannanam was extended to Chethipuzha with exclusive ecclesiastical education. In 1957, the major seminary at Chethipuzha was shifted Bengaluru with the name Dharmaram College. It is under this seminary, the first catholic university in India, Christ University, Bengaluru was founded.

Establishment of the Sanskrit School at Mannanam

Saint Kuriakose identified that root cause of the isolation of his community and other lower castes from material welfare was the lack of education. His immediate attempt after establishing seminary was to establish schools. It was with an extraordinary courage that established a school along with the monastery he founded. In 1846, while the monastery was still at its infancy stage he opened a school which admitted students even from lower castes. The medium of instruction in the school was Sanskrit. No wonder why English was not made the medium of instruction then. The authorities of the Catholic Church then were sceptical about the language English which was then considered a channel of the spread of Protestant ideology. This severe attitude of the administrators who came from the Europe had the backing of the Synod of Diamper also. The status that Sanskrit had among the people in the upper layer of the then society might also have influenced him in adopting Sanskrit as the medium of education in this school. Fr. Parappurath Varkey, one of the contemporaries of Saint Kuriakose, recorded about the establishment of this school as, "along this time a Sanskrit school was established as part of the Mannanam Monastery. The priestly inmates and children from the neighbourhood were studying here. A tutor belonging to the *Varyar* community was brought from Thrisur, to run this School. He was well versed both in Malayalam and Sanskrit." (Parappuram, 1846) Saint Kuriakose was the first Indian who not only dared to admit the untouchables to schools but also provided them with Sanskrit education which was forbidden to the lower castes, thereby challenging social bans based on caste, as early as the former part of the 19th century. (Kokkatt, 1998)

Saint Kuriakose became more enthusiastic by the success of the Sanskrit school at Mannanam. His realization that social inclusion happens only if the education of the society is confirmed was displayed in his subsequent actions. Without much delay he opened another school at the neighbouring village Arpookara. The school at Mannanam was later developed into a high school with boarding house and then to a First Grade College and contributed several outstanding leaders of Keralam. Fr. Parappuram Varkey wrote, "while the work on the Mannanam School began, a place on the Arpookara Thuruthumali hill was located to build a Chapel and school for the converts from the Pulaya caste. (Parappuram, 1846)

Establishment of the Printing Press

Printing presses were very crucial in popularizing education. The accessibility to education for the masses has been expedited by no other human invention like that of the printing presses. Saint Kuriakose was fully aware of the power of printing. During the first half of the 19th century, there were only two printing presses Keralam. Since he was denied permission to see the press near to his locality, he travelled all the way to Thiruvananthapuram, the capital of the kingdom of Travancore to see the printing press there. He came back and prepared a model of it on his own using the plantain stem. (Ulakamthara, 1971) In 1846, the very same year of the opening of the school, he founded St. Joseph's Press, Mannanam, with a wooden printing press which was the third printing press of Keralam and the first of the Catholics. (Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara Pilgrim Centre, 2015) This printing press also could be the first printing press built in India. It is worthy to note that it is in this wooden press that the first daily in Malayalam, *Nazranideepika*, was printed. (Jacob, 2014)

A Visionary Administrator

In 1861, he was appointed Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Verapoly. Though the actual reason behind his appointment was undoubtedly to avoid further severance and disestablishment of the Catholic Church in Keralam which was administered by the Italian Carmelite missionaries, it paved way for greater social changes in Keralam. A seminal reason behind the unbelievable high literacy in Keralam compared to other states in India, can be traced back to a historical circular of Archbishop Bernadinos that Saint Kuriakose got issued. The circular was about opening schools along with every parish church in the Archdiocese. It instructed that each parish should establish schools, or else they would be closed down and

priests suspended. The order that the churches that do not follow the instructions would be closed down had huge impact in creating a revolutionary change in the academic sphere. The circular was written by Saint Kuriakose in his own hand. He did not remain complacent after getting the circular issued. He delegated the members of the CMI Congregation to ensure the implementation of the order and to energize educational activities. Each monastery was to oversee these activities of the parish churches in its neighbourhood. (Plathottam, 1938) Schools attached to the churches thus became the live wire and symbols of educational activities in Keralam. The high influence and impact of the circular is well noted with etymology of the word *Pallikkoodam* in Malayalam. In Malayalam, the language of Keralam, *Pallikkoodam* means school and *Palli* means church or mosque. Forty years after this monumental circular, there were around 1000 schools in the entire Keralam managed by the Catholic Church. (Tharakan, 1984)

A Man who Dreamed High

Higher education in India was not very well organized during the 19ᵗʰ century. Though there were colleges in some of the cities in India, universities were established only in 1857. News of the establishment of University of Madras made Saint Kuriakose aim high. Besides, the Church Missionary Society had already begun a college in Kottayam, the nearby city. Hence, he dreamed to establish a college at Mannanam, (Plathottam, 1938) that would help the multifaceted growth of the Syriac Catholics. He began his efforts towards achieving this goal. Due to the sudden tide of events, it remained an unfulfilled dream for him and, for the Catholic Church in Keralam for nearly a half a century. A letter to the Prefect of the *Propaganda Fide* by the assembly of Syriac clergy on October 5, 1884, is noteworthy here. "There is no one from among the Syrian Christians who have completed college education and secured a degree. There are more than a hundred degree holders among the Jacobites. While there are many lawyers, doctors and judges in other communities, there is none among us." (Paingott, 1996)

From 1600 to 1887, Syriac Catholics of Keralam were forcefully governed by a handful of the Italian missionaries. (Frykenberg, 2008) Under the yoke of the uninspiring and authoritative European missionaries, the exasperated Syriac Catholics and their churches found a ray of hope in a visiting Syriac Catholic bishop, Thomas Roccos, from Bagdad. The administrators of the Church who totally failed to resist the tide of bishop Roccos had but one

choice before them – to promote the universally acceptable Kuriakose Elias to the top of the leadership. In June 1861, Archbishop Bernardinos appointed Fr. Kuriakose as the Vicar General of the Archdiocese of Verapoly with wide powers and transferred him to Koonammavu, a place near Kochi. His attachment to the monastery where he spent more than 30 years of active life and the dream to transform Mannanam as a major educational centre did not stand on the way of this great martyr of obedience. He could not return to Mannanam and due to the busy schedules of the new assignment as Vicar General, his dream of establishing the college remained a dream. He passed away while at Koonammav at the age of 66, ten years later.

Educating Women

Education of women was another pioneering work kick-started by the saint. On February 13, 1866, he founded the first indigenous religious congregation for women, Congregation of the Mother of Carmel (CMC), in India at Koonammav. He wrote in his diaries that the major intention of the establishment of the convent was women's education. (Avila, Dhanya, & Mareena, 2012) Simultaneously with the construction of the convent building, a building for the boarding school for girls called *educumthat*, had also been constructed. (Maria, 2014) In 1867, teaching in the school was commenced with the nuns in the convent as the teachers. At the school apart from teaching language, arithmetic, and catechism, girls were trained in music, stitching and rosary-making. (Avila, Dhanya, & Mareena, 2012) The tremendous progress the women in the locality achieved can easily be assessed from an 1874 letter of Fr. Kuriakose Eliseus Porukkara, the successor of Saint Kuriakose. He wrote to the nuns: "Dear children, I read your letter most happily, again and again. I praise God because the hands that were once engaged to hold the pounding piston and to wash pots and pans, have now *written like this* and also because, you who did not know yourselves or your creator, who did not know how to read properly putting letters together and who like animals, were confined to domestic works, have now been raised to such a great height." (Maria, 2014) The Congregation of the Mother of Carmel with around 6000 professed members is engaged in various ministries that are for the integral development of the women of the society.

Social Inclusion through Education: The Original Vision of Saint Kuriakose

The educational endeavours of the CMI congregation are attributed uniquely to the seminal contributions and inspiration of Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara. As of December, 2015, the CMI Congregation runs a University, 50 University Colleges, and 500 Schools. (Thekkedathu, 2015) All these institutions put together have about 300000 students and 9000 teachers. The education imparted in these institutions aims at the formation of the human person for the fulfilment of individual and social responsibilities by growing into adulthood according to the mature measure of Christ. (Carmelites of Mary Immaculate (CMI), 2003) Saint Kuriakose knew the value of education. When the thought came as to which would be the right platform the Congregation should step into, in order to uplift the community, it was the field of education that blazed bright before him. If the establishment of the Congregation has helped the spiritual growth of the Church in Keralam, the educational activities paved the way for the overall growth of the society. (Vellian, 1992)

Conclusion

Saint Kuriakose had a clear vision on the transformative role of education. He wrote: "As soon as children are able to recognize things, they should be sent to school. Besides, the parents should enquire about their studies and their friendship. Every Sunday, their learning should be checked." (Chavara, 2014) He entrusted the well-to-do members of the community and the parishes with the responsibility of providing educational facilities for poor students. He also found out viable means to maintain the schools established by him. (Kanjirathumkal, 1978) In considering his contribution towards education, it is not the number of institutions established by him that matters most. Rather it is the new thought process he injected into the consciousness of the society that education is inevitable for its all-round progress and development. He, in fact, had brought light to many lives when he was alive. He wanted to get rid of *jnanakurudatham* (intellectual blindness) and thought education was the only way to it. (Abraham, 2014) Further, he made it obligatory to the parish churches and monasteries to provide the people with learning facilities, in spite of all sorts of inconveniences. This augmented the spread of education. His plans were neither to have any control over the poor nor to win a battle of among the Christian denominations. Because, "all the evidence suggests firstly that one of the main causes for the growth of popular education in the West has been the struggle between the various Christian religious groups for thought control over the poor; and secondly that the Protestants were the first to see the potential value of the school and the printing press as weapons in this battle." (Stone, 1969) Saint Kuriakose' vision of education

is unique and ever relevant in this regard. It was his vision and farsightedness that enabled the Syriac Catholic community of Keralam reach the enviable position in educational field that it has acquired today. He realized the vast potentials of 'education' and his work has played a unique role in the building of modern Keralam. In short, to use 'education' as a mission that is inclusive, Saint Kuriakose Elias Chavara opened schools for people irrespective of their social status, founded printing press for better spread of knowledge, issued circular to churches to open schools along with them and founded a congregation for women with the main view of educating women.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FIRST-GENERATION COLLEGE STATUS AND CO-CURRICULAR ENGAGEMENT ON THE UNIVERSITY SATISFACTION OF STUDENTS

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Abstract

As an increasing number of first-generation students attend college, it is important for universities to understand and meaningfully respond to the unique needs of these students in order to ensure that they have the same quality of experience as non-first-generation students. The purpose of this paper is to examine the relationships between first-generation college status, co-curricular involvement and engagement on university satisfaction amongst students. The sample for this study consisted of 204 first- and fourth-year university students who completed an online survey administered as part of the Youth Cultures Study conducted under the auspices of the International Federation of Catholic Universities. Results showed a significant interaction effect between generational status and co-curricular involvement on university satisfaction. Non-first generation students who were involved in co-curricular activities showed significantly higher levels of satisfaction as compared to those who were not involved. The level of satisfaction for first-generation students followed a similar pattern, but those first-generation students who reported no involvement in co-curricular activities showed the lowest level of satisfaction with their university experience as compared to all other students. Additionally, level of university satisfaction increased significantly in a stepwise fashion as level (none, some, high) of co-curricular involvement increased. There were no differences between first-generation students and non-first generation students with regard to overall co-curricular engagement/involvement. However, first-generation students were significantly more engaged in spiritual- and/or service-based activities as compared to non-first-generation students. The findings of this study suggest that first-generation college status is an important factor associated with type of

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co-curricular involvement and university satisfaction. Implications for further research on special programs for first-generation students are discussed.

The Relationship Between First-Generation College Status and Co-Curricular Engagement on the University Satisfaction of Students

In the 21st century, universities are faced with the challenge of offering rigorous academic opportunities to an increasingly diverse population of students. Beyond academics, institutions of higher education, and in particular, mission-driven Catholic universities must also task themselves with creating co-curricular programs in order to support and inspire nascent compassionate and ethical leaders for a multicultural society. As universities enroll and seek to retain an increasing number of students who are underrepresented and disadvantaged, they must also address the special needs of students from a variety of subpopulations, including those who are the first generation to attend college. In keeping with the special theme of "being open to others" of this second issue of *EducA*, Catholic institutions might reflect on how to authentically live out this theme by welcoming multicultural students and creating "truly open" and "liberating" curricula and co-curricular opportunities. How can these universities nurture their students so that they in turn are inspired to be "open" to their own communities— to "others"? This paper will focus on one population of critical importance in a growing multicultural world— first-generation college students.

The core purpose of this paper is to examine the relationships between generational college status and co-curricular engagement on university satisfaction amongst students attending a Catholic university in the western United States. The following questions will be addressed: What factors influence first-generation students' success? Do first-generation students experience different levels of university satisfaction as compared to non-first generation students? Are first-generation students as involved in co-curricular activities as non-first-generation students? Does university involvement and engagement affect university satisfaction amongst students? Does the type of co-curricular involvement influence these factors?

University Satisfaction

A manner of gauging how well a university is meeting the needs of its students is to examine satisfaction with their overall university experience. Orpen (1990) found that in business students, the factors most greatly associated with satisfaction in their university included high quality of teaching and greater diversity of programs, while the factors that were the least related included support services for students. University satisfaction is a critically important aspect of students' college experience. Pike (1991) has reported correlations between academic performance as measured by grades (grade point average; GPA) and university satisfaction. His research highly suggests that university satisfaction *causes* an increase in GPA, rather than GPA causing university satisfaction. Interestingly, research has suggested that university satisfaction is related to co-curricular involvement, particularly in regards to religious- or spiritually-based engagement (Mooney, 2010).

The Importance of Co-Curricular Involvement in the Success of College Students

The research regarding involvement suggests that there is an understood distinction between extracurricular and co-curricular activities (Mooney, 2010). Co-curricular activities tend to be activities that enhance the academic learning experience for students, such as artistic clubs, academic clubs, or even spiritual- or service-based organizations. Extracurricular activities, on the other hand, tend to refer to involvement in athletic teams, athletic clubs, or intramural sports. For the purpose of this paper, we will describe the activities investigated as co-curricular activities, in congruence with the accepted distinctions between the terms extracurricular and co-curricular.

Involvement in university life is an important aspect of many students' college experience. Involvement in co-curricular activities may come in many forms including participation in: service-oriented organizations, student government, political organizations, religious-based groups, and other related activities. Past research indicates that such involvement is related to other facets of university experience; specifically, co-curricular involvement is frequently tied to positive outcomes amongst college students. Strapp and Farr (2010) found that involvement in psychology-related activities was related to grades (GPA), as well as university satisfaction, in psychology majors. In that particular study, greater involvement in

specifically a major-related activity was associated with higher GPA and higher university satisfaction. Furthermore, these researchers suggest the development of major-relevant leadership and work-related skills as a result of their involvement as a possible explanation.

Additionally, Webber et al. (2013) found a significant relationship between greater engagement in different co-curricular activities, particularly service-related activities, and GPA, as well as university satisfaction. Interestingly, Baker (2008) further explored the topic of involvement, in regards to ethnic minority college students, and found that the type of involvement students engage in was critically important to their overall success. She found that while involvement in some organizations is positive for some types of ethnic minority students, the same type of involvement might have no effect, or even be detrimental, to other minority students' success. As this influence differs based on student race, this finding may suggest that there is no unique type of engagement that is beneficial across the board for all students. Thus, universities should strive to create a variety of programs and engagement opportunities on campus in order to benefit as many students as possible.

First-Generation versus Non- first-generation College Students

For the purpose of our study, first-generation students are defined as, "those whose parents' highest level of education is a high school diploma or less" (Núñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). In cases where parents have different levels of education, the maximum education level of either parent determines how the student is categorized. When examining the factors that may influence university satisfaction in first-generation students, some studies have found that integration and cultural transformation are critically essential in understanding why first-generation students differ from their non-first-generation counterparts (Núñez & Cuccaro- Alamin, 1998). Aside from the academic, economic, work, and familial responsibilities that many college students face, first-generation students face the added stress of having to adapt culturally to academic life, which can ultimately limit their ability to integrate themselves into the college setting. While this outcome is attainable, it comes at a great sacrifice for the first-generation student and their families, especially when first-generation students encounter a conflict between the cultures of their families/friends and their new college. Academic and social integration highly depends on students' involvement in and adaptation to the institution they are attending.

Mehta, Newbold, and O'Rourke (2011) address the importance of university engagement for first-generation students by examining why first-generation students fail. Financial, work, and familial stresses can result in a less optimal university involvement by first-generation students in co-curricular activities, especially as they struggle to balance and cope with such stresses. While first-generation students experience greater amounts of stress, their ability to cope can be largely influenced by their degree of engagement in co-curricular activities that serve to enrich their college experience and allow them to make connections with their peers. Involvement, ultimately, influences first-generation students' ability to adjust to college life and provides a social transition that benefits academic success and persistence (Mehta, Newbold, and O'Rourke, 2011).

Type of co-curricular involvement is also important to examine in order to more fully understand the overall experience of first-generation students. Easley, Bianco, and Leech (2012) cite the "desire to repay and pay forward" as one of the motivations behind first-generation students' desire to engage in university life and succeed in higher education in general. These findings may suggest that first-generation students might be more motivated to engage in co-curricular engagement opportunities that serve the community and greater good as compared to non-first-generation students.

Hypotheses

Based on the literature reviewed above, we pose the following—

Hypothesis #1: Higher levels of university engagement will be associated with correspondingly higher levels of university satisfaction (Mooney, 2010).

Hypothesis #2: First-generation students who participate in co-curricular activities will show the highest reported university satisfaction as compared to uninvolved first-generation students and both involved and uninvolved non-first-generation students. Yet, we also predict that uninvolved first-generation students will have the lowest university satisfaction as compared to the rest of students.

Hypothesis #3: Lastly, based on research conducted by Easley, Bianco, and Leech (2012), we predict that first-generation students will be more involved in spiritual- and or service-related co-curricular activities as compared to non-first generation students.

These research questions will be tested using institutional data from Loyola Marymount University collected as part of the *Youth Cultures Study*, sponsored by the Centre for

Coordination of Research, an arm of the International Federation of Catholic Universities (2014).

Method

Participants

The participants of this study included 60 males (29.4%) and 144 females (70.6%). Of these 204 students, 108 (52.9%) were first-year undergraduate students, while 95 (46.6%) were fourth-year undergraduate students (one did not identify year in college) between the ages of 18 and 26 (M = 19.9, S. D. = 1.7). All students were enrolled at Loyola Marymount University (LMU), a private Catholic university in Los Angeles, California. Eighty-five of the participating students participated in the study in the spring of 2012, while 119 participated in the spring of 2013. Of the spring 2012 students, 8% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 9% as Black/African American (non-Hispanic), 54% as Caucasian/White, 1% as Native American, 23% as Latino/Hispanic (all races), and 5% as multiracial. Of the spring 2013 students, 15% identified as Asian/Pacific Islander, 7% as Black/African American (non-Hispanic), 49% as Caucasian/White, 1% as Native American, 20% as Latino/Hispanic (all races), and 8% as multiracial. While the sample is consistent with the general LMU population demographics in regards to race/ethnicity, this sample did have a minor overrepresentation of female students.

For the purpose of this study, it is also important to report the number of students indicated by the survey as first-generation students. We decided to adhere to the traditional definition of first-generation student status: neither parent of a first-generation college student has received a degree from a four-year college or university in the United States. If a student has one parent who has a college degree, they are considered to be mixed-generation, not first-generation. Since no question on the survey asked directly whether students self-identified as first-generation or not, we used items inquiring about the education of both parents to classify students as first-generation or not. This process yielded 48 students (23.5%) as first-generation, and 156 (74%) as non-first-generation; 5 (2.5%) did not answer the parent education question. Of those 156 non-first-generation students, 49 (31%) formed part of the mixed-generation group of students, meaning that one of their parents did attain a college degree. For the analyses reported in this study, the 48 students who identified that both parents did not attain a college degree were defined as "first-generation students" and the 156

students who were either mixed generation or non-first-generation were grouped together to form the "non-first-generation" group, in accordance with the literature (Núñez & Cuccaro-Alamin, 1998). The proportion of first-generation students in this study mirrors the general rate at the University.

Materials and Procedure

The participants of this study volunteered to complete the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) *Youth Cultures* survey online. The survey consisted of 85 sets of questions belonging to the categories of Personal Data, Parental Background, Personal Activities and Interests, Satisfaction with Life and Self-Esteem, Perception of the World/Politics, Most Important Aspects in Life and Personal Identity, Family and Intergenerational Relations, Significant Others, Friends, Social Networks, Interactions with Others, Partner Relationships, Work, Value Orientation and Ethics, Religion, Confidence in Institutions, University, and The Future. After signing up for the survey, participants were given a link to complete the survey via email. The participants' responses were all recorded anonymously, and following completion of the survey, responses were kept in a database with password protection.

Degree of co-curricular involvement was determined by examining the sum of involvement in the following groups: (1) sports club or organization; (2) religious group; (3) artistic or cultural group (theatre, music, dance, literature…); (4) volunteer in a non-governmental organization (NGO) working for the poor, sick or other underprivileged groups; (5) student organization; (6) political party/movement; (7) trade union; (8) defense of human rights organizations; (9) feminist organization; (10) ecologist/environmentalist organization; and (11) anti-globalization or anti-system movement. The distribution of degree of involvement is as follows: 10.3% (N=21) not involved at all; 44.1% (N=90) have some involvement in 1 or 2 activities; and 45.6 (N=93) have high involvement in 3 or more activities. A spiritual/service involvement scale was constructed in order to measure participation in co-curriculars based in spiritual- or service-based activities. This scale was created by summing the number of endorsements of: (2) religious group, (4) volunteer in a non-governmental organization (NGO) working for the poor, sick or other underprivileged groups (8) defense of human rights organizations, (9) feminist organization, and (10) ecologist/environmentalist organization.

In order to measure university satisfaction, participants were asked to rate their general satisfaction with different aspects related to their university and their studies on a scale of 1 to 6, 1 being totally dissatisfied and 6 being totally satisfied. The questions asked them to rate their satisfaction in respect to the following statements: 1) with your choice of university; 2) with your choice of degree/studies; 3) with the way classes are imparted; 4) with the professors/lecturers; 5) with the student climate; 6) with the personal attention and help you get from professors/lecturers and other university staff; 7) with the general atmosphere of the university; 8) with the possibilities offered for personal growth; 9) with the possibilities offered for other academic activities beside those connected to your degree; 10) with the possibilities for deepening my religious knowledge and experience; and 11) with the possibilities offered to pursue my own specific interests. The university satisfaction scale was created by summing the responses to these eleven items. The internal validity of this university satisfaction scale was evaluated by performing a Chronbach's Alpha test, which yielded a score of 0.91 indicating a highly reliable and internally consistent scale.

Results

Hypothesis #1: **Involvement and University Satisfaction**

A one-way ANOVA was used to test the independent variable of co-curricular involvement on the dependent variable of university satisfaction. A significant main effect for co-curricular involvement on university satisfaction, $F(1, 193) = 10.43$, $p < 0.0001$, was found indicating that students who were more involved were significantly more satisfied with their overall university experience. Post-hoc analyses using a Bonferroni correction revealed that students who had <u>some</u> (1 or 2 activities) co-curricular involvement (M= 50.56) were significantly more satisfied than students who were <u>not</u> (0 activities) involved (M= 42.94), $p = 0.001$. Furthermore, students who had <u>high</u> (3 or more activities) co-curricular involvement (M= 53.26) were significantly more satisfied than students who had no co-curricular involvement (M= 42.94), $p < 0.0001$. Lastly, students who had <u>high</u> co-curricular involvement (M= 53.26) were significantly more satisfied than those who just had <u>some</u> co-curricular involvement (M= 50.56), $p = 0.035$. These results are shown in *Figure 1*. Overall, the significance of these results emphasizes the importance of co-curricular involvement, specifically, levels of such involvement, on university satisfaction.

Hypothesis #2: **First-Generation Students and Involvement**

In a similar effort of understanding the factors influencing university satisfaction, we analyzed the effects of the independent variables of generational status and co-curricular involvement on the dependent variable of university satisfaction, using a two-way ANOVA. For the purpose of this test, we combined the values of some (1 or 2) and high (3+) involvement into one category of "yes involved" in order to increase the power of the analyses. Results from this two-way analysis of variance revealed a statistically significant interaction, $F(1, 189) = 5.80$, $p = 0.017$. Non-first-generation students who were involved (M = 51.58) in co-curricular activities showed significantly higher levels of university satisfaction as compared to those who were not involved (M = 46). The level of satisfaction for first-generation students followed a similar pattern, but those first-generation students who reported <u>no</u> involvement (M = 36.2) in co-curricular activities showed the <u>lowest</u> level of satisfaction with their university experience as compared to other first-generation students who were involved (M = 53.2). These results are shown in *Figure 2*. There was a non-significant trend for first-generation students (M = 51.31) to report higher university satisfaction as compared to non-first-generation students (M = 51.17) but the main effect for generational status did not reach statistical significance, $F(1, 189) = 2.98$, $p = 0.086$. However, results did show a significant main effect for university involvement $F(1, 189) = 22.70$, $p < 0.0001$, such that students who were involved (M = 51.95) in co-curricular activities were significantly more satisfied than those who were not involved (M = 42.94).

Hypothesis #3: **First-Generation Students and Types of Involvement**

Two analyses of variance were conducted to test the relationship between first-generation student status and type of involvement — separately for <u>general or total</u> co-curricular involvement and <u>spiritual- and/or service-based</u> co-curricular involvement. The first one-way ANOVA testing the relationship between first-generation student status and <u>general</u> co-curricular involvement did not yield any significant results $F(1, 197) = 0.45$, $p < 0.50$ indicating that first-gen students (M = 2.67) did not significantly differ from non-first gen students (M = 2.48) on total (general) involvement. These results are shown in *Figure* 3. However, the second one-way ANOVA tested the relationship between generational status and <u>spiritual- and/or service-based</u> involvement, which yielded a significant main effect for generational status, $F(1, 197) = 3.79$, $p = 0.05$, such that first generation students were more involved in spiritual- and/or service-related co-curricular activities (M = 1.25) than non-first

generation students (M = 0.90). These results are shown in *Figure 4*. The pattern of these overall results suggest that while first-generation students do not differ from non-first generation students in terms of general or total co-curricular involvement, they exhibit a greater tendency to engage in a significantly higher degree of spiritual- and/or service-based co-curricular involvement.

Discussion

Findings

When examining the effect of co-curricular involvement on university satisfaction, students reporting some/high involvement tended to be significantly more satisfied than those with no involvement, and those with high involvement tended to be significantly more satisfied than those with some/low involvement. These results are consistent with findings in the literature that there is a positive relationship between involvement and university satisfaction (Mooney, 2010).

The results of our study indicate that there is a significant interaction between co-curricular involvement and generational status on the university satisfaction of college students. Both first-generation and non-first-generation students who reported being involved in one or more co-curricular activity were significantly more satisfied with their university as compared to those reporting no involvement. Additionally, first-generation students who were involved held the highest mean in university satisfaction as opposed to all other groups (non-first-generation and involved, first-generation and not involved, and non-first-generation and not involved). Also, first-generation students who reported no involvement in co-curricular activities were significantly less satisfied with their university experience as compared to all other first-generation and non-first-generation students. These results point to the importance of co-curricular involvement for first-generation students.

Results also showed that first-generation students were significantly more involved in spiritual-and/or service-based co-curricular activities as compared to non-first-generation students. (The groups did not differ in terms of general or total co-curricular involvement.) These findings are interpreted as first-generation students' "desire to repay and pay forward" as one of the driving motives to engage in university life and connect with underserved communities, in some cases, their very own communities (Easley et al., 2012). We posit that

engagement in spiritual- and service-based co-curriculars can impact the lives of first-generation students by fulfilling their need to engage socially, and perhaps even adding meaning to their lives.

These findings as a whole build on previous work from our research lab showing that student involvement in service/religious oriented groups is significantly related to an increased sense of social awareness and ethical and pro-social behavior (Machón, Cullen, Kreisel, Roxas & González, 2014). We previously reported that for those involved in service/religious service, growth occurred from first to fourth year in university students. This growth is shown in the expression of increased social awareness, concern for social equality, and in the priority that dedication of their lives to real and meaningful social action has when considering future plans. This work supports the important role that a values-driven higher education plays in the formation of "whole students" inspired to contribute to the improvement of social inequality and fragmentation.

Limitations and Implications for Further Research

There are a few limitations of our study to acknowledge. First, the nature of the survey is correlational, thus making statements about causality and directionality tentative. For example, it could be the case that higher university satisfaction leads to higher co-curricular involvement and not the other way around. Secondly, the survey included no specific questions regarding "first-generation college status" *per se*. Existing items on highest level of education of participants' parents were therefor used to classify students as first gen or not. Further research on this subject area should control for the first-generation variable more accurately, explicitly asking students if they identify as first-generation students or not. Furthermore, about 30% of our non-first-generation sample consisted of students who were "mixed-generation", meaning one of their parents received a college degree and the other did not. However, we did adhere to how these students are typically classified in the literature, as non-first generation (Núñez & Cuccaro- Alamin, 1998). Future studies should consider the implications of being a mixed-generation student, and control for that variable more accurately.

Additionally, this study was cross-sectional, as two different groups of first- and fourth- year students were surveyed. Ideally, the same group would have taken the survey during their

first and fourth years, in order to more accurately follow trends regarding involvement and university satisfaction in students. Yet, while there was a slight overrepresentation of females in the sample of our study as compared to the student population, the sample appears to be generally representative of the student population in regards to race/ethnicity and age.

Conclusions

The findings of this study suggest that there is indeed a relationship between university satisfaction, co-curricular involvement, and first-generation student status. As predicted, the unique backgrounds of students do coincide with various levels of university satisfaction, as well as co-curricular involvement. Keeping these findings in mind, it is important for both universities and students to be aware of the relationship that exists between spiritual- and/or service-based involvement and university satisfaction. This positive relationship suggests that Catholic universities in particular should continue to offer varied spiritual- and/or service-based activities in which students may become involved, as this study indicates that these particular co-curriculars have the strongest relationship with university satisfaction, which, in turn, has a relationship with other positive outcomes in students, such as grades (Pike, 1991). Additionally, the relationship between first-generation students and university involvement/engagement should also be noted. The dramatic difference in university satisfaction between involved first-generation students and uninvolved first-generation students is highly noteworthy, and suggests that these students may benefit to a greater degree from involvement in spiritual- and/or service-based co-curriculars on campus. Further research can seek to expand upon this relationship between first-generation status and involvement, and study whether "first-to-go" programs specifically designed for this population are effective for first-generation students.

As Catholic universities, in living out their mission, become more "open" to an increasingly diverse student population, they must remain focused on creating rigorous academic programs as well as meaningful co-curricular experiences that prepare students for a "more open" and tolerant society. This represents our greatest challenge, our greatest inspiration and our most noble mission— as institutions for higher education and institutions for a "higher purpose".

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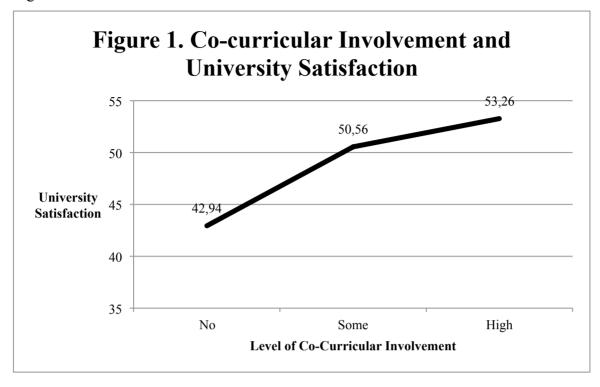
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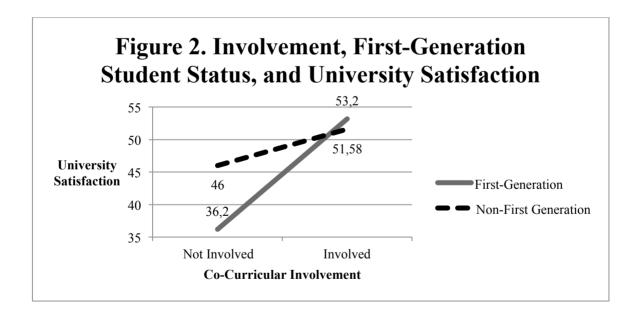
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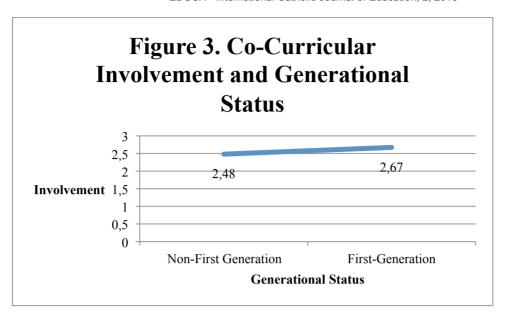
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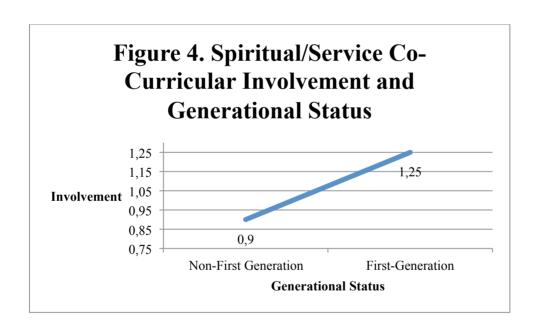
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Figures

Figure 1. Co-curricular Involvement and University Satisfaction

University Satisfaction (y-axis, scale 35–55)

- No: 42,94
- Some: 50,56
- High: 53,26

Level of Co-Curricular Involvement (x-axis)

Figure 2. Involvement, First-Generation Student Status, and University Satisfaction

University Satisfaction (y-axis, scale 35–55)

- First-Generation: Not Involved 36,2 → Involved 53,2
- Non-First Generation: Not Involved 46 → Involved 51,58

Legend:
— First-Generation
- - - Non-First Generation

Co-Curricular Involvement (x-axis)

Figure 3. Co-Curricular Involvement and Generational Status

Figure 4. Spiritual/Service Co-Curricular Involvement and Generational Status

PARA UMA FUNDAMENTAÇÃO ANTROPOLÓGICA E ÉTICA DA EDUCAÇÃO:
A ESCOLA COMO LUGAR DE HOSPITALIDADE

Isabel Baptista[*]

Resumo

O presente texto reflete sobre os fundamentos antropológicos e éticos da educação, tentando explorar o poder heurístico da noção de *hospitalidade* no quadro de uma filosofia da educação escolar indexada a valores de alteridade. Na linha de autores como Emmanuel Lévinas e Jacques Derrida, sustentamos que a experiência de acolhimento do outro, reconhecido e valorizado enquanto outro, constitui o acontecimento antropológico fundamental, a partir do qual podemos compreender a fecundidade dos seres mortais, a sua misteriosa, e paradoxal, vocação para a imortalidade e para a transcendência.

A inscrição deste pressuposto no campo da educação, ao mesmo tempo que convoca uma reflexão substancial sobre a condição humana, obriga, em nosso entender, a considerar as implicações práticas decorrentes da necessidade de realização do imperativo de acolhimento ético, procurando, concretamente neste caso, indagar sobre as dimensões de ordem organizacional, profissional e pedagógica que nos permitem qualificar a escola, cada escola, como um *lugar de hospitalidade*.

Palavras-chave:

Educação escolar, alteridade, hospitalidade, lugares de hospitalidade.

Introdução

Evocando o dever ancestral de acolhimento do forasteiro, do viajante e do mendigo, a noção de hospitalidade surge-nos hoje como uma virtude primordial da vida em comum, remetendo para valores de humanidade vitais para a cidadania contemporânea.

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Configuradas por possibilidades de comunicação e mobilidade novas e absolutamente extraordinárias, as sociedades atuais padecem, no entanto, de uma certa perda de "sentido do outro", manifesta na fragilização dos laços sociais e no desenvolvimento de fenómenos de isolamento, indiferença e exclusão. A par da existência de rotinas de vida que fazem do habitante do lugar um estrangeiro na sua própria terra, proliferam os jogos de abertura e fechamento, de proteção e neutralização, de grupos, instituições e organizações (Gotman,1997:6). Os indivíduos circulam diariamente por uma série de locais, assumindo uma diversidade de papéis e desenvolvendo uma multiplicidade de interações pessoais, muitas delas de carácter meramente fortuito e funcional.

Neste contexto, as práticas de acolhimento tendem a tornar-se cada vez mais institucionalizadas e ritualizadas, como acontece, por exemplo, ao nível nas formas de hospitalidade paga, próprias das indústrias da hotelaria e do turismo. Aparentemente, o "belo arco-íris da hospitalidade" perdeu o brilho de outrora, quando Ulisses, ao atravessar os mares, fazia de cada uma das suas aventuras a prova da hospitalidade, tanto para o herói quanto para o anfitrião, como notou Alain Montandon (2003:131). Contudo, esta ideia, associada, segundo o autor, à nostalgia de uma hospitalidade natural e universal, corresponderá, na verdade, a uma falsa questão já que, mais do que refletir sobre o declínio dos valores tradicionais, importará repensá-los e atualizá-los em função das novas interpelações e das novas necessidades.

O verdadeiro desafio passará então por procurar instituir, em todos os planos da vida humana, dinâmicas de relação positiva com o outro, seja esse outro o desconhecido, o estrangeiro, o migrante, o sem-abrigo, o refugiado ou o familiar, o amigo, o vizinho, o colega de trabalho ou o cliente. Até porque, como nota Jacques Derrida, é no plano da condicionalidade histórica, com todas suas regulações necessárias, que a hospitalidade incondicional, tal como a defende Lévinas, adquire verdadeiramente efetividade e sentido, justificando-se assim um trabalho de inscrição social e política desejavelmente amplo e diversificado (Derrida, 1997).

Em alinhamento com estas posições, o conhecimento sobre hospitalidade prática tem vindo a ganhar especial relevância nos nossos dias, motivando a realização de uma pluralidade de estudos de natureza interdisciplinar, referentes a domínios tão diversos como a filosofia, as políticas públicas, o turismo, a arquitetura, o urbanismo, a literatura, a justiça, a economia ou a educação. Trata-se sempre, no entanto, de procurar pensar a hospitalidade substantivamente

(Camargo, 2008), isto é, valorizando-a em toda a sua amplitude socioantropológica e axiológica.

Neste entendimento, a Faculdade de Educação e Psicologia da Universidade Católica Portuguesa (FEP/UCP) desenvolve, desde há uma década e sob o enquadramento do Centro de Estudos em Desenvolvimento Humano (CEDH), uma linha de investigação específica sobre hospitalidade e educação, visando inscrever o poder especulativo e operativo da categoria de hospitalidade em todos os âmbitos da atividade educacional, tanto escolares como sociais (Baptista, Azevedo, 2015).

Inserido neste quadro académico, o trabalho que agora se apresenta parte do pressuposto de que a questão antropológica fundamental, aquela que justifica e anima a racionalidade pedagógica, seja qual for a dimensão prática que tivermos em referênca, diz respeito à experiência de relação com a novidade do novo, com o desconhecido e o transcendente.

Situando o ponto de ancoragem dessa experiência no acolhimento da alteridade do *rosto*, expõem-se os argumentos que nos permitem reconhecer a hospitalidade como valor estrurante da condição humana e, a partir daí, como virtude inerente aos lugares de educação escolar, considerados como lugares antropológicos por excelência.

A hospitalidade como valor da condição antropológica

Para compreender as possibilidades e os limites da hospitalidade enquanto categoria socioeducacional, é necessário clarificar, desde logo, os fundamentos antropológicos e éticos que, a um nível essencial, sustentam a racionalidade pedagógica. Recorremos nesse sentido ao pensamento dos chamados filósofos da alteridade, com destaque particular para Emmanuel Lévinas e Jacques Derrida.

Identificada com a experiência de acolhimento da alteridade, vivida de forma privilegiada na experiência de relação interpessoal, para Lévinas a hospitalidade constitui um traço essencial da identidade humana, evidenciando o carácter relacional e estruturalmente aprendente da própria subjetividade. "O Eu não é um ser que se mantém sempre o mesmo, mas o ser cujo existir consiste em identificar-se, em reencontrar a sua identidade através de tudo o que lhe acontece" (Lévinas, 1988: 24). E este processo de identificação passa, antes de mais e

necessariamente, por uma ligação saudável e respeitosa com o mundo habitado. Neste sentido, o corpo, a casa, a alimentação, o trabalho, a economia, não são meras realidades empíricas e contingentes, mas momentos fundamentais de subjetivação.

Desta maneira, Lévinas contraria as conceções idealistas sobre a identidade, realçando, pelo contrário, as condições de possibilidade de uma identidade de "carne e osso". Na relação com um mundo plenamente desfrutado, possuído e representado, os sujeitos afirmam a sua unicidade e a sua liberdade, a sua condição de *rosto*. Razão pela qual o encontro interpessoal, o encontro entre rostos, se torna tão especial. A relação com alguém igualmente capaz de habitar, desfrutar e representar conscientemente o mundo, interrompe o movimento de apropriação, colocando o sujeito em situação de acolher dimensões de desconhecido que transcendem qualquer ideia de alteridade que possa ser associada ao mundo natural ou à intimidade pessoal. É então neste tipo experiência que a subjetividade encontra o segredo da sua fecundidade temporal, a sua aptidão para relacionar-se com o infinito e a transcendência, ou com o que escapa à ordem do previsível e do visível. O acolhimento da interpelação vinda de outra pessoa tira a subjetividade "do seu lugar", despertando a sua vocação reflexiva e aprendente.

Ao colocar deste modo a ênfase da hospitalidade na figura do sujeito acolhedor e nas modificações produzidas ao nível da consciência de si mesmo, Lévinas projeta o sentido da unicidade humana num plano ético essencial, já que na situação de face a face, aquele que acolhe dispõe-se à perda do seu conforto e da sua prioridade em favor de outros. Esta disposição corresponde à qualidade que define a hospitalidade ética, o tipo de qualidade que, em nosso entender, caracteriza os lugares antropológicos.

A hospitalidade como virtude dos lugares antropológicos

O espaço transforma-se em *lugar* a partir da relação humana que o simboliza, ou seja, quando é subjetivamente apropriado e construído, constituindo-se em referência pessoal, à maneira da ligação identitária ao mundo defendida por Lévinas. Por sua vez, a noção de *lugar antropológico*, proposta por Marc Augé (1992), acrescenta a esta dimensão identitária duas outras dimensões importantes, permitindo-nos reforçar a linha de argumentação que vem sendo seguida. Para este autor, os lugares antropológicos são lugares identitários na medida em que se constituem, também, como lugares históricos e relacionais. Neles, os sujeitos "são

história", no sentido em que são protagonistas ativos de uma vida solidariamente convivida. "A partir do momento em que os indivíduos se aproximam, criam o social e ordenam os lugares" (Augé, 1992:116).

Enquanto lugares eminentemente relacionais, os lugares antropológicos são lugares densos do ponto de vista humano, impregnados de cheiros, sabores, cores, sentimentos, afetos, memórias e histórias tecidas por gente próxima. Falamos então em *lugares de hospitalidade* (Baptista, 2002, 2008, 2010), considerando que a identidade dos lugares habitados é indissociável da qualidade das experiências de encontro interpessoal que neles são vividas, proporcionadas e potenciadas.

Contudo, em virtude das exigências da vida contemporânea, circulamos diariamente por uma diversidade de lugares mas também por uma diversidade de não-lugares, definidos por Marc Augé (1992) como espaços em relação aos quais não existe, nem é obrigatório que exista, qualquer ligação afetiva e onde têm lugar interações casuais. Desenvolvidas na qualidade de transeuntes, passageiros, utentes ou clientes, as relações interpessoais tendem a ser, naturalmente, de carácter episódico, formal e utilitário.

A questão oportunamente colocada por Marc Augé (1992), ao denunciar os efeitos perversos da sobremodernidade, prende-se com a constatação de um desequilíbrio cada vez mais evidente no que se refere à relação entre lugares e não-lugares, mais precisamente, com a predominância crescente dos espaços de interação ocasional e funcional e com a perda progressiva de qualidade antropológica dos lugares, a sua transformação em não-lugares. Citando o autor, "um mundo onde se nasce na clínica e se morre no hospital, onde se multiplicam, em modalidades luxuosas e inumanas, os locais de trânsito e as ocupações provisórias", é um mundo votado à individualidade solitária, ao anonimato, à passagem, ao provisório e ao efémero (Augé, 1992:84).

Neste contexto, as formas de relação mediatizada e de contratualização solitária parecem ganhar prioridade sobre os encontros face a face que, como vimos, são de importância vital para os processos de identificação e realização humana. Ao mesmo tempo, constata-se que os não-lugares, enquanto lugares de sociabilidade naturalmente frágil e fortuita, tendem a perder também as marcas habituais de hospitalidade urbana. Referimo-nos aos códigos de cordialidade que tradicionalmente caracterizam a vida em sociedade.

Embora, à luz dos pressupostos de natureza antropológica anteriormente enunciados, não possamos reduzir as leis da hospitalidade às regras das boas maneiras ou da chamada "boa educação", julgamos que é importante sublinhar aqui o papel desempenhado pela cortesia nas relações humanas, numa perspetiva de promoção de uma cultura social afável e respeitosa em relação ao outro. Correspondendo a um sentimento expressivo de consideração e estima interpessoal (Bergson, 2008: 21), pode dizer-se que a cortesia representa um primeiro patamar da hospitalidade, funcionando como uma espécie de porta de entrada na relação com o outro. Ora, ao entrar em relação com o outro, o sujeito torna-se participante de uma certa ordem social (Picard, 1998:59). É que o outro, o meu próximo, é também um terceiro por relação a outros igualmente próximos. "Uma existência livre, e não uma veleidade da liberdade, supõe uma certa organização da natureza e da sociedade (Lévinas, 1988:219).

Neste sentido, defendemos a hospitalidade como qualidade urbana extensiva aos não-lugares, reconhecendo, porém, que ela não constitui uma virtude inerente a esses espaços, ao contrário do que acontece com os lugares antropológicos que são, por definição, lugares intrinsecamente atravessados pela interpelação da alteridade.

Em suma, equacionada numa linha de inspiração levinasiana e derridiana, mais do que uma forma positiva e cortês de interação, o termo hospitalidade designa a experiência de acolhimento de alteridade que é gerada pela interpelação de outra pessoa, constituindo-se dessa forma como uma experiência humana fundamental. Uma experiência que, sendo vital no processo de subjetivação, ativa a dinâmica de vinculação inter-humana, contribuindo assim para o desenvolvimento de laços sociais consistentes e significativos.

É este, pois, o sentido de hospitalidade que interessa sublinhar, um sentido amplo e eticamente fundado que nos permite pensar as exigências atuais da educação escolar num quadro paradigmático indexado a valores de alteridade, de responsabilidade e solidariedade social.

Hospitalidade prática e cultura escolar

No seguimento do que vem sendo dito, concluímos que a hospitalidade representa uma virtude de relação humana que transcende a esfera da mera cordialidade ou urbanidade, constituindo-se como elemento estruturante da identidade, e, nessa medida, como experiência formativa essencial. Na verdade, enquanto prática antropológica intencionalmente orientada

para a promoção da fecundidade temporal do ser humano, de cada ser humano, é a própria educação que pode ser definida como hospitalidade (Baptista, Azevedo, 2015:143). O acolhimento da alteridade, a abertura ao desconhecido e à transcendência, surge-nos assim como uma ideia consubstancial à ideia de educação e, por consequência, à ideia de escola.

Como nota Eirick Prairat (2005: 50-51), pode mesmo dizer-se que a hospitalidade representa uma das propriedades características e distintivas das organizações escolares, enquanto organizações sociais específicas. As escolas são lugares explicitamente destinados à educação, o que, no contexto das sociedades do século XXI, é o mesmo que dizer à realização de um direito humano básico. Como tal, a escola democrática define-se, obrigatoriamente, como uma escola aberta a todos. Mas aberta em que sentido e até que ponto? O que é que, afinal de contas, distingue as escolas das chamadas *instituições de acolhimento social*?

Na linha do que foi dito, estamos perante um imperativo de democracia e de hospitalidade ligados à necessidade de garantir a todos, sem exceção, oportunidades de aprendizagem potenciadoras de condições de autoria e realização pessoal. Uma escola democrática, aberta, inclusiva e integradora, é uma escola organizada de modo a que todas as crianças e jovens possam encontrar aí uma saída e um futuro, a sua saída e o seu futuro

Não se trata, portanto, de um acolhimento generalizado e abstrato, mas sim da atenção ao testemunho de alteridade de cada aluno, enquanto ser humano absolutamente único. É certo que os alunos não estão na escola por convite, como se fossem visitantes ocasionais, mas sim por obrigação. É o sentido antropológico e ético da hospitalidade que aqui é convocado. Parafraseando Eirick Prairat (2005: 51), os imperativos de educação e de acolhimento não são antagónicos. A arte pedagógica consiste, precisamente, em saber transformar a obrigação em convite à formação, um convite desenvolvido de tal maneira que acaba por converter a necessidade em oportunidade.

Entende-se assim que o acolhimento hospitaleiro é condição de uma aprendizagem feliz e bem-sucedida. Lembrando, no entanto, que a experiência de hospitalidade ultrapassa o momento do acolhimento, ela implica uma dedicação responsável e cuidadosa em relação àquele que é acolhido. O que, em contexto escolar, obriga a atender às condutas institucionais e à qualidade das práticas educativas necessárias à efetivação da hospitalidade. Ou seja,

importa ter presente que está em causa a realização de um imperativo ético que transcende a garantia de conforto, de bem-estar e de satisfação do hóspede.

O tipo de relação que estabelecemos com os outros é o que, a um nível fundamental, define a qualidade antropológica dos lugares, como foi dito. De tal modo que a perda dessa qualidade conduz ao aparecimento dos não-lugares. Trata-se, pois, de evitar que as escolas se transformem em não-lugares, em lugares impessoais onde se desenvolve uma sociabilidade pobre do ponto de vista da ligação humana. Esta preocupação justifica a aposta na qualificação ética e estética da escola, a começar pelo cuidado com o seu clima relacional, com atenção aos parâmetros de relação profissional e pedagógica, bem como aos hábitos de trabalho e convívio. Contudo, importa procurar ir mais longe e mais fundo, de modo a explorar, conjuntamente e de forma consequente, todos os aspetos que fazem da escola um lugar histórico, identitário e relacional.

Perguntamos então, em que medida as nossas escolas se constituem como lugares de hospitalidade. Quem é o hóspede da cultura escolar? Quem são esses outros que nos dispomos a receber e a acolher? Que lógicas de trabalho, que regras e que rituais marcam essa receção e esse acolhimento? Quem é que é deixado de fora e porquê? Que tipos de interação humana são privilegiados? Do ponto de vista organizacional, profissional e pedagógico, em que medida podemos dizer que as nossas escolas funcionam como lugares de acolhimento e de produção de alteridade?

São estas, no fundamental, as perguntas que têm norteado os trabalhos de investigação desenvolvidos no âmbito do nosso centro de estudos (CEDH-FEP/UCP), com destaque para componentes organizacionais que vão desde a clarificação e explicitação das linhas de fundamentação antropológica e ética que sustentam a missão, o *ethos*, de cada escola, até às lógicas de conceção e gestão dos espaços e dos tempos educativos.

Uma escola hospitaleira é também, e forçosamente, uma escola inserida socialmente, ou seja, é uma escola atenta aos laços que sustentam a sua inserção sociocomunitária. Procura-se neste sentido dar especial atenção às dinâmicas de relação entre atores, internos e externos. "Tanto a educação escolar como a educação familiar e social, em geral, têm um papel central nas sociedades de hoje, pela possibilidade e oportunidade de que representam de favorecer o desenvolvimento humano personalizado de todos e de cada um, ao longo de toda a vida e

com a vida" (Azevedo, 2011:133). O que, segundo o mesmo autor, coloca a educação escolar num horizonte paradigmático novo, implicando lógicas de corresponsabilização cada vez mais exigentes no âmbito de uma regulação solidária e sociocomunitária da educação.

As escolas funcionam, com efeito, como ecossistemas relacionais muito intrincados, sustentados por jogos de interdependência especialmente delicados e complexos. Aqui, as leis ético-políticas da hospitalidade recomendam a flexibilidade organizacional necessária à manutenção de portas entreabertas, abertas até certo ponto, fechadas até certo ponto.

Uma escola hospitaleira é também uma escola atenta aos indicadores de frequência e sucesso escolar que permitem aferir sobre as oportunidades de saída e de futuro de cada criança e de cada jovem. Estas oportunidades dependem substancialmente, como foi referido, do tipo de acolhimento que for dado à pessoa de cada aluno, mas também do tipo de acolhimento que for dado à pessoa de cada profissional e de cada colaborador.

As questões relativas à ética profissional, em particular à ética profissional docente, surgem assim em especial destaque, sobretudo através de estudos sobre as dinâmicas de decisão, de autoria, de cooperação e de autorização recíproca. Enquanto adultos de referência, os educadores funcionam como promotores privilegiados de hospitalidade. Para tal, é necessário que eles próprios possam afirmar-se como sujeitos capazes de "dar lugar", tanto no sentido de saber acolher, pedagógica e eticamente, como no sentido de construir o lugar. Construir um lugar é inventar um lugar, ousando romper com o instituído, para criar novas possibilidades de relação e de acolhimento. Precisamos por isso de mentalidades profissionais hospitaleiras, o que, em última análise, convoca argumentos de ordem epistemológica que se prendem com as exigências de um conhecimento complexo e de natureza interdisciplinar, apoiado no acolhimento de novas ideias e na gestão partilhada de iniciativas e projetos.

No plano pedagógico, a par das questões de desenvolvimento do currículo, formal e oculto, adquirem especial importância os temas respeitantes à relação educativa, bem como o estudo de práticas orientadas para a promoção da participação dos alunos na vida escolar, em conformidade com um paradigma de respeito pelos direitos das crianças e dos jovens.

O grande desafio passa, como sabemos, pela responsabilidade de formação de seres racionais sensíveis e autónomos. Ora, uma identidade verdadeiramente autónoma é uma identidade que

vive a plenitude da sua condição de interdependência, uma identidade que, sendo capaz de dialogar positivamente com a incerteza e o imprevisível, se torna, certamente, mais resiliente, mais ativa e mais criativa.

Na verdade, é a própria pedagogia que nos surge como um saber de hospitalidade, um saber dialógico, interativo e dinâmico. Um saber técnico, ético e estético, de natureza essencialmente prudencial (Baptista, 2007, 2014). Conforme procurámos mostrar, na prática da hospitalidade trata-se não só de saber dar lugar, no sentido de convidar à formação, familiarizando os alunos com novas ideias, novas áreas do saber e novos caminhos de descoberta, mas também, e por consequência, de procurar criar novos lugares, acolhendo e produzindo alteridade.

Reflexões finais

No seguimento dos argumentos expostos, reforçamos que a hospitalidade constitui uma das virtudes cardinais da cultura escolar, funcionando simultaneamente como ideia reguladora, como princípio de funcionamento e como prática formativa. Ou seja, para que a escola possa cumprir os desígnios de hospitalidade consubstanciais à sua missão, é necessário que ela se institua como um verdadeiro lugar de hospitalidade, com tudo o que tal implica em termos de qualificação histórica, identitária e relacional.

Recordamos que, como é próprio dos lugares antropológicos, os lugares de hospitalidade são lugares pertença e de afirmação identitária, mas são também, e forçosamente, lugares de abertura e de acolhimento. Esta abertura é condição essencial para a vivência da alteridade, por mais ariscada que essa vivência possa ser. O receio do desconhecido, sendo compreensível e legítimo, não poderá servir para justificar lógicas de fechamento e de indiferença, conducentes à afirmação de identidades narcísicas e à emergência de culturas sociais, organizacionais e profissionais mixofóbicas.

Como lembra recorrentemente Derrida (1997, 1999), toda a hospitalidade contém em si mesma uma ameaça latente de hostilidade mas, por mais desconcertante que seja, é essa capacidade de exposição ao risco e ao imprevisto que define a hospitalidade ética. Daí a necessidade de regras, de padrões de conduta e de rituais que ajudem a prevenir e a gerir as ameaças intrínsecas à vivência da hospitalidade. Sem esquecer, no entanto, que, por

definição, a hospitalidade não tem um topos definido, implicando um trabalho de equilíbrio permanente entre a incondicionalidade ética e a condicionalidade temporal. Reside aqui, justamente, o carácter instável, simultaneamente poético e político, da hospitalidade. O que, no nosso entendimento, será o mesmo que dizer o seu carácter pedagógico, ético e estético.

Defendemos por isso, com Derrida (1999:97), a necessidade de "articular a reflexão filosófica, a leitura dos textos canónicos sobre a hospitalidade com os problemas urgentes da nossa sociedade", sabendo que não existe um modelo perfeito de hospitalidade, mas apenas processos em desenvolvimento que, como tal, são sempre suscetíveis de perversão, mas também de melhoria.

Perspetivando este desafio no horizonte prático da educação escolar, tratar-se-á então de procurar garantir, em cada circunstância e diante de cada dificuldade, as condições de uma hospitalidade desejável e possível (Derrida, 1999:101). Estamos conscientes, portanto, de que falar de hospitalidade significa falar de possibilidades mas também de limites, justificando assim que a própria aventura do conhecimento, enquanto procura de compreensão e de verdade, seja vivida, antes de mais e acima de tudo, como experiência de abertura, sensibilidade, vulnerabilidade e intranquilidade.

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