CIVITAS EDUCATIONIS.
EDUCATION, POLITICS AND CULTURE
Rivista semestrale

Ambiti di interesse e finalità
Civitas educationis. Education, Politics and Culture è una rivista internazionale peer-reviewed che promuove la riflessione e la discussione sul legame fra educazione e politica, intesa come dimensione fondamentale dell'esistenza umana.
Tale legame ha caratterizzato il pensiero e le pratiche educative occidentali sin dai tempi degli antichi greci, così come testimonia il nesso *paideia-polis*.
La rivista vuole essere un'agorà in cui sia possibile indagare questo nesso da diverse prospettive e attraverso contributi teorici e ricerche empiriche che focalizzino l'attenzione sulle seguenti aree tematiche:

Sistemi formativi e sistemi politici;
Educazione e diritti umani;
Educazione alla pace;
Educazione alla cittadinanza democratica;
Educazione e differenze;
Educazione e dialogo interreligioso;
Educazione e inclusione sociale;
Educazione, globalizzazione e democrazia;
Educazione e cultura digitale;
Educazione ed ecologia.

Questa rivista adotta una procedura di referaggio a doppio cieco.

Aims and scope
Civitas educationis. Education, Politics and Culture is an international peer-reviewed journal and aims at promoting reflection and discussion on the link between education and politics, as a fundamental dimension of human existence.
That link has been characterizing western educational thinking and practices since the time of the ancient Greeks with the bond between *paideia* and *polis*.
The journal intends to be an agora where it is possible to investigate this topic from different perspectives, with both theoretical contributions and empirical research, including within its scope topics such as:

Educational systems and political systems;
Education and human rights;
Peace education;
Education and citizenship;
Education and differences;
Education and interfaith dialogue;
Education and social inclusion;
Education, globalization and democracy;
Education and digital culture;
Education and ecology.

This journal uses double blind review.

Web site: www.civitaseducationis.eu
e-mail: civitas.educationis@unisob.na.it

UNIVERSITÀ DEGLI STUDI
SUOR ORSOLA
BENINCASA
DIPARTIMENTO DI SCIENZE
FORMATIVE, PSICOLOGICHE
E DELLA COMUNICAZIONE

care
Centro di Ateneo per la Ricerca Educativa
e per l'alta formazione degli insegnanti e degli educatori

Civitas educationis

EDUCATION, POLITICS AND CULTURE

Anno VIII
Numero 11
Dicembre 2019

MIMESIS

SUOR ORSOLA
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Iscrizione al registro operatori della comunicazione R.O.C. n. 10757
Direttore responsabile: Arturo Lando

Pubblicazione semestrale: abbonamento annuale (due numeri): € 36,00

Per gli ordini e gli abbonamenti rivolgersi a:
ordini@mimesisedizioni.it
L'acquisto avviene per bonifico intestato a:
MIM Edizioni Srl, Via Monfalcone 17/19
20099 – Sesto San Giovanni (MI)
Unicredit Banca – Milano
IBAN: IT 59 B 02008 01634 000101289368
BIC/SWIFT: UNCRITM1234

Università degli Studi Suor Orsola Benincasa, via Suor Orsola 10, 80135 Napoli
Phone: +39 081 2522251; e-mail: civitas.educationis@unisob.na.it

MIMESIS EDIZIONI (Milano – Udine)
www.mimesisedizioni.it
mimesis@mimesisedizioni.it

Isbn: 9788857565224
Issn: 2280-6865

Table of contents – Indice

ESSAYS – SAGGI

BOOK REVIEWS – RECENSIONI

A Libertarian, An-archist and A-crata *Approach to Education*

Félix García Moriyón*

Abstract

When anarchism appeared as a political proposal, it was accompanied by a philosophy that encompasses all aspects of human life. In this political project, education plays a very important role on the road to a radically different society. Education is a necessary condition to foster free people who tend towards social solidarity. At present, anarchists offer three different educational proposals: deschooling society, creating schools with an anarchist agenda and ethos and teaching in free and compulsory schools. In this paper, we explore the third option in a more detailed way: the role of an anarchist teacher in public schools. We pay attention to the three essentials that run throughout all manifestations of anarchist ideology: freedom (libertarian[1]), autonomy (anarchism) and empowerment (a-cracia[2]). The three of them should guide anarchist teachers, according to the central principals of anarchist political praxis: direct action, prefigurative politics and mutual aid. The means employed to change society must be coherent with the ends to be achieved.

Keywords: *deschooling; non-authoritarian schools; prefiguration; direct action; self-government; anarchist education; anarchist teacher.*

1. Introduction

1.1 Anarchism and anarchisms

Anarchism is a political philosophy that was born at the beginning of XIX century, although it is possible to find very old antecedents (Marshall,

* Universidad Autónoma de Madrid.

1 Although I continue to use the term 'libertarian' in my paper, it is, in Spanish (and also in French or Italian), synonymous with 'anarchist' and has a weak, but interesting, relationship with the US term 'libertarian', which is normally on the right of the political spectrum (Roderick, 2018; García Moriyón, 2019).

2 'Acracia' is a very frequent term in Spanish to refer to 'anarchism', and 'ácrata' is almost synonymous to 'anarchist'. This term exists also in French, Portuguese and German, but not in English. I want to use it because it refers to a fundamental trait of anarchism: a society without power nor domination. 'Acracia' comes from ancient Greek: α-, *a* 'non', y κράτος, *kratos* 'power'. It is very different meaning to that of the English term 'akrasia': weakness of will.

1993). It is a worldview that not only focuses on political theory and praxis, but is concerned with all the dimensions and spheres in which human lives develop. Additionally, the fact that, from the beginning, it posed a global and radical revolution – a comprehensive and holistic revolution – means that its approach seeks to clearly transform social, political and economic structures. At the same time, it seeks to transform people, defending a different model of human being. For this reason, anarchists have always placed great emphasis on education, as well as on the forms of struggle with which to advance towards a different society. The means employed to change society had to be coherent with the ends to be achieved.

The foundations of anarchism as a specific political proposal date back to the 19th century. From the outset, anarchism made important contributions to education, both theoretically and practically in the creation of anarchist-inspired schools (García Moriyón, 1986). We can date the end of this phase to 1937, when anarchism was defeated in Spain, where it had achieved a widespread public presence and had been able to implement its social model in large areas of the country. We see a strong renaissance of anarchism in the 1960s in different countries around the world, with another flowering of anarchism occurring at the beginning of the 21st century, especially as a result of the 2007 crisis (García Moriyón, 2001; Gordon, 2007; Grubacic & Graeber, 2004). In this article I will focus on the contribution of anarchism to education in these last two stages, although I include a brief reference to the pedagogical principles developed in the previous period, since they are still substantially present. At the same time, although I speak of anarchism in general, it would be best to speak of anarchisms, since there are diverse tendencies within the broad spectrum of anarchism.

Contrary to what is often said, classical anarchists do not have an optimistic conception of the human being, like Rousseau's, nor a pessimistic conception, like that of Hobbes or Carl Schmitt (Angout, 2014). In general, they highlight the plasticity of human beings with positive and negative traits, always open to cooperation, but also to conflict (Ibañez, 2004). The predominance of positive traits will depend on education, and on society in general. Moreover, it is always possible for the situation to be reversed and the negative traits to be reintroduced, thus requiring constant vigilance to ensure that the conditions of freedom that make a life without oppression and exploitation possible predominate. This vigilance should apply to society in general, to the educational institution in particular, as well as to anarchist organizations and individuals who seek to radically transform present day society.

1.2 Anarchism and education in the last five decades

There are continuities between the first and the following two stages, at least in the importance given to education and in efforts to implement libertarian school models. There is also continuity in the general principles

that guide both the critique of existing education and the application of pedagogical alternatives. There are, however, differences that provoke a change in anarchist educational proposals.

When anarchism first emerged as a specific proposal for social transformation, education was still a very limited activity; about two hundred years later, almost all children aged 3 to 16 attend compulsory school in most countries. The education system, run by the state (public school system) or other institutions (semi-public and private schools), guides (and controls) the socialization process of all children from kindergarten to twelfth grade, or the equivalent. So the central question from an anarchist approach is not only concerned with offering education to children, but with how to offer a different way of educating them within the framework of an education system governed completely by state regulations and laws.

The main change is that formal compulsory education has now been introduced all over the world, from ages 6 to 14-16. I emphasize two important differences from an anarchist perspective: formal education is compulsory and the state has complete control over the school curricula and academic qualifications of teachers and students, although all over the world there are public schools (dependent on the state and free of cost) and private schools. Private schools are certainly not free and contribute in some way to the segregation of students. While this makes it difficult to create new schools outside the publicly financed system, anarchist criticism of the current model of schooling remains, focusing on three basic points:

a) The education system reproduces social inequality. Since the publication of Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis' *Schooling in Capitalist America* (Bowles & Gintis, 1976), the role of the formal school as both reproducer of the social order and legitimizer of social inequality has become clear. A key element in this legitimization is meritocracy: compulsory education is presented as a pivotal element in the equality of opportunities, made possible by social mobility (OECD, 2012): if opportunities are equal, those who rise to high positions in society have achieved it on their own merits, by their individual effort in the education system. Since there is hardly any social mobility, meritocracy becomes pure ideology that conceals the true role of the school in the reproduction of inequality (Volante & Jerrin, 2018; Appiah, 2018);

b) The mold of consciences (García Moriyón, 2011). The education system remains focused on a very uncritical model of teaching, along the lines proposed by Freire when he contrasted banking education with critical and liberating education – education for conscientization. Although official documents generally insist on the profound relationship between education and critical development and emphasize the importance of democratic values, current education primarily focuses on the uncritical assimilation of dominant values and respect for authority (Goodman, 1960). The continuity between the prison, the mental hospital and the school as institutions in charge of social control, highlighted by Foucault (1975), is not a rhetorical exaggeration, but rather reveals what has been called the hidden curriculum: the die-cutting of consciences;

c) The commodification of education. Once compulsory schooling has been achieved, education in general becomes impregnated, and controlled by, the neoliberal political and economic model, in which education has become one of the sectors of the economy where most money is invested and spent and has eventually been dominated by the interests of the market (Garland, 2012). It is a fundamental asset for increasing productivity. Large corporations insist on adapting curricula, syllabuses and academic research to the needs of the productive system, while students invest in their own education in order to gain access to better paid jobs and occupy positions of power in economics and politics. After years of schooling, students end up internalizing the dominant values, and those who access the highest levels of academic training internalize the meritocratic and competitive approach that form the basic ideological underpinning of today's neoliberal capitalist society.

1.3 Anarchist Alternatives

In the face of these changes, the educational strategies of the classical era do not make much sense, although the teachings embodied in schools such as Yasnaia Polyana, La Ruche or the Modern School continue to be referents that must be taken into account, since in those schools children were provided with a liberating and non-authoritarian education, an education aimed at empowering children to become persons endowed with the capabilities required to exercise their freedom (Gribble, 2004). Focusing on the field of formal education, and leaving out both non-formal and informal education – in which the anarchist tradition has also offered many ideas and practices – current anarchism intervenes from three different approaches in educational practice.

On the one hand, there are those who consider that no pact with the educational institution, with compulsory schooling, is possible. As we have mentioned above, the education system continues to be, in general, an institution of control and domestication, in which the normal development of children is restricted, giving priority to uncritical adaptation and obedience to established authority. This idea was revisited in the 1960s by an author who can be considered an anarchist, Ivan Illich (Kahn, 2009). Illich directly proposed a kind of deschooling that goes beyond not attending formal institutional schools – which are controlled by the state. Rather, he promotes a type of real deschooling: the only way for anarchists to remain consistent with their educational beliefs is to explore non-schooling ways of achieving children's personal grown processes within complex societies such as that of today. Home-schooling is one good example (Heidenry, 2011).

A second option is to create schools with an anarchist agenda and ethos. As Neill acknowledged when he presented his experience at Summerhill, the problem with these schools is that, if they are private, they cannot serve poor sectors of the population or the working class. Nevertheless, there is

a broad movement in the educational world of schools that try, more or less radically, to implement a model of grass-rooted, direct democracy in the school. Some of them have a specifically anarchist orientation – as in the case of the Paideia school in Spain (Martín Luengo, 2016). Yet they are few, while others are integrated into the broader framework of the new school movement or progressive education. These share fundamental principles that were already in force, such as, for example, Ferrer Guardia's *Escuela Moderna*. Such principles include: 1. trust in reason rather than doctrine; 2. self-government or shared responsibility; 3. freedom of choice; 4. equality; and 5. respect for children and trust in each child (Gribble, 2004). We are faced with a varied reality that, without being properly anarchist, translates fundamental aspects of anarchist educational approaches into practice.

The third option is to become a teacher in the free public compulsory school. In some countries – most of the countries of the European Union, for example – this is almost the only option, since the two previous options represent a minority, amongst other reasons because, as we have just seen, private schools, either fee-paying or with economic support from the State, are only accessible to children of a certain economic level. Obviously, when teaching in a public school, all the criticisms I have previously raised about compulsory formal education are valid. In a sense, there is a contradiction between being a public school teacher and being an anarchist educator: "Sooner or later people will have to recognize that compulsory schools are part of the problem. Eliminating them is part of the solution" (Gabbard, 2012: 44). However, it should not be forgotten that the majority of children attend these schools, so it is necessary to consider how to influence them with a libertarian pedagogical approach. In fact, some of the schools mentioned in the previous paragraph, not many of them of course, are public and have an educational practice very close to that proposed by anarchism.

In the next section, I will focus on this third area that is clearly opposed to the radical anarchist option of deschooling, that is, not sending children to public school or – to make it clearer what causes them to drop out – to state-run schools. It is an option based on my own personal experience of involvement in anarchist thought and practice since 1974.

2. An anarchist teacher

If we wish to carry out an anarchist education, we must be aware that it is a global project that involves us in three dimensions or spheres. Firstly, it demands a specific way of understanding and practicing our role as teachers, that is, to rigorously consider the personal changes that we must incorporate into our daily pedagogical practice in order to guarantee that we align that practice with what an anarchist education aims to be (García Moriyón, 1996). This radical change consists in overcoming the

dominant model, which promotes the teacher as an expert in educational methodology and in the specific content of the subject matter being taught – a person whose function is to hand down this knowledge to children so that they can incorporate it significantly into their lives, and to guarantee that students internalize the norms that govern society. Faced with this model, the objective is to become a critical professional (critically analyzing current patterns of educational behavior) and a creative professional (able to generate different modes of behavior at school) (Giroux, 1988). The central objective of an anarchist teacher is not to make his students grow up as anarchists, but to help them to become people who are able to think for themselves, critically and creatively, in collaboration and dialogue with their own peers, people who are able to deal with the rules and situations that constrain and limit their own freedom and that of their classmates. We, as teachers, do not seek to integrate the new generations into the logic of the current system, nor do we teach them to adapt to these norms. On the contrary, education becomes the 'practice of freedom', girls and boys (along with their teachers), learning to critically deal with the real world and society and to discover how to participate in the transformation of their world.

Secondly, it is necessary to transform the classroom – the site where we exercise the most important part of our profession – into a space for collaborative learning. It must be transformed into a place in which we put into practice a basic principle: no one educates anyone, nor does one educate himself. Rather, people educate each other through the mediation of the world, in reciprocal and horizontal relationships. Having transformed the classroom into a community of inquiry (Kennedy, 2012), we break with the banking model of education, ceasing to be the repository of knowledge and norms of behavior that we transmit to our students, simply so that they can incorporate and reproduce that knowledge and those norms. This also breaks with a scheme in which the teacher is the center of the educational relationship. Rather, s/he seeks a multipolar relationship in which teachers play a basic role, yet neither exclusive nor central. Children need to realize that learning relationships develop in different directions. Of course they go from teacher to student, but also from student to teacher and, most importantly, from one student to another.

Thirdly, we do not have to limit ourselves to what we do within the four walls of the classroom; it is also necessary to transform the entire school into a just community in which students participate directly in all aspects related to the governance of the school. These include: deliberating about the pedagogical organization; participating in the elaboration of school regulations and in the resolution of conflicts; and intervening in the design of the educational project, as well as in the adaptation of the general educational goals to the specific school and class group in which they are learning. This is what is already being attempted in democratic schools, but anarchists want to advance towards a model that goes beyond democracy, towards an autonomous self-organization of the school. They do not even

limit themselves to what happens in the school, but seek to relate to the social environment to which it belongs, involving families first, and later on, the community in which the school is located.

It is easy to understand that the difficulty of the task grows as we spread over wider spheres. In the classroom environment, where the core of the pedagogical relationship develops, the capacity of teachers to implement an alternative model is fairly broad, although there can be obvious difficulties, and conflicts may occasionally arise with school management or with the educational administration (Gabbard, 2012: 34-35). It is more difficult to influence the modification of the life of the center, so it is important to create working groups within the school to share experiences and activities that broaden the scope of educational transformation. Beyond the school, it is important to join the pedagogical renewal movements that are actively involved in the transformation of education (García Moriyón, 2009).

More specifically, it is important to get involved in the activity of the anarcho-syndicalist teachers' unions which place at the center of their direct actions the profound modification of working conditions. It also wants schools to advance towards models of radical democracy, that is, of acrobat education, since *acracia* is the best example of democracy: it seeks not only to divide and control power, but also to advance towards a complete disappearance of the relations of power and domination.

3. Comprehensive anarchist political intervention

The option of introducing anarchist education within public compulsory formal education is also based on the premise that the education system is not only the mold of consciences and an institution of social control. It is also the social environment in which the most vigorous and influential human efforts are made to achieve the kind of universal education that allows people (students, teachers and families) to more effectively face the many complex mechanisms of oppression. In this sense, its contributions have been very important, as shown by the substantial increase in the population's capacity to understand and criticize the world around them. At the same time, if certain conditions are met in schools, there can be radically supportive and democratic forms of coexistence, much more so than in any other institution. Last but not least, the formal school is an adequate and effective environment in which to fight against the ignorance that is a major instrument of control (or *el alimento de la esclavitud* – a motto repeatedly used by anarchists).

Furthermore, there are strong pedagogical currents in the world of formal education that vindicate a critical pedagogy, which follow proposals that have always been present in contemporary formal education, such as the movement for the new school that was very active between the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Without being anarchist themselves, many of their theses also coincide with the propos-

als of libertarian pedagogy. It is enough to consult 'Critical Pedagogy' on Wikipedia to get a first impression of the amplitude of this educational trend, with fuzzy limits and with different pedagogical, philosophical and political assumptions. Anarchist thinkers often cite authors as diverse as Deleuze, Foucault or Rancière (May, 2009), so that the relation between critical, progressive or new education and anarchist pedagogy are rather circular and work in both directions: anarchist thinkers enrich the current of critical education and these innovative trends influence anarchist educators. If we pay attention to the official documents promoted by international organizations and especially governments, we find that they set partly contradictory objectives for education. On the one hand, a selective and meritocratic approach conditioned by the current neoliberal economic policy is a priority (OECD, 2009), although those same official documents include the need to promote justice, democratic participation and equality (Council of Europe, 2017).

According to a famous biblical quotation from Proudhon, *Destruam et edificabo* (Tear down and build), the strategy of anarchist intervention is twofold. On the one hand, it is essential to carry out a harsh critique of present society, which obviously includes denouncing the structures and practices that uphold domination and exploitation. This includes a steady critique of the school institution in terms of its role in the reproduction of the system of exploitation and domination. Obviously, criticism should not simply be denunciation, but should rather help structures and situations of domination to disappear. This will require different tactics adapted to each situation, if possible within the framework of active nonviolence and civil disobedience, even though these pacifist formulas are frequently questioned in terms of the extent that they end up perpetuating what they intended to change (Gederloos, 2007; Dejean, 2016).

Both in the phase of destruction or deconstruction of existing structures and in the construction of alternatives, what is important is the use of direct action, that is, that the interested parties themselves take control over the solution of their problems, and of the difficulties they face (Graeber, 2009). In the world of education, this means not waiting for education authorities, trade unions or other types of NGOs to approach and resolve what is happening. This is what teachers, but also students, have to do: learn to take control of their own lives – not individually and competitively, but by seeking cooperation with those who suffer from the same problems. It is necessary to intervene directly in education, bypassing the structures of state administration from which neither permission nor justification is required (DeLeon, 2008).

Direct action is closely linked to two other proposals of anarchist political philosophy that apply to education. The guiding thread of an organization must be self-governance, that is, the direct involvement of all the people who form part of the organization in its governance and decision-making processes. This includes deliberating about the ends sought by the institution – what kind of education it is looking for or what is meant

by a well-educated person – as well as the means needed to achieve those ends. All this is done through various processes of assemblies and deliberations, where it is important to reach consensus that enjoys sufficient acceptance, yet at the same time has the flexibility to accept a variety of concrete applications of these decisions. An interesting model that can inspire concrete practices of self-government and direct action is that offered by the Zapatista movement – not strictly anarchist, but with profound similarities (Khasnabish, 2012).

Any anarchist intervention to transform social structures, particularly education, must always ensure that the means employed are consistent with the ends pursued. In formal education, bureaucratic classification, measurement, control, discipline, compulsoriness, etc. are all means that in themselves provoke what is sought: the formation of individuals who will end up being obedient citizens, incapable of questioning the functioning of society, people who accept as a vital personal project what contemporary society offers: a competitive individualism that manifests itself through consumption and climbing up the social hierarchy, in order to increase one's ability to consume and attain the accompanying social prestige. Ethics and anarchist politics insist, therefore, on changing the means (Franks, 2006), which implies rejecting purely instrumental reason, while maintaining morally founded reason, that is, a reason of ends or valued rationality. To paraphrase Martin Luther King, freedom and mutual aid are not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.

Anarchist education is an integral way of teaching that puts into practice, here and now, a different way of teaching, modelling the transformative power of our educational proposals. Our educational praxis is an effective incarnation of the kind of human society in which we want to live and a practical demonstration of the kind of people we want to be. One of the most suggestive concepts of anarchist political action is "prefiguration" (Graber, 2002). This direct action is indicative of the reflexivity of anarchist methods which not only react against existing conditions but are also 'self-creative' (Franks, 2006).

The idea is to create spaces that provide greater freedom and organizational capacity based on mutual aid. Anarchists seek to prefigure that which they are looking for. As applied to education, this means that anarchist education does not seek to teach children to be anarchists, it is not an alternative model of indoctrination. Rather, it is a perspective and activity that puts into practice educational models based on fundamental principles of anarchism, in such a way that students and teachers change their own lives in a radical and deep sense. Anarchist teachers create alternative systems and structures of teaching in their own classrooms, to demonstrate the viability of their ideals, to visualize that a different way of teaching is not a utopian proposal or a dream, but rather a very real pedagogical relation that is happening here and now. An education that embodies and prefigures the basic aspect of anarchism: a steady critique of the current social 'order', collective direct action, self-organization, mutual aid and a value

rationality, a reason interested in ends, not only in means. And the most important thing is that any class or lesson that approaches this model is a "prefiguration", a creative event (the moment of the *Kairos*), "a concept of the present as that of the here-and-now, in which splinters of messianic time are shot through" (Benjamin, 1974: XIII, A) and a deep personal experience, insofar as it provides a foretaste of what a truly democratic society might be like (Graber, 2009: 235). "Only by making one's form of organization in the present at least a rough approximation of how a free society would actually operate, how everyone, someday, should be able to live, can one guarantee that we will not cascade back into disaster" (Groubacic & Graeber, 2004)

4. A libertarian, anarchist, and *acrata* education

So far I have used the term anarchist mainly to refer to a global proposal that has also been known by other names, although 'anarchism' is the term that has gained the most prominence. I return to the three terms that have been used more or less frequently, because they can help to make even clearer the richness of an education inspired by anarchist principles and the possibility of implementing it here and now, both in schools that are specifically anarchist or very close to anarchism, as well as in state-run public schools that currently host the majority of children and adolescents.

4.1 Libertarian

A central concept for anarchism is that of personal freedom, to the point that anarchists have already been referred to as libertarians. This first occurred in France around 1850, then in Spain in the 1930s. In more recent times, some people have used the word to situate themselves within that political ideology, since it avoids the term 'anarchist', which is loaded with negative connotations in broad sectors of public opinion. In English, however, 'libertarian' is identified with groups that defend individual freedom within the framework of capitalism and the free market. It is important to bear this in mind in order to avoid confusion, given that although they do share some features, anarchists defend a very different concept of freedom (Long, 2017). Traditional anarchism has always been anti-capitalist and anti-free market.

The fundamental difference, as Bakunin rightly pointed out, is that anarchists link personal freedom to the sense of solidarity and mutual aid that are radical hallmarks of their political, social and economic proposal. Our personal freedom does not begin where the freedom of the other person ends, but rather where that person's freedom begins; that is, we can only be free in a world in which all human beings are free. As long as that situation does not occur, the exercise of our freedom will not be fulfilled (García Moriyón, 2019). My personal freedom is enriched by the freedom of oth-

ers and is only such if it is exercised by myself and recognized by other free people. Freedom in the liberal sense is not directly linked to the freedom of others. In fact, it usually provokes individualism and inequality. On the other hand, freedom is not granted – even less by the state or by law – but it is rather recognized, and in many contexts the struggle of human beings is a struggle for recognition of their full status as human beings.

It is important to bear this in mind in formal education, since, in principle, it is compulsory education: the child is obliged to attend and the family is responsible for this. Moreover, the state intervenes if it detects cases of truancy. The concrete way of deconstructing or overcoming the authoritarian and coercive character of the school is by generating – from the beginning – educational relations in the classroom based on what could be called an educational pact or contract. Such a contract is freely decided upon by the parties, and can be questioned at any time in order to revise or reform it. Yet it is a social contract which, with a solidarity-focused approach to freedom, imposes certain obligations to observe the pacts.

Experience shows that there is always a strong possibility of introducing the educational pact in the classroom. Although the academic curriculum is often determined by educational laws, this curriculum has to be adapted to each specific academic group. Within this context, the teacher can introduce a dynamic in which children are recognized as capable of participating in the decision regarding the specific topics to be addressed in the classroom (project-based learning) and the time to be devoted to them. In addition, the classroom is transformed into an ongoing community of inquiry that allows all its members to speak in conditions of equality, with the teacher's task originally focused on orienting the rigor and argumentative quality of the dialogue while avoiding a position of preference. With this approach, it is possible to face the actual diversity of students in an environment more conducive to the kind of free and cooperative teaching that makes it possible for each student to contribute to the classroom according to their capacity, and to receive from the classroom according to their needs (Kennedy, 2012). The exercise of freedom, understood in this way, is associated with equality by compensating for existing inequalities: it generates more equality, reduces segregation and fosters mutual aid (Suissa, 2008).

4.2 Anarchist

Literally, anarchism means the absence of bosses and the denial of hierarchies that go beyond the those that merely function relative to specific contexts and well-defined periods of time. The Greek meaning of the word anarchy is formed by the prefix an- or a-, which means the absence or the lack of, and the term ἀρχή (*arkhi*), which means ruler, director, chief or authority. Thus, the word anarchy, in itself, can be defined as without authority or without ruler. So we propose an education without chiefs, which means breaking with the intrinsic asymmetric relations that exist in the classroom between teachers and students and proposing a model of the

teacher as one who facilitates students' process of growth and self-empowerment. Teachers do not liberate students, nor do they empower them, but rather facilitate a process of self-liberation and self-empowerment, providing them with the cognitive and affective tools, habits and dispositions that will allow them to be themselves.

We are confronting one of the crucial problems of formal education. The relationship between teachers and students is characterized by profound inequality that goes beyond functional differences, that is, the different roles that each one plays. This relationship also goes beyond the different degrees of maturation development – both cognitive and affective – that children and adolescents have as stages previous to adult life. In everyday practice, teachers are closer to Platos's image of the philosopher king, or to the enlightened despot – much appreciated in the first decades of the Enlightenment – than to the image of a teacher-companion who offers support to children and teenagers in their process of personal growth. In contrast, we propose a different image which, by recognizing inequality and asymmetry, clearly restricts the tendency to impose, or even to liberate students ('for their own good', of course), and focuses on accompanying and guiding, i.e. educating. This is not an easy task, as evidenced by experiences such as Summerhill, and even more so, by the experience of the libertarian schools of the Weimar Republic (Schmid, 1936). Nevertheless, as noted above and further discussed below, there are effective strategies that can help us to break these asymmetric pedagogical relationships.

4.3 Acrata

Finally, we are entering into another, though less frequent central concept for understanding anarchism. Anarchists do not seek democracy, specially the actual liberal democracy; they want, as many other people, a true democracy, and for them that means advancing towards *acracia* (Bertolo, 2019). Nor does it simply attempt to divide power and establish a system of checks and balances to avoid its accumulation, but also undertakes a permanent process of fragmentation and deconstruction of power relations. This process goes beyond a critique of existing liberal democracies by proposing that no one should exercise power, given that power leads to domination and tends to increase the distance between those who hold power and those who do not. This makes it possible to establish an interesting and fruitful distinction between power, authority and domination (*Ibidem*). It also goes beyond direct democracy, because once we recognize a holder of power, be it the people (democracy), the best qualified people (aristocracy) or the techno-scientific experts (technocracy or epistocracy), we are giving up being the subjects of power, or empowered people. This can only be achieved by recognizing the genesis of the power that inevitably arises in the bosom of common life and by introducing a constant process of deconstruction of power relations, which in the field of education implies blurring, as far as possible, the differences between teachers and students.

This profound leveling of power relations in the classroom requires increasing horizontal forms of organization, which leads us to transform classrooms into safe and free spaces and environments, genuine inquiry communities in which we put into practice cooperative learning based on relevant work projects. This also requires challenging the power kernel in the pedagogical relations of formal education – the processes of qualification and selection – transforming them into processes of evaluation and learning. School marks are more than just a source of anxiety and pride among students. They should become a tool to focus on the goals to be achieved in the educational process by students and teachers. Evaluation serves the primary purpose of promoting student learning by informing students about their progress, alerting teachers about their students' needs, and certifying the degree to which students have mastered the tasks and competencies valued by students, teachers, schools and even by society. But schools that reduce evaluation to grading and giving marks – a process entirely in the hands of teachers – becomes a school that segregates, classifies and hierarchizes, thereby justifying meritocracy and legitimating social reproduction. All the same can be said of the control of living together and of the norms of the inner regime, with its system of sanctions and punishments (Foucault, 1975). School classrooms become a central institution of social control, via grades, students' records, sanctions and punishments.

An anarchist practice of education requires overcoming both the system of grades and that of awards and punishments. It is entirely possible – within the framework of the school contract of which I spoke above – to negotiate with students the goals to be achieved in the academic year, to negotiate the indicators to be used to gauge the extent to which those goals have been achieved, and to open the door to their direct participation in evaluation and grading. It is also possible to abolish all systems of sanctions, prizes and punishments, by seeking conflict resolution practices based on mediation between equals and on the open discussion of differences, in order to find solutions to the problems that coexistence always provokes. To the extent that we move into this direction, current education can more closely approach that of an anarchist, libertarian and *acratica* education.

5. Conclusion

Be realistic, demand the impossible! This slogan became famous in France in May 1968 – a period of social revolution in which anarchism had a notable presence and contributed by giving a certain identity to the social uprising of students and workers.

That motto is useful in summarizing the fundamental contribution of this article. The anarchist educational proposal, which has always been so important within anarchist theory and practice, is a realistic proposal, although many call it impossible. Not only is it a matter of providing a harsh, albeit well-deserved criticism of the negative side that predominates

in the current education system, but also of trying to offer an alternative way of practicing education, radically transforming the usual way of teaching and learning.

Under the cobblestones, the beach! Another slogan from 1968 that reminds us that under the boring, oppressive and repressive environment of usual teaching in a compulsory school lies the joy of learning. We don't need no education, we just long for enriching education. And it is here, breaking another brick in the wall.

Guided by the force of anarchism (anarchy, freedom and *acracia*) and the tactics they have been used to change society (direct action, self-management, mutual support) it is a fact that other ways of educating and learning can be put into practice, ways that, by being based on freedom, mutual support, empowerment, etc., foreshadow an alternative education and point to a different society, without domination or exploitation.

References

Angout, J.C. (2014), "Bakunin, Carl Schmitt et le mythe de la bonne nature", in *Refractions*, n. 33, pp. 91-100.

Appiah, K. A. (2018), "The myth of meritocracy: who really gets what they deserve?", www.theguardian.com/news/2018/oct/19/the-myth-of-meritocracy-who-really-gets-what-they-deserve, access July 4, 2019.

Benjamin, W. (1974), "On the Concept of History", in Id., *Gesammelten Schriften I:2*, Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp Verlag.

Bertolo, A. (2019), "Poder, autoridad, dominio: una propuesta de definición. Más allá de la democracia", in Id., *Anarquistas y orgullosos de serlo*, Barcelona: Fundación Salvador Seguí, pp. 117-150.

Bowles, S. & Gintis, H. (1976), *Schooling in Capitalist America: Educational Reform and the Contradictions of Economic Life*, New York: Basic Books.

Briscoe, F.M. (2008), "Anarchist, Neoliberal, & Democratic Decision-Making: Deepening the Joy in Learning and Teaching", in *Anarchism, Education and Alternative Possibilities. Educational Studies*, vol. 44, n. 2, pp. 76-102.

Chomsky, N. (2003). Peregrín Otero, Carlos (ed.). *Chomsky on Democracy & Education*. New York: Routledge Falmer, 2003.

Council of Europe (2017), *Learning to live together, Report on State of Citizenship and Human Rights Education in Europe*. Strasbourg: Council of Europe Publishing, www.coe.int/en/web/edc/report-on-the-state-of-citizenship-and-human-rights-in-europe, access July 4, 2019.

Dejean, M. (2016), "Mais que veulent vraiment les Black Blocs ? Entretien avec Francis Dupuis-Déri", in *Les Inrockruptible*, www.lesinrocks.com/2016/11/01/livres/actualite/veulent-vraiment-black-blocs-entretien-francis-deri/, access July 4, 2019.

Deleon, A. (2008). "Oh no, not the 'A' word! Proposing an 'anarchism' for education", in *Anarchism, Education and Alternative Possibilities. Educational Studies*, vol. 44, n. 2, pp. 122-141.

Franks, B. (2006), *Rebel Alliances: The Means and Ends of Contemporary British Anarchisms*, Edinburgh, UK: AK Press.

Foucault, M. (1975), *Surveiller et punir : Naissance de la prison*, Paris : Gallimard.

Gabbard, D. (2012), "Updating the Anarchist Forecast for Social Justice in Our Compulsory Schools", in R.H. Haworth (ed.), *Anarchist Pedagogies: Collective Actions, Theories, and Critical Reflections on Education*, Dexter, Michigan: PM Press, pp. 32-46.

García Moriyón, F. (ed.) (1986), *Escritos anarquistas sobre educación*, Madrid: Zero.

Id. (1996), "El profesor libertario", Ponencia presentada en el *I congreso de la Federación de Enseñanza de la C.G.T. Valladolid*, cgt.org.es/sites/default/files/IMG/pdf/El_profesor_libertario.pdf, access July 4, 2019.

Id. (2001), *Senderos de Libertad* (*Los anarquistas en los movimientos sociales*), Madrid: Libre Pensamiento, www.mundolibertario.org/archivos/documentos/FlixGarcaMoriyon_senderosdelibertad.pdf, access July 4, 2019.

Id. (2009), "Philosophy for Children and Anarchism", in E. Marsal, T. Dobashi & B. Weber (eds.), *Children Philosophize Worldwide Theoretical and Practical Concepts*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter & Lang, pp. 663-673.

Id. (2011), *El troquel de las conciencias. Una historia de la educación moral en España*, Madrid: De la Torre.

Id. (2019), "Libertad liberal, libertad libertaria", in *Libre Pensamiento*, n. 98, pp. 9-16.

Garland, C. (2012), "'We Teach All Hearts to Break': On the Incompatibility of Education with Schooling at All Levels, and the Renewed Need for a De-Schooling of Society", in *Educational Studies*, vol. 48, n. 1, pp. 30-38.

Gederloos, P. (2007), *How Nonviolence Protects the State*, theanarchistlibrary.org/library/peter-gelderloos-how-nonviolence-protects-the-state, access July 4, 2019.

Giroux, H. (1988), *Teachers as intellectuals. Toward a critical pedagogy of learning*, Wesport, CT: Bergin&Garbey.

Goodman, P. (1960), *Growing up absurd*, New York: Vintage Books.

Gordon, U. (2007), *Anarchy alive!: Anti-Authoritarian politics from practice to theory*, London: Pluto Press.

Graeber, D. (2009), *Direct Action: An Ethnography.* Oakland, CA and Edinburgh: AK Press.

Gribble, D. (2004), "Good news for Francisco Ferrer – how anarchist ideals in education have survived around the world", in J. Purkins & J. Bowen (eds.) (2004), *Changing anarchism: anarchist theory and practice in a global age*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, pp. 181-198, nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-271170, access July 4, 2019.

Grubacic, A. & Graeber, D. (2004), "Anarchism, or the revolutionary movement of the twenty-first century", in *Znet*, theanarchistlibrary.org/library/andrej-grubacic-david-graeber-anarchism-or-the-revolutionary-movement-of-the-twenty-first-centu, access July 4, 2019.

Heidenry, M. (2011), "My Parents Were Home-Schooling Anarchists", in *The New York Times,* www.nytimes.com/2011/11/13/magazine/my-parents-were-home-schooling-anarchists.html, access July 4, 2019.

Hern, M. (1998), "The promise of deschooling", in *Social Anarchism*, n. 25, p. 35.
Ibañez, T. (2014), "La nature humaine. Un concept excedentaire dans l'anarchism", in *Refractions*, n. 33, pp. 7-22.
Khasnabish, A. (2012), "To Walk Questioning: Zapatismo, the Radical Imagination, and a Transnational Pedagogy of Liberation", in R.H. Haworth (ed.), *Anarchist Pedagogies: Collective Actions, Theories, and Critical Reflections on Education*, Dexter, Michigan: PM Press, pp. 220-241.
Kennedy, D. (2012), "Lipman, Dewey, and the Community of Philosophical Inquiry", in *Education and Culture*, vol. 28, n. 2, pp. 36-53.
Kahn, R. (2009), "Anarchic epimetheanism. The pedagogy of Ivan Illich", in R. Amster, A. DeLeon, L.A. Fernández, A. Nocella II & D. Shanno (eds.), *Contemporary Anarchist Studies An introductory anthology of anarchy in the academy*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 125-135.
Long, R.T. (2017), "Anarchism and Libertarianism", in J.J. Nathan (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Anarchism and Philosophy*, Leiden: Brill, pp. 285-317.
Marshall, M. (1993), *Demanding the imposible. A History of Anarchism*, London: Fontanal Press.
Martín Luengo, J. (2016), *Paideia. 25 años de educación libertaria. Manual teórico-práctico*, Madrid: Fundación estudios libertarios.
May, T. (2009), "Anarchism from Foucault to Rancière", in R. Amster, A. DeLeon, L.A. Fernández, A. Nocella II & D. Shanno (eds.), *Contemporary Anarchist Studies An introductory anthology of anarchy in the academy*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 11-17.
OECD (2009), *Definition and Selection of Competencies (DeSeCo). Executive Summary*, OECD Publishing www.oecd.org/pisa/35070367.pdf, access July 4, 2019.
Id. (2012), *Grade Expectations: How Marks and Education Policies Shape Students' Ambitions*, OECD Publishing, dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264187528-en, access July 4, 2019.
Purkins, J. & Bowen, J. (eds.) (2004), *Changing anarchism: anarchist theory and practice in a global age*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-271170, access July 4, 2019.
Roderick, T.L. (2018), "Anarchism and Libertarianism", in N. Jun (ed.), *Brill's Companion to Anarchism and Philosophy*, Leide: Brill, pp. 285-317.
Ross, E.W. & DeLeon, A. (eds.) (2010), *Critical theories, radical pedagogies, and social education: New perspectives for social studies education*, The Netherlands: Sense Publishers.
Schmid, J.R. (1936), *Le maître-camarade et la pédagogie libertaire*, Neuchâtel: Delachaux et Niestlé.
Suissa, J. (2008), "Anarchism, utopias, and the philosophy of education", in *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, vol. 35, n. 4, pp. 627-646.
Volante, L. & Jerrin, J. (2018), "Education does not always equal social mobility", in *The Conversation*, theconversation.com/education-does-not-always-equal-social-mobility-106386, access July 4, 2019.

Finito di stampare
nel mese di dicembre 2019
da Geca Industrie Grafiche – San Giuliano Milanese (MI)