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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

© 2019 – MIM EDIZIONI SRL
Via Monfalcone, 17/19 – 20099
Sesto San Giovanni (MI)
Phone: +39 02 24861657 / 24416383

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Remaking Education at Anarchist-inspired Alternative School

Roy Danovitch*, Erica Eva Colmenares**

Abstract

This article explores the philosophy and practice of anarchist education within the context of an alternative middle and high school in an urban setting. It sets out to explore how educators within the field reconcile some of the tensions and conflicts at the heart of anarchist thinking, particularly as it pertains to its organizational structure and educational practices. To do this, the article begins by examining the history and practice of anarchist education, arguing for a recovery of its emancipatory, political roots, and a problematization of the neoliberal focus on management and performance, an approach that divests education of its political and ethical content. We then provide a concrete example of anarchism that informs the organizational practice of an alternative school animated by anarchist principles and radical traditions in education. We argue that the political challenges we face demand project-oriented schools characterized by dialogic governance and a relational approach to justice. Such schools may help us reimagine education to promote both individual and collective flourishing.

Keywords: *anarchist education; dialogue; relational justice; dialogic governance.*

1. Introduction

Broadly speaking, this paper explores the philosophy and practice of anarchist education within the context of an alternative middle and high school in an urban setting. It sets out to explore how educators within the field reconcile some of the tensions and conflicts at the heart of anarchist thinking, particularly as it pertains to its organizational structure and educational practices. As we will demonstrate at the outset, we view anarchism as a complex tradition that challenges hierarchal structures of power and authority, and envisions communities organized on the principles of freedom, dialogue, and mutual aid. While anarchism is frequently

* Columbia University.
** California State University.

viewed in libertarian terms (i.e., with an emphasis on individual freedom), we examine a reading of anarchist education that is concerned with questions of political and social power. This paper then examines the history and practice of anarchist education, arguing for a recovery of its emancipatory, political roots, and a problematization of the neoliberal focus on management and performance, an approach that divests education of its political and social power. We will end by providing a concrete example of anarchism that informs the organizational practice of an alternative school animated by anarchist principles and radical traditions in education. We argue that the political challenges we face demand project-oriented schools characterized by dialogic governance and a relational approach to justice. Such schools may help us reimagine education to promote both individual and collective flourishing.

2. Anarchy and Dialogue

> Dostoevsky possessed a brilliant gift for hearing the dialogue of his age, or, more precisely, for perceiving his age as a great dialogue, and for capturing in it not only individual voices, but above all the dialogical relationship between voices, their dialogical interaction. He heard both the dominant, recognized, loud voices of the age, that it to say, the dominant, leading ideas (both official and unofficial) and the still-weak voices, the ideas which had not yet reached full development, the latent ideas which no one had yet discerned, and the ideas which were only beginning to mature (Bakhtin, 2013: 93).

How can Bakhtin and Dostoevsky enrich our understanding of both the philosophy and practice of anarchist education? First, it is worth examining what Bakhtin means when he refers to Dostoevsky's ability to capture the great "dialogue of his age." It is not some kind of constitutive and preexistent identity to which he refers, but instead a dialogic interaction of trends, traditions, voices, and perspectives that are all placed in a relational context. This ceaseless interaction lends to Dostoevsky's novels a vitality and energy that defies fixed categories; each character is so fully individuated, not because he or she embodies a single idea, but because their very identities are unfinished. At the same time, Dostoevsky's great gift was providing an organizing framework for his characters that liberated their voices and maintained their complexity, without undermining the coherence of the larger narrative. In other words, his novels are not a "tyranny of structurelessness" to use Jo Freeman's phrase, but instead a democratic landscape characterized by constant and ceaseless interaction (Freeman, 1972). Within this space, as Wayne Booth remarks, characters are "respected as full subjects" but are not "fully defined or exhausted" (Booth, 2013: xxiii). In other words, they are not subordinated to the dominating plans, or schemes, of the author.

This strikes us as a heady but appropriate way to interrogate the meaning of anarchist education, a concept open to a wide variety of interpretations and applications. While it is certainly true that the traditions of progressive and democratic education defy easy classification, a characteristic feature of anarchism is its explicit rejection of prescriptive models and blueprints. As Rudolph Rocker noted, anarchism is not:

> a fixed, self-enclosed social system but rather a definite trend in the historic development of mankind, which, in contrast with the intellectual guardianship of all clerical and governmental institutions, strives for the free unhindered unfolding of all the individual and social forces in life (Rocker, 2004: 17).

Similarly, as Judith Suissa has remarked:

> a fundamental aspect of the anarchist position is the belief that the exact form which the future society will take can never be determined in advance; the creation of a harmonious, free society is a constant, dynamic process of self-improvement, spontaneous organization, and free experimentation (Suissa, 2010: 151).

For this reason, as Suissa recalls the American-born educator Homer Lane saying, there may be no such thing as an anarchist education, but only educational experiments, or projects, animated by anarchist values (*Ibidem*). These values include a commitment to freedom, spontaneity, and self realization, along with a resistance to coercive forms of hierarchy and authority. At the same time, the anarchist community is composed of diverse voices that coexist – but whose differences are never reconciled. In this sense, what characterizes anarchism is the fact that it remains a work in progress, rather than a fixed and finished system implemented by theorists or what Mikhail Bakunin described as "system builders" (Bakunin, 1970: 17). It is concerned less with expressing a single, unchanging identity, and more about creating a context for freedom to emerge in richer and more pluralistic forms.

A helpful way of understanding the project of anarchist education is through the concept of "assembly" as developed by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (2017). What is characteristic of assembly is its dialogic character – it seeks neither to banish verticality or fetishize horizontality, but instead to "take power differently, to achieve a fundamentally new, democratic society, and crucially, to produce new subjectivities" (Ibid.: xiv). Referring to failed social movements that only reincorporated systems of power and authority, Hardt and Negri explain that such movements "need to affirm their most incisive differences and most extensive pluralities, that is, as a multitude" (Ibid.: xx). In other words, they must explore experimental mechanisms of democratic management that situate power in the process of coming together – rather than any constitutive entity or

Rousseauian 'general will.' In this context, the polis or public becomes a space for new beginnings, where democracy can be created and invented beyond any centralized and autonomous sphere or center. In this way, the anarchist mode of organization focuses less on management, and more on fostering an ethic of encounter that affirms the political as a way of life.

3. Historical Models of Anarchist Education

So what do we mean when we talk about anarchist education or an anarchist pedagogy? This is perhaps too narrow of a question, considering that the values and practices associated with anarchism can be understood on a spectrum, from theorists who emphasize its radically libertarian dimensions, to those that linked freedom with a wider concern for political transformation. We draw this distinction in order to highlight key tensions and conflicts at the heart of anarchist thinking. Are we conceiving of anarchism in broadly individualistic terms, and viewing autonomy as the end goal of a truly liberating education? Or, do we view autonomy as inextricably linked with social struggle – a position that centers questions of power, class, and equity? How does anarchy deal with state and political power – by escaping its presence within self-governing collectives, or by cultivating class and political consciousness in schools embedded within urban contexts? These questions are particularly important if anarchist schools are to advance the larger aims of a radically democratic education, or simply enact a more utopian vision for those who can afford to escape from the harsh realities of power.

In his definitive treatment of anarchism and education in the United States, Paul Avrich (2006) identifies Francisco Ferrer as the lynchpin of a movement that inspired a wide variety of "Modern Schools". Inspired by libertarian and anarchist thinking, these Modern Schools emphasized self-direction, cooperative learning, and social justice, along with a critical orientation towards authority. Launched in 1901, one of the first Modern Schools was Ferrer's *Escuela Moderna* in Barcelona, where students:

> were imbued with the ideals of brotherhood and cooperation and with a sympathy for the downtrodden and oppressed. They were taught that war is a crime against humanity, that the capitalist system is evil, that government is slavery, that freedom is essential for human development (Ibid.: 7).

Escuela Moderna, like many of the Modern Schools which would follow, emphasized the process of learning, and stressed "the dignity and rights of the child, encouraging warmth, love, and affection in place of conformity and regimentation" (Ibid.: 11). The philosophers and educators that inspired Ferrer, and the Modern School movement more broadly, include Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Bakunin, Kropotkin, and Tolstoy, all of whom stressed the natural dignity and rights of the child, along with an

'integrated' approach to schooling rooted in discovery, exploration, and real-world problem solving – qualities that inspired progressive educators' adoption of the workshop model and experiential learning (Labaree, 1997; Nussbaum, 2010). Tolstoy's school, *Yasnaya Polyana*, for example, placed emphasis on equitable relations between teachers and students, favoring an "unconscious education" (Avrich, 2006) where learning would happen naturally, and education would lead to emancipation. The emphasis on "unconscious education" anticipated the work of Paul Goodman (2010) a century later, who argued that "incidental education" was a greater source of learning than the formal, teacher driven instruction of school.

Though Ferrer's *Escuela Moderna* was eventually shut down by the Spanish army, and Ferrer executed as a result of his school's anti-clerical, anti-colonial teachings, his work inspired the Modern School movement, which led to a host of small, grass roots, collaborative learning communities and inspired anarchist, libertarian, and socialist ideals. Many of those educational experiments are chronicled by Judith Suissa (2010) in *Anarchism and Education*, a text that reviews the political and philosophical assumptions underlying anarchist schools, along with 20th century models such as A.S Neill's Summerhill School and the Walden Center and School in Berkeley.

The more recent evolution of anarchist-inspired schools owes its influence to A.S. Neill, Paul Goodman, Herb Kohl, William Ayers, Ivan Illich, John Holt, and other educators who inspired the creation of hundreds of small independent schools across the United States and Europe. Despite their idealism, many of these schools either did not last or evolved into more traditional schools as they grew in size and complexity (Gray & Charnoff, 1986). In *Free Schools*, Jonathan Kozol argued that many of the educational experiments which emerged in the 1960s were politically non-controversial and culturally isolated, placing students in an "artificial context of contrived euphoria within a world of pain" (Kozol, 1972: 48), a critique echoed by scholars who argue that many alternative schools, particularly those outside the public school system, emphasize radical individualism at the expense of political solidarity. Kozol's testimony is supported by scholars like Lisa Delpit (2006) and George Dennison (1969), both of whom question progressive educational experiments that ignore questions of power and authority as they exist in urban spaces (Shor, 1996).

It might be helpful here to unpack the very real trends which have depoliticized schools ostensibly committed to freedom and democracy, enacting instead a form of schooling whose purpose and form is instrumental and oriented towards management or "soft socialization." This is especially important given the importance of concepts such as equality, freedom, and justice within anarchist thought and practice. As Michael Apple (2012) has noted, many of these concepts have been invested with a radically individualistic meaning that imagines students as individual choosers and consumers, rather than political beings and agents of social change. Similarly, the very nature of schooling has evolved into a monologue whereby

success is determined by the production of particular kinds of learners, citizens, and subjects. In the place of plurality, diversity, and complexity – a Bakhtinian congregation of diverse voices, traditions, and orientation engaged in a 'restless conversation' – we have what Michael Fielding (2012) describes as "the high performance learning organization" whose success is predicated on eliminating risk and maximizing efficiency. Adopting the imperatives and values of neoliberal reform, such schools have divested education of its ethical content in the name of productivity, performance, and personalization. The tenuousness of dialogue – which involves a recognition that we are constituted in and through relations with others – is replaced with a model that fosters interactions only the degree to which those interactions serve a functional or instrumental purpose.

Given these challenging trends, how do schools strive to recover and express a form of anarchist education that has a radically democratic character, one that dismantles traditional forms of hierarchy and control, while at the same time fosters new forms of individual and collective life? How might such a school be organized and structured? Our purpose in this next section is to highlight one such school – the Angeles Workshop School – and describe how it offers an emancipatory vision of education inspired by many of the principles and practices of anarchism.

4. A Radical Alternative: the Angeles Workshop School

> The community room is the only non-enclosed space at Angeles, an independent alternative school that looks like a cross between a polling station and a cultural center. The room itself is surrounded by bookshelves with copies of Michelle Alexander's (2010) *The New Jim Crow*, Howard Zinn's (2008) *People's History of American Empire*, a series of pamphlets on neurodiversity, and even a published copy of one of the school founder's dissertation, exploring how immigrant science teachers from Africa apply social justice in their curricula. The room has a worn in, lived in feel to it: partially stained carpet, low lying black craftsman table, and pillows chaotically assembled on the floor. On the white board a schedule is written out, with recent edits and changes marked in red. It is 9 am, and the school is gathered together for its Daily Forum, a space for both mindfulness, open dialogue, and shared governance. But there are no bells marking the beginning of the session, and judging by where students take their seats, no rigid grouping or seating plans either. Twenty-five students of different age levels (11-17) sit together, alongside their teachers, who, outside of their size, blend in seamlessly. Suddenly, a meditation chime rings. With an inquisitive and casual tone, Scott, one of the school's founders, asks the group, 'So, how's everyone feeling? What's on your mind?' With these simple questions – an inquiry into what students were feeling and thinking – Daily Forum is officially underway. After a brief silence, students give brief reports on how they spent their weekends, interesting things they watched on televi-

> sion, things on their minds. After some sharing, Nick, an 8th grader, gestures that he has something to say. He is frustrated that Angeles students aren't respecting the ban on sugary soft drinks. 'We made an agreement, and no one's really listening, so we need to do better.' Most students agree; they had raised the issue several times before, and even discussed research on the addictive qualities of soda during Science class. But a few other students disagreed, in particular, Yalda, an 8th grader: 'That's so hard core, when I drink the soda I'm not harming anyone else, and even if some people think it's unhealthy, then why should it be banned? We ban things like racism and bullying, not like my preference for Pepsi, I actually came here so I could drink soda at school!'
>
> The students listened, and a few people appeared to agree. Ndindi, Scott's wife and co-founder of the school, asks students what they feel the difference is between norms, values, and rules. Suddenly, the tenor of the dialogue turns more reflective.
>
> What immediately becomes clear is that there is no prescriptive plan for this meeting; there are agenda items to cover – a proposal from the students to change the location of one of their 'City Days Exploration' trips, an Eco-Activist set to visit on Thursday, and a guided session focusing on coding – but what seems to take precedence is an open-ended dialogue about school agreements, current events, and community values that generates a wide range of perspectives and reflections. The give and take – interspersed with playful jokes and spontaneous references – infuses the community with a transgressive but fundamental reflective quality, as if it were authoring its identity without concern for traditional boundaries and roles.

In this section, we want to briefly describe how the principles and practices of anarchism shapes the educational approach of a self-described alternative 'workshop' school for middle and high school students in one of the largest urban cities in the United States. As we will explain shortly, the term workshop denotes something far deeper than an emphasis on project-based learning; as we would soon learn, the school embraces a much richer commitment to dissolving the barriers that separate work from play, and the vocational from the academic. As the opening vignette indicates, this was not a school governed by traditional structures, procedures, and routines; instead the school itself appeared to be entirely integrated, not just in terms of its co-educational and inclusive character, but also in terms of the space itself, which was organized to support creative and interdisciplinary encounters.

The school's website describes it as a radically alternative independent school for students in grades 5-12, one that is characterized by hands-on projects, role playing games, social justice curriculum, civic engagement, and a small environment with a sliding scale tuition. In its documents, the school describes its mission as "co-manifesting a learning environment that emboldens active participants in our world, and fosters analytical, self-motivated learners, engendering in them a profound love for commu-

nity, both global and local." It is thus deeply invested in both the individual, social, and political dimensions of student growth and development. In what follows, we outline two anarchist-inspired principles and practices that animate the school – its dialogic mode of governance and its relational approach to justice.

5. Dialogic Governance

Given the challenge anarchism poses to both authoritarian and permissive organizational structures, what are the systems, structures, and values that shape how the Angeles Workshop School works? What are its modes of governance and decision making? In the same way that Hardt and Negri argue for public spaces built on an ethic of encounter and experimental mechanisms of democratic management, the school's governance is built on dialogical principles. In his description of school as a "Third Way," David Kennedy notes that a school modelled on the principles of dialogue "is both experimental and emergent and guided by normative ideals; it is not a community that 'just happens', nor is it a community that is determined from above, by a hierarchy of power" (Kennedy, 2006: 174). Kennedy suggests that such a school is an intentional community; neither prefabricated nor structureless, but very much guided by the project of linking impulse and habit in the aim of social reconstruction. As one student at Angeles describes it:

> It's about the individuality mixing with the oneness. I don't know. That's the best way to describe it. You're not the only one here, there are teachers, students, but they help you find out who you are. They're different, but we all work together, but that's because we're always working on it, always trying to figure out why we're here and why we're doing what we're doing, that's the best I can explain.

Part of this process is made possible by the emphasis on dialogue. In such a setting, governance is a joint enterprise that involves co-authorship and continual sensitivity towards maintaining equitable relations of power. As the vignette illustrated, authority was not solely concentrated in any single person or administrator; it was a distributed feature of the school's community.

Yet there are also pragmatic reasons for the school's structural form. As the school's documents suggest, the school is "small and genuine," a quality that obviates the need for hierarchies, or what the school describes as "conventional policy making." Instead of delegating tasks and responsibilities to figures who make decisions on behalf of the community, the school itself explores problems, plans, and proposals during its Daily Forum – the primary space for collaborative decision making and philosophical reflection. Yet the Daily Forum is less about developing procedures and more about fostering meaningful encounters. As the school's accreditation documents explains:

> We have found that authentic, direct communication with all stakeholders is not only possible in a school of our own size, but is also highly preferable, and far more effective. As most conventional written policy is created a proxy for genuine, one on one understanding, we have found that the former is unnecessary because we have the latter. We have found that dialogue allows us to think through problems and issues in a manner that welcomes diverse viewpoints; we think dialogue allows us to make better decisions because the process itself is not fixed in stone, like certain forms of parliamentary procedure (WASC Materials).

Similarly, one student told us,

> I can't really remember all the decisions we've made, but I do know we always end up talking about how the school works, how to respect and think about alternative views, and just how to be conscientious of others. Also, everyone who comes here wants to know about how it works, but the truth is, it just does.

In this way, dialogue seems to plays a central role in the governance of the school. It involves a consistent pattern of openness, reciprocity, and mutuality, qualities that gave students the freedom to express themselves authentically, while also attending to the experience of fellow community members with whom they share space and construct meaning. Dialogic governance also serves as the medium and mechanism that allows for what Michael Fielding (2012) describes as "radical collegiality" – students and teachers working together to produce shared understandings and address issues of common concern. At Angeles, examples of radical collegiality included students and teachers working collaboratively to improve admission policies, enhance self-assessment practices, update the school's website, and formulate policies enshrining their commitment to non-discrimination. Meanwhile, the school's willingness to diversify the roles of community members – with students occasionally positioned as teachers, researchers, and citizens – only affirmed the school's commitment to anarchism as a more liberating form of individual and collective life.

6. Relational Justice

There is a further point worth discussing in regards to Angeles' approach to governance, one incorporated under the practice of relational justice, which Anthony Laden suggests rests on a process of intersubjective justification whereby "no one is in a position to rule arbitrarily over another" (Laden, 2013: 71). In describing the pedagogy of schools which view justice as central to their missions – and Angeles would certainly qualify as one – Laden suggests that the principle of equality should govern the relations between students and teachers. Laden argues

that these relationships do not obviate the need for hierarchy, and that hierarchy itself does not necessarily mean "arbitrariness of rule" (Ibid.: 73). Laden observes that hierarchy involves "having the status to make decisions or take actions that others cannot" (Ibid.: 71), a definition he suggests can be tempered by the practice of accountability and the exercise of reasonableness:

> In such cases, deference to one's authority must rest on earned trust and on the ability to justify one's decisions, neither of which requires handing authority to one's subordinate [...]. One way for an educational environment at any level both to value reasonableness would be to place the practice of intersubjective justification at the heart of its organizational structures and norms and to reward and encourage those who properly demand and offer justifications, who show the proper responsiveness to others (*Ibidem*).

We include Laden's analysis here because we think it illustrates the value of making power the source of inquiry and reflection. Laden's emphasis on intersubjective justification and the corresponding example he provides – "a student could ask a teacher why a particular topic was being covered or why it was being taught this way, as well as why certain work was assigned or certain facts and interpretations were presented as they were" (Ibid.: 73) – is very similar to the kind of authoritative teaching theorized by Lawrence Kohlberg (1996). Authoritative teaching – unlike the polarities of authoritarian and permissive teaching – is built on the anarchist premise that authority is not self-justifying. Its justice is predicated on its ability to withstand critical scrutiny, and make itself endlessly negotiable between persons.

Laden's picture of relational justice – along with the practice of philosophical dialogue – finds expression in many of the practices at Angeles. As seen through the vignette of the Daily Forum, the decisions about scheduling, planning, curriculum – and even diet – are framed in terms of reasons, with ample room for students to evaluate the merit of such motives, and offer proposals of their own. In the science class, for example, students and teachers collaboratively propose and discuss topics – from the Drug War to the Physics of Skateboarding – to make the curriculum more relevant and responsive to student interests, and the wider social context of the school. As one student stated:

> What I like about Angeles is the fact that the influence of the teachers is sort of out in the open; they don't use their influence to kind of determine things for us, but to get us to provide good reasons for what we want to do. The more they listen to us, the more we listen to them.

Patrick, the literacy teacher, suggested that justice and power were distributed features of the school environment:

> But who has authority? I'd say it's just part of the social dynamic in the school. But the kids have a tremendous amount of it. They self-dictate and self-police in a productive way more often than not. And, of course, you know, the teachers here, we have the authority but I feel like it's not just handed down from God kinda, you know, 'Listen because you have to.' I feel like they respect the people that are educating here. And if that's the case, we're off to a good start.

The emphasis on authority as part of the "social dynamic in the school" suggests that the very meaning and nature of justice was contestable, not just in the formal space where the school makes decisions, but throughout the environment more broadly. In this way, the school did not attempt to either vacate or dissolve questions of power, but instead used it as a basis for reflection and investigation. In this way, the school expresses one of the critical features of anarchist education – its commitment to making authority and power a transparent and negotiable feature of collective life – rather than the property of a remote or permanent leader who sharply delimits participation and dialogue about political matters.

7. Moving Forward

Centering anarchist inspired values and practices at the center of a school's organizational and pedagogical approach may sound enticing in theory, but how might this actually translate into meaningful and sustainable change, given all the pressures school face in meeting performance benchmarks and accountability standards in the neoliberal era? How to address claims that the anarchist vision for education and society is naive, romantic, and hopelessly unrealistic? These are questions with no easy answers, and perhaps accounts for the relative sparsity of genuinely radical educational models, particularly at the secondary school level. The clear challenge involved in making anarchism work hinges on management and control. As we have suggested, a school that is open, emergent, and dialogic is also one with no settled and final form. Similarly, a school that embraces complexity, and adopts a syncretic mixture of traditions and practices may find it challenging to communicate its approach in the language of monologue, or through the prism of a single, dominating voice. Families may also find such an approach too uncertain in an environment where particular outcomes are necessary in order to compete in a changing, fast paced economy.

At the same time such an approach to education is actually far more intentional and pragmatic than the reputation suggests. As our example demonstrated, the school was experimental in a manner that was firmly rooted in current realities and challenges. It was open to constant change and transformation, but also espoused a set of universal values that gives

its model a particular shape and form. Scholars have used the term "radical incrementalism" (Unger, 1998), "prefigurative practice" (Fielding & Moss, 2010) and "speculative pragmatism" (Manning, 2016) to characterize institutions and knowledge forms that transcend rigid classifications, and remain open to the relational character of experience. Such approaches are necessary because they provide "practical instantiations of lived alternatives" (Fielding, 2012: 17) and "provide an anticipatory image of broader transformations" (Ibid.: 19) This is just what Angeles set out to do; it was on the one hand critical of the ideology surrounding traditional school, and on the other *practically* committed to working towards social, educational, and political transformation – aspirations which anchor the anarchist imagination. This vision is what invested the identity of the school with a clear political shape, but one that remained open to change, interpretation, and possibility.

For this reason, educators interested in the relationship between anarchism and education should consider how such schools fit within a lineage of theoretical and educational traditions, rather than presuming such an approach requires envisioning something which has yet to exist. The tradition of radical education includes a diverse array of educational projects that have sought to affirm the dignity and rights of students, cultivate communities that embrace difference, and foster an ethic of encounter. Examples include Dewey's Lab School, the Reggio Emilia schools, and many of the schools associated with the Modern School movement and radical common school tradition. A number of scholars – David Kennedy (e.g., 2017a; 2017b), Alexander Sidorkin (e.g., 1999), and Michael Fielding (e.g. 2007; 2012) – have also provided a thoughtful and theoretically rich sketches of schools premised on the power of dialogue. Such schools do not not see themselves in one way; neither do they attempt to paper over differences, conflicts, and tensions that inevitably characterize compulsory education. Instead, in the tradition of anarchism, they explore educational alternatives where the related goals of individual and social reconstruction can be meaningfully pursued.

Ultimately, whether an anarchist education works or not is the wrong question to pose; the more pressing pursuit is thinking about the important work of creating schools that meaningfully aspire towards a more humane and pluralistic form of democratic life. This in itself is an ethically worthwhile endeavor, one that treats individuals as subjects capable of authoring and shaping their own realities.

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