

Book reviews

Bara, F. E., Fuentes, J. L., Ibáñez-Martín, J. A., Naval, C. y Jover, G. (Coords.) (2024).

Filosofías para la Universidad.

Octaedro. 264 pp.

Since the founding of the first university institutions in the early Middle Ages, academic debate on the key issues surrounding university education has been constant. Thus, the book *Philosophies for University*, coordinated by Francisco Esteban Bara, Juan Luis Fuentes, José Antonio Ibáñez-Martín, Concepción Naval and Gonzalo Jover, seeks to address the timeless questions that remain difficult to answer: “What’s university for?” and “What’s the purpose of university education?” These questions are addressed through a compilation of contributions from various authors in the field of the Theory and Philosophy of Education, organised by topic under three broader parts. Part 1 focuses on the relationship between university and society, dealing with matters such as university policy, the social impact of these institutions, and civic engagement at university. Part 2 reflects on teaching staff, students and university pedagogy, focusing on issues such as the roles of teaching staff, university participation and the content to be delivered. Finally, Part 3 explores the role of universities and the challenges they face in the 21st century.

Part 1, “University and Society”, consists of five chapters that include a range of perspectives on modern university education, offering a substantially accurate overview of the influence this institution has on society. Both David T. Hansen (Chapter 1) and Francisco Esteban Bara (Chapter 3) criticise university utilitarianism, which reduces the role of the university to the mere preparation of students for employment. To oppose this leaning and address the humanising mission of university, the former places the responsibility on teaching staff to offer a classroom environment that cultivates the democratic imagination, which must be governed by forms of mutual interaction. The latter, meanwhile, underlines the importance of university conversations in stimulating the spirit and mind. In Chapter 2, José Antonio Ibáñez-Martín examines the core elements that must define the university style: authentic freedom, together with the search for truth and good, which guide personal and social life. He emphasises, once again, the role of the teacher in achieving these ends.

In Chapter 4, Juan García-Gutiérrez and Marta Ruiz Corbella offer interesting reflections on the humanising nature of Artificial Intelligence in Education (AIED), and conclude by emphasising the current educational challenge of promoting the autonomy, freedom and reason of human beings in the face of the overwhelming technological

boom. Finally, Victoria Vázquez-Verdera and Juan Escámez-Sánchez bring Part 1 to a close with a critique on the utilitarian stance of universities, arguing that it perpetuates privilege and hinders the creation of environments in which everyone can develop their full potential. They therefore call for a rethink of both curricula and the functions of university education.

Part 2 of the book focuses on the various members of the university community, as well as on *what to teach* at university. Amanda Fulford makes the first contribution with a commentary on the aesthetics of university performance, distinguishing it from the metrics that pervade the academic sphere due to the pressure to demonstrate results. She therefore argues that we must recognise the intrinsic value of university practice beyond the profits it may generate. In the chapters that follow, Josu Ahedo and Aurora Bernal Martínez de Soria examine the role of the university Professor. The former argues that their role is to support the student in the pursuit of happiness, while the latter stresses the importance of the teacher's educational leadership in restoring the meaning of education at university.

In Chapter 9, Cruz Pérez Pérez and Vicent Gozávez Pérez underline that, although there must be a balance between theoretical and practical content, the most important thing is to properly reflect on the essential elements that will give meaning to university learning. Along these lines, Roberto Sanz Ponce and Elena López-Luján call for the inclusion of citizenship education in teacher education programmes, so that future teachers know how to deal with it in the classroom. Teresa Yurén concludes this section with contributions from Hegel, Ricoeur and Honneth, and claims that learning is, above all, an educational process based on an ethical relationship of recognition and commitment.

The five chapters that comprise Part 3 of the book seek to answer questions such as: "What is the primary task of higher education?" and "what challenges are currently being faced by university education?" Ana Hirsch Adler is the first to venture an answer to this last question, highlighting aspects such as new technologies, the internationalisation of universities, educational innovation and the development of skills such as critical thinking and global citizenship. In Chapter 13, Juan Luis Fuentes refers to "intellectual virtue", which rests on the pursuit of knowledge for the sake of knowledge itself. He also introduces the idea of "wonder" for moral education, exploring "historical consciousness" as an experience of wonder that paves the way to wisdom and happiness.

Meanwhile, María G. Amilburu highlights the identity crisis that universities are currently facing due to the systematic attack on freedom of thought and expression, resorting to the term *wokeism*. To reverse this situation, she proposes educating people capable of thinking for themselves, using dialogue and mutual learning as means to achieve a better understanding of reality and society. Anna Pagès supports this author's position, while noting the false belief that universities can remain neutral in the face of social problems as the cause of this lack of freedom. Miquel Martínez goes further and argues that, while it is true that the university must be tied to society, society must, in turn, commit itself to honouring this institution and ensuring its improvement. Therefore, he closes the chapter by presenting higher education not simply as a learning community, but also as the ideal place for the cultivation of civic and social engagement.

In short, the book has a prominent critical stance, and underlines the need for a shift in our thinking about university practice in order to overcome the identity crisis currently being faced by this institution. The combination of in-depth theoretical reflections and practical proposals for solving this problem offers a solid basis for real change in this area. Thus, reading *Philosophies for University* will be especially enriching for university teaching staff, as it can better their understanding of current challenges in education and offers workable solutions for leading change. Nevertheless, any reader or researcher in

the field of education will also find this book a source of inspiration in questioning and redefining their own perspective of university and its true purpose in society.

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Monge López, C. (coord.) (2025).

Mediación de conflictos y ayuda entre iguales en Centros de Educación Infantil y Primaria.

Morata. 294 pp.

School harmony is central to current academic reflection in the field of Educational Sciences, while also representing a priority concern for schools themselves and a key factor in assessing the quality of contemporary educational systems. Beyond the simple matter of maintaining order and discipline, school harmony is inextricably linked to the holistic development of the pupils, to educational equity, and to the construction of democratic and inclusive school communities. With this in mind, the book reviewed here offers a meaningful and timely contribution to the study and improvement of school harmony.

The book collates contributions from various theoretical, methodological and practical perspectives, seeking to provide a well-founded approach capable of being applied in real situations. The text's pluralistic focus makes it useful for researchers and academics who wish to deepen their analysis of the concept, as well as for educators who are committed to implementing effective strategies to improve school harmony.

Through ten chapters, the voices of different authors take us from the theoretical foundations of the field to real-world experiences in schools. These include mediation practices in conflict resolution, peer support initiatives, and proposals for institutional reorganisation aimed at building fairer, more inclusive school climates.

Chapter 1, "School harmony: conceptual framework, risk factors and protective factors", offers an up-to-date review of the scientific literature on school harmony, addressing its conceptual evolution, benefits, challenges and main approaches. It includes references to recent policy and examines risk and protective factors from an ecological perspective, highlighting the key role of social and emotional skills. This chapter offers a solid theoretical framework, which underpins the practical proposals offered in later chapters, and is useful for both researchers and educators seeking to base their practice on evidence.

Chapter 2, "The competence to deal positively with school conflict: the culture of mediation through the subject of Physical Education", suggests that Physical Education is the ideal context in which to promote school mediation, taking advantage of the heavily relational aspect of team play and cooperation. Through a dual process of research and action, it aims to reduce competitiveness, foster collaborative learning and position teachers as a model of non-punitive conflict management. The chapter offers a concrete proposal based on the experience of CEIP de Cullera (Valencia), with practical implications for integrating harmony across all areas at school.

Chapter 3, "Managing harmony in early childhood and primary education through restorative circles and spaces for learning to resolve conflicts", presents three school experiences aimed at improving harmony in the early stages of education. Two of them focus on the use of restorative circles to foster dialogue and peaceful conflict resolution, while the third focuses on emotional learning and conflict management from a preventive approach. These experiences all share the goal of strengthening pupils' social and emotional competencies, helping to create more inclusive, empathetic and cohesive school climates. This chapter is particularly valuable in showing that it is possible to work on building more empathetic, inclusive and resilient school communities from an early age, recognising harmony as the backbone of the educational mission.

Chapter 4, “New challenges for school mediation in early childhood and primary education”, offers a critical review of the role of mediation in the current context of education in Spain, highlighting how it has been established over time and its basis in current policy. The text explores the concept of mediation in depth and outlines different methods adapted to early childhood and primary education, specifying the competencies required for its effective implementation. Particularly noteworthy is the inclusion of restorative justice practices, which go beyond the traditional approach by proposing non-punitive alternatives focused on repairing and strengthening community ties. This chapter deals with the essential points to redefine mediation as an evolving pedagogical tool.

Chapter 5, “Experiences of peer support schemes in early childhood and primary education: implications and possibilities”, underlines the educational value of peer support schemes as a strategy for strengthening interpersonal relationships in the school environment. Based on pupils’ voluntary commitment, the chapter deals with a range of practices such as peer mentoring, the friendship bench, the calm corner or the hugging chair, which promote cooperation, empathy and mutual support from an early age. These initiatives have significant pedagogical potential to foster greater school harmony through inclusion and support.

Chapter 6, “The role of collaboration: from peer mentoring to peer counsellors for greater inclusion and harmony in schools”, focuses on the role of the peer counsellor as an effective peer support resource. This strategy aims to tackle the social and educational exclusion of the most vulnerable pupils by creating supportive connections and offering positive role models. The chapter also addresses peer mentoring and the competencies needed to perform these roles, underlining their contribution to greater school harmony, inclusion and supportive school environments.

Chapter 7, “Evaluation of a peer support scheme to reduce stigma towards people with mental illness in primary school pupils”, addresses the need to combat mental health stigma from an early age. The text reviews a range of formal educational initiatives and proposes a concrete intervention based on peer support. It also outlines the results of an exploratory study with pupils, which showed positive outcomes in terms of stigma reduction, thereby reinforcing the value of these strategies in fostering more inclusive attitudes in schools.

Chapter 8, “Reasoning in pairs: a peer tutoring scheme for cooperative problem-solving of everyday mathematical problems”, focuses on the relationship between tutor and mentee, particularly how it can support curricular learning and help build inclusive classroom environments. The text describes the “Reasoning in pairs” scheme, which is based on peer tutoring, and explains its objectives, teaching resources and practical examples applied to mathematics, which will be of interest to teachers. The chapter concludes with empirical evidence, supporting the positive impact of the proposal both on academic performance and on achieving greater school harmony.

Chapter 9, “Mediation and peer support in primary schools in the Region of Madrid: a qualitative study”, presents research based on interviews with welfare and protection coordinators in schools in the Region of Madrid. The study reveals the persistence of uncivilised behaviour in the school environment, as well as the need to make further progress in achieving greater harmony. Through the committed voices of those leading the pursuit of greater harmony in schools, key aspects such as the use of peer support schemes, their perceived benefits, and their strengths and weaknesses are examined. The chapter concludes with concrete recommendations for strengthening these initiatives and ensuring their positive impact on school culture, which will be of interest to both teachers and researchers.

Chapter 10, “Improving school harmony through the involvement of the entire educational community in a school for early childhood and primary education”, presents the experience of CEIP La Paloma, which since 2017 has been implementing a comprehensive strategy focused on peaceful conflict resolution, harmony and cooperation. By exploring

the perceptions of pupils and teachers, the chapter highlights the progress made thanks to the involvement of the entire educational community. This concrete experience underlines the value of collective commitment as a basis for building more harmonious and inclusive school environments.

As a whole, this volume offers a comprehensive, well-founded and committed overview of school harmony, offering both theoretical contributions and practical experiences that reflect the range of approaches and strategies currently being implemented in the education system. The ten chapters share a clear common thread: commitment to school harmony based on mutual respect, inclusion, the active involvement of the entire educational community, and the social and emotional development of the pupils. By collating research, tried-and-tested schemes and fresh initiatives, the book not only offers well-founded knowledge, but also serves as a reference guide for educators and researchers keen to transform school culture through a preventive, restorative and educational approach. Reading this book is highly relevant in the current educational context, which is calling for consistent and collaborative pedagogical strategies to address the challenges of school harmony.

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Martín, X. (coord.) (2025).

Pensar el aprendizaje-servicio. Ideas, teorías y corrientes.

Graó. 140 pp.

Political disaffection, especially among younger people, permeates the current context. Aspects such as social fragmentation, the growing rise of digital technologies and the urgent need to train professionals capable of responding to complex social problems are some of the current challenges facing higher education, especially at a critical time when multiple challenges are converging.

It is within this framework that the service-learning (SL) methodology emerges as an educational practice with the recognised capacity to connect the teaching-learning processes in community contexts in which certain socio-educational needs are observed, such that both the development of transversal social and civic competences and academic learning can be enhanced. Institutional support and recognition of this methodology has grown considerably, allowing its expansion from schools to local authorities and third-sector entities, to the point of being considered a valuable instrument capable of fostering citizen participation, the strengthening of community ties, and civic engagement.

The book *Pensar el aprendizaje-servicio. Ideas, teorías y corrientes* [*Thinking about Service-Learning. Ideas, Theories and Trends*], coordinated by Professor Xus Martín, compiles the contributions of sixteen specialists from different Spanish universities. The book is organised into four thematic sections and a total of twelve independent chapters, preceded by an introduction that sets out its core themes. Its purpose is to establish connections between service-learning and various specialists, pedagogical trends, theories and ideas so as to endow it with greater meaning.

The first thematic section focuses on values in SL. In the opening chapter, Josep Maria Puig Rovira initiates a reflection on the value spaces present in service-learning project. Drawing on the theory of social practices, he argues that this methodology possesses all the characteristics of true educational practice, as it combines action, meaning and community. Throughout his contribution, he addresses different value scenarios present in these projects across their various phases, such as identifying needs, the structure of the practices, praxis itself, and reflection. This author emphasises that the latter is one of

the essential elements in an SL project, since this is where a space is created for examining and affirming the values experienced throughout the project.

The second chapter, written by Professors Fátima Avilés Sedeño and Montserrat Payá Sánchez, introduces the concept of 'solidarity' as a transversal principle that runs through all phases of a SL project, from its design to its final evaluation. Their interdisciplinary approach, with philosophical and biological perspectives, enriches the debate and enables the conceptualisation of solidarity as a value that invites participants to live these experiences as transformative actions, thus helping to build more equitable and inclusive communities.

In the third chapter, Mónica Gijón Casares draws on gift theory to situate reciprocity and altruism as key elements in the formation of social ties. This paradigm challenges individualistic conceptions and the social system based on the logic of self-interest, presenting SL as a methodology whose theoretical foundations are based on the philosophy of the gift, which means that students improve social reality through altruistic and freely offered actions. From this perspective, they do not merely recognise social injustices, rather they become actively involved in carrying out actions that strengthen community participation.

The fourth chapter, by Xus Martín, deals with the ethics of care based on the contributions of Carol Gilligan, Seyla Benhabib, Nel Noddings and Joan Tronto. The author examines the importance of care in life, highlighting its scarce presence in the field of education. In view of this, she advocates for the need to develop educational practices that promote mutual care, establishing connections between solidarity, cooperation, daily care practices, ecofeminism and planetary ethics, reflected through specific SL experiences at different educational levels.

The second thematic section encompasses two fundamental issues for its consolidation as a methodology: the role of educational leadership and its institutionalisation at university level.

In the fifth chapter, Miquel Martínez Martín analyses the pedagogical strategy of SL and its contribution to the educational transformation we are in need of today. The consolidation of this methodology contributes to a culture immersed in educational leadership that supports a model encompassing relevant learning content, participation-based social practices, as well as those that lead to initiative, engagement, and involvement in communities.

In the sixth chapter, Alexandre Sotelino Losada, Ígor Mella Núñez and Mar Lorenzo Moledo analyse the various methodological proposals that have emerged to meet the needs of different groups, highlighting project-based learning, the flipped classroom, cooperative learning, challenge-based learning, design thinking and service-learning. The authors stress that all these methodologies promote more active participation among students, fostering their capacity for critical reflection, autonomy, and social participation.

SL stands out among them for its growing consolidation in the socio-educational field and for its bidirectional approach, since while students acquire educational, social and civic competences, the community receives support to address specific problems. Despite this, they also identify important challenges facing this methodology, such as the lack of stable funding, teachers' perception of its time-consuming nature, or the difficulty of including it in the official curriculum without the necessary institutional backing.

The third thematic section explores various theoretical and practical frameworks that have become particularly important in relation to SL, in its four complementary chapters.

In the seventh chapter, Miquel Àngel Essomba examines the dialectical relationship between community education and SL, and raises the question of why community education does not automatically develop when implementing these projects. In

order to answer this question, the author identifies four essential components for this relationship to be one of mutual reciprocity: awareness of the degree of communitisation of the educational environment; the generation of shared expectations that move from the individual to the collective; the mobilisation of people, resources and collaboration networks that were previously absent; and the construction of a collective identity that defines what the educational community wants to be and how it wants to be built.

In the eighth chapter, Marta Ruiz Corbella and Juan García Gutiérrez address the intercultural approach in SL. The authors review the concept of interculturality from a rights-based perspective, specifically cultural rights, connecting it to global citizenship education. They argue that interculturally oriented SL projects promote the recognition of cultural differences in societies aspiring to be democratic, open and plural. In short, the aim is to foster the development of critical capacity and recognition of the other, while acknowledging the conflicts and difficulties arising from the process in order to cultivate intercultural competence as a tool for democratic coexistence.

María Nieves Tapia devotes the ninth chapter to the connections between Paulo Freire and SL, focusing on the concept of conscientization and its relationship with two fundamental terms in Freirean thought: praxis and dialogue. The author draws connections between the life and work of Freire and the development of this methodology, identifying convergences between the two.

This author identifies four challenges for SL from a Freirean perspective: cultivating critical awareness in contexts of post-truth and artificial intelligence; learning to dialogue in times of extreme polarisation; practising transformative solidarity, which aims to create real changes in collaboration with other social agents; and fostering participatory citizenship in fragile democracies, understanding that democratic life must be regarded as a 'collective sport' in which young people exercise it in a practical way.

The tenth chapter, written by Brenda Bär, examines the points of convergence between SL and education for global justice. The author argues that this approach invites social organisations to engage in educational activities that go beyond the transmission of information regarding injustices through workshops, conferences, or the development of educational materials. Thus, the link between this methodology and education for global justice arises from understanding pedagogical action not only as a mere process of educating people to be engaged citizens, but also as equipping them with the capacity to transform and become involved in the face of injustice.

The final thematic section explores two fundamental issues in our current educational context: digital technologies and learning situations.

In the eleventh chapter, Anna Escofet Roig analyses the impact of digital technologies on education and, more specifically, on SL. Their widespread use in all areas of society has led to an unprecedented transformation in the way we relate to each other, communicate and learn. The author highlights the possibilities of connecting digital technologies and SL due to their potential for transforming educational processes. In this context, she suggests that projects using digital technologies contribute to the development of key life skills.

Jesús Vicente Ruiz Omecaña brings the book to a close in the twelfth chapter by exploring the possibility of transferring SL projects to formal educational scenarios through learning situations. The author suggests that a process of deep reflection is required to enable teachers to integrate this methodology into the curriculum, where it can be approached from different areas or subjects. In this way, he states that it is a valuable experience for the acquisition of cross-cutting competences in the teaching-learning processes themselves, while developing an individual and collective identity, and thus contributing to the community.

In light of the above, this collective work developed by sixteen specialists from different Spanish universities offers a panoramic view and, at the same time, further

examines the methodology of SL, providing it with the theoretical foundations and conceptual rigour necessary for its academic consolidation. Therefore, it is an ideal educational proposal, which links academic education with community engagement in order to cultivate critical and socially committed professionals and are committed to building democratic societies.

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Páramo, P. and Burbano, A. (coord.) (2025)

La investigación en el aula: maestros que aportan desde los colegios Maristas. Ediciones Maristas.

Ediciones Maristas. 189 pp.

Educational quality depends on an integrated curriculum, since it encompasses all aspects of school life and its context. This involves guiding principles and ideals towards the very core of knowledge. In our school reality, one of the key factors is the role of teachers and their professional development, which has a direct and significant impact on their students.

With this in mind, it is essential to highlight the role of the teacher in the classroom as a facilitator of knowledge, responsible for creating enriching academic spaces, including school research, with the aim of addressing the needs that arise in the classroom on a daily basis. These pedagogical approaches motivate teachers to reflect on their origins and to find in them the necessary impetus to offer students disruptive alternatives that allow them to appropriate knowledge effectively.

The book reviewed here is organised into nine chapters, which holistically address classroom research based on clear and organised principles. These chapters are the result of extensive work by a team of committed teaching professionals. From an objective perspective, each experience presented in this book reflects in its structure a series of practices that explore how the reality of the classroom is intertwined with social research, seeking to offer concrete answers to the needs of teachers regarding how to conduct research from within the school itself. The relevance of this document lies in its potential to provide guidance and support to teachers in their research work.

To be more precise, this book is based on experiences that teachers have encountered in their own educational realities. Aware of the importance of academia and pedagogical research, these teachers decided to further explore their understanding and application of such. They benefited from the collaboration of prominent researchers such as Dr Pablo Páramo and Dr Andrea Burbano, who contributed significantly to the development of their own research group, thus providing a fundamental approach to strengthening research skills in the classroom.

Based on the above, the first chapter of the book is an excellent compilation of different educational approaches to educational research in this field. These approaches encompass different perspectives on knowledge, providing solid parameters for dealing with classroom learning in the current era. Based on diverse educational contexts and realities in the school environment, the chapter describes active pedagogies that are bringing about significant changes. In these pedagogies, the student is positioned as the centre of learning, which is fundamental to the whole teaching-learning process.

It is also important to note that chapters two to seven form the very core of this book. These texts have been written by classroom teachers who are beginning to

recognise and harness their great potential. Beyond their daily interaction with students, these teachers have developed the ability to identify and analyse the pedagogical issues present in their schools. Through a systematic, organised and methodical study of their educational reality and thanks to specific and ongoing training, these teachers have been able to adopt new perspectives and approaches. In their writings, one can observe a constant search for ways of innovating regarding classroom interaction, combining the pedagogical field with profound academic reflection and new positions that are reflected in each of their approaches.

Therefore, these research reflections from a pedagogical perspective are organised in a methodological and practical way, offering an in-depth analysis into the aspects the authors wish to bring to the reader's attention. These reflections are not only aimed at the authors themselves, but also all those who are involved in the field of education. Consequently, the purpose of the work is not to present a definitive final conclusion, but rather to serve as a starting point for those who wish to explore education from a different perspective and with innovative parameters.

In this way, we find texts that address diverse methodological approaches, including emotional factors, self-assessment processes in the classroom, post-pandemic teaching, and reading comprehension. These texts offer us a broad and organised perspective based on the specific reality of each school, providing a solid basis for understanding the particular dynamics in which research is carried out. By means of an inductive approach, the research problem is posed and various methods are used to collect and analyse the information. Finally, conclusions and future lines of research for improvement in the pedagogical field are presented, reflecting a commitment to educational quality and progress in the field of pedagogical research.

Continuing with the development of the book, chapter eight focuses on mathematical thinking at pre-school level, an innovative proposal aimed at early childhood. This initiative is part of a project developed by the Marist Brothers in Colombia over 30 years, consolidating a methodology based on the ideals of constructivism and active pedagogies. The researcher presents a detailed proposal that seeks to strengthen teacher training in the different key moments for the development of mathematical thinking in young children. Through different phases, the proposal seeks to positively influence students' education and lay the foundations for future development in teaching mathematics in the school context.

Importantly, the ninth and final chapter focuses on ethical thinking, specifically under Kohlberg's principles and their normative implications. The authors of this chapter provide a detailed overview of moral education, presenting in a precise and organised way the steps that have marked the evolution of ethics in relation to school education. Different paradigms that have emerged from the moral and ethical construct are explored, as are the divergent positions of other authors regarding Kohlberg's theory, which has significantly enriched the debate. As a result, key factors such as the emotional dimension of the person and the recent proposal of normative case studies are highlighted, bringing diverse perspectives on educational ethics and the objectives of Education today, which occurs within a context of constant change and transformation that forms part of school life.

In short, this book brings together the pedagogical thinking of educators from different places, contexts and perspectives, united by their desire for a more relevant Education, one that is adapted to the realities of today's world. Through research processes, teachers can stay at the forefront of pedagogical thinking and explore new ways of understanding Education from an epistemological perspective, that is, from knowledge itself. It is important to note that the vast majority of the researchers who contribute to this book are classroom teachers who propose a different vision of Education,

with their own approaches and views. Thus, this book can be a valuable tool for many teachers who want to be part of the change and want to make their own cognitive and pedagogical ruptures aimed at building a better world for the children and young people of today.

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Ortega, P. (2025).

Pedagogía de la alteridad: Levinas y la educación.

Editum-Redipe, Murcia. 358 pp.

The purpose of this work is to demonstrate how, on the basis of Levinasian ethics and anthropology, it is possible to establish a new education against the totality of being. Behind Levinas' philosophy is a relentless critique of all forms of totalitarianism, embodied in idealism. His two major works: *Totality and Infinity* and *Otherwise than Being or Beyond Essence* stand as ample testament to this. His entire philosophical thought represents an amendment to the totality of Cartesian-Kantian philosophy that has shaped the way of thinking and living of Western society, and with it, also, the educational system.

Levinas, despite having devoted his life to teaching, never addressed education as a 'subject' to be studied. Nevertheless, his ethics as 'first philosophy' is an inexhaustible source for pedagogical discourse and educational praxis. Educating in alterity means understanding education as an encounter with the other and as an essential ethical event in the fight against all forms of barbarism. The book can be divided into two different parts: one that can be considered the *theoretical and discursive* foundation of the pedagogy of alterity, and the other as its application to educational *practice*.

With this work, Pedro Ortega provides us with the theoretical basis for what has come to be known as the pedagogy of alterity. He presents an overview, by way of an introduction to Levinasian thought applied to education, and highlights some central ideas of Levinasian ethics as an act charged with responsibility, humanity, and hospitality. He underscores the need to start afresh, to 'think ourselves anew' and this requires changing the theoretical assumptions that condition our behaviour and our way of understanding and implementing education.

Levinas takes as a basis a concept of the human being that is alien and opposed to the concept of Western philosophy. For him, the human being is a *historical being*, who has made circumstance his way of life. Historicity is the 'condition' for human existence. There is no human life outside the here and now. The how, when and where are inseparable from human existence. Man is an 'adverbial' being. This idea runs insistently through all the pages of this book. For Levinas, the human being is not a *being in-itself and for-itself*, but rather *with-the-other and for-the-other*. In this way, he breaks with the fundamental idea of Cartesian-Kantian anthropology—that of man's autonomy and independence. For Levinas, one cannot answer the question 'who am I?' without first making a detour, without passing through the other. Answering for *the other* is the necessary gateway to knowing who we are, to understanding ourselves as *human*. No one is *human* by themselves; it is the other who makes us *human* when we answer for them. Living as *humans* is not a genetic inheritance; it is a task that occupies and engages us for our entire lifetime.

There is an idea present throughout all of Levinas' work. We might consider it the cornerstone of his entire thought: *substitution*, understood as *responsibility*. If we disregard this concept, his entire anthropology, and with it, his ethics, falls apart. The two are linked. One cannot exist without the other. For Levinas, the human being is 'assigned' to the other prior to any possibility of accepting or rejecting him. It is a 'condition' that is impossible to avoid without jeopardising one's *human* condition. The human being is *hostage* to the other,

responsible for the other without limits, to the point of affirming that we are responsible for the other, even for their crimes that we have not committed. Levinasian responsibility is configured as a constituent principle of *human* identity. *Answering for the other* is the only way to *transcend ourselves*, to come out of our 'I' so as to affirm the other in their radical alterity.

Vulnerability is the 'condition' of the ethics of compassion. The presence of vulnerability and alterity gives rise to compassion, and to ethics. It also highlights the concept of asymmetry and proximity, grounded in the radical alterity of the other, which is inherent to their *human* condition. This entails the prohibition of the totalisation of the other, their conversion into an object or subject of study. It is from 'exteriority', the 'outside', 'the stranger, the orphan and the widow', in Levinas' words, that the human being derives their *human* condition.

Pedagogía de la alteridad: Levinas y la educación [Pedagogy of Alterity: Levinas and Education] addresses the *social* dimension of Levinasian discourse and uses it to make an ethical proposal for society, its institutions and the lives of individuals. The chapter on 'ethics and public life' follows this line of thought. This requires a change of ethical model, focusing on the individual and their context, removed from idealism; it requires understanding responsibility as inherent to the human condition; it entails the witness of those who exercise power; and it involves bearing in mind that the other is always a question and an answer, forever coming forth to meet us. The author addresses the Basque conflict, ignored or "forgotten" by education professionals. It is strange that a problem that has caused so much suffering, especially among the Basque population, has not been given due attention by education professionals, starting with pedagogues. The author ventures to propose a strategy—always provisional—to educate for reconciliation and coexistence, based on the recognition of the dignity of the victims, the injustice of their suffering, and the repentance of those who have caused violence and suffering. The itinerary of the proposal includes the following steps: a) the account (narration) of the violence endured by the victims; b) the acknowledgement of the victims' damaged dignity; c) the account of the violence carried out by the perpetrators narrated by the perpetrators themselves, where possible; and d) their repentance, if any. This requires the creation of an educational climate in the classroom that fosters empathy, reaching out to others and putting oneself in their place. The strategy seeks to develop the responsibility necessary to make the other's cause one's own. It is a difficult path, especially when violence is seen as justified by those who have committed it and find social support for it. It is very difficult to walk a road not yet travelled, plagued by resistance to recognising the harm inflicted by the perpetrators of violence. It is a 'minimum' proposal and always provisional.

The book ends with a chapter on the *meaning of life*. For the author, one is educated *for life*. And education is not just about equipping the individual for the competent exercise of a profession. It also entails making ethical values one's own—justice, equity, love of liberty, solidarity, compassion—values that render civic coexistence possible and bestow upon society a *human* face. If the discovery of the *meaning of life*, of the values that guide life, is not encouraged, life unfolds in a permanent attitude of simply letting time pass, without any horizon beyond the immediate task. Life is a "task—each person their own", as Ortega y Gasset puts it, but directed by a purpose, by ethical beliefs or convictions that give it coherence. Ethical values are the foundations that support the structure of the edifice of our life. The anchoring of the meaning of life—its theoretical foundation—must be sought in the very anthropological structure of the human being, who cannot but answer for the other. It is always the other who is the source of responsibility, of ethics and, therefore, of the meaning of life. The author proposes a strategy for educating in the meaning of life, centred on responsibility, on the inescapable need to respond to the question of the other, on the permanent attitude of welcoming the other and taking responsibility for the other. That is to say, advocating for an education in which answering for *the other* becomes a way of life.

This is a book that ‘gives food for thought’ by questioning the assumptions on which we have based our pedagogical discourse and our educational praxis for many years. The author does not shy away from the challenge of addressing Levinas’ work and making it “speak” the language of education. Reading and understanding Levinas means putting aside the concepts we have already learned and adopting a new language. Levinas is an uncomfortable, difficult and ‘strange’ author for our way of thinking.

With this book, Pedro Ortega offers us the first reading of Levinas and his influence on education in the Spanish language. It is a bold and necessary book. It opens the door to ‘another way’ of educating. It only remains for me to hope that this book may prove a valuable instrument for many educators, one that enables them to pursue an education that meets the demands of our time, and which calls for a more just, equitable and compassionate society.

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