EdUcators in the Classroom

Faculty of Educational Sciences

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edited by

Marin Beroš | Bruno Ćurko

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INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the second decade of the 21st century, the European Union was confronted with multiple and multifaceted challenges. Many of these challenges were not only EU or European specific, such as the problems of democratic backsliding, rising populism, the aftermath of Brexit; they were in fact truly global in nature – the COVID-19 pandemic emergency, the refugee/migrant crisis, climate and broader ecological emergencies… the list goes on. However daunting these challenges may be, it is certain that the EU must face them with a reinvigorated belief in itself – in its community and in the values we share.

But what are these values that we share as Europeans? And how can these values be highlighted and ingrained in educational practices in order to preserve the complex and delicate knitting of our European society for the years to come? This scientific monograph aims to provide a deeper reflection on these questions, based on several years of research and teaching activities culminating in an Erasmus+ project entitled *Highlighting European Values in the Educational Thought* or *HEVET* which was established as an eponymous Jean Monnet module at the Faculty of Educational Sciences (FES) of the Juraj Dobrila University of Pula (UNIPU).

HEVET was built on two fundamental premises. First, that EU countries share basic political values, from which all other values emanate. These basic political values trace their lineage to the French Revolution and build upon the widely-cited revolutionary credo *"liberté, égalité, fraternité"* – liberty, equality, and solidarity (to which it transformed from the original "fraternity"). These are our shared beliefs which are also afforded the highest level of protection in the system of government we know as democracy. Second, that democracy can be preserved and reinforced over time primarily through education.

Therefore, the main objective of *HEVET* was to reaffirm this link between education and successful democratic governance by empowering future schoolteachers to become "EdUcators" – that is, schoolteachers equipped with conceptual knowledge in the field of values-education, as well as with the educational toolkit needed to convey European values (in an age-appropriate manner) to elementary-school students and to encourage their curiosity for civic engagement.

In terms of its theoretical/conceptual background, the project primarily followed the ground-breaking work of John Dewey, whose seminal book *Democracy and Education* revealed the significance of education for successful democratic development more than a century ago. His work prompted a re-evaluation of the methods by which citizens can be educated for critical reflection, autonomous decision-making and the cultivation of

citizenship cooperation and solidarity. The *HEVET* project drew upon the practical insights of the *Philosophy with Children* (*PwC*) pedagogical movement, which was initially developed by Matthew Lipman and the Institute for the Advancement of Philosophy for Children (*Philosophy for Children - P4C*) and has since given rise to a multitude of approaches collectively known as *Philosophy with Children (PwC)*.

The methodological framework of the project was built on the pioneering work of Jürgen Habermas and his discourse theory. Its objective was to recreate (or at the very least approximate) the ideal speech situation in the module's classes (particularly seminars). In this setting all participants were encouraged to evaluate each other's assertions based solely on reason, fostering an atmosphere of amity and trust. The module's teaching staff played a pivotal role in guiding participants to reflect on and reach a rational consensus regarding value issues. This pedagogical approach was essential to familiarize students with the concept of deliberative democracy, an inclusive form of democracy that also provides a toolkit for consensus-building on matters that are of essence for the well-being of European society.

In addition to innovative teaching on EU studies, *HEVET* aimed to create networks for knowledge and skills transfer with local and national actors dealing with EU policies, but also to provide research dissemination of project results through a combination of written, live and online deliverables. Finally, this research monograph is the pinnacle of various research activities conducted throughout the project's lifespan.

With its somewhat intriguing title, *EdUcators in the Classroom* is an interdisciplinary research monograph, as it gathers scholars of various academic profiles and backgrounds, who have contributed with insightful papers on the broader topic of European values, intersecting themes such as democracy, solidarity, civic engagement, critical thinking, responsibility, etc., and how these complex ideas can then shape and inform education and teaching practices. Building on the *HEVET* project, the monograph draws on theoretical concepts from the philosophy of education and reflects on the challenges education faces in the changing societal and political environment of the 21st century. While some of the challenges are universal and timeless (e.g., are we educating to fulfil the needs of our individual students or the needs of society?), some of the problems are strongly connected to our time and place. In that regard, a philosophy of education that is appropriate for the 21st century must address social transformations that have a decisive impact

on the meaning of education, its goals and its practices, in particular: globalization, digitalization, cultural fragmentation and transformation.

Furthermore, we seem to live in a time of multiple narratives, where individuals display multiple knowledge, multiple experiences, and multiple truths. This has led to the proliferation of different, specialized schools focused on special interest groups, which in turn has led to the multiplication of learning spaces. At first glance, this may appear to be a step forward in the democratization of learning, however on closer inspection, this development has also led to a devaluation of authority and an increase in relativism – an "anything goes" mentality that is not optimal for building the democratic society. As a reaction within the EU, this postmodern societal restructuring has radically transformed educational curricula in just a few decades, with some member states becoming trailblazers of values-sensitive education such as Finland, while others, such as Croatia, searched for adequate ways to add value to the roller coaster of educational reforms.

Considering the aforementioned issues, the monograph will follow the lines of both "theory" (e.g. conceptual clarifications, moral and political philosophy) and "practice" (e.g. pedagogical, didactical approaches, examples of "best practice" in teaching). While primarily intended for scholars of educational philosophy and pedagogy, we are certain that the research monograph will also serve as a groundbreaking literature reference for future generations of students of the course on which *HEVET* is built. We hope that the mix of theoretical approaches and practical solutions will entice and empower students to become "EdUcators", not only teachers of European values, but also researchers in the collective endeavor with the children entrusted to their care.

The contributors in this monograph come from a variety of viewpoints, but they share a common concern – how do we want to teach our students in the future? What kind of values do we want to impart in a world that is changing rapidly, and many would say, not for the better? In this sense, the paper with which we begin *Go (Even More) West, Young Man: Freirean Account of European Educational Values* by Josip Gućć offers a solution with a Freirean (re)interpretation of European educational values, highlighting the aspects of dialogue and love as exemplified by figures such as Socrates and Christ. This study underscores the contemporary significance of Freire's concepts by linking Greta Thunberg's framework of active hope with Freire's dynamic utopian vision of hope in an ever-changing world. It

also methodically exposes Freire's ideas as critical global challenges, emphasizing the need for a new way of thinking centered on collaboration, integrity, equality, and the welfare of all living beings, rather than competition. Finally, it promotes a deeper acknowledgment and appreciation of Latin American contributions to the comprehension of education and the values it should represent.

In *The Myth of Educative Neutrality: Creating a European Identity and Citizenship Education*, Tomás Pacheco-Bethencourt examines the complex function of education, especially civic and citizenship education, as a crucial tool in shaping social values and identities in Europe. Furthermore, he finds that the definition of European values is ambiguous, which has an impact on the development of future citizens. The convergence of education and political agendas underscores their profound interconnectedness, as education functions not only as a vehicle for disseminating knowledge, but also as a site for ideological contention. In this regard, Pacheco-Bethencourt examines the problem of modern value discrepancies between Western European countries on the one hand, and Central and Eastern European countries (such as Hungary and Poland) on the other. In his opinion, the fundamental requirement for addressing the aforementioned predicament is to abandon the concept of value neutrality. To resolve the current dichotomies and ambiguities of conservativism and progressivism, the author advocates a kind of dual synthesis. In this context, education for citizenship, interpreted through a republican lens and integrating previously articulated frameworks of conservativism and progressivism, becomes more relevant than ever. Pacheco-Bethencourt claims that this dual strategy can foster a more inclusive and unified sense of belonging, especially for immigrant populations and second and third-generation citizens who may still be determining their position within European society.

Alan Tafra deals with comparative pedagogy in his paper *Mirković, Masaryk and Freire: Education for Democracy between Regional, European and Global Challenges*, in which he analyses the educational reflections of three figures: Croatian economist and writer Mijo Mirković, Czechoslovak president and philosopher Tomáš Masaryk, and Brazilian founder of critical pedagogy Paulo Freire. The primary focus is on Mirković, whose personal value system around the World War I was decisively influenced by Masaryk. Mirković subsequently articulated his fundamental teaching ideas in his autobiographical work, *Old Grammar School of Pazin* (1950), which is

dedicated to the inaugural Croatian high school in Istria. Given that Mirković's reflections on education contain elements similar to the pedagogy of the oppressed, Tafra suggests that Mirković anticipated Freire's critical pedagogy, which later developed independently. The paper demonstrates that the ideas of all three authors remain relevant today and offer numerous insights for practitioners and theorists interested in the development of education and democracy.

The following paper, *Teaching European Values in a Time of Hyperreal Intersubjectivity* by Kire Sharlamanov and Katerina Mitevska-Petrusheva, examines the relationship between the concept of hyperreality and values through the lens of Habermas' theory of discursive ethics. Its aim is to illustrate how discursive ethics can enhance the teaching and learning of European values, moving beyond mere factual retention to a deeper and more substantive understanding. Finally, it illustrates how discursive ethics informs concrete teaching methods that can be implemented in the classroom to facilitate the comprehension, internalization, and application of European values.

The paper titled *Responsibility as a Value in Curricula of Cross-Curricular Topics in the Republic of Croatia and Educational Policies in the EU*, authored by Monika Terlević and Emanuela Ham, offers a thorough examination of the alignment between Croatian national curricula and European values, with a particular emphasis on the incorporation of responsibility in cross-curricular topics. The subsequent analysis elucidates how the National Curriculum Framework strikes a balance between defined educational objectives and the pedagogical autonomy afforded to educators in selecting teaching methodologies. By situating Croatian educational policy within a broader European context, this work provides valuable insights into how curriculum design can promote active student engagement.

Stefan Smirnov's *A Case Study of European Values in Finnish Upper Secondary Education: Everyday Praxis, 'Value Jargon,' or Somewhere in Between?* presents a pertinent study of democracy, human rights, and other European values in the Finnish educational system, using prior research, available literature, curricula, and surveys of teacher trainers' and upper secondary students' perceptions. The author conducted two surveys on the subject, involving upper secondary school students and their teachers, who also serve as teacher trainers. While previous studies have indicated that issues such as democracy and human rights are inconsistent, implicit, and

reliant on the personal interests of individual educators in the Finnish educational system, the content analysis of the data in this paper reveals that democracy, human rights, and other European values are manifested in various forms in the majority of classrooms in this upper secondary school. Upper secondary students identify explicit European values such as human rights, implicit values like democracy, and the relative absence of the rule of law. Teacher trainers prioritize equality as a practice in their work with upper secondary students and student teachers. This case study suggests that the data collected reflects an educational shift from 'value jargon' towards everyday praxis, although systemic barriers and practical challenges remain. However, this research is limited, and the author suggests that the further research is needed to identify possible barriers and challenges to European values education within the network of Finnish teacher training schools.

Miloš Jeremić, in his paper *How Philosophy with Children Can Provide Education for Democratic Values*, examines the fundamental importance of critical and analytical thinking within the Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture (RFCDC), a set of materials by the Council of Europe, intended for use by education policymakers, especially those working in ministries of education, and educational practitioners in all sectors of education. It critiques the framework's portrayal of thinking as secondary to other competencies and argues that critical thinking is vital for effective democratic education, especially in an era of rising populism that threatens democratic values. The paper highlights the significance of reflective thinking for both educators and learners using John Dewey's examination of idle, pure, and reflective thought. Jeremić contrasts Dewey's notion of reflective thinking with Martin Heidegger's differentiation between calculative and meditative thinking, cautioning against the prevalence of calculative thinking, which may result in superficial judgments. Ultimately, he promotes the incorporation of both analytical and contemplative thinking in education, in order to develop an education that effectively responds to contemporary demands. By fostering deeper understanding and critical engagement, democratic societies can better address complex challenges and nurture informed, thoughtful citizens.

Art as a Tool for Stimulating Critical Thinking and Promoting European Values by Elmana Cerić and Bruno Ćurko examines the significant subject of art's capacity to enhance critical thinking and cultivate values within educational settings. Drawing on the theoretical perspectives of philosophers

like John Dewey and Herbert Read, the paper explores the transformative possibilities of incorporating artistic practices into education. Through theoretical analysis, paper highlights the capacity of arts to foster empathy, dignity, and democratic participation, all of which are essential to European values. Additionally, it includes practical examples from two workshops designed to engage participants in reflective and creative processes that foster both analytical and emotional reactions to intricate societal issues. These examples illustrate how, through carefully designed activities, art can be integrated into education to encourage students to engage in deeper thinking, discussion and active participation in the community, thereby emphasizing its importance in contemporary education. The integration of art into the educational process is therefore not only beneficial, but also necessary. It facilitates the development of critical and creative thinking skills, as well as the competencies required to confront the challenges of contemporary society. Art enables individuals to become reflective and accountable citizens who are committed to building a better and fairer society. Ultimately, this study enhances the existing literature on art-based education by offering a detailed framework for its implementation in cultivating critical thinking and promoting fundamental European values, including tolerance, solidarity, and respect for human rights.

The monograph concludes with Marin Beroš's *Straightening the Crooked Timber of Humanity – Promoting Cosmopolitan Values in Education*, which argues for the preservation of cosmopolitan ideals, which he considers endangered in the current global political climate, especially after the COVID-19 pandemic. The vehicle for this, he argues, should be education that is not focused on the present but (as Kant stated) on "a potentially enhanced state of humanity in the future" – that is, a cosmopolitan education. Focusing on Immanuel Kant's educational philosophy, a foundational thought of cosmopolitan education, the paper further examines the positions and suggestions of modern authors in the field, including Nussbaum, Hansen, and Todd.

In conclusion, the editors of this research monograph would like to acknowledge the full support of the Faculty of Educational Sciences, Juraj Dobrila University of Pula, throughout the implementation of the *HEVET* project – the Faculty has not only provided an institutional home to *HEVET* by supporting the development of new and innovative educational content within its existing curriculum (i.e., within the bachelor-level course *Philosophy of Education* in the first year of the Teacher studies program), but has

also encouraged a vibrant interchange of ideas and perspectives among the project team members, faculty educators and students. It was particularly encouraging to see the number of students participating in *HEVET* activities, as they are the next bearers of the "flame of knowledge" for future generations. In addition, the implementation of the project was greatly facilitated by the efforts of the administrative staff of the faculty, who provided their assistance throughout the three years of the project.

Editing a book is usually a collective effort that depends on many other unforeseen factors in addition to the intellectual rigor and work of its contributors. As editors, we are deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to collaborate with a group of exceptional experts and dedicated individuals whose knowledge, research diligence, and enthusiasm are evident in the written work collected in this research monograph. As for the unforeseen – while we have done our best to intercept and resolve these factors – it is important to note that any failings in attention to detail are our own.

Education plays an essential role in nurturing and reaffirming our shared European values, and when imparted early, these values not only shape future European citizens, but also strengthen the very fabric of a united, democratic Europe. We hope that you will be motivated by this message, as well as by the other inspiring perspectives offered by our contributors.

The Editors:

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GO (EVEN MORE) WEST, YOUNG MAN: FREIREAN ACCOUNT OF EUROPEAN EDUCATIONAL VALUES

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ABSTRACT

The paper puts forth a reinterpretation of two European educational values (dialogue and love) based on Paulo Freire's philosophy of education. The two European educational values are exemplified by the teachings of Socrates and Jesus Christ. Socrates has an exceptional place in the Western philosophical pantheon, particularly in light of his emphasis on dialogue as a pivotal contemporary European educational value. Freire's potential contribution in this regard is presented through his concept of the "spoken book" as a Socratic response to Socrates' abstention from writing books. The other crucial Western cultural and thus educational figure is Jesus Christ, the founder (or God himself) of Christianity. His insistence on love was interpreted by Freire not so much as a direct imperative, but rather as an indirect imperative to strive to create the circumstances in which it would be easier to love. The paper demonstrates that the European Westerner should find incentives in the "Near West" (Latin America) to take his own educational values more seriously, as opposed to the prevailing kind of admiration for these two figures, which resembles admiration for a gifted child (the child is not to be taken fully seriously). Thus, instead of a conclusion, the paper presents the figure of a child, Greta Thunberg, as an example of the common educational thesis that the teacher should always be a student and vice versa.
Keywords: *Paulo Freire, Socrates, dialogue, Christianity, love*

1. INTRODUCTION

From a geographical perspective, the four sides of the world are relative to each other, with the exception of the equator, which serves as the definitive demarcation between the northern and southern hemispheres. In contrast, the Mercator projection establishes definitive positions for the West and East. However, the conceptualizations of Europeans (who influence the imaginations of most others) about what culturally constitutes the West and East have evolved over time. At this time, the West is understood to encompass North America without its Latin American components and Europe without its easternmost regions. Distinctions between the Near and Far East are also noteworthy, while other regions of the world are of relatively little interest. The introduction of a further category, designated as the "Near West", which would include Latin America, is a proposition that merits consideration. This proposal is predicated on the notion that European cultural influence has, without question, left an indelible mark on the region. This legacy manifests not only in language, but also in philosophy. Consequently, Latin American philosophy is predominantly regarded as a variant of European philosophy, albeit with one or two "exotic" elements. However, it is crucial to acknowledge that Latin American contributions to European culture and philosophy are not merely "exotic"; they can be regarded as a more profound manifestation of the Western tradition.

Given the focus of this book on European educational values, it seems appropriate to focus on Paulo Freire, the most prominent Latin American educational philosopher and practitioner. His thought is valuable in that it demonstrates how European educational values can be more fully understood when viewed through the lens of the "Near West" rather than the "metropolis." With his direct and indirect assistance, I will endeavor to illustrate that European Westerners often fail to fully embrace some of the most crucial educational values they nominally espouse. These values will be exemplified primarily by two figures: Socrates (dialogue) and Jesus Christ (love). The conclusion will be made by referring to educational values that can be drawn from Greta Thunberg's concern for the environment. These values are, in great part, similar to those that can be found in more profound or at least alternative readings of the teachings of Socrates and Jesus Christ.

2. SOCRATIC DIALOGUE

Socrates' well-known reluctance to write books is indicative of his philosophical perspective on knowledge and education. Books, he says, cannot answer when we ask them a question. He believed that books, by their very nature, cannot engage in a dialogue with their readers. Dialogue represents the fundamental mode of truth acquisition, which also implies that the path to it is inherently educational. Moreover, it is mutually educational – one interlocutor leads the other to the truth and vice versa, so that, paradoxically, the leader does not become a slave (as it mainly was Ancient Greek παιδαγωγός) to some eternally established truth, nor does the student, who is not necessarily a child (Anc. Gr. παῖς). In the dialogue, both are free to search for the truth, regardless of what they believe about the form of its existence (specifically, Socrates believes that it exists objectively, but also that neither he nor anyone else has the "divine wisdom" with which this truth can be fully and safely retrieved). Consequently, if the book can be interpreted as an endeavor to ascertain eternal truth, wherein divine wisdom is recited in a one-sided way, and the cognitive subjects have no opportunity to question it, then the book effectively enslaves them, rather than liberating them.

While these implications cannot be derived with certainty from Socrates' thought, few thinkers have dared to draw such a radical conclusion about the book as Socrates did, and perhaps even fewer have attempted to confront this conclusion directly or indirectly. For the majority of the history of Western philosophy, the challenge posed by Socrates has been regarded as a mere anecdote, an illustration of the peculiarities of this philosopher, and so forth. One of the few who have confronted this challenge in a manner that may be considered Socratic is the Brazilian philosopher of education Paulo Freire, who achieved this primarily through the concept of a *spoken book*, in collaboration with his interlocutors.

In this discussion, the focus will be on the most well-known and accessible of Freire's "spoken books," which have been either written or translated into English. This selection also includes works that directly address the concept of the spoken book. The first of these was conceived by Freire in 1985 through a conversation with António Faundez and published originally under the title *Por uma pedagogia de pergunta* [*For a Pedagogy of Questioning*]. This text was subsequently translated into English as *Learning to Question: A Pedagogy of Liberation* in 1989. The second text is the result of Freire's

conversations with Ira Shor and was first published in English in 1987 as *A Pedagogy for Liberation: Dialogues on Transforming Education*, and in the same year in Portuguese as *Medo e ousadia: O cotidiano do professor* [*Fear and Boldness: The Everyday Life of the Professor*]. The third instance comprises the conversations between Freire and Myles Horton, as well as with other unidentified parties, which were published in the book *We Make the Road by Walking: Conversations on Education and Social Change* in 1990.

Each of these books is written as a transcription of live conversations. At the beginning of the conversation with Faundez, Freire enumerates the justifications for "speaking a book" rather than writing it down directly or writing separate books. Specifically, the act of "speaking a book" form is posited as a more dynamic and creative intellectual experience, one that disrupts the conventional individualistic approach to the book creation. This approach, as Faundez and Freire argue, liberates authors from the comfort of their studies, opening them to the opportunity for critical thinking. The spontaneous dialogue is characterized by a certain lightness, dynamism, and liveliness, which are advantages of this endeavor. These qualities, while appealing in their own right, also facilitate a greater sense of freedom and expression, but do not detract from intellectual rigor and seriousness (Freire & Faundez, 1989, pp. 2–3). Freire suggests to Shore that such

> "a book can be serious without being pedantic. We can rigorously approach the ideas, the facts, the problems, but always in a light style, almost with a dancelike quality, an unarmed style." (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 2).

Shor defines rigor as "a desire to know, a search for an answer, a critical method of learning," which involves the other in the activity of searching. This is not the traditional school rigor to which the average student is exposed. Students are not motivated because they are not involved in the *activity of rigor*; rather, they are provided with knowledge as a "corpse of information" or a "dead 'body of knowledge'," which is often regarded as a mere repository of facts to be memorized. Freire offers a complementary perspective, suggesting that motivation does not precede action as is commonly assumed. Instead, he proposes that motivation emerges in the act of action itself. Thus, a spoken book "will be good if at the very moment in which the possible reader is reading, he or she is able to feel motivated because of the act of reading, and not because he or she read about motivation." In discussing the futility of externally imposed motivation on students, Shor

highlights the fact that traditional teaching merely involves reporting on conclusions reached by others, implementing a curriculum designed by others, and it is up to the student to remember the report. “Do you see the corpse here?” he inquires of Freire (Freire & Shor, 1987, pp. 4–7). While the book may not be created to function as a “corpse of information,” it is insufficient to merely establish a dialogue *within* the confines of the book. The book should, in essence, facilitate a dialogue *beyond* its own boundaries, engaging in dialogue with the reader.

The issue can be addressed in several ways. As stated by Shor, “If I hear from others that my book reads as if I were speaking to them, I know I found the voice I wanted.” On the one hand, Freire claims that in writing individually, the author “needs at least mentally reach the possible readers of the book even if there is no chance that he or she will ever meet them.” The spoken book, on the other hand, should make the reader feel uncomfortable and insecure. “If we can do that, then the book will have rigor” (Freire & Shor, 1987, pp. 3–4). The reader, then, should be drawn into the activity of rigor, which means that the book has provoked a certain dialogue. But the dialogue already begins with the reader asking questions, which, according to Horton, are probably of the same type as those that he and Freire ask each other in their spoken book (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 4). In the absence of this assumption, it would be challenging to envisage anyone initiating engagement with a specific text. For a dialogue to emerge, the text must be accessed by the reader as a result of their own volition, particularly if the reader does not anticipate finding definitive answers within the text. Consequently, the reader should be dialogically determined, and the text should prompt the generation of new questions that facilitate internal dialogue or the continuation of the dialogue in a different configuration, perhaps with another book.

The objective of a spoken book, particularly the one authored by Freire in collaboration with Faundez, is to a significant extent to establish the conditions for a dialogue, as explicitly stated in the title – learning to question. Consequently, the issue that pertains to education can be extended to numerous literary works, as Freire asserts: “The educator, generally, produces answers without having been asked anything!” (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 35) Subsequently, Freire and Faundez further elaborate on each other’s ideas, advancing them in a progressively radical manner. Faundez posits that the fundamental responsibility of an educator is to facilitate the development

of questioning skills. Freire cautions against the suppression of the capacity for inquiry by authoritarian educational systems, which represent one aspect of the broader repression of individuals' full potential, including their capacity for self-expression. Furthermore, Faundez highlights the underrepresentation of body language in educational discourse, asserting that this form of communication is pivotal in fostering questioning, rather than merely providing answers. Questioning, Freire continues, should not exist for the sake of questioning, but should always be linked to action, so that it is not simply reduced to an intellectual game. It should lead to the explanation of facts and not to the mere explanation of words that refer to those facts. Accordingly, questions should stem from one's personal experience and relate to one's identity. Human existence itself should be an act of questioning. However, if schools do not reject questioning, they often bureaucratize it, leading to a *pedagogy of response* - adaptation - rather than a *pedagogy of question* - creativity (Freire & Faundez, 1989, pp. 35–40). Faundez states:

> "To find an example of this bureaucratized asking of questions we need look no further than the texts to which students are subjected. The questions are questions which already contain their answers. In that way, they are not even questions! They are answers rather than questions. Students have to know beforehand the answers to the questions they will be asked. On the other hand, if we taught them to ask questions, they would have to ask themselves questions and creatively discover the answers for themselves - in other words, participate themselves in the process of discovery and not simply answer a particular question on the basis of what they have already been told." (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 40)

The mere presence of dialogue in its full, living form is insufficient for escaping the attempt to establish eternal truth. Freire is quite direct in his insistence that what is read should serve as a stimulus, rather than a deposit to be stored. Faundez elucidates this point when he speaks of Freire's "method," which consists of a set of principles that must be constantly reformulated according to different situations. In response, Freire asserts that:

> "I am in complete agreement. That is exactly why I always say that the only way anyone has of applying in their situation any of the propositions I have made I precisely by redoing what I have done, that is, by not following me. In order to follow me it is essential not to follow me! Which is exactly what you were saying." (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 30)

Despite his awareness that the vitality of dialogue must be diminished in written speech or conversation (Horton & Freire, 1990, p. 8), Freire's approach and that of his dialogue companions demonstrate seriousness in addressing the reasons Socrates had for disdaining the book. Spoken books not only contain dialogue but also strive to function as tutorials for dialogue. They make dialogue imperative at every moment. Freire's entire body of work consistently encourages us to name and rename the world, thereby rendering it a problem, which is the fundamental condition for initiating change.

> "But while to say the true word - which is work, which is praxis - is to transform the world, saying that word is not the privilege of some few persons, but the right of everyone. Consequently, no one can say a true word alone – nor can she say it for another, in a prescriptive act which robs others of their words. Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming - between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them. Those who have been denied their primordial right to speak their word must first reclaim this right and prevent the continuation of this dehumanizing aggression." (Freire, 2005, p. 88)

Dialogue is impossible without critical thinking (which is also generated through dialogue). Furthermore, dialogue requires love, faith in others, and humility (Freire, 2005, pp. 88-95). If there is no necessity to alter either the people or the world, then dialogue is an exercise in futility. If one is entirely convinced of the ideal state of the world and of humanity, then it is sufficient to engage in polemics in order to demonstrate one's strength. As previously stated, the dialogues with Freire were written in an "unarmed style." Rather than a discussion in the form of a conflict of ideas, these dialogues are more a process of mutual enrichment and critical deepening of experiences and thoughts (between which there is no sharp division). The success of such a discussion depends on the openness of the interlocutors, who learn from each other.

Freire employs Socratic methods to challenge the assumption that the book is inadequate for the Socratic task. In doing so, he radicalizes the task by attempting to extend Socrates' educational imperative to areas of culture that Socrates neglected. It is important to note that Freire is operating within a distinctly different historical and contextual framework than that of Socra-

tes. Consequently, it is unsurprising that their practice of dialogue manifests in markedly different ways. Andreola posits that the primary distinction between Socrates and Freire lies in latter's apparent inability to utilize maieutic in the manner of extracting a preconceived, finished idea from the student (as fully explained by Plato). Conversely, Freire's approach aims to facilitate the intersubjective construction of knowledge (Andreola 2006, p. 22). However, it is entirely arbitrary to view Plato's idealism as a continuation of the so-called Socratic idealism. In Plato's *Meno*, a discernible effort is made to establish a coherent progression between two thinkers, particularly with regard to the subject of education. However, in this instance, Socrates abruptly shifts his focus from moral matters to geometry, and the notion of the independent acquisition of truth is posited as a consequence of the soul's recollection of contemplating unchanging ideas prior to birth (cf. *Meno* 81d, 85d-86c; Vlastos 2016; Guć 2022b). It is evident that we are confronted with two distinct versions of Socrates. With regard to pedagogical matters, we can assert that the Socrates of *Protagoras* differs from the Socrates of *Meno*, with the latter exhibiting a greater resemblance to Plato himself. As Plato's dialogues progress, it becomes increasingly apparent that dialogues are merely a superficial form, a far cry from genuine dialogue. For example, in *Protagoras*, the discussion does not conclude with a definitive answer to the question of whether virtue can be taught. Instead, it highlights the necessity for further discourse on this topic (*Prot*. 361a-362a). Plato's later dialogues are rather stylistic representations of Socrates' (more accurately, Plato's) monologues, wherein the interlocutors typically offer only brief affirmations. But one difference is particularly significant, namely that in *Meno* Socrates even renounces his motto that unexamined life is not worth living, when he equates true opinion with true knowledge in practical value:

> "For if true opinion without knowledge does suffice to guide action aright, then the great mass of men and women may be spared the pain and hazards of the 'examined' life: they may be brought under the protective custody of a ruling elite who will feed them true beliefs to guide their conduct aright, without allowing them to inquire why those beliefs are true." (Vlastos, 1991, p. 125)

3. CHRISTIAN LOVE

It appears that Catholicism offers a greater degree of opportunity for engaging in dialogue in comparison to Protestant denominations. In accordance with the doctrine of *sola scriptura*, Protestants tend to interpret the Scriptures literally, thereby precluding any possibility of dialogue regarding the messages conveyed by the Bible. In contrast to Protestantism, Catholicism does not require its adherents to interpret the Bible literally. Nevertheless, the Roman Catholic Church has established a system of official interpreters. However, the current head of the Roman Catholic Church, Pope Francis, has been some connections to liberation theology (Løland, 2021), which has given rise to concerns among conservative European Catholics regarding the suitability of his beliefs for his role. Consequently, there has been an opportunity missed to embark upon a constructive dialogue concerning the nature of Christianity in Europe, which is the continent's most significant religion and a key element of its cultural heritage.

While the intention is not to provide a theological perspective on this matter, it is imperative to briefly address liberation theology to illustrate the fact that Latin American institutional Christianity is more receptive to socialist political ideas than its West European counterpart. Although liberation theology is not a form of "socialist theology," it does not espouse an antagonistic stance towards Marxism. This can also be observed in the appreciation of Freire (as a Marxist in many aspects) in liberation theology. In the most influential book of the movement, Gustavo Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation*, Freire is referred to directly on several occasions. His most important theses, along with their practical applications in the liberation of Latin Americans, are praised and taken as important guidelines for liberation theology (see Gutiérrez, 1988, pp. 57, 121, 136-137). Leonardo Boff, another prominent figure in liberation theology, goes even further, saying: "Freire is considered one of the founders of liberation theology," especially because he "placed the poor and oppressed at the center of his method, which is important in the concept of preferential option for the poor, a trademark of liberation theology" (Kirylo & Boyd, 2017, p. 87).

Freire's work also includes praise and references to liberation theology (see, for example, Freire 1985, pp. 127-128). However, for the purposes of this discussion, I will limit my consideration to one illustrative example in order to present Freire's approach to the issues discussed by theologians of liberation. The example under consideration the *Manifesto of the Bishops of the*

Third World (*Manifiesto de Obispos del Tercer Mundo*), published on August 15, 1967 (Câmara et al., 2014). Of the 17 bishops who signed the Manifesto, only one was from Europe, specifically from Split, Yugoslavia (now Croatia), Frane Franić. It is precisely his thought, quoted as such in the *Manifesto* (signed as Frank Franic), that Freire quotes in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

> "If the workers do not become in some way the owners of their labor, all structural reforms will be ineffective. [This is true] even if the workers receive a higher salary in an economic system but are not content with these raises. They want to be owners, not sellers, of their labor. ... At present the workers are increasingly aware that labor represents a part of the human person. A person, however, cannot be bought; neither can he sell himself. Any purchase or sale of labor is a type of slavery. The evolution of human society in this respect is clearly progressing within a system said to be less responsive than our own to the question of human dignity, i.e., Marxism." (Freire 2005, p. 143)

What do the bishops of the Third World want? Their manifesto follows the recent encyclical of Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio*. One of the main points of the Manifesto is that socialism is less at odds with Christian morality than capitalism. The bishops' objective is to reestablish morality in accordance with its Christian foundations. It is, therefore, the genuine socialist system that represents the practical application of Christianity, as opposed to mere proclamation. The *Manifesto* not only acknowledges the existence of the class struggle, but also recognizes that it is not instigated or perpetuated by the working class. Instead, the class struggle is fought by the rich against the workers. Given that Christ's two primary commands of love are of equal value, the pursuit of justice on earth (as the initial expression of love for one's neighbor) serves as a preparation for eternal life, which should be approached as seriously as Moses took the liberation of his people from slavery (Câmara et al., 2014). In this context, the prevailing theme of liberation theology is emphasized by Câmara, a prominent proponent of liberation theology. This paper will demonstrate that Freire's ideas, which align with those of the *Manifesto*, can be instructive in the task of thinking about religious messages more critically (which in this context also means more politically), particularly in the context of education.

Freire does not really talk much about God, as he regards God primarily as a "presence in history." This history is ultimately shaped by human actions, while God provides a vision of human wholeness and social justice (Kirylo

& Boyd, 2017, p. 6). “This is how I have always understood God - a presence in history that does not preclude me from making history, but rather pushes me toward world transformation, which makes it possible to restore the humanity of those who exploit and of the weak” (Freire, 2000, pp. 103–104; cited also in Kirylo & Boyd, 2017, p. 7). It is evident that Freire’s perspective cannot be considered wholly incompatible with that of secular humanism as espoused by Marxism. Freire himself states:

> “When I was a young man, I went to the people, to the workers, the peasants, motivated really, by my Christian faith … When I arrived with the people - the misery, the concreteness, you know! … The obstacles of this reality sent me - to Marx. I started reading and studying. It was beautiful because I found in Marx a lot of the things the people had told me – without being literate. Marx was a genius. But when I met Marx, I continued to meet Christ on the corners of the street - by meeting the people.” (Kirylo & Boyd, 2017, p. 7)

One of the primary reasons for the repulsion of Marxism among Christians is its apparent lack of sensitivity to violence, as the Communists “openly declare that their ends can be attained only by the forcible overthrow of all existing social conditions” (Marx & Engels, 2018, p. 95). Nevertheless, the perspective shifts when one adopts a more radical stance on the issue of violence, as exemplified by Freire:

> “Any situation in which ‘A’ objectively exploits ‘B’ or hinders his and her pursuit of self-affirmation as a responsible person is one of oppression. Such a situation in itself constitutes violence, even when sweetened by false generosity, because it interferes with the individual’s ontological and historical vocation to be more fully human. With the establishment of a relationship of oppression, violence has already begun. Never in history has violence been initiated by the oppressed. How could they be the initiators, if they themselves are the result of violence? How could they be the sponsors of something whose objective inauguration called forth their existence as oppressed? There would be no oppressed had there been no prior situation of violence to establish their subjugation.” (Freire, 2005, p. 55)

Thus, violence occurs not only when one directly mistreats another person physically or psychologically, but *every time the oppressor thwarts another person’s self-realization*, preventing them from becoming more fully human. This suggests that education is a key setting in which such violence can occur. In this setting, it can be relatively easy to condition young people

to accept the existing world and its power structures as inevitable and natural.

Freire advocates the prophetic church, which aims to facilitate radical social change while rejecting palliative reforms and all static forms of thought. The prophetic church becomes in order to be (Freire, 1985, p. 137). This kind of church cannot be dogmatic or infallible. It cannot moralize that is, it cannot know what to do before entering into action, cooperation and coexistence with the oppressed. That is why it must be, without Freire explicitly stating so, dialogical, that is, truly educational. What he says is that the prophetic church

> "…does not separate worldliness from transcendence or salvation from liberation. It knows that what finally counts is not the 'I am' or the 'I know,' the 'I free myself' or the 'I save myself;' nor even 'I teach you,' 'I free you,' or 'I save you,' but the 'we are,' 'we know,' 'we save ourselves.'" (Freire, 1985, pp. 137–138)

From a European perspective, this approach appears to present significant challenges to the realm of religious education, as well as to education in general. If there are certain truths to be learned,[1] the dialogue employed in the classroom can only be considered a pedagogical strategy to convey these truths more effectively. What makes the pedagogical stance of liberation theology challenging for most Europeans is mostly the aforementioned "preferential option for the poor", which suggests a willingness to "authentically listen to, work with, and stand with the poor" (Kirylo & Boyd, 2017, p. 94). According to Christopher Rowland, liberation theologians aim to learn from the poor as they live and work with them. Not only is Scripture interpreted in relation to the everyday experience of oppression of ordinary people, but the latter is also "as important a text as the text of Scripture itself" (Rowland, 1999, pp. 1-3, 7). For Gutiérrez, there are three languages about God: "the language of the marginalized and oppressed, the language of their liberation, and the language of the gospel of Jesus" (Gutiérrez, 1999, pp. 32-33).

[1] Of course, the truth of the Scripture for Christians cannot be denied, but this truth can in many cases be widely open to interpretation. The issue arises from the compulsion to adhere to a specific interpretation that is imposed from a superior authority.

It is widely acknowledged that all of Freire's educational work is dedicated to the oppressed. While this can be understood in secular terms, Freire also presents his commitment in religious terms: "'Washing one's hands' of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral" (Freire, 1973, p. 1; Freire, 1985, p. 122). He is clearly commending a Christian who tries to stay out of the conflicts of this world. Nevertheless, it is possible to serve the interests of the oppressor in a more subtle manner, presenting one's actions as being in favor of the oppressed. These are what Freire refers to as "'anesthetic' or 'aspirin' practices", which are associated with moralizing (Freire, 1973, pp. 1-2; Freire, 1985, p. 122).

> "In the last analysis the basic presupposition of such actions is the illusion that the hearts of men and women can be transformed while the social structures which make those hearts 'sick' are left intact and unchanged." (Freire, 1973, p. 1; Freire, 1985, p. 122)

This directly applies to the cardinal Christian virtue of love. In the *New Testament* we find it as an imperative: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Mark, 12:31) or: "Love your enemy" (Matt, 5:44), while Augustine would simply say: "Love, and do what you will" (Saint Augustine, 1989, p. 73). It is mentioned that dialogue is impossible without love. This becomes clear when one considers the pathological manifestations of love. Clearly influenced by Erich Fromm, Freire asserts: "Domination reveals the pathology of love: sadism in the dominator and masochism in the dominated" (Freire, 2005, p. 89). Thus, dialogue is a horizontal relationship based on authentic love, along with humility and faith (Freire, 2005, p. 91). According to Freire, dialogue, if understood as the act of naming the world (in order to change it), cannot be comprehended without "a profound love for the world and for people. Love is at the same time the foundation of dialogue and dialogue itself." Love is also an act of bravery that cannot be reduced to sentimentality (Freire, 2005, pp. 89-90), and as such is especially required of the oppressor. In order to engage in solidarity with the oppressed, he should not make pious or sentimental gestures, but *risk an act of love* (Freire, 2005, pp. 49-50). Finally, love is one of the pillars and even principles (Kohan, 2021, pp. 67-91) of Freire's philosophy of education. However, Freire is very cautious not to moralize in this matter. Rather than issuing a direct command: "Love…!" he mostly tries to work out ways in which love can emerge, doing so implicitly, but sometimes very explicitly,

for example at the end of the preface to his most famous book, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

> "From these pages I hope at least the following will endure: my trust in the people, and my faith in men and women, and in the creation of a world in which it will be easier to love." (Freire 2005, p. 40)

Love can be understood as an indirect imperative, whereby we should prioritize the creation of a conducive environment for love to flourish. In this context, two other cardinal Christian virtues - hope and faith - play a pivotal role. Faith is present in the mere fact of Freire's faith in God, but also in faith of another kind, namely in other people - without which he cannot realize God's intention of changing the world and at the same time of co-humanization - while hope is most apparent in the utopian character of Freire's philosophy. The church should be utopian according to Mannheim's differentiation of utopia and ideology (Mannheim, 1936), where the latter is represented precisely by the idea of Christian brotherly love in a society based on serfdom - it is a proclamation in a context built in such a way that the actualization of the idea is impossible (Mannheim, 1936, p. 175). Such an ideological stance on the part of the Church would be characterized, in Freire's own words, as "formalism in bureaucratic rites where hope, detached from the future, becomes only an alienated and alienating abstraction." This approach does not encourage action, but rather perpetuates a state of passive acceptance amongst the oppressed. Consequently, the Church effectively "forbids itself the Easter it preaches" (Freire, 1985, p. 127).

> "The *sine qua non* which the apprenticeship demands is that, first of all, they really experience their own Easter, that they die as elitists so as to be resurrected on the side of the oppressed, that they be born again with the beings who were not allowed to be. Such a process implies a renunciation of myths which are dear to them: the myth of their 'superiority', of their purity of soul, of their virtues, their wisdom, the myth that they 'save the poor', the myth of the neutrality of the church, of theology, education, science, technology, the myth of their own impartiality - from which grow the other myths: of the inferiority of other people, of their spiritual and physical impurity, and the myth of the absolute ignorance of the oppressed. This Easter, which results in the changing of consciousness, must be existentially experienced. The real Easter is not commemorative rhetoric. It is praxis; it is historical involvement. The old Easter of rhetoric is dead - with no hope of resurrection. It is only in the authenticity of historical praxis that Easter becomes

> the death which makes life possible. But the bourgeois worldview, basically necrophilic (death-loving) and therefore static, is unable to accept this supremely biophilic (life-loving) experience of Easter. The bourgeois mentality - which is far more than just a convenient abstraction - kills the profound historical dynamism of Easter and turns it into no more than a date on the calendar. The lust to possess, a sign of the necrophilic worldview, rejects the deeper meaning of resurrection." (Freire, 1973, p. 2; Freire, 1985, pp. 122-123)

As James D. Kirylo and Drick Boyd (the author of a comprehensive account of Freire's spirituality) aptly observe, prayer represents Freire's appeal to God for fortitude in resisting oppression. It is not, however, a form of passive, magical thinking whereby one merely waits for divine intervention. We are not mere vessels awaiting the infusion of divine knowledge through the Word of God. The Word can only be heard through engagement with the process of liberation of fellow human beings. The Word of God does not encourage a passive stance in the face of domination over my brother; rather, it calls for the re-creation of the world for his liberation. In this way, the comprehension of the Word of God is analogous to Freire's concept of learning, which he defines as an interplay of reflection and experience (Kirylo & Boyd, 2017, p. 8), gained through action.

The concept of love in education appears to be largely limited in its manifestation and scope. Sentimental love is the predominant form of love depicted in literature, and its manifestations do not extend to the structural level. The love for one's neighbor does not extend beyond the actions of a Good Samaritan. These actions are not inherently problematic, as are those of mercy if they are merely an expression of false generosity (see Freire, 2005, pp. 44-45). A responsible and loving educator should not limit themselves to these actions or, at the very least, is obliged to initiate a dialogue on the various forms of love. This dialogue should not be divorced from the action of changing the world, since changing reality removes the illusion of its naturalness and makes students (of all ages) more receptive to understanding the real possibilities of acting according to the deeper meaning of love.

Finally, one must ask whether Freire takes Christ seriously enough, i.e., can he be read as an encouragement to Europeans to understand Christ's message more radically? According to Freire, not only is it imperative to advocate for the poor, but it is also essential to "walk in their shoes" through the Eastern experience. This entails the act of giving one's second garment to

another and living with another in unconditional love. But is this love unconditional towards the enemy? It seems not, but at the same time it is a moral conflict in which one cannot simultaneously love the oppressor and the oppressed. The most that can be done is to love the oppressor in such a way that he is required to stop being an oppressor. And the humanization of the oppressor can only be done by the oppressed - they liberate the oppressor by liberating themselves (Freire, 2005, pp. 65-67).

> "Yet it is - paradoxical though it may seem-precisely in the response of the oppressed to the violence of their oppressors that a gesture of love may be found. Consciously or unconsciously, the act of rebellion by the oppressed (an act which is always, or nearly always, as violent as the initial violence of the oppressors) can initiate love. Whereas the violence of the oppressors prevents the oppressed from being fully human, the response of the latter to this violence is grounded in the desire to pursue the right to be human. As the oppressors dehumanize others and violate their rights, they themselves also become dehumanized. As the oppressed, fighting to be human, take away the oppressors' power to dominate and suppress, they restore to the oppressors the humanity they had lost in the exercise of oppression." (Freire, 2005, p. 56)

Freire would not turn the other cheek lightly, but he believes that the oppressed do not slap the oppressor, but that the oppressor does it himself – he generates violence that leads to the impossibility of creating love, so that the real subject of violence of the oppressed is the oppressor himself. I leave it to the reader to decide how much of Freire's rationalizations can be read into this, but it is certain that his approach offers a valuable perspective for understanding Christ's messages.

4. GRETA INSTEAD OF CONCLUSION

Although it can hardly be considered a Christian virtue, as it is, in fact, one of the deadly sins, rage is Europe's first word, as evidenced by Homer's invocation at the beginning of the *Iliad* (Anc. Gr. Μῆνιν…; Sloterdijk, 2010, p. 1). The rage of a young girl, Greta Thunberg, has brought a relatively new European educational value to the fore in a somewhat different light. Environmental education has become a prominent feature of European educational systems. Notably, Greta and her likeminded peers have adopted a more active, almost lecturing role in this movement, often engaging in direct confrontation with adults, even vociferously.

Since initiating the School Strike for Climate on August 20, 2018, Greta Thunberg has delivered several noteworthy speeches as a 15- to 16-year-old girl, which have been compiled in the book *No One is Too Small to Make a Difference*. The text reveals that Greta's demands are relatively straightforward, given that the climate crisis is underpinned by clear scientific evidence and a defined path to resolution. This involves halting business as usual to prevent the emission of greenhouse gases. She is aware that radical changes are required, yet even at the UN Climate Change Conference in Katowice (December 15, 2018), discussions revolve around the concept of "green, eternal economic growth" and the proposal of "the same bad ideas that got us into this mess." In addition to the establishment of a new economic and political system, it is imperative to cultivate a novel mode of thinking that is not based on competition but rather on cooperation, fairness, equity, and a commitment to the well-being of all living species. Greta is told to go back to school, while she actually acts like a well-educated child (she "has done her homework") who takes her insights into climate crisis seriously, while most adults do not. She characterizes adults as immature, spoiled, and irresponsible children. She does not need their hope - she wants them to panic, to start treating the crisis as a crisis. One cannot "sit around waiting for hope to come." Hope must be earned. She acknowledges that her words may appear naive, "but if you have done your homework then you know that we don't have any other choice" (Thunberg, 2019).

The anguished cry of Greta Thunberg can be interpreted as a manifestation of her profound frustration with the hypocritical actions of the majority of adults in their response to the environmental crisis. In an attempt to pacify their consciences, such individuals engage in practices such as recycling or utilizing electric vehicles, thereby paying a nominal fee to maintain the *status quo* and their relatively comfortable lifestyles. This phenomenon can be likened to the manner in which false generosity functions. The adoption of cosmetic measures is regarded as the most pragmatic approach, whereas Greta's demands are perceived as commendable yet impractical and utopian, in a word, naive. But what could be naiver than to think that we can somehow solve our environmental problems while maintaining unstoppable economic growth? Thus, the pragmatic approach is demonstrably naiver than the utopian one. Freire would say that when the utopian dream seems less attainable, one should find ways to make it more attainable (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 187). Similarly, Greta's utopia bears resemblance to Freire's in numerous other respects. The structure of Greta's hope does not resemble

prayer as a form of "magical thinking," as a passive act of waiting for hope, but rather as a process of building and earning hope. Freire's utopian hope is similarly neither idealistic nor impractical (Freire, 1985, p. 57), nor is it passive; rather, it is active in the constantly changing world (Freire, 2000, p. 103). The future is not merely a repetition of the present (Freire, 1985, p. 58).

Greta's concern for all living beings is also something that can be found in late Freire, and which could actually be interpreted as his discovery of his inner childlikeness ("this child who leads me to love life so much"; Freire, 1985, p. 197). In this context it should also be mentioned that Freire's revolutionary utopia is biophilic (Freire, 1985, p. 82). The imperative of attaining a childlike state or of preserving it is a crucial facet of Freire's philosophy of education and political engagement, primarily due to the inherent value present in infantile curiosity, restlessness, creativity, delight in questioning, daring to dream, and desire to grow (Freire & Faundez, 1989, p. 140).[2]

The admiration directed toward Greta is comparable to that accorded to Socrates and Christ. It appears that these three figures, i.e. the values they represent, are frequently not taken very seriously in the European West. Although Socrates occupies an important place in the philosophical pantheon of Western philosophy, the admiration we pay to him resembles the admiration we pay to a gifted child - as if we find a serious study of his life and work to be too naive, and would rather choose more realistic figures, such as his disciple Plato, for actual orientation. A comparable situation can be observed in the case of Jesus Christ, the founder of the dominant European religion. While Jesus Christ is widely regarded as "the way, the truth and the life" by the majority of Western Europeans, his moral example is not widely accepted as a serious paradigm for one's own actions, particularly when it requires us to "walk in the shoes" of the oppressed and not allow ourselves to pacify our consciousness with false generosity. While some Western Europeans may express cynicism and ignorance towards the issue, they may also admire the determination of young activists like Greta Thunberg in addressing the impending ecological disaster. However, this admiration may not translate into concrete action, reflecting a common tendency to admire chil-

[2] For more insights in bioethical implications of Freire's philosophy see: Guć, 2022a.

dren's activity. A significant shift in attitude may be achieved by adopting the Freirean concept of becoming a child.

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THE MYTH OF EDUCATIONAL NEUTRALITY: EUROPEAN IDENTITY AND THE ROLE OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The role of education in cultivating the future of a community is beyond doubt, as is its place in creating a common space. In this sense, citizenship education has been a key factor in the promotion of core values both nationally and internationally, in this case, in Europe. This setting rules out the possibility of any educational neutrality, at least regarding what counts as citizenship and the rights and duties that are associated with the concept. In the case of the European project, what constitutes a common European identity, and values has changed significantly from what it was at the inception of the European Union, from a substantive foundation rooted in Christian values to a more abstract and secular scheme that underlines the defense of minorities, the rule of law, and cosmopolitanism. This conceptual change has underscored the difficulty of pinpointing exactly what European values are and how difficult it is to define what it means to be European, as evidenced by the clash between Central and Eastern European countries, such as Hungary and Poland, and their Western counterparts. The purpose of this article is to explore the concept of "European values" and how it relates to citizenship education.
***Keywords**: European Union, citizenship, identity, values, education*

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is at the center of political debates, and rightly so, as it affects the future of any society. Indeed, there is usually a gap between individual preferences in education and the design of curricula by policymakers. This is seen in controversies between parents and schools, even to the point of who

should take precedence in deciding the direction of education. As a result, civic education is a subject of constant debate among political parties and members of civil society.

One heatedly contested topic is the idea that education should "be neutral", which generally means that it should not indulge in any "ideological bias" or value-laden rhetoric, perceived as indoctrinating by some. Instead, it should strive for pure objectivity, providing students with the tools to pursue the truth as best equipped as possible. However, while perhaps noble in its intent, it hardly corresponds to how it works in practice, as Paulo Freire argued in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* claiming that there was no such thing as neutral education (Freire, 1968). On the other hand, there is something to be said about the independence of educational systems from partisan interests, and the latter's insistent attempts to control the former.

As such, it figures in the political agendas and rhetoric of all parties, including those considered populist whose underlying narratives have, to a large extent, spread across the ideological spectrum over the past decade. This is to be expected, since successful access to prospective electors is a strategy for gaining power in the near future. As a result, education and civic education are often reduced to political currency, in some cases tied to partisan interests.

This chapter explores the challenging task of teaching European values, particularly in a rapidly evolving socio-political landscape. It highlights the complexity of reconciling the universality of these values with the diverse cultural backgrounds and perspectives present in contemporary European classrooms. The clash between the aspiration for a unified set of values and the realities of pluralistic societies raises pertinent questions about cultural relativism, ethnocentrism, and the imposition of beliefs. The analysis therefore asks what these "European values" are. Are they clearly defined? This chapter argues that they are not, which greatly complicates the formation of future citizens, especially in a European international context.

Indeed, citizenship education remains one of the greatest tools for affirming - and changing - the political *status quo*. This chapter argues that education in general, and citizenship education in particular, is an effective means of creating active European citizens, who are key to safeguarding liberal democratic principles. But is this not also achieved by teaching "national values" or citizenship? What, if anything, distinguishes European values from

national values? Not only are they not mutually exclusive, but they can also be complementary, as this chapter will show. As a frame of reference, the study uses the Eurydice 2012 document, *Citizen Education in Europe*.

In this regard, the chapter will first look at the development of citizenship education as a concept in the European Union. This will show why it has been so controversial. There has been a substantial change of interpretative disposition from "objective" subjects such as physics or mathematics to more "subjective" areas from the humanities, such as citizenship education, where it is not uncommon to hear claims of brainwashing or ideologization.

Secondly, the study will analyze what "European values" are, if anything, clarifying the use of the concept, and comparing it with "national values", arguing that the concept has an open texture. In this sense, it is advisable to abandon the notion that education can be neutral or completely impartial in some respects, at least in terms of creating active citizens, as will be defended in the third section. This is not a novel idea and can be found in pedagogical literature since classics such as Aristotle and Cicero.

2. CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION: CREATING ACTIVE CITIZENS

Educating good citizens has been an objective since ancient times. In the Greco-Roman world, the idea of *paideia* or education to achieve an ideal *polis* was a common project. In this sense, the discussion has swung back and forth between educating good citizens, or rather, citizens who are good, and thus will be good citizens. In the same process, the political *status quo* can be affirmed or transformed despite the expansion the scope of citizenship - women, slaves, immigrants, or minorities - and the changing expectations of what it means to be a citizen (rights and responsibilities). For Thomas Jefferson, for instance, history education for American citizenship should play a primary role in keeping vigilant against a possible tyrannical government in the future (Jefferson [1779] 1905, pp. 266-72).

In republican thought, a *res publica* evokes elements such as religious practices, education, traditions, and laws. These elements are prominent, for example, in Cicero's argument in the dialogue *De re publica*, through his analysis of King Numa's educational reforms, which he uses to prevent the people from becoming savage tyrants (Cic. *Rep*. 1.68, 2.48). Through education, citizens are elevated in virtue - something that the *politikós*, a true political leader - should do and this is only achieved in connection with the

traditions of the past through the ancient republican account. In the Eurydice 2012 document, this is seen in the emphasis on history and national cultural traditions.

Thus, civic education (or citizenship education) as a subject was created and applied in some education systems throughout the twentieth century, especially after the First and Second World Wars, while in others it was merged with other subjects such as history, philosophy or taught according to a cross-curricular methodology (Eurydice, 2012, p. 13). Activities such as "flag-raising ceremonies, visits to parliamentary institutions and giving voice to guest speakers who have some political experiences to share" were also promoted in schools across Europe (Kennedy, 2019, p. 2).

Since 2002, following *The Recommendations of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to Member States* (Council of Europe, 2002), civic education has become a common sight in European curricula, albeit without a consensus on the approach (Pacheco-Bethencourt, 2022). In the UK, for example, it was introduced in 2002, following the 1998 report by the Advisory Group on Citizenship which raised concerns about citizens' democratic engagement and perceived 'social decline' (Tonge, Mycock & Jeffery, 2012). Since then, the quest for an active citizenship has been pursued.

However, it is not only good citizens who are the desired 'product' of citizenship education, but also citizens who care, who have certain values and a sense of belonging to a particular political and social community, i.e. people who *identify* as citizens. Hence, authors such as Benedict Anderson have theorized the role of education in achieving social cohesion by creating "imagined communities" linked to national identity (Anderson, 1991). In the case analyzed in this chapter, this has to do with European citizenship and, at its core, the concept of European values.

2.1. Citizenship Education in Europe and the Eurydice 2012 Document

Citizenship or civic education, sometimes called education for citizenship, has become a leading point of discussion in countries such as the United Kingdom, Ireland, the Nordic countries, and Spain, to name a few. The reasons for this emphasis are varied: mutating "patterns of governance", globalization (Keating, Ortloff & Philippou, 2009), increased immigration and a post 9/11 decline in the support of liberal democratic values (Burchianti & Zapata-Barrero, 2016, p. 270). Moreover, this support seems to be eroding

further, with recent studies signaling increased support for alternative forms of government, such as military dictatorship, among younger generations (Helmstetter & Fraser, 2023).

The very framing of the debate about citizenship education as an existing subject argues against the notion that there is such a thing as educational neutrality, at least when it comes to citizenship. It has to do, of course, with the related question of "What is a citizen?", or "What is a good citizen?", i.e., "A citizen of what?". The question of what a good citizen is, is related to what they should do and how they should behave, what their responsibilities are and what they can expect. Indeed, that it is controversial is evident from the back-and-forth arguments since the early 2000s, even transcontinental to the United States (Nash, Crabtree & Dunn, 1997) and Australia (McIntyre & Simpson, 2009).

"A citizen of what?" is a question paramount to understanding how citizenship works, and what set of rights and responsibilities each member of the political community has. In this sense, elucidating *what* that community is becomes paramount in order to even begin to discuss the matter. Thus, many scholars have approached this task from different standpoints.

The established significance of history and heritage in fostering a collective national identity and communal bonds has been greatly recognized. Authors such as Benedict Anderson (Anderson, 1991), much like Walker Connor (Connor, 1994), have stated that a shared historical perception plays a crucial role in the construction of the nation's *imagined community*. It is noteworthy that this historical narrative does not necessarily require factual accuracy in order to become embedded in the dominant discourse of this imagined community.

Connor suggests that members of the community believe that they have a primary and exclusive claim to the homeland, and that while outsiders may be tolerated, the demand that they "go home" can be made at any time and "may be aimed at compatriots as well as at foreigners" (Connor, 1994, p. 78). Furthermore, ethnonationalist concerns, are "by their very nature", obsessed with "a vision of freedom from domination by non-members" (Connor, 1994, p. 78).

It produces a particular narrative about history: stereotypes, oversimplifications, and condensed versions of a more intricate and complex past are abounded in what the historian Eric Hobsbawm has called the *invented tradi-*

tion of a nation (Hobsbawm, 2000). Nationalists and ethnonationalists have traditionally used this rhetoric to develop a narrative that suits their conception of the *true people* and to bridge contemporary citizens with their forefathers, creating not only a spatial but also a temporal sense of community.

But what does it mean to *imagine* a community, to *invent* a tradition? Understanding this will provide insights into how citizenship education, for example, can use history to promote its political objectives. In the first case, it is better understood by proposing, with Anderson, one such community: the nation. Is the nation invented? It is, to the extent that its members, for the most part, do not know each other, but nevertheless think of themselves as a kind of collective (Anderson, 1991, p. 6). Such an i*magined* status is common to all communities larger than local or "face to face" communities, but it is important to be careful, as this does not necessarily mean fake, an opposition to *the real*: *imagined* is linked to creation. Community is produced through a creative process.

This process is only possible under certain material circumstances, in a certain time and space. For Anderson, it is conditioned by the weakening and transcending of three axioms of classical antiquity: a) the relationship between language and truth, linked to truth as correspondence (both an ontological and epistemological axiom), b) the natural order of society, c) the concept of circular time, in which cosmology and history coincide (Anderson, 1991, p. 36).

Only then could national consciousness emerge. Paradoxically, much of nationalist and ethnonationalist speech consists of building bridges between present-day citizens and a pre-national past. This also goes hand in hand with what the creation of a European identity might look like to some. Indeed, the question is whether this process is akin to the process of imagining a nation.

On the other hand, having established that an *imagined* community is not necessarily a *fake* community, "invented traditions" point to the practices and values of the members of these communities. As Eric Hobsbawm describes, those are "a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behavior by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past" (Hobsbawm, 2000, p. 1). More importantly, these practices try to build a bridge to the past, a temporal continuity.

To make his case, Hobsbawm discusses the British monarchy. To the historian, nothing seems more ancient, more perennial, and more linked to an immemorial past, while in fact, it is a product of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (Hobsbawm, 2000, p. 1), at least in its current form and, of course, in the present dynasty. There is no direct continuity even between Alfred the Great and Queen Victoria, though the argument for the institution as a nexus could also be made. Arguably, many traditions considered ancient have a similar feature.

Some conceptual distinctions are paramount, as tradition is not custom. Tradition is framed and immovable, whereas custom allows for some degree of variation. The past, whether invented or real, imposes practices on the present that do not accept change. Particularly relevant to the argument being advanced here is the creation of new traditions (much like the creation of new communities) for new purposes (namely political) but influenced by ancient materials and grafting on to old traditions, often expanding the old vocabulary and symbology to produce new materials and devices.

Hobsbawm accurately points out that the novelty of some ideological movements (such as nationalism) that historical continuity had to be invented, an ancient past beyond said continuity, either through semi-fiction – Boadicea, Wallace, Vercingetorix - or forged, such as the Czech medieval manuscripts (Hobsbawm, 2000, p. 7). It is in this creation of continuity that populist ethnonationalist rhetoric really excels, as we shall see.

Invented traditions are created officially and unofficially. The former is political, through institutions and movements, while the latter is social, through political groups such as clubs or fraternities, that are not necessarily consciously political (Hobsbawm, 2000, p. 263). The political creation of these traditions is the focus of this paper. By employing "invented traditions", history serves not only as a means of legitimizing institutions, policies, and power groups, but also as a unifying agent within communities. This vital component fosters a collective imagination among its members, providing a profound sense of purpose, coherence, and occasionally guidance.

So, what are the goals of citizenship education? There is, of course, the creative notion of inventing a new political community and a sense of belonging in its citizens. The Eurydice 2012 document, *Citizen Education in Europe* provides some cues by identifying four main objectives: First, to develop political literacy, second, to acquire critical thinking and analytical skills.

Third, to develop certain values, attitudes, and behaviors, and finally, to encourage active participation and engagement at school and community level (Eurydice, 2012, p. 27).

As the report argues, these objectives are interdependent and complementary, but the first is the most relevant in defining what citizenship education entails, as it includes learning about "social, political and civic institutions; human rights; national constitutions; citizens' rights and responsibilities; social issues; recognition of the cultural and historical heritage as well as the cultural and linguistic diversity of society" (Eurydice, 2012, p. 27).

Nevertheless, the third and fourth objectives also play a crucial role, albeit of a secondary nature. The third prioritizes acquiring a determined set of values, and the fourth prioritizes communal behavior and participation, which is closely linked to what active citizenship tends to mean. Citizenship education thus becomes a pivotal tool for protecting or modifying the political *status quo*, as well as for creating and defining social and political identities. Civic education is therefore targeted by politicians who seek structural change in society and by those who attempt to maintain current power structures.

In liberal democracies, there are many advocates of "active citizenship", citizens who are politically engaged and active in promoting democratic values and human rights. However, this concept has been criticized for its vagueness, and a lack of definition of the responsibilities of an active citizen. In this chapter, the definition that is used as a model because of its generality is that of an active citizen as someone "engaged in participation in activities that support a community", where the community is not only the nation-state, but also local, European, and global communities (Kersh et al. 2021, p. 3).

Sensibly, these "democratic values" refer to certain types of communities and are not necessarily shared by all citizens in every community system, or even in every country. In this framework, active citizenship could function as a Foucauldian "disciplining technology" (Luke, 1990) to promote and ensure commitment to liberal democracy. In this sense, authors such as Kerry Kennedy define civic education "as a political construction designed to serve the purposes of the nation-state reflecting its values, its purposes and its priorities" (Kennedy, 2019, p. 18). These purposes and priorities may indeed be liberal, illiberal or authoritarian.

The Eurydice document takes into account not only the national dimension, but also the international, namely European history, culture, literature, and economic, political and social issues. It also deals with the institutions of the European Union and how they work, as well as international organizations related to the EU. Here is where the document gets more interesting, in one line: "the sense of national and European identity and the related sense of belonging" (Eurydice, 2012, p. 32). Arguably, the text says that the matter is covered in the curricula, although it avoids going into details. Nevertheless, it is inferred that the question of national and European values is connected to history, culture and general liberal democratic values or principles.

A secondary set of tools is also described, skills that every citizen should have in order to become active in his community. The aim is to combine the theoretical aspect of citizenship with practical elements. Again, there are four sets of skills: civic skills (voting, volunteering, and general participation), social skills (collaborative working and conflict resolution), communication skills (debates), and intercultural skills (promoting intercultural dialogue and appreciation of differences) (Eurydice, 2012, p. 3).

Perhaps the third set of skills is more prone to debate because, while differences exist and allow for a rich cultural exchange, it creates a tense equilibrium with citizenship as an inclusive concept where commonalities are to be sought, as well as a common goal to further unify a community, even if it is a diverse one. In this sense, in order to create a more robust sense of belonging, especially with regard to immigration policies, these common and unifying aspects should take precedence over citizenship as a concept imbued with the political and cultural traditions of a community.

2.2. Interpreting Citizenship Education

There are namely three relevant standpoints to approach the conceptual debate on the goal of civic education, as understood by some educational theorists such as Schugurensky and Myers (Schugurensky & Myers, 2003), Kerr (Kerr, 2002) or Kennedy (Kennedy, 2019): a) progressive, b) conservative and c) post-structuralist. They are explicatively useful, though necessarily vague to some degree, simplifying complex concepts with a diluted history.

The first framework highlights public participation and active citizenship, while the second describes the "conservative" case with a production-based

concern, that is, to prepare future citizens for access to the job market or an emphasis on history and traditional values to maintain the current *status quo*. Finally, a post-structuralist view understands civic education as a tool for validating the power structure, embodied where the political regime serves the economic system and financial markets.

There are several differences and nuances between the progressive and conservative approaches. The former might seem akin to traditional republicanism (Pettit, 1997), where participation and involvement in public life are strongly encouraged and seen as key to civic education in schools. The latter would focus on passive citizenship, emphasizing that the teaching of history should highlight gradual progress and development.

Conversely, these views also take a different view of where society should be going, which is one of the main concerns of education. Conservatism, in this view, underscores the existence of shared values, the need for gratefulness towards previous generations by preserving their achievements, and a certain hope for the future that rests on the foundations they laid. In contrast, the alleged progressive outlook understands the future as being actively shaped by participating citizens. It should be noted that this idea is linked to the notion of creating or imagining communities. In this sense, education, for example, is a foundational element in the creative process of a nation.

Albeit descriptive, the association of the progressive view with republicanism should be re-evaluated, as the republican view can conflate both approaches. Following Cicero's theory of the mixed constitution, which is central to classical republicanism, it is evident that a *res publica* conjures up elements such as religious practices, education, traditions, and laws, while at the same time mixing the preservation of historical heritage with the encouragement of participation through the education of citizens. All of these elements are prominent in Scipio's argument in the dialogue about the Republic, as seen, for example, in his analysis of King Numa's educational reforms (Cic. *Rep*. 1.68, 2.48).

It is not just a question of how power is distributed among the institutions, but it is also matter of "an equitable (*aequabilis*) balance in the state (*rei publicae*) of rights and duties and offices, so that there is enough power (*potestatis*) in the magistracies, authority (*auctoritatis*) in the deliberation of the senate, and liberty (*libertatis*) in the people" (Cic. *Rep*. 2.57). There is a key distinction between power (*potestas*) and authority (*auctoritas*), the former

being held by the magistrates and the latter by the senate. Authority has to do with guiding, directing, advising and educating.

In this vein, these positions can also be seen as converging in that they both aim to ensure social cohesion, while at the same time giving different answers to the question of what makes different individuals come together, what makes them fall apart, what their attitude to the past is and what they should expect in the future. This is the central question posed by Charles Merriam in *The Making of Citizens* (Merriam, 1931, pp. 33-35). The question is how to cooperate peacefully and successfully in plural societies with citizens who have only their citizenship in common.

The third position provides a critical account of the previous approaches. Critical theorists - who have entered with strength in the mainstream political arena - and post-structuralists argue that aiming for "cohesion" or building active citizens renders education little more than a factory subservient to a *status quo* represented by liberal democracy and capitalism. For proponents of this approach, both progressive and conservative views on civic education can block the possibility of radical renewal and revolutionary change (Luke, 1990).

Nevertheless, this view fails to offer a convincing alternative and remains merely a destructive account of citizenship education. Moreover, it falls into a similar error to the one it accuses the other approaches of. If citizenship education is a means of consolidating the establishment, for instance, liberal democracy politically and capitalism economically, and is a prerogative of states and institutions, including transnationals ones such as the European Union, then a deconstructive oriented citizenship education would fall into the same intention.

It seems that to work, a post-structuralist proposal would have to demand that citizenship education be removed from school curricula, but that would not be enough, because it is primordial for deconstructivist views on national identity and traditional values. Thus, in order to justify their attack on the discipline, they would have to use citizenship education as a tool and fall under their own razor.

These three conceptual interpretative schemes, which as explained are general outlines as they lack some necessary nuances, provide quite different approaches to the concepts that civic education entails. Their relevance has to do with the role that each of them plays in the creation of a common iden-

tity, or lack thereof, and of shared values that articulate how citizens should behave.

3. AN EUROPEAN IDENTITY

The use of "European values" has been frequent in contemporary European political discourse, both by defenders of the European Union and by its critics. Tellingly, its use has had the same intention: to defend its policies or to legitimize various criticisms. Naturally, these two camps, supporters and detractors, understand the same term in slightly different ways.

To check the range of the analysis, given the scope of the chapter, the focus will be on how institutions use and define European values, although European values also include what European citizens value (Foret & Calligaro 2018, p. 5) and can be approached from four different perspectives, Weymans recalls. First, are these values shared by Europeans? Second, the values that distinguish European citizens from citizens elsewhere. Third, those values that Europeans believe their institutions should embody, and fourth, the changing use of the concept by politicians concerning the citizenship's view of the matter (Weymans, 2023, p. 98).

3.1. The European Union and European values

Defenders of the EU use terms such as dignity, human rights, democracy and tolerance as concomitant to the European project and present at its inception, but this is not the case. Neither the 1951 Treaty of Paris, which established the European Coal and Steel Community, nor the 1957 Treaty of Rome, which established the European Economic Community mentioned these concepts (Duranti, 2017, p. 209). They barely figured until the 1990s and early 2000s, as European institutions "kept their technocratic focus on the single market the Community was meant to create", rather using "peace or reconciliation" (Weymans, 2023, p. 98).

Nevertheless, they were asserted by the Council of Europe in 1949, and the European Convention on Human Rights in 1950, defended by the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg since 1959 (Duranti, 2017, pp. 1-2). As Samuel Moyn points out, the Cold War context was pivotal for this use, as it served an anti-communist political rhetoric, centered on defending the values of Western Europe (Moyn, 2015, p. 94). This notion of European

values describes a common foundation embodied by Europe's Christian heritage.

These values, in this particular view, are Europe's legacy to the world. They originated in Europe but were seen by Europeans as a necessary export to the rest of the world. A prime example of this mindset is the idea that the United States is a direct product of these values, as Margaret Thatcher once stated (Thatcher, 2016). For advocates of this position, as Duranti puts it, being a "good European" requires a commitment to respecting human rights and a compromise on the rule of law and individual freedoms or civil liberties (Duranti 2017, p. 9). While they were prominent in the post-war years, as mentioned above, they lost traction by the end of the post-war period.

Thus, unlike today's use of European values, which appeals to the entire political spectrum, at the inception of the European project they mostly had this Christian-imbued connotation, which aimed to differentiate Western Europe from the communist East, so much so that an epistemic split was created in the minds of Europeans, where Central and Eastern Europe were no longer seen as part of Europe, but rather as members or ex-members of the Soviet empire. Hence the attempts by authors (Kundera, 1984), politicians (Thatcher, 2016) and even religious figures such as the Pope (John Paul II, 2017) to reclaim these countries as truly European. The ideological imprint of the concept of European values largely explains its absence from the rhetoric of the European Community, at least until the 1970s.

3.2. European and National Values

By the 1970s, the European Community and the Council of Europe had to justify their existence or in other words, find a source of legitimacy, as their support base was quite dim. Indeed, as Samuel Moyn notes regarding the European Court of Human Rights cases, it had "decided only seventeen cases", until the 1980s, when the number seriously increased (Moyn, 2010, p. 80).

For Wims Weymans (2023), two shifts would be pivotal in changing that situation. For one, there was the enlargement of the European Community, when it welcomed the United Kingdom, Ireland, and Denmark and rethought what it meant to be European (European Council, 1973). As Weymans says, in order to position oneself in the world, one should know what one stands for, or what it means to be accepted into a particular club (Weymans,

2023, p. 104). The second shift was the need to connect with the public and defend the merits of the European project to the voters.

The first elections to the European Parliament were held in 1979, and European political parties had already been created, such as the Christian Democratic European People's Party in 1976, which promoted the idea of the Christian democratic founding fathers whose project had to be continued (Chenaux, 2007, p. 95). There was undoubtedly a need to define Europe, that is, to find a common European identity for its citizens. In this regard, Jacques Delors, head of the European Commission from January 7, 1985, to January 24, 1995, launched a campaign to create a European nation (van Middelaar, 2013), while also reinvigorating the notion of a single market.

Hence, the concept of a social Europe was born, and the notion that the benefits of a single market should benefit all Europeans (Dinan, 2014, pp. 215-16). It seemed to succeed until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, when the European club expanded eastward, and commonalities clogged when faced with the old tensions of the early anti-communist leanings of what became the European Union. Public enthusiasm for the European project also decreased, giving rise to a growing number of Eurosceptics who sometimes saw the EU as a direct threat to national sovereignty and culture.

It became more difficult to talk about a common identity when since the 1990s, twenty member states were involved. As van Middelaar signals, the discussion over what symbols to put on banknotes or even on the denominations of the currency illustrates the fear that national identification would prevail over European. Thus, concrete identifications, or references to concrete people were not preferred (van Middelaar, 2013, p. 242). These abstract references muddle the identity of a people, as the vagueness of the terms made them prone to confusion. The same occurred with the flag or mobility education programs such as Erasmus (Weymans, 2009, pp. 272–73).

In itself, the idea of values flooded the public debate in Europe at the end of the 1990s, which had to deal with a split from the "conservative Christian values" that had been the basis of the European project at its inception. Thus, values in a minimally secular sense have become the legitimizing element of the European project and its programs, as they seek to further promote these values. They are also used to describe challenges, such as the 2008 financial crisis, which has been framed as a "crisis of values" (Durão

Barroso, 2009, p. 4). Similarly, when the European Union was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2012, it described itself as a "community of values" (Durão Barroso's part of the Nobel Lecture 2012).

But this minimal understanding of "European values" is proving to be muddy terrain, as replacing notions of common history, culture, and identity with a vague set of democratic values exacerbates perceived differences between members of the European club, while aiming to remain vague enough to include as many countries as possible (van Middelaar, 2013, p. 249). Still, the goal of finding common ground and creating a community of citizens who share at least some principles, such as the defense of liberal democracy, remains.

As Weymans points out, it is somewhat paradoxical that Central and Eastern European countries began to join the Union when it had already minimized the language of identity, civilization and culture that many of these countries held dear because these more robust values separated them from the Soviet Union and Russia in particular (Weymans, 2023, p. 111). On another front, this conceptual openness of "European values" made it more attractive to the European left, which began to accept the European project as soon as it was explicitly separated from a Christian endeavor and began to use "Europe" as a symbol of progressivism, even in direct opposition to what they saw as backward conservatism.

The idea of common values has also been undermined by Europe's colonial past, on the one hand, and by political interpretations of that past and its alleged consequences for the present, on the other. Indeed, for some, praising European values has become the same as praising imperialism, if not preceded by ostensible dissociation from that possibility. The situation becomes more difficult because European values are something to be promoted and at the same time to be emptied of any concrete civilizational or cultural component.

This gap between the origins of European values and their new, abstract version has led to a clash between the perceived identity of Europe, understood nationally, and European identity, understood internationally. Nevertheless, both versions, the more substantive predecessor and the one defined in terms of human rights and the rule of law, share the same goal, which is to define, limit and exclude (Weymans, 2023, p. 112). The new values, which are political at their core, propose democracy and human rights as

Europe's boundaries: free elections, respect for minorities and the rule of law (European Council 2001, p. 20). Let us delve some more into the clash between traditional European identity and the newly defined European values.

The tensions between Central and Eastern European countries, former members of the Soviet Union and Western European countries highlight this conflict of values. While the more abstract and encompassing values have been embraced by the left, they have also been more frontally opposed by European conservatives. This has been particularly the case in the Hungarian and Polish conundrum, where the governments of both countries have taken an illiberal turn that is seen by some as anti-European, and by others as a recuperation of traditional European values that vertebrate a substantive common identity.

Since the 2010s, Hungary has undergone a thorough revision of its constitutional and political order under the Fidesz (*Magyar Polgári Szövetség* – Hungarian Civic Alliance) government. During this time, it has effectively gone from being a success story of the transition from socialism to democracy to a semi-authoritarian regime "where the new constitutional structure vests so much power in the centralized executive that no real checks and balances exist to restrain this power" (Bugarič, 2019, p. 602). Indeed, Viktor Orbán made no secret of his intentions when as head of government, he argued in Tusnádfürdö in July 2018 for the creation of an illiberal state with a different constitutional order, far from liberal democratic principles (Edy, 2014).

The exceptionality of the Hungarian case is that it was achieved by legal means due to Fidesz's two-thirds majority in the Diet (unicameral parliament of Hungary) and therefore faced few obstacles for constitutional reform (Scheppele, 2014, p. 51) when the 'rules of the game' were not suitable for the Hungarian government. After the fall of communism, constitutional courts became the prime custodians of the rule of law and naturally, targets. In centralized models of judicial review, it is the constitutional court's prerogative to review legislation, so if the goal is to centralize power, the so-called undemocratic rule of liberal judges would have to end.

Poland went through a similar process under the PiS (*Prawo i Sprawiedliwość* – Law and Justice) party from 2015 to 2023, and Hungary seemed to be an inspiration for the reforms that would take place. But unlike Fidesz,

PiS did not have the means to amend the constitution to its liking, so it had to find a way around it by creating a new form of constitutional amendment that changed the meaning of the constitution through ordinary statutes.

Under the government of Prime Minister Beata Szydlo, the Constitutional Tribunal was overrun with loyalists and the number of judges was increased. Thus, decisions would now have to be approved by a two-thirds majority, making the annulment of PiS legislation a difficult endeavor (Bugarič, 2019, p. 606). Indeed, the Repair Act on the Constitutional Tribunal was fabricated to paralyze the possible actions of the Tribunal as a check on power, and it succeeded in its objective.

It is not the purpose of this chapter to dig too deep into each of these cases, but to highlight the tension between the governments of these countries and the European Union, which responded by withholding European funding by tying disbursements from the EU budget to the fulfilment of rule of law standards (European Commission, 2018). This changed with the adoption of the 2021-2027 *Multiannual financial framework* and the *Next generation EU recovery package* in summer 2020, during the July 2020 summit. There, the European Council also agreed on a rule of law named *Conditionality regulation*, where both Hungary and Poland would be found wanting.

Beyond the purely technical and practical component of this dispute, there is also an underlying conflict of values, as Hungarian and Polish leaders present themselves as the true defenders of European ideals and Western civilization. In their view, the bureaucrats in Brussels have forgotten and betrayed these values by substituting liberal ones. In contrast, attacks on the rule of law and the rights of minorities, as well as their stance on massive immigration, were perceived in Brussels as a decline in Eastern values.

Indeed, Hungarians and Poles see themselves as defenders of true European values, because they are derived from, and not opposed to, national values. As Orbán said, "We are not Europeans because we have 'common European values' […] this is a misunderstanding. We are Europeans because we have [a] national, cultural heritage and values and we can harmonize these values in a common alliance" (Orbán, 2016). Furthermore, regarding Hungary and Poland, he claimed that "Poles and Hungarians have a common path, common fight and common goal: to build and defend our homeland in the form that we want… Christian and with national values" (Foster & Csekö, 2018).

For Orbán, his position is the true embodiment of European values (Mos 2020, p. 14). Of course, much of this rhetoric stems from a cultural standpoint rather than a truly religious Christian one, as it is constructed to counter Islam and especially the European Union's migration policies. Moreover, cosmopolitanism, which is seen as a strength in the West, is largely seen as a threat and a weakness in the East, and this is a core tension as, cosmopolitanism is a central value in the newly forming European identity (Krastev, 2017, p. 47).

Hence, populist leaders in these countries remind their Western counterparts of the original meaning of European values as they were written in a Christian conservative language, forgotten, and recycled by the European Union's adoption of a secular, more inclusive set of identity signs. For Weymans, these original core values have now "returned with a vengeance" not only in the East, but also among the conservative politicians in the West, and are gaining increasing support, especially in the context of the immigration debate and, of course, in education.

Education is not, and cannot be, a neutral tool, since it is of paramount importance in the process of creating the identity of a community, in other words, in imagining a political community. The question is whether liberal democratic values and abstract notions of the rule of law and cosmopolitanism are sufficient to create a robust sense of community and belonging, or whether more substantive elements need to be emphasized. If the latter is the case, it may be useful to look at the national dimension as well, as it might re-signify ideas such as a shared past, present and, hopefully, future. In this sense, education for citizenship understood in a republican sense, which, as noted above, combines the conservative and progressive frameworks, becomes more relevant than ever.

4. CONCLUDING REMARKS

In conclusion, this chapter has delved into the intricate role of education, particularly civic and citizenship education, as a pivotal instrument in the formation of societal values and identities in Europe. In this sense, it has argued that it is not all that clear what European values are and what the implications of this conceptual ambiguity are for the formation of future citizens. The intersection of education and political agendas highlights how deeply these realms are intertwined, as education serves not only as a

mechanism for imparting knowledge, but also as a battleground for ideological influence.

As explored, the tension between individual preferences – rooted in diverse cultural, social, and political backgrounds - and standardized curricula designed by policymakers is a recurring theme in educational discourse. This tension manifests itself in ongoing debates over who has the authority to direct educational content and objectives, a question that remains central to the political discourse surrounding education.

Throughout the chapter, the analysis of European values versus national values has revealed the complexity and often ambiguous nature of these concepts. While European values are frequently invoked as a unifying force to promote a shared sense of identity among citizens of the European Union, they are also subject to interpretation and debate, particularly when juxtaposed with national values, demonstrating how the shortcomings of "new European values" that rely on more vague notions of citizenship in relation to liberal democratic principles.

Following this analysis, the chapter argues that these two sets of values need not be seen as opposing forces, but rather as complementary elements that can coexist within the broader framework of citizenship education, the latter understood in a republican sense, merging what have been inaccurately termed the conservative and progressive interpretative frameworks of citizenship education. This dual approach can help cultivate a more inclusive and cohesive sense of belonging, particularly for immigrant populations and second and third generation citizens who may still be navigating their place in European society.

The chapter also emphasized the crucial role of education in the construction of both European and national identities. By fostering active citizenship through the teaching of shared values, education serves as a foundation for the preservation and promotion of democratic principles throughout the European Union. However, this process is not without its challenges, particularly in an era of increasing cultural diversity and social fragmentation. The chapter argues that a nuanced and balanced approach to citizenship education - one that respects cultural diversity while promoting a common set of values - is essential for ensuring that education remains a unifying force in Europe.

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MIRKOVIĆ, MASARYK AND FREIRE: EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRACY BETWEEN REGIONAL, EUROPEAN, AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT

Starting from the understanding that moral role models from the past still represent an indispensable standard in education, in this paper we follow three examples: a Croatian economist and writer from Istria (Mijo Mirković), a Czechoslovakian president and philosopher (Tomáš Masaryk), and a Brazilian founder of critical pedagogy (Paulo Freire). A close examination of their lives and work reveals several notable facets that serve to distinguish them from their contemporaries. These facets include a remarkable versatility, a penchant for genre hybridity, a profound commitment to scientific interdisciplinarity and democracy, continuous public and pedagogical activity. In this study, the primary focus will be on Mirković (artistic pseudonym Mate Balota), whose personal value system, particularly during the First World War era, was profoundly influenced by Masaryk. Masaryk's conception of education encompassed the comprehensive development of public pedagogy, as well as the spiritual and cultural dimensions of populace in the pursuit of democratic self-determination. The subalternity of the Istrian Croats within the Austro-Hungarian and later fascist empire profoundly influenced Mirković's understanding of education. He outlined his basic pedagogical principles in his book 'Old Grammar School of Pazin', an autobiographical study from 1950, dedicated to the first Croatian high school in Istria. In Mirković's critical reviews of the curriculum and the work of principal and teachers, practically all of Freire's key concepts are evident: the banking concept of education, the culture of silence, conscientization, and more. Mirković's reflections on education contain elements of a kind of pedagogy of the oppressed and it can be proven that this author anticipated Freire's critical pedagogy, which later developed independently. Freire's critical pedagogy had a global impact on pedagogy in general and is still, despite frequent criticism, extre-

mely relevant. A comparison of Mirković's and Freire's pedagogical thought helps to reflect on today's challenges to the teaching profession at all levels.
Keywords: *philosophy of education, critical pedagogy, Mijo Mirković, Paulo Freire, Tomáš Masaryk*

1. INTRODUCTION

Considering the exceptional cultural diversity of Europe and the universal reach of its influence, European values are best highlighted by connecting and comparing their regional, national, European, and global dimensions and forms. As Hans-Georg Gadamer suggests in the title of his renowned essay, the diversity of Europe is its "heritage and future": "Perhaps the special advantage of Europe is that, more than other countries, it could and had to learn to live with others, even if the others are different" (Gadamer, 1997, p. 24). Moreover, Gadamer posits that the experience of diversity, neighborhood, and equality within a relatively compact geographical space such as Europe serves as a "real school". However, the ultimate political consequence of his thought extends beyond the framework of the political unity of Europe, encompassing a task that is of paramount importance for the future of all humanity – "to learn that we must not simply exploit the means of our power and possibilities of action, but stop before the other as the other, before nature as well as in front of the developed cultures of peoples and countries, and that we should perceive others as others of ourselves, in order to have a share in each other" (Gadamer, 1997, p. 26). As Tzvetan Todorov (Todorov, 2019) observes, the unity of Europe stems from its dealing with its own plurality, which historically predestined it to show others the cosmopolitan way, already instilled in its ancient philosophical roots. The critique of colonialism and Eurocentrism is inextricably linked to European culture and values (Tafra, 2014). Consequently, any reflection on education and teaching in contemporary Europe must incorporate a comparative component that engages with non-European perspectives.

It is crucial to recognize that moral role models from the past continue to serve as indispensable standards in education (Nietzsche, 2003). In this paper we examine three examples: a Croatian economist and writer from Istria (Mijo Mirković), a Czechoslovakian president and philosopher (Tomáš Masaryk), and a Brazilian founder of critical pedagogy (Paulo Freire). Distinguished by their versatility, genre hybridity, scientific interdisciplinarity, continuous public activity, commitment to democracy, practical orientation,

and pedagogical activity as a constant element of their biographies these figures offer a rich source of examples for our analysis. Firstly, we focus on Mijo Mirković (artistic pseudonym Mate Balota).[3] Tomáš Masaryk had a decisive influence on Mirković's value system around the First World War. The subalternity of the Istrian Croats within two empires - the Austro-Hungarian and the later fascist one – exerted a profound influence on Mirković's understanding of education. The type of discourse that Mirković gradually developed while dealing with the aforementioned historical and geopolitical situation can rightfully be labeled postcolonial. Mirković's reflections on education contain elements of a pedagogy of the oppressed and anticipate Freire's critical pedagogy by a couple of decades. Despite frequent criticism, Freire's pedagogy has had a global impact on pedagogy and remains relevant today. A comparison of Mirković's and Freire's pedagogical thought facilitates consideration of current challenges to ethical education and to the teaching profession at all levels.

2. MIRKOVIĆ AND MASARYK

Masaryk and Mirković both hail from humble beginnings, with their shared lineage stemming from the peasant and working classes. The Czechoslovak president's father was a coachman, while his mother was a maid employed by a German lord. However, when considering the prominent status of Mirković's father Ante, it could be argued that he descended from a "dependent unfree serf who remained so even when serfdom was legally abolished" (Mirković, 1930, p. 6). The early years of Masaryk's life, similar to those of like Mirković and the majority of his generation, were marked by significant challenges. His formative experiences, which included witnessing the conditioning of the masses, served as a catalyst for his commitment to the Czech national revival. Undoubtedly, Mirković's origins and the diverse occupations he engaged in to support himself and his family also prepared him for the role of a national revivalist, which he most often performed under vario-

[3] Mirković (1898-1963) is certainly the least known of these three authors on an international scale. He is undoubtedly the greatest contemporary Croatian intellectual from Istria - an economist, university professor, journalist, poet, novelist, and historian. In some of his works of a typically interdisciplinary character - most notably in his doctoral dissertation - he also applies a philosophical approach to historical, economic, social, and political topics.

us pseudonyms, the most famous of which was Mate Balota. Both of them were strong characters and ready to speak out in the newspapers against public opinion and the prejudices of their people and even insist on a different ethical and political orientation. Masaryk's case is internationally more renowned example of selflessly dedicating one's expertise and determination to a lifelong pursuit: preparing his compatriots in accordance with their shared philosophy of progress for "a new time that had to come according to the strict and inexorable laws of development" (Mirković, 1930, p. 12).

2.1. Education for Social Progress: Patriotism and Cosmopolitanism

Masaryk's political and philosophical activity was dedicated to the creation of a Czech national program, without national exclusivity, but based on the belief that the cultural programs of different nations are compatible in their ethical basis. Following in the footsteps of Herder, Masaryk believed that they could be aligned with a great cosmopolitan goal: the realization of the ideal of Humanity (Zdenek, 2020; Van den Beld, 1975). Masaryk's understanding of politics is inseparable from concern and responsibility for his own people and humanity, and to that extent the professor's accession to the position of president of Czechoslovakia was the best fulfillment of the prophecy of the great Czech pedagogue Comenius about the restoration of national self-government (Mirković, 1930, p. 13). Masaryk’s approach for the Czechs was analogous to the later proposal by Mirković for the Istrian Croats: "to become culturally and economically so strong as to command respect and recognition from friends and opponents. And that meant the creation of culture, the creation of higher ideals, the building of science that will be at the European level, progress in all areas of literature and art - and above all: the creation of people" (Mirković, 1930, p. 19).

It could be said that Masaryk's entire political activity was an attempt to concretize his philosophy of education set on the plan of complete national emancipation. On this path of emancipation for the "small, poor, unenlightened and unaware people" (Mirković, 1930, p. 18), education plays a central role: just as his father, an illiterate coachman, learned to spell letters from little Tomáš, so did Balota in his novel *Tight Country* describe the intergenerational educational cooperation within the Istrian sphere of the oppressed (Mirković, 2023). Masaryk expressed his philosophical and political ideals most clearly and didactically at the beginning of the 20th century in the 1901 booklet *Ideals of Humanity*. This work represents a form of ethics

grounded in the Kantian secularized interpretation of Christian ethics (Scruton, 1990, p. 47), placing an emphasis on the development of free and independent thinking and education. Masaryk's philosophy is characterized by a seamless integration of politics and morality, emphasizing the imperative for both progress and immediate, tangible improvement in the present world (Schmidt-Hartmann, 1990, pp. 144-145). This attitude manifested itself even in Masaryk's capacity as a professor of philosophy, as Mirković (Mirković, 1930, pp. 47-48) notes that he is "not a philosophical systematist". Instead, his philosophical activity is "primarily practical", befitting his roles as a politician and a diplomat. Contrary to his nationalist adversaries, Masaryk championed the unity of humanity, truth, and justice. His philosophical motto "truth wins" is indicative of his perspective on the role of knowledge and education, where he espouses that knowledge is a virtue that must serve truth and humanity (Mirković, 1930, p. 57).

Following the First World War, he advocated for the global organization of world politics on the basis of enlightened statesmanship, internationalism (*mezinárodnost*) and cosmopolitanism (*všesvětovost*) (Masaryk, 1920; David, 2020). In his enthusiastic study (Mirković, 1930, p. 8) dedicated to the Czech teacher, Mirković noted that Masaryk actually tried to convince his people to "look at the Czech question from the point of view of Europe and humanity" and "to measure it by European standards". More specifically, "his ideal is the liberal countries, England and the United States", which practically prove that the system of private initiative and free competition enables "the creation of considerable well-being of the broad layers of the people" (Mirković, 1930, pp. 75-76). Masaryk recognizes the origin of his ideal in Christ and claims that precisely in these countries, religion is still the "backbone of social communities" (Mirković, 1930, p. 76). He believes that the individualism of contemporary society is best suited to an independent search for God and concludes that Protestant liberalism is best suited to this (Mirković, 1930, p. 44, 64). In the footsteps of his eminent compatriot and pedagogue Comenius, Masaryk emphasizes the establishment of good order as the foundation and starting point for the upliftment of the people. He believes that the improvement of society ultimately "depends on man's relationship to God" (Mirković, 1930, p. 41) and refinement of own's mind. In this regard, it is noteworthy that Masaryk placed significant emphasis on the long-standing tradition of the Czech Reformation, eventually joining the Evangelical Church of the Czech Brethren himself (Masaryk, 1923).

After all, Masaryk "founded the political program of the Czech people in the philosophy of Czech history" (Mirković 1930, p. 57), in which the Hussite movement occupies the highest and central position. Since, from Masaryk's perspective, the goal of Czech history was the development of democracy, it can be said that the Czech history is one long and difficult path of education for democracy. In Mirković's words, Masaryk is a typical "people's philosopher", and his intellectual work is "Czech folk philosophy", intended for the moral transformation and emancipation of every individual - in other words, for the "general education of the people" (Mirković, 1930, p. 64). In the classical spirit of Plato and Aristotle, the highest criteria for character education should apply to politicians, who through their practical example, are tasked with renewing the tradition of ancient moral models (Mirković, 1930, p. 34). Notably, Masaryk's doctoral dissertation from 1875 was dedicated to Plato's theory of the soul, and he was strongly influenced by Plato's interweaving of ethics, politics, upbringing, and education - so much so that his political work was also inspired by the vision of Plato as a patriot (Zdenek, 2020).

2.2. Influences and Differences

However, Masaryk conceptualized education (*vzdělaní*) in the extremely broad sense of public pedagogy, as the spiritual and cultural development of the people in the struggle for democratic self-determination. The dissemination of Masaryk's progressive ideas was facilitated by a well-organized network of institutions and collaborators, which engaged in the popularization of education through extensive publishing and public activity across the country. Given that the initiative was spearheaded by universities and schools, it can be posited that the process was part of a comprehensive educational endeavor, which given the depth of intervention, organization, and idealism, also possessed a significant philosophical dimension. This holistic dimension is also evident in the actions of the politicians, who are tasked with overseeing the well-being of the populace and continuously working towards its enhancement. Masaryk's conception of politics encompasses a wide array of initiatives, including teaching in schools, holding public lectures, opening libraries, staging theatrical performances, doing artistic and literary work, enhancing economic development (Mirković, 1930, p. 36). Masaryk's conception of politics as "true science" is interdisciplinary, encompassing not only sociology, psychology, national economy, ethnology,

and statistics, but also the field of "influence on character education" meaning that "people are not only the means, but also the goal" (Mirković, 1930, p. 33). Along with the fight for women's equality, national equality and the democratization of the political system, he engaged in intense political activity marked by numerous initiatives (e.g., against alcoholism, prostitution and corruption) to expand and reform public education. It is interesting that Masaryk saw the dialectic inherent in the expansion of education, so he emphasized the concurrent "degenerative" sociological aspects such as the increase in suicidality and sexual immorality (Pynsent, 1990, p. 70). Mirković, an atheist, or, at best, an agnostic of Protestant inspiration - who, it should be noted, writes “God” with a lowercase initial letter - must have a problem with this aspect of Masaryk's teachings, even if he himself does not confront this problem head-on. In his doctoral dissertation, Mirković (Mirković, 2008, p. 33) emphasizes Goethe's thought that "the real, only and deepest question of world history and the history of humanity, to which all other questions are subordinate, remains the conflict of disbelief and belief". This assertion served as the foundational premise for Masaryk's intellectual endeavors, particularly evident in his habilitation thesis on *Suicide as a Mass Social Phenomenon in Modern Civilization* (Masaryk, 1970). Masaryk's answer to the question regarding motivation behind relinquishing life includes a pessimistic cultural critique that recognizes signs of decadence in modern civilization, a certain half-heartedness and dissoluteness which again "is nothing but a lack of belief" (Mirković, 1930, p. 41).

Masaryk's model of work served as a true template among the Slavic peoples in Central Europe, so it also reached Istria. Mirković embraced a comprehensive array of Masaryk’s ideas and values, most notably his enduring commitment to liberalism and democracy, as well as the practice of persistent "small work" (*drobná práce*) to improve the socio-economic position of his own people, wherein a particularly prominent role belongs to education. Marković’s interest in Protestantism and its history in Istria and Croatia is also noteworthy (Mirković, 1980; Mirković, 2008). Masaryk's insistence on the central importance of religion is rooted in liberal Protestant theology, which perceives it as a deeply personal and intimate matter. This perspective did not exert a deeper influence on Mirković’s work. However, an intriguing parallel can be drawn between Freire's inspiration from Latin American liberation theology and Masaryk’s emphasis on religion. Conversely, as a witness and intellectual participant in the wave of left-wing popular revolutions during the second half of the last century, Freire does not share Ma-

saryk's fascination with the Entente powers and the Anglo-American liberal-democratic political tradition. Mirković's inconsistent acceptance of Masaryk's "disgust with collectivism" and harsh criticism of Marxism (Scruton, 1990, p. 49) are mostly limited to his early phase and his doctoral dissertation. Through the period of the strengthening of fascism in Europe, and finally after the geopolitical outcome of the Second World War, Mirković's commitment to social democracy and liberalism embodied by the major Western European powers underwent a gradual shift. He began to make significant contributions to the development of socialist Yugoslavia. The aforementioned forces contributed to the suppression of Masaryk's achievements and dissolution of Czechoslovakia during Hitler's time, as evidenced by the signing of the Munich Agreement.

Nevertheless, despite certain differences conditioned by different historical and civilizational circumstances, all three authors are critics of nationalism and advocates of cosmopolitan and internationalist attitudes and policies. It is especially important to emphasize that all three authors ground their vision of peace and international cooperation in their belief in the power of education. Paulo Freire was a staunch proponent of education, and the subsequent discourse will primarily draw parallels between his educational philosophies and those of Mirković, while also acknowledging the contributions of Masaryk, the oldest of these three authors. Masaryk falls into the background of our interests partly because his pedagogical thoughts are less directed towards the classroom itself. Masaryk's decisive influence on Mirković's value system occurred in the context of the First World War. The subalternity of the position of the Istrian Croats within the Austro-Hungarian and later fascist empires significantly influenced Mirković's understanding of education, including specific pedagogical topics he addressed. The historical and geopolitical context, as well as the type of discourse that Mirković gradually developed while dealing with it, can rightly be labeled postcolonial. This highly charged political aspect leads us to the next task: a comparative analysis of Mirković's and Freire's pedagogical ideas.

3. MIRKOVIĆ AND FREIRE

In the context of institutionalized education, Mirković outlined the basics of his educational philosophy in the *Old Grammar School of Pazin*, an autobiographical study from 1950, dedicated to the first Croatian high school in Istria (Mirković, 1984). The critique of this classical grammar school is arti-

culated from the vantage point of assessing the real needs of the underdeveloped socio-economic structure of the Croatian population in Istria - from which the majority of its students came - and does not merely accentuate the limitations and imbalance of its curriculum. The primary subject of critique encompasses the monologue and monotonous methodology of individual teachers, pedagogical formalism and conformism, Austrian state ideology, clerical spirit, and authoritarian repression led by the headmaster during that period.

3.1. Mirković, Freire, and Critical Pedagogy

In the book, Mirković presents his positive and negative reviews of examples of the work of several teachers in an argumentative manner. It is noteworthy that in the portraits of principals and teachers, practically all the key concepts developed by Freire can be discerned: banking concept of education, culture of silence, conscientization, codification, de-codification, and others (Freire, 2002). While Masaryk's conception of public pedagogy is predominantly elitist, characterized as a benevolent educational intervention or civic education via propaganda and mass media (Orzoff, 2009), Mirković's critique of the limitations of high school humanities at the time suggest a potential precursor to radical-democratic critical and cultural pedagogy. He is critical of the "banking" concept of education, which reduces students to passive recipients of information selected and controlled by "all-knowing" teachers. He also challenges the scientific reduction of the teacher's "culture of pedagogical act" to a mere project of "scientific thinking" (Marinković, 2008). Instead, Freire advocates education as part of the general emancipatory project of freedom, unimaginable outside of its essentially political dimension. The school is there to enable and support self-reflection, autonomy, critical thinking, and action directed towards the societal transformation (Giroux, 2011).

The influence of Freire's critical pedagogy on educational theory and practice in both Europe and Americas is undeniable and still present (Schugurensky, 2011). However, the meaning and relevance of its application remains controversial and in growing contradiction with neoliberal educational policies - constrained by narrow administrative considerations - and methodologies dependent on the behaviorist cult of measurability. On his way to the global North, Freire's work is usually appropriated according to the Western ideological assumptions, "dressed up in the jargon of abstract progressive

labels" (Giroux, 2011, p. 177), and in the neoliberal context reduced to a mere pedagogical technique or bare method (Freire, 2016, pp. 77-78). It is an approach that "necessarily ignores the intelligence, judgment and creative abilities of the teacher" (Freire, 2007, p. 98). Consequently, the revolutionary-democratic aspects of Freire's pedagogy are often lost, as well as the "profound and radical nature of its theory and practice as an anti-colonial and postcolonial discourse" (Giroux, 1993, p. 177). If the work of the Brazilian pedagogue must be accepted as a typical postcolonial text, it is important to point out here the possibility of reading Mirković/Balota in a postcolonial key; this is especially true for his synthesis of the history of the multicultural Istrian metropolis (Mirković, 1960) located on the geopolitical boundary of different imperial systems (Urošević, 2021, pp. 143-158). The theme of the subaltern and colonial position of the Istrian Croats within those imperial arrangements, and their struggle for survival - which, according to the author, ended with the epochal historical turn of 1945 and the defeat of fascism - runs through practically all of his literary and historiographical works. In his book dedicated to Pula and its surroundings, Mirković often emphasizes the "colonizing" and "colonial" characteristics of the urban majority in that area, including the Austria ascent at the transition to the twentieth century and its "capitalism with a colonial character" (Mirković, 1960, pp. 19-21, 25, 67, 82-83).[4]

Regarding Freire, Henry Giroux (1993, p. 178) observes that teachers and all who wish to understand him should become "border-crossers": which requires the courage to leave the safety of inherited cultural, theoretical, and ideological boundaries. This willingness to change imposes the critical task of reinventing tradition. However, the "boundaries" mentioned by Freire do not only have a vague metaphorical meaning; in this particular case, crossing them meant Freire's long-term exile in a number of countries. Assuming the role of mediator between European and non-European cultures,

[4] The idea of reading Mirković's texts in the context of postcoloniality should be further elaborated. Considering the limits of this work, we will only note that the concepts of postcolonial studies are successfully applied to the area of Southeastern and Eastern Europe - as evidenced by the most famous examples of Maria Todorova and Larry Wolff - despite all the ambivalence and the fact that they are often used after the prefix "demi-" or "semi-". A more recent review of related literature is given by Kołodziejczyk and Huigen (2023).

Freire can be considered in the postcolonial context as a typical "border intellectual" who is also "sympathetic to the formation of new cultural subjects and movements engaged in the struggle over modernist values of freedom, equality and justice" (Giroux, 1993, pp. 179-180). Mirković's status as an "exile writer" and a "diasporized" intellectual (Urošević, 2021, p. 10, 73) is well-established. However, it is noteworthy that in the context of the first half of the 20th century, his attempt to formulate a cultural, historical, and political subjectivity for Istrian Croats, predominantly of peasant origin, exhibits both similarities and differences to Freire's subsequent case. If the Brazilian philosopher bravely "crossed the borders" of European tradition and non-European cultures in the post-war world, Mirković left Istria between the two world wars because of Italian imperialism and fascism, which degraded the cultural status of its eastern neighbors in the name of higher achievements of European civilization (Tafra, 2022). Historical and geopolitical circumstances ultimately led to Mirković's involvement in the Paris Peace Conference as a member of the post-war Yugoslav government delegation. In this capacity, he exerted a notable influence on border issues and the annexation of Istria to Croatia and Yugoslavia (Mirković, 1963).

The previously mentioned circumstances that hinder the Western reception of Freire's work are also followed by the imperative of the application of digital technologies, whose developmental and psychological impact is increasingly problematic, and whose socioeconomic and political foundations are incompatible with the postulates of critical pedagogy (Zuboff, 2019; Matteucci, 2022). Freire insists that technological modernization alone cannot facilitate the transition from naïve to critical consciousness (Freire, 2005a, p. 30). Moreover, he contends that even the most technologically advanced societies "reveal the 'domestication' of man's critical faculties by a situation in which he is massified and has only the illusion of choice". This issue has been extensively explored within the framework of the philosophy of the Frankfurt School, particularly by Marcuse (Marcuse, 1989). Freire contends that education cannot be a mere acquisition of skills for competitive employment. Instead, it is argued that education should foster the autonomous development of creative powers (Polić, 1993) and therefore has no other purpose than to become a life transformation through which a person reaches his own essence (Mikecin, 2011). In essence, Freire's philosophy of education draws upon Humboldt's humanistic foundations (Barbarić, 2011), which the Brazilian author elevates to a political vision of revolutionary change in the world, following Marx's transformation of German idealism.

Critics who portray Freire as the "father of *Woke*" most likely unknowingly go to the very roots of the matter when they raise their voice not only against Marx, but also against Hegel's dialectics, Vico, and Rousseau (Lindsay, 2022). Freire's dialectic is a radical theory of becoming, the goal of which is to contribute to the overcoming (*Aufhebung*) of the contradictions of the existing social structure through dialogical cultural activity, by raising it to a higher level of freedom of human beings (Freire, 2002, p. 147). As some critics close to him note, Freire's dialectic has the properties of a "bipolar strategy" that can affect his students in such a way that they simplify the complexity of the real world to a monolithic rejection of objects of their criticism (Schugurensky, 1998, pp. 24-25). Compared to this radical aspect of Freire's legacy, Mirković is indisputably more ideologically moderate, somewhat closer to social democracy, and relatively more willing to compromise with capitalism and liberalism. Although Marković's doctoral dissertation - in which he undoubtedly accepts the capitalist framework of social reality as default, marked his initial stance, his evolving views progressively gravitated towards socialism and the left. "It should be emphasized that Mirković did not consider himself a Marxist and that he really took sides on some issues in economic theory that differed from the positions of Marxist science" (Čalić, 1969, p. 19). Nevertheless, Mirković attraction to socialism was primarily influenced by his personal experience of the brutality of capitalist relations, rather than its utopian aspects. In contrast, Freire was often subjected to Marxist criticism for speaking of the "oppressed" instead of the class struggle, which he said, "is not the mover of history, but is certainly one of them" (Freire, 2014, p. 81). What both can easily agree on is the commitment to democratic socialism and the rejection of Stalinist-type authoritarianism and dogmatism (McLaren, 2000).

In any case, Freire's theory avoids the detours of vanguardism and populist propaganda (Giroux, 2011, p. 163). The point of his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* cannot be detected as any specific technique, training or methodology - and especially not as coercion or political indoctrination. Rather, it is a plea for multidimensional thinking (Lipman, 2003) and democratic citizenship, for which learning about the world leads to action in a real socio-historical situation. In Adorno's words, it requires a kind of thinking that is not "the intellectual reproduction of what already exists" or something to be lightly satisfied with. It is a kind of thinking which cares for the possibility of something different, "is akin to transformative praxis", "points beyond itself", and represents "the force of resistance" (Adorno, 2005, pp. 292-293).

First of all, this requires transcending the immediate personal experience and freeing oneself from the fatalistic acceptance of the existing state of affairs, from the dominant "common sense" thinking and the shibboleths that support it (Giroux, 2011). Freire clearly indicates the destructive pedagogical force of corporate and militaristic culture, which reduces the moral consciousness of citizens to the fatalistic acceptance of the dominant ideology (Freire, 2016, pp. 100-102). Mirković, in a series of feuilletons entitled *Istria is Changing* (Mirković, 2011), specifically highlights the politics of the everyday, detecting the disastrous effects of the cultural industry and consumer society on the general education of Croatian peasants in Istria during 1930s. Mirković's pedagogical thought, and to a certain extent also Masaryk's, basically correspond to Freire's concept of pedagogy as "cultural practice and politics that takes place not only in schools but in all cultural spheres" (Giroux, 1993, pp. 182). In this broader sense, every form of cultural work can be considered pedagogical at the same time, and there is an evident agreement between all three authors about this postulate.

Freire interprets the role of his pedagogical thought within the framework of the Brazilian "transition epoch" (Freire, 2005a, pp. 6-21) - a long period of modernization in which the need to transition out of a closed, colonial, and anti-democratic society did not, as a rule, receive adequate responses from the elite, while the subordinate majority was often a victim of ignorance and superstition. Autonomous economic development was supposed to be the basis of progress that would end huge differences, and for this purpose it was necessary to achieve "passage from one mentality to another: the support of basic reforms as a foundation for development, and development as a foundation for democracy itself" (Freire, 2005a, p. 29). In the context of the birth of a new society, Freire envisions the role of educators through their contribution to critical education, which will shape critical attitudes and deal with the irrational consciousness that prevents people from leaving a passive and subordinate position: "Only an education facilitating the passage from naïve to critical transitivity, increasing men's ability to perceive the challenges of their time, could prepare the people to resist the emotional power of the transition" (Freire, 2005a, p. 29). This is a very typical instance of the famous Gramsci's saying of the "interregnum" of the crisis in which "the old dies and the new is not yet able to be born" (Gramsci, 1977, p. 311), when the masses - unorganized, illiterate or uneducated - are subject to such an irrational climate and under the pressure of elites that they remain subjugated by the "culture of silence" (Freire, 2000; Freire, 2001, p. 72). Mirko-

vić describes a similar climate of the transitional period of sudden fascist modernization in rural Istria and its broad educational effects in the mentioned cycle *Istria is Changing* (Mirković, 2011), while in the late Austrian period he places the problem of the genesis of critical consciousness in the institutional framework of the school, with a focus on the relations in the student-teacher-principal triangle. The communication atmosphere in Croatian grammar school in Pazin, as described, bears resemblance to Freire's concept of a "culture of silence", which despite individual commendable examples suppresses creative initiatives for social transformation. In the context of Brazilian military dictatorship as well as Austrian and Italian repression in Istria, both authors emphasize the importance of developing a critical consciousness that can withstand doubt, and the inevitable changes brought about by modernization.

According to Freire, paving the way towards a more humane future leads through a critical confrontation with history, whereby the research of the past should enable students to shed light on personal experiences from a historical perspective. This means that they should see their contemporary reality in a different way, beyond the binary of the naive theory of progress and the reactionary apologies of the past. Within the context of history, particularly when we talk about Freire's concepts of "codification" and "decodification" (Freire, 2002), we are also addressing the basic theoretical assumptions of various school projects and case studies on the comparative axis of "then and now". It is not hard to imagine similar application within the framework of other social sciences and humanities, although similar problematization can be achieved where it is less expected: Freire himself cites biology as an example (Freire & Horton, 1990, pp. 102-109). Contrary to the rigid curriculum and standardized tests stubbornly attributed to Freire, this approach is conducive to cultivating a "healthy skepticism towards power" (Giroux, 2011, p. 157) and a dose of relativism (Tindale, 2013) among students that is necessary for the development of a radical democratic project. Complacency and instant theoretical and political fixes are not effective in this context. As Giroux observes, Freire prioritized "humility, compassion, and a willingness to fight against human injustices" (Giroux, 2011, p. 161). In this vein, and in the context of Lipman's multidimensional thinking (Lipman, 2003), which inevitably includes caring thinking, Freire refuses to reduce poverty and inequality to the individual character flaws or cultural and national irresponsibility. In opposition to the ahistorical and asocial logic of the capitalist theory of rational choice, Freire sought

answers and solutions in complex and historically conditioned economic and political structures.

Ultimately, for Freire, the struggle for democracy and against inequality is part of his personal life story that includes periods of imprisonment and exile. Mirković's biography, exemplified by a series of works of a hybrid genre between science and art, historiography and essay writing (Urošević, 2021, p. 8) mirrors Freire's trajectory in significant ways. Notably, Mirković's first arrest occurred during his student years, at the beginning of the First World War in Premantura near Pula, due to allegations of involvement in sabotaging the communication infrastructure of the Austrian army (Mirković, 1984, p. 95; Mirković, 1960, pp. 120-127). His lifelong resentment of repressive institutions gave birth to faith in the meaning of resistance and hope for a more equitable and free society, despite the dauting challenges. Many of Mirković's works, frequently of an autobiographical nature, aligns closely with Freire's understanding of hope as a political and pedagogical imperative to always listen to the oppressed, talk to them, associate and cooperate with them - which is a prerequisite for any possible change in power relations. In Freire's vocabulary, the experience of oppression permeates the individual works of these authors to such a degree that they can also be read as deeply personal stories about the development of critical consciousness: the path of awareness (*conscientização*) of two teachers. In this paper, it is particularly important to emphasize that both were curious students (Giroux, 2011, p. 164; Mirković, 1984), who in the Socratic sense remained so even later in their capacity as teachers (Čalić, 1969; Runjić, 2001). During the entire creative period, both scholars were dedicated to the creation of counter-narratives that contrast the dominant ideology and pedagogy with models of cultural and pedagogical practice suitable for a democratic society. Mirković's *Old Grammar School of Pazin* (Mirković, 1984) - especially through the depictions of student activism through their societies and newspapers - testifies that they have in common the recognition of the key role of school and pedagogy in designing a collective political struggle for democratic values.

The cynicism typical of our time has no place here - neither in the case of Mirković nor Freire (Giroux, 2011, p. 161). In both instances, an aversion to universal recipes is evident, as is the futility of a theory that disregards the concrete historical context in which individual and social transformation should be achieved. It is important to emphasize that both are dedicated to

the realization of ideals through direct human contacts in a real-life environment and a dialogical relationship with others. In the case of Freire, this approach is encapsulated in the concept of "philosophy of praxis" as a "radical educational praxis" (McLaren, 2000, p. 191). This attitude of Mirković is already evident in his 1923 Frankfurt doctoral dissertation, where he expounds on his advocacy for Masaryk's idea of persistent "small work" (*drobná práce*) as a means to improve the socio-economic position of his own people. This approach, which transcends mere practicalism, underscores the pivotal role of education in societal advancement (Mirković, 2008).

3.2. Class and Nation: A Call for a New Curriculum

Considering the Eurocentric tone of Mirković's first theoretical work (Mirković, 2008), it is worth mentioning that one major distinction between the Istrian and Brazilian intellectual is conditioned by the socio-historical, geopolitical, and civilizational differences of the European and South American context. In the latter case the phenomenon of *latinidad* (Mignolo, 2005) underscores a notable sense of unity and interconnectedness among the nations, a contrast to the European context, including Istria and Croatia, where the historical legacy of nationalism and numerous wars have contributed to a different narrative. Nevertheless, what applies to Freire (Giroux, 2011, p. 162) in this regard can also be attributed to Mirković (Mirković,1960; 1984; 2011), given that both intellectuals are considered cosmopolitan and have always tried to link the specific details of their environment with global and transnational circumstances, transcending narrow-minded identity politics. Mirković is vigilant that his reactive Croatian and Yugoslav nationalism does not turn into chauvinism, and therefore he occasionally expresses sympathy for various aspects of Italian life, culture, and political tradition. Thus, he recalls that at the beginning of the First World War, Italy was "a country of hope, advanced and democratic, and it fought for its justified rights just like us", or that during the Pazin days the professors of the Italian high school "looked to him like some real Mazzini's or Garibaldi's revolutionaries", as opposed to "alpine paraders" and the clerical atmosphere of the Croatian high school (Mirković, 1984, p. 44). Consequently, he writes that he learned "some important lessons about life" from the Italians: those about the importance of "cheerfulness" and "spiritual warmth", about self-confidence and nonchalance, about the fact that life is beautiful even when it is difficult and poor (Mirković, 1984, pp. 88-89; Mirković, 1929, p. 15).

Mirković's identification with Masaryk, who was known for quoting his historical role model, Jan Hus, on how he "prefers a good German to a bad Czech" (Mirković, 1930, p. 56) is indicative to his cosmopolitan inclinations. However, Mirković is more willing to take his cosmopolitanism out of Eurocentric framework and morally and artistically condemn colonialism and racism, as in the 1935 poem *My Black Brother* (Mirković 1979, pp. 105-106). In this poem he employs a personal motif, drawing from his experience working alongside African laborers in a French factory twelve years prior. The poem was inspired by the Fascist Italy attack on Ethiopia (Peruško, 1959, p. 58). There is no doubt that Mirković would agree with Freire's resolute position: "All discrimination is immoral, and to struggle against it is a duty whatever the conditionings that have to be confronted" (Freire, 2001, p. 60).

It is noteworthy that in the case of some teachers of Istrian origin, such as Professor Ivan Brgić, Mirković singles out an amazing intercultural competence: "mastering the elements of Italian and German civilization, adopting them without harming one's own personality" (Mirković, 1984, p. 69). The following quote shows how threads of his regional cultural geography are woven into Mirković's philosophy of education in Istria: "This adoption of the new, and staying on the ground of one's own civilization, firmly on one's feet in one's own country and on the accumulated experiences of generations, is the special strength of this living, noble, and at the same time *hajduk*-like independent people of southern and western Istria" (Mirković, 1984, p. 69). Professor Brgić exemplifies this approach, as he is a classicist who had a vision of social development, and who, using the method of actualization, „found this classicism in the level of development of his native region, in folk songs, in female characters, in the wisdom of peasants who plow". This example can serve as an illustration of intercultural competence, which Freire also stands for: "It is necessary to understand someone different from me if I want to grow. Therefore, my radicality ends in... the moment when I refuse to understand that which is different from me" (Freire & Gadotti, 1995, p. 262). It is a kind of imperative for educators: "Every day one has to recreate one's tactics to overcome the exclusivism of a narrow cultural comprehension" (Freire & Gadotti, 1995, p. 265). Freire's radical contextualism as the principle of the dependence of knowledge on a particular historical and socio-political context, well known in Latin American postcolonial theoretical frameworks (Dussel 1985; Grosfoguel 2002), can also be interpreted within the confines of a classroom, which is equally influenced by the social

background and individual experiences, the dialogic possibilities of students and teachers, teacher autonomy, and the manner in which the teachers interpret and comment on historical, cultural and economic forces at play (Giroux, 2011, p. 162). However, while Freire consistently avoids romanticizing certain cultural identities exposed to oppressive social conditions, Mirković's work comprises a culturally pessimistic critique of the destructive impact of capitalist modernization and fascist totalitarianism on traditional forms of life in small and remote Istrian rural areas, as evidenced by a series of his essays and fiction. However, this does not mean that he did not mention numerous details that indicate the irreversible contamination (Vattimo, 2000, p. 148) of that archaic and rustic culture exposed to the immensely stronger forces of financial capital, cultural industry, fashion, ideology, and political repression. In essence, both authors posit that culture exerts a strong educational influence impacting both broader structures and the intimacy of personal identity. Consequently, it represents a pivotal domain of social and political struggles (Giroux, 2011, p. 163).

From a Latin American perspective angle, Freire (2005a, pp. 30-31) also warned of the dangerous tendency of "uprooting" that accompanies the benefits of industrial civilization, such as a higher standard of living, and therefore emphasized that a new critical education must find adequate means to combat such negative effects. Among the latter, he includes the dehumanizing consequences of the excessive specialization of work that forces man to behave mechanically, thereby separating him from the purpose of the production process and suppressing any critical attitude. In opposition to this "domestication", passivation, and loss of control over the key aspects of individual and collective survival, Mirković also spoke with a lot of bitterness and rebellion in a series of texts from the 1930s (Mirković, 2011). Despite his romantic criticism of the consequences of industrialization and modernization, as a rational economist and always inclined to realistic politics and practical work, Mirković would undoubtedly agree that the contradictions of capitalist development in backward areas cannot be overcome by returning to archaic forms of consciousness and technophobia. Consequently, the flourishing of democracy is contingent upon educators influencing the prevailing belief regarding the need to participate in modernization changes. In accordance with the well-known assertion by Hölderlin that "where the danger is, also grows the saving power", Freire identifies the "phenomenon of popular rebellion" as "one of the most promising aspects of our political life" (Freire, 2005a, p. 32) among the new form of conscious-

ness. In the Istrian context preceding the Great War, Mirković's account of student activism through secret societies and magazines, as well as a series of acts of protest, boycott, and disobedience, clearly indicate the attitude of rebellion (Mirković, 1984, pp. 131-141). In response to the authoritarian headmaster and the narrow clerical horizon, the students founded their own literary and political societies and started newspapers, aligning with the prevailing trend in the Croatian and South Slavic countries in the years preceding the First World War. Mirković's inclination to secret and subversive activities led to his delayed graduation, which occurred a few years later during the wartime exile in Moravia. At a safe distance from terrorist planning or revolutionary Marxism, the basic idea behind the activities of *Učka* - one of those student societies - was liberal secularism, i.e. opposition of scientific thought to church dogmatism, affirmation of freedom of thought, criticism and discussion. Basically, it was about the ideology of a "liberal movement" compatible with "a well-developed bourgeoisie that seeks freedom of labor and freedom of the market" (Mirković, 1984, pp. 132-133). In order to better understand the dynamics of Central European trends at the time, it is worth noting that shortly before the beginning of Mirković's education in Pazin, Masaryk gave one of his best didactic speeches in the Vienna Reichsrat with the aim of defending liberal and scientific education against theological influences (Masaryk, 1908). Since there was practically no such Croatian bourgeoisie in Istria at that time, the main slogan was "freedom", particularly "free thought", a concept that resonated with young people like Mirković who dreamed of "getting out of the narrow-mindedness of the church, Austrian bureaucratic formalism, the murderous template of formalist pedagogy, the terrible, moldy, dead Habsburg reaction" (Mirković, 1984, p. 133). Despite the pervasive negativity in Mirković's remarks concerning Austria, it is noteworthy that he lauds the Austrian social democracy, which, in contrast to the rather provincial and conservative disposition of the Croatian national movement in Istria secured universal suffrage for men as a prerequisite for significant triumphs in the 1907 elections in Istria (Mirković, 1984, p. 133).

For both authors, the willingness to rebel against the imposed humiliating condition is elevated as a "symptom of progress, an introduction to a more complete humanity" (Freire, 2005a, p. 32). One of the biggest obstacles to the rise of the people is the educational practice that excludes discussion and prevents participation, which only worsens the consequences of the lack of democratic experience. Therefore, according to Freire, it is necessary to face

vital problems and to be oriented towards research and "intervention in reality" (Freire, 2005a, p. 33). It is ultimately about the issue of the irrelevance of a curriculum separated from reality and devoid of concrete activities that could contribute to the development of critical awareness. Freire's description of the dependence of the traditional curriculum and methodology on high-stakes phrases and abstractions fully finds its earlier counterpart in Mirković's memoirist analysis of teaching in the *Old Grammar School of Pazin*. During the period of national struggles, the Pazin high school was, according to Mirković's effective irony, "the light of the peasant's oil lamp in the age of electricity" (Mirković, 1984, p. 18). However, due to the classical grammar school curriculum, its humanistic character was burdened by learning classical languages and drumming up Latin phrases and grammar rules. Focusing on the translation of classical texts, rather than cultivating classical spirit and culture, did not correspond to the real needs for "practical people for the economic and cultural upliftment of the people", and this must have had a "deforming" effect on the youth (Mirković, 1984, p. 33). The high school therefore accumulated "some strange impractical learning, which future railway clerks, bookkeepers, court clerks, bank correspondents - and even future judges - will never be able to put to practical use" (Mirković, 1984, p. 33). In a country "where peasants kept cattle on the ground floor and slept on the first floor of the same building" (Mirković, 1984, p. 55), such humanities were a means of keeping them in submission. Harnessed to the Austrian state ideology and supported by strong clericalism, it was a surviving legacy of "the counter-reformation, which took from the classics what could serve it (theistic views, myths, state organization and state rationale...), and rejected or hid what could overthrow the authority, to shake the order, which hinted and indicated that all relationships in nature and relationships in human society are in constant movement, change, sudden demolition and persistent construction of new ones" (Mirković, 1984, p. 34). Mirković contrasts the sterility of such a tradition with "descending from the bookish constructions of free thought into the concrete Istrian reality" (Mirković, 1984, p. 134). He recognizes the best examples of such actualization in the presentations held in the secret student society *Učka*. One lecture that emphasized the imperative of improving the economic conditions of Croats in Istria as a basis for political struggle had an impact on Mirković's life path, which over time was followed by Masaryk's ideas already mentioned here. Mirković's critical remarks and suggestions for improving teaching find their answer in Freire's key thesis: "Democracy

and democratic education are founded on faith in men, on the belief that they not only can but should discuss the problems of their country, of their continent, their world, their work, the problems of democracy itself. Education is an act of love, and thus an act of courage" (Freire, 2005a, p. 33). In his memories of high school days, Mirković points to this ideal mostly *via negativa*, painting the problematic image of a typical Istrian professor at the time. Given that he completed high school in Moravia as an Istrian evacuee during the First World War, Mirković could also make a comparison according to which Czech professors "didn't have more knowledge, but they were better pedagogues and were able to impart knowledge better" (Mirković,1984, p. 62). After all, "... it was the land of Comenius. They were better people, closer to students, more cultured, more accessible - it was the land of the religious reformation and the Hus; they were much more independent, direct, warmer, they were more developed characters than original types". Mirković interprets this Czech quality as "a consequence of a different socio-economic structure of the nation" - that is, with an already numerous citizenries, its own bourgeoisie and proletariat, as well as the class struggle in full swing. It is probably not necessary to further explain how strongly Masaryk influenced him in this regard as well.

Although the evident lack of self-respect among many of Mirković's professors - which is especially evident in their attitude towards the principal - can be justified by very unfavorable circumstances, this malady within the classroom necessarily spreads the lack of respect for students. As Freire notes, respect for the autonomy of the learner is a kind of knowledge that is indispensable to educational practice: "As an educator, I have to constantly remind myself of this knowledge because it is connected with the affirmation of respect for myself" (Freire, 2001, p. 59). This "knowledge" is an "ethical imperative" that stems from the anthropological essence of man as an incomplete being, which is especially true for children and young people. As articulated by the Croatian philosopher, the teacher and student are "essentially on the same path, but circumstances meet at different points on that path. The teacher was a student, and the student will be a teacher" (Marinković, 2008, p. 87). Mirković thus cites the example of professor of history and geography Luka Brolih, who was criticized for "sticking to textbook material, for stuttering a lot during lectures", and for being "too bookish", from whom one could learn much more about Carthage and the Roman hills than about Pazin itself (Mirković, 1984, pp. 40-41). But in addition to his otherwise undeniable teaching qualities, almost four decades later, Mirković

commendably points out that Brolih was not "with the school regime", that he "took care of everyone", and that he knew how to "say 'You'" to the students, thereby raising the students to some level of equality". Freire nevertheless recognizes the root of disrespect towards the student in ignoring the knowledge and culture with which students come to school from their families and social environment (Freire, 1993, p. 77). With such a teacher's attitude, it is not possible to achieve a dialogical relationship, and thus not a successful teaching, but only a "banking" type. According to Freire, pedagogy should start precisely from this prior knowledge of the student, taking into account that it is also an expression of his/her social class. Of course, it is a starting point from which the real educational path has yet to begin, but it still has its own specific relevance and meaning. For example, Mirković testifies critically about the teaching of botany, which was reduced to "rules alone without examples, without trips to nature, without connection with our previous knowledge and experience" (Mirković, 1984, p. 37). As he spent his entire childhood in nature before high school, Mirković does not hesitate to say that he knew more than the teacher himself. It seems that everything was in vain: "Zoology and botany were written perhaps learnedly, but incomprehensible for children, the teacher did not know how to bring the subject closer to us, there was no one to build a bridge between our childhood experience of nature and the systematic knowledge presented in books, and so that knowledge was memorized and, of course, forgotten like any mechanical learning" (Mirković, 1984, p. 37).

According to Freire the relevance and meaning of school knowledge should "reflect the needs and expectations of the population in relation to schools and teachers are the interpreters of these expectations" (Freire, 1993, p. 78). Moreover, the Brazilian philosopher of education believes that people have the right to "participate in the process of producing new knowledge", because it is part of a "serious process of social transformation" (Freire & Horton, 1990, p. 97). Respect for the „knowledge of the people" is a political attitude appropriate for an educator interested in progressive social change (Freire & Horton, 1990, p. 101). Freire's radical-democratic understanding of pedagogy, which goes far beyond narrow institutional frameworks, is based on the philosophy of history that starts from Bloch's "not-yet-being", that is, the anthropological perspective of human as an unfinished being (Bloch, 1978). This philosophy of history rejects any fatalism and deterministic understanding of history and as "prophetic discourse insists on every human being's right to show up for history, not only as its object, but also as its subject"

(Freire, 2016, p. 106). Understanding history as a possibility of reinventing the world is crucial for education; moreover: "We are or become capable of education because, side by side with the realization that certain experiences negate freedom, we experience the understanding that struggle for freedom and autonomy, against oppression and arbitrariness, is possible" (Freire, 2016, p. 108). It seems that practically every page of Mirković's memories of his high school days in Pazin confirms the following Freire motto: "No reality is what it is because it must be. It is what it is because strong interests of the powerful make it so" (Freire, 2016, p. 110). Freire's assessment of the neoliberal reduction of educational practice to technically efficient training - with ineffective civic education as its reverse - corresponds *mutatis mutandis* to Mirković's critique of the classical curriculum and authoritarian pedagogy in a much earlier, but not entirely different context. Despite all the obstacles - or rather thanks to them - the spiritual development of young Mirković and his colleagues can serve as an illustration of the process of conscientization that leads to practical action in the world itself. "No matter what society we may be in, or what society we may belong to, it is urgent that we fight with hope and fearlessness" (Freire, 2016, p. 122). In response to the aspiration of young people to fight for a more equitable and better world, the pedagogue is compelled to combat apathy, both among students and the masses, as well as within oneself. The struggle for hope is inseparable from understanding the reasons for apathy (Freire & Gadotti, 1995, p. 259).

3.3. The Principal

It is impossible to state a priori to what extent all these Freire's views are correct in a specific case or even applicable as a guide, but there is no doubt that Mirković's intuitions from the *Old Grammar School of Pazin* are essentially consistent with them. Namely, Freire says very clearly: "The democratic school that we need is not one in which only the teacher teaches, in which only the student learns, and in which the principal is the all-powerful commander" (Freire, 2005b, p. 133). Mirković describes a situation in which the world of teachers is radically separated from the rural environment from which most of their students and some of the teachers come from. Their elitism and authoritarianism towards the students are surpassed only by the headmaster Kos, to whom they themselves are almost unquestioningly subordinate. As Mirković notes, they fell into the director's care-

fully crafted mechanism, caught "like flies in a spider's web" (Mirković, 1984, p. 63).

On the occasion of a national holiday, a celebration was organized at Pazin Grammar School, during which the professors and the principal wore uniforms, with sabers on their sides. Mirković, a young student at the time, was keenly aware of the authoritarian spirit of the regime and the school, especially through the hierarchical differences according to the "rank class". He speaks of the "gap and chasm between principal's high class of the sixth rank *Beamter* and the eighth, ninth and tenth of the professors and probably the eleventh of the substitutes" (Mirković, 1984, p. 63). Younger teacher substitutes, who did not yet have the right to a uniform, looked "unusually close, dear" to the students, as if they were protesting against the regime and its bureaucratic *Beamter* parade in the middle of the peasant nation. It is worth noting that this specific aspect of the educational problem, which has by no means entirely disappeared, was also noted by Friere: "A large number of male and female teachers feel absolutely handcuffed by an authoritarian administration" (Freire & Gadotti, 1995, 264).

The principal seemed to young Mijo like an absurd bureaucratic superhero who, like a "phenomenal working machine" (Mirković, 1984, p. 50), came to supervise the students' free time outside of school, stopping them on the street where the "Old Man" used to give them long moralistic sermons, peeking into the students' apartments, causing real panic. In short, the principal "immediately labeled as a sin every exit, every walk, everything that was not a way to school or church" (Mirković, 1984, p. 51). Once he found Mirković walking around the apartment of the girl he was in love with, he tried to shame him by calling him to fear his father, the world, and God. In the case of the last appeal, the student responded to principal Kos, as Mirković himself writes, by asserting that "there is no reason to fear something whose existence has not been scientifically proven" (Mirković, 1984, p. 54). Since then, for Mirković, in the fourth grade, a "real state of war" started, after he had already "battered in that wolf den, causing frequent small collisions and explosions" (Mirković, 1984, p. 53). In revenge, the principal tried to show his authority to Mijo by "annoying" him with Greek grammar - after the student rebellion, the previous teacher was fired, and Kos took over the subject - trying to prove to him that he doesn't know the subject and thus keep him at bay, but to no avail. Mirković experienced this as "extreme formalism", which was not backed by real conviction. He formulated the princi-

pal's and the gymnasium's "philosophy" in general as follows: "It was important not to spoil the order, not to get out of order, not to make a fuss, not to make scandals" (Mirković, 1984, p. 55). That obedience pays off, Mirković ironically notes, is evidenced by the paradox that after serving Austria for half a century, the director received a pension from the Kingdom of Italy, after which he moved to his native Slovenia, and became a supporter of the Serbian Karađorđević dynasty (Mirković, 1984, p. 59). However, if the pillars of the regime were called into question during the Pazin days, that conformist director would instantly turn from a "benevolent, calm, composed old man", and a "cultural worker in a backward nation", into a "furious lynx", and an "Alpine bureaucrat, Austrian *Kulturträger*, *Südmark* guard, inquisitor" (Mirković, 1984, p. 53). Mirković depicts the archetype of the national, class, and civilizational conflict with the scene of the principal's questioning about the boy's loan of three crowns to another student, when little Mirković realizes that he is "one of his serfs, whom he accuses and whom he judges" (Mirković, 1984, p. 47). It seems that Mirković was most irritated by the director's role as a "lurking protector" (Mirković, 1984, p. 50). This can undoubtedly remind one of Freire's critiques of assistentialism, "which means transforming assistance into a strategy" (Freire & Gadotti, 1995, p. 260). It is simply a nicer way of perpetuating domination and destroying hope. In any case, it was in the director's interest to isolate Pazin, the high school and its students from the rest of the world (Mirković, 1984, p. 56).

3.4. The Portraits of Educators in the Classroom

Like the literary figure Ivica Kičmanović (Kovačić, 2005), those who once studied in Zagreb or Vienna were isolated in the Pazin basin, without collective support and vision. Although they made their way to the "top of the social hierarchy" - alas, "below them there was nothing but a scattered small peasant population, and the mediators between the peasants and them were only village priests" (Mirković, 1984, pp. 62-63). Professors of Istrian origin still maintained "individually some contact with their village, but these were more personal private relationships than public work" (Mirković, 1984, p. 63). This is how the type of Croatian Istrian professor was formed, a "somewhat deformed" personality, whether they were correct but indifferent state officials or simply depressed, resigned, lost and dissolute: "All of them lacked the inner warmth and momentum that comes from the inner convicti-

on of fulfilling a calling" (Mirković, 1984, pp. 63-64). They were "pitiful and barren" as if they carried within them some fundamental error in the tectonics of their structure. At the same time, they were also "brilliant, rare, full of individual peculiarities and contrasts, unusual, strong people in their own way" (Mirković, 1984, p. 64). Most of the teachers still show symptoms of resignation and the syndrome of uprooting. The wider horizons of former Viennese students prompted them to feel more deeply and painfully "the small opportunities, the almost lost of our backward Istrian national collective in that great empire" (Mirković, 1984, p. 61).

A significant number of Pazin high school teachers, and to some extent the school in general, engage in social activities that demonstrate an awareness of the importance of the national struggle (Hammer, 1999). However, these activities are constrained by several considerations for preserving the delicate balance in the city, the province and the entire Habsburg Monarchy. Still, Freire believes that a progressive educator must start from the position that "education is a political practice"; moreover, he himself, as an educator, is also a "politician" (Freire, 2005b, p. 129). Furthermore, politics and education are inseparable, "a political act is pedagogical and the pedagogical is political" (Freire, 2016, p. 115). This requires "to know against whom and against what we are working as educators" (Freire & Horton, 1990, p. 97). It is probably too demanding for many to criticize neutrality regarding "the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed", which Freire unmasks as "acting in favor of the powerful" (Freire & Horton, 1990, p. 104). While there is a general consensus that the role of "commentator" (Rosić, 2011, p. 148) is the responsibility of a modern teacher, the real challenges begin with the application to current controversial situations. In any case, Freire believes that the teacher should "discuss problems in an open way and even express his determination", which again does not mean imposing political views on students (Freire & Horton, 1990, p. 104). Mirković certainly agrees that the role of a teacher cannot be reduced to that of a mere "facilitator", at least judging by his high school memories. Mirković's criticism is reminiscent of both Freire and Nietzsche when he accuses teachers who "sold and taught knowledge, but did not give us the conviction, nor the outlook on the world, nor the enthusiasm that the youth were looking for. We asked not only to study, but to fight for something, to sacrifice ourselves for something. Each generation of youth burns with a longing to make a sacrifice. We shouted, howled that we wanted to fight, to die, to sacrifice ourselves. Everything around us remained deaf, no one heard us, no one answered

except the youth themselves" (Mirković, 1984, p. 64). This enthusiasm among young people can evoke Nietzsche's faith in the instincts of young and their special historical mission (Nietzsche, 2004), a mission that also needs adequate teachers. Freire even compares the authority of teachers to the relationship between progressive political leaders and the popular masses, asserting that teachers' role is "to lead the masses while learning with them and never imposing on them" (Freire & Horton, 1990, p. 182). The dialectical relationship between authority and freedom can also give rise to conflict: "I believe in conflicts. Conflicts are the midwife of consciousness" (Freire & Horton, 1990, p. 187).

Given that critics often portray Freire's pedagogy as pseudo-activism that has a destructive effect on the realization of relevant educational outcomes (Lindsay, 2022), it should be added that the Brazilian author did not fail to emphasize the role of "intellectual discipline" that students can develop only in cooperation with teachers (Freire, 2005b, p. 155). The dialectical relationship between authority and freedom, teacher and student, entails confronting the set of limitations. The rejection of authority in the name of abstractly understood freedom is just as wrong as the distanced authority that stifles that freedom (Freire, 2005b, p. 156). "Authority is necessary to the educational process" and there is no doubt about that: "What is bad, what is not necessary, is authoritarianism, but not authority" (Freire, 2005b, p. 181). A contrasting example to the bohemian-dissolute professor Roža can be one of his colleagues, a classicist - also of Istrian peasant origin - whose "solid work energy... was excessively consumed and extinguished by the hypertrophy of conscientiousness" and "the military discipline with which he bound his life and which he transferred to his classes" (Mirković, 1984, p. 66). Based on the comparison of these two typical cases, Mirković comments that "from a didactic point of view, Roža did not have a single class that could be said to have succeeded", while Zgrablić "did not have a single class that could be said to have been ruined" - but only the bohemian Roža left behind something "that was stronger than methodical teaching units, than dry knowledge, than grinding" (Mirković, 1984, p. 65). Namely, "that wiry old man always seemed to be full of the joy of life, as if he was inviting you to run away with him, to run away into the world, into its geography... to run away from this rigid order, these monotonous hours, into freedom, into movement" (Mirković, 1984, p. 64). Although the students knew that Roža could not take them anywhere, they were still grateful to him for "knowing how to hint that there are other worlds" - in other words,

for realizing the value of utopian thinking: "that it can be nice to go there regardless will they ever get there" (Mirković, 1984, p. 66).

A kind of dialectical synthesis of these two examples can be seen in the third Istrian professor, the calm mathematician and physicist Franjo Novljan, who was especially distinguished by his "sense for collective work and collective life" (Mirković, 1984, p. 67). He tried to convey his "higher cultural level" and the ideas of folk revival to the masses through frequent lectures for the public. In addition to the already mentioned Brgić, it seems that Mirković's favorite was Mato Kević, a Slavist originally from Dalmatia. Some teachers' inflexible doctrinarism prevented them from being "more human", and it seems that Kević best embodied the synthesis of good teaching. He was "one of the few who knew how to get carried away at lectures, to be delighted himself, and to delight and captivate others". As Mirković (Mirković, 1984, p. 73) also recalls, Kević was the type of man who "rejoiced when he found a smoldering light in people and immediately strove to make that light ignite and flare up. More than in others, one could feel in him the affirmation of life, a bright outlook on life, and an effort to make life beautiful and bright". As "he was able to provoke not only the speech of reason but also to open the heart", it could be said that this professor skillfully combined cognitive and affective aspects of learning in true education (Polić, 1993, p. 22). Among the most positive reviews of high school teachers by Mirković is the one dedicated to Sasa Šantel, a teacher of mathematics and drawing who more than a century ago embodied the modern STEM educational ideal (Mirković, 1984, p. 43). He was one of those who, in addition to expertise and methodical gift, also knew how to provide students with affective support. As Marković eloquently puts it, these teachers - "they don't knock down, they don't threaten, they don't act", but "they just spread around themselves the light and warmth of the human soul".

The Franciscan monastery – which virtually merged with gymnasium into one institution, created a contrasting impression. It was characterized by "too little cheerfulness, fantasy, and humor“ (Mirković, 1984, p. 76). Mandatory Sunday masses were "the most unpleasant and difficult experiences" of the first year of Mijo’s schooling. "Crumpled like sardines, lined up like soldiers", according to his memory, the students were subjected to "lead discipline": "pushed like some convicts, we had to remain motionless and voiceless" (Mirković, 1984, p. 77). As in most similar situations, the spirit of the author remains unconquered - "resistance, disgust, the desire to esca-

pe from here forever grew in us". The catechist's approach aligns with an anti-dialogical authoritarianism, yet Mirković accuses him of basic teacher flaws that occur regardless of the school subject (Mirković, 1984, p. 79). He identifies such behaviors as "acting that he himself does not believe in", as well as a lack of enthusiasm, which is why "he could not win with the heart, nor convince with reason, nor be carried away by eloquence". In the years preceding the First World War, the "ecclesiastical circle tightened" around the gymnasium, "militant clericalism" appeared, and conflicts among the students began (Mirković, 1984, p. 81). Although Mirković showed high respect for Protestantism in several of his works (Mirković, 1980; 2008), in terms of religion, Freire as a steadfast believer represents a fundamentally different case, which can partly be explained by the different historical experience of the Latin American civilization circle. In short, among the numerous ones who inspire a wide spectrum of followers, we can certainly include a liberation theologian and even a "Christian anarchist" (Kohan, 2021, p. 19).

However, his aspiration for freedom nevertheless implies "discipline in the act of reading, of writing... of teaching and learning... discipline in respect and in dealing with public matters; discipline in mutual respect" (Freire, 2005b, p. 158). Especially the subordinate parts of society must become aware of the unity of intellectual and political discipline, as a basic prerequisite for democratic progress towards a more just society (Freire, 2005b, p. 159). Also, as "banking education" is probably Freire's best-known term, it is important to note that the criticism of non-dialogical teaching is by no means directed against all forms of teaching: "You can still be very critical while teaching... The liberating teacher will illuminate reality even if he or she teaches" (Freire & Shor, 1987, p. 40). Nevertheless, dialogue is not just a means that the teacher occasionally uses: "Dialogism is a requirement of human nature and also a sign of the educator's democratic stand" (Freire, 2007, p. 92). On the other hand, "authoritarian anti-dialogue" represents an act of violence against human nature and contradicts democracy. Mirković, for his part, testifies about the experience of psychological terror, but also of physical violence by individual teachers, citing an instance with a science teacher who "was not known as a great naturalist by the students, but as a terrible and dangerous police snout" (Mirković, 1984, p. 35). His obsessive control could even cause hysterical reactions of fear in more fragile students. However, after receiving a strong slap from that teacher, little Mirković seemed to lose interest in the subject: "At that moment, all respect for

this teacher disappeared in me, I no longer had ambitions to get good grades from him ... [A] man whose thoughts are not focused on the object he is dismantling, but on maintaining prestige over children, by instilling fear and terror into their small, naive, honest peasant souls - all this was low and vile and uncultured" (Mirković, 1984, pp. 42-43). Mirković summarizes his attitude towards the authoritarian discipline in two short sentences: "I could not stand either school or church discipline. I sincerely wanted to leave Pazin and such a school" (Mirković, 1984, p. 53). From his epistemological point of view, Freire claims that the improvement of knowledge is not possible without a dialogical relationship "among active subjects who are immune to the bureaucratization of their minds and open to discovery and to knowing more" (Freire, 2007, p. 92). The key is to achieve a "dialogical atmosphere" in which even the teacher's detailed presentation of the topic can imply dialogue, as opposed to mere "chattering".

3.5. Childhood

At the end of this comparison of Mirković's and Freire's pedagogical reflections, it is necessary to point out another aspect of their remarkable congruence. It is about reminiscing of childhood and youth, in both cases a practice that interweaves literary, philosophical, and poetic elements into a hybrid form. Mirković is an excellent writer, and although the *Old Grammar School of Pazin* does not belong to pedagogical fiction (Brajović, 2019), elements of this genre can be found in the author's masterpiece *Tight Country* (Mirković, 2023), where the literary and essayistic aspects of this autobiographical prose are executed at the highest level. Although the oeuvre of the Brazilian critical pedagogue is primarily devoted to the education of adults and young people, with a lesser emphasis on children, a notable exception is a series of letters to his niece Cristina, written between 1993 and 1994, when he was over seventy years of age. In these letters, Freire delves into his early days in family and at school (Freire, 1996). The dignity of childhood, the need to talk to the child, to listen to him, to take care of him is clearly highlighted. Childhood in these letters goes beyond the dimension of a certain period of life and rather becomes a form that gives life the necessary "curiosity, joy, and vitality" (Kohan, 2021, p. 113). In particular, Freire's reminiscences and reflections on his own childhood reveal more than biographical facts about the author, presenting rather a "portrait of an educator in childhood" that is offered as a model to every educator who wants to ret-

hink and better understand his life and professional path. This model necessarily implies complex comparisons of "then and now", which are beyond superficial nostalgia. As we saw earlier, the same could be said for Mirković's *Old Grammar School of Pazin*, as well as for some of his other texts (Mirković, 2011).

For example, the memory of the father in both authors associates "critique of the division between manual and intellectual work", as well as a "dissatisfaction with the existing order of things" and a "disposition toward a political rebellion of sorts" (Kohan, 2021, p. 117). If Joaquim Temístocles Freire can be said to have been Paulo's first conscientize, from whom he received his first important political lessons, the same applies to Mijo's father Ante, who along with his mother Mara was a central formative figure during his early years. Observing and listening to their fathers, little Paulo and Mijo already understood on an intuitive level the roles and relations of dominance in society and saw the necessity of challenging it. Ante Mirković was a stonemason who, because of the injustice everywhere, could barely contain the "volcanic eruptions" of his nature and his "nihilistic socialism" (Mirković, 1984, p. 93). It was the same case when the father got angry because of the remark of a clergyman influential in the distribution of student grants on which Mijo depended - that his son had problems with good behaviour, even though he was otherwise "studying well" (Mirković, 1984, p. 81). The father's pride was strongly hurt because he interpreted the remark about "good behaviour" just like his son, as a demand for unquestioning obedience. Mirković later commented on that event as follows: "Now I knew that I no longer had the third condition for support, good behaviour in the church sense, that I would never acquire that condition again in my life, that my father did not ask me to fulfill it at all... And already in the first grade I wasn't a school nerd, but I read constantly, not only what the school required, but I persistently searched for what the school forbade" (Mirković, 1984, p. 81). With a subtle note of humor from which life experience speaks, he adds: "I considered myself a revolutionary and thought that a revolutionary must be a pessimist" (Mirković, 1984, p. 74). Similar to Mirković, "'Freire the boy' and 'Freire the man' are not as separable as they may first seem" (Kohan, 2021, p. 119). Even then, it is not difficult to recognize future educators who warn against injustices and bravely fight for their ideals. Even the fact that Freire moved from his native Recife to Jaboatão dos Guararapes at approximately the same age when Mirković, from his native Rakalj, arrived at the high school in Pazin, testifies to a common maturation in an environment charac-

terized by traditionalism, clericalism, superstition, authoritarianism, political conflicts and above all, struggle for freedom and justice (Kohan, 2021, p. 121). The continuity of the life experience of both includes a love for nature, a tendency to critically analyze the economic and political reality of their region and country, a passion for writing, dissatisfaction with the existing, and an unstoppable desire for change. Life circumstances forced both to grow up early, however, the values of childhood (Krleža, 1972) such as curiosity, sensitivity and restlessness remained a part of their personalities forever.

4. CONCLUSION

The contributions of all three of these esteemed authors continue to resonate, offering numerous insights for practitioners and theoreticians interested in the development of education and democracy. As demonstrated throughout the work, the similarities of their attitudes and interpretations prevail over the differences, which largely have their cause in the special historical, cultural, and geopolitical circumstances in which they worked. For instance, all three promote development and progress, starting from the premise that pedagogical reform is a necessary part of any relevant social, economic, and political change. Therefore, they can also agree that the role of teachers and pedagogues has a much more important role than was traditionally acknowledged. However, the modalities of implementation of these general attitudes depend not only on socio-historical circumstances, but also on the philosophical and political theories, and affinities of individual authors. While Masaryk's understanding of public pedagogy is predominately elitist, as a benevolent educational intervention from above, Mirković's critique of the limitations of the high school humanities at the time suggests the possibility of his role as a precursor of radical-democratic critical and cultural pedagogy. To that extent, he can represent a kind of Freire's forerunner. Despite genre hybridity and unconventionality, the rejection of doctrinarism and the distinct practical orientation and activism of all three authors, it is necessary to take into account the specificities of the scientific and artistic fields in which they worked. While Masaryk’s work is closest to academic philosophy, Mirković’s literary and essay writing brings the dynamics of the classroom closer to the readers. Freire is today the most relevant of these authors, and the existing socio-economic problems related to capitalist globalization and neoliberal practice indicate that this will most likely remain

the case for a long time. This also applies to his appeal for fairness, solidarity, cooperation, and dialogue in educational settings of all levels. Notably, these are also the common values of all three authors considered in this paper.

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TEACHING EUROPEAN VALUES IN A TIME OF HYPER-REAL INTERSUBJECTIVITY

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ABSTRACT

In the time of postmodern hyperreality and intersubjective understanding of reality, the question of ontological re-imagining of values, including European values and their inclusion in curricula, is raised. In this chapter, we will first delve into the concept of hyperreality and then present the basic European values. We will examine the relatedness between hyperreality and values from the perspective of discursive ethics in order to propose how values can be taught in contexts of multicultural intersubjectivity. The approach proposed in this chapter is a multidimensional, multi-perspectival representation of European values. The focus will be on how discursive ethics can support the process of teaching and learning European values, not only at the level of learning and memorizing facts, but at a much deeper and more substantive level. Special emphasis will be given to suggesting concrete teaching approaches that can be applied in the classroom, thus supporting the process of understanding, internalization, and application of European values.
Keywords: *European values, hyperreality, intersubjectivity, teaching approaches*

1. INTRODUCTION

In the literature, it is often suggested that people in Europe, in addition to sharing the same geographic location, also hold certain common values that differentiate European culture from that of China, India, or America. However, this does not imply that all Europeans hold the same values. Indeed, the defining feature of Europe is its diversity, which is reflected in the variety of values across the continent. This is why Jacques Delors noted that the issue of values in the context of Europe is not always straightforward (Chopin & Macek, 2022).

This is sometimes a reflection of the modern vs. traditional dichotomy and is certainly influenced by the political, legal, cultural and social aspects of values. According to the findings of the European Value Study, despite significant and emphasized differences in beliefs, behaviors, and opinions across Europe, Europeans share common values (Luijkx et al., 2016). These values are found in the establishment the European Union and serve as a basis for the design and implementation of common European policies. Therefore, besides being an economic and political community, the European Union has always been perceived as a community of values. Article 2 of the Treaty on European Union (2007) outlines the fundamental values upon which the European Union is founded, including respect for human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities. It is underlined that these values are shared by all EU Member States and are fundamental in a society that promotes pluralism, non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and gender equality (European Union, 2007).

European values are the foundation of the EU's legal framework. They are democratic and liberal. The Council Recommendation on common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching (Council Recommendation, 2018) encourages member states to promote European values from the earliest age and in all types of education. These values derive from the basic characteristics of European societies, which are pluralistic and strive for non-discrimination, tolerance, justice, solidarity, and equality. Europe’s characteristic values have been established and adopted over a long time, from the period of the Enlightenment until today. They are related to the historical experiences of the European people, especially after the tragedies that these people experienced in the 20th century. According to Chopin and Macek, the main characteristics of European values are: the

combination of democracy and political liberalism, a system relying on checks and balances of power, renunciation of the use of force, and a preference for peaceful settlement of conflicts through negotiation and mutual respect; emphasis on solidarity and achieving a high level of social justice, and a strong sense of moderation and compromise, tolerance, openness and distrust of political passions (Chopin & Macek, 2022, p.3).

All EU member states, as well as those in the process of accession, show interest in adopting European values into their education systems. The goal is to prepare citizens who can actively engage and participate in social life. Various social groups, including parents, the business sector, universities, and the general public, are interested in having their students adopt European values in a pedagogically appropriate manner. (Morkovich & Regenbogen, 2015, p. 379).

European values are embedded in the national curricula of the EU member states. This is achieved through the introduction of the European dimension in school subjects, as well as the promotion of European-oriented schools, where the study of foreign languages is given priority. An example of this is the public schools in Germany, which are called "*Europaschulen*" (Carlson, Eigmüller & Lueg, 2018, p. 396).

It can be said that European values are a significant social marker. The need to teach them and pass them on to younger generations is clearly justified. Due to this, basic European values are included in school curricula in European countries. Still, as Mompoint-Gaillard et al. underline “it appears that their practical application in schools is lacking” (Mompoint-Gaillard et al, 2022, p. 45). There is therefore a need to explore how these values can be taught in the most efficient manner. This necessitates the use of appropriate teaching methods and innovative approaches that will lead to their understanding, acceptance, and internalization into the value systems of students.

The topic should also be considered from the perspective of contemporary societal trends, particularly in light of the modern digital age, characterized by the creation of hyperreality – a blend of physical and virtual reality. This phenomenon affects all areas of life, including education, the context in which European values should be taught and adopted. Additionally, attention should be paid to diversity, which represents a significant landmark of Europe, implying that inclusiveness should also be considered. In the following examination, the most effective and suitable approaches for teaching

European values will be analyzed, taking into account the conditions of hyperreality and increased diversity.

2. HYPERREALITY

In modern society, technology has become an inevitable part of people's lives, the environment, and the habits of social agents. The natural and social environment is being radically mechanized. The lights in our homes, the music that surrounds us, the air conditioning in our cars, the TV screens, and the smartphones are just a small part of the technology that increases the quality of life of modern people. (Mulder, 2011, p. 6). While the older generation still has the option of not using the latest technological advances, there is no such option for younger generations. They use the latest advancements and spend most of their time in virtual reality. For young people, conversations with friends often take place online, through social media and video games. Modern technologies, which have become more pervasive, more intense, and more influential in people's daily lives, have radically changed the context in which individuals interact with each other. The educational process itself is increasingly being reformed to keep up with this pace. More and more educational activities are moving into the virtual space, reducing face-to-face interaction. Unlike previous generations of students who had social activities in the classroom, the new generations of students communicate and socialize with their peers online, in the virtual space.

Hyperreality, as conceptualized by Baudrillard, indicates the collapse of the stable relationship between the original and the model, that is, the mirror through which the original is viewed (Baudrillard, 1994). Simulation is an imitation of something that is, that does not actually exist. It threatens the distinction between truth and falsehood, between reality and imagination. If simulation claims to be a faithful reflection of reality in a mirror, the simulacrum has no such ambition. In the simulacrum, there is no fixed and stable original. It is completely separate and independent from the original (Faulkner, 2022, p. 185).

This is creatively applied in the educational context through simulation pedagogy. Using the transformative potential of simulation, this pedagogy creates an environment where students learn through simulated experiences, moving from the "as if" to the "what if" perspective. Such pedagogy is proa-

ctive, inventive, and nonrepetitive, and students are guided to learn through originality and ingenuity rather than repetitiveness. This "what if" approach engages students' imaginations. According to Hopwood, simulation pedagogy blurs the distinction between the real and the imaginary, finding more value in playful creation than in imitation (Hopwood, 2017, p. 69).

Virtual reality is often perceived as something fake, which is not the real approach. Virtual reality exists, people connect and communicate through it, but this communication is mediated by technology. This puts less emphasis on the natural, physical reality, and more on the virtual one, which makes people detached from each other. Thus, the connections between people have become more digital and less physical (Mulder, 2011, p. 8). In the educational setting, this takes place through the creation of virtual learning environments. These environments facilitate the teaching process by distributing content, messages, and notes online and enabling communication through discussion forums and chats. Essentially, the concept of a virtual learning environment is associated with virtual space, time, resources, and strategies used in the educational process (Alves & Morais, 2020, p. 518).

Considering the trends of modern society's, pedagogy is challenged to find ways to organize a learning process that includes the use of technology and enables learning through simulations. This approach to education, although compatible with the requirements for experiential learning and technology-enhanced teaching, is often neglected, although there have been moments, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, when education took place online, and required appropriate adaptation of teaching methods to the new conditions (Asderaki & Sideri, 2020, p. 262). Furthermore, Tiffin, Terashima, and Rajasingham speak about hyperreality, which is a mixture of physical reality, virtual reality, human intelligence, and artificial intelligence (Tiffin, Terashima & Rajasingham, 2002, p. 2).

Applying the concept of hyperreality in the context of education, Tiffin and Rajasingham introduced the terms HyperClass, HyperSchool, HyperCollege, and HyperUniversity, describing the process in physical space where real students, teachers, and teaching materials interact with virtual students, teachers, and materials (Tiffin & Rajasingham, 2003). HyperClass involves the co-action of students and teachers in physical reality interacting and learning synchronously together with students and teachers who are in virtual reality, that is, who see them on a screen. This type of educational activity has been taking place in Japanese and New Zealand universities for more

than 20 years. Still, Watts has a different opinion about hyperreal education, arguing that it views education as a process in which students are seen as customers to be satisfied, rather than as a process in which the outcome should be related to the quantum of knowledge and skills that students need to develop (Watts, 2010, p. 97).

3. DISCURSIVE ETHICS

Discursiveness is usually seen as an ideology of involvement of all social groups in the processes (Sabatini, 2017, p. 78). Discursive ethics is closely related to deliberative democracy, and the opening of space (the hyperreal digital space) brings more opportunities for intersubjective exchange in a more conventional society. Intersubjectivism refers to the coordination of individual contributions in the construction of knowledge, which is achieved through the synergistic advancement of interdependent contributions within discourse (Bober & Dennen, 2001). This is especially emphasized today as society, schools, and students are becoming more heterogeneous. Due to this, students must learn how to successfully navigate the complex intersubjective space, including the multidimensionality of the phenomena and values they learn about in school. This implies a multidimensional, flexible consideration of some of the a priori democratic values. The multidimensionality of values means being aware that they can be interpreted in different ways depending on the cultural, political, and social context (Chang, Duck, & Bordia, 2006).

In an educational setting, an open and transparent debate about the facts is led by the teacher, who builds his or her authority through the relationship established with the students. This means that the teacher's authority is not a priori, given in advance, but is built through the facilitation of the discussion and exchange of ideas. For this to happen, teachers need to have a certain degree of autonomy granted by the formal education system (Løvlie, 2007, p. 182).

Discursiveness underlines the need for rationality and communication, which does not necessarily coincide with some aspects of hyperreality (Thompson, 1998, p. 28). In the educational process, the use of technology creates an intersubjective space for the exchange of rational ideas and the training of students. It combines the space-independent intersubjective con-

nection characteristic of hyperreality with the rationality and inclusiveness of discursive ethics.

Educationalist Lars Løvlie (Løvlie, 2007) believes that a specific type of dialogical education can be established, based on the concept of discursive ethics of Jürgen Habermas (Habermas, 1990). Namely, Habermas notes that the stability and structure of modern society is being challenged by globalization, which brings skepticism, and moreover poses a problem for the values of modernization (Fransson, 2016, p. 81). Traditional intuition cannot produce unified norms and values. Hence, there is a need for the rehabilitation of modern rationality through the promotion of plural (European) values which will coordinate the actions of social agents. Such values can be reached only through the implementation of the principles of discursive ethics. Education that integrates the principles of discursive ethics, values the worldview of each participant, and is based on discussion between the teacher and the students.

Discursive dialogical education differs from traditional dialogical education by insisting on the recognition of participants' viewpoints as valid, with the aim of reaching a consensus on the best arguments regarding given topics and values (Lillemyr, 2020, p. 91). The essence of discursive ethics is rational communication and dialogue, self-reflection and mutual understanding in order to reach agreement on certain values and their interpretation. Argumentation is seen as a rational tool, not based on local customs and traditions, but on the willingness to accept and adopt the best argument. Communication in discursive ethics is oriented towards learning, and challenges the assumptions, discourses, and cultural influences that are taken for granted.

Discursive ethics is often considered too abstract to integrate normative practice into values through the educational process (Strike, 2006). Nevertheless, it has its advantages, reflected in the fact that the discourse is considered valid only if it is accepted by all parties involved. At the same time, all participants in the discourse take part in the discussion, and engage in the search for truth, in a free manner, under equal conditions, without any pressure, and with the will to accept the best argument, regardless of who presented it. In such a discussion, everyone has the right to ask a question, to examine the opinions of others, and to share his or her own thoughts. In this manner, European values should be debated and interpreted in the classroom, where all students participate in the discourse. This means that all at-

tendees (physical or online) should be treated as legitimate participants in the discussion. Any topic, value, or phenomenon can be subjected to criticism and open debate until a consensus is reached. In this way, values are clarified, paving the way for them to be considered as a standard in the behavior of the social agents.

This is especially significant in diverse cultural contexts, or what Habermas calls the post-conventional society. Pluralism in society emphasizes the emancipatory potential of discourse (Joldersma & Crick, 2010, p. 139). Through open discussion, tradition becomes more transparent, and, in some cases, subject to change. In the case of European values, this means taking a set of values that are considered European, such as democracy, freedom, solidarity, non-discrimination (as a value derived from equality), the rule of law, respect for human rights, respect for human dignity, tolerance, and pluralism, and analyzing them critically and in an open manner until a consensus is reached. This is a process in which teachers and students actively participate.

In addition, the issue of morality should also be noted. Morality is closely related to discursive ethics and raises the question of how values are ranked. This should be thoroughly considered, especially before discussing values in the classroom, given that values are more or less universal, and how a value is ranked depends on the individual and the context. In this regard, discursive ethics is compatible with the theory of social constructionism, which considers that the learning process is very close to social negotiation and should take place in an actively constructed context (Tokamiya, 2024). In practice, this means a shift from the paradigm of instruction as transferring information to students to the paradigm of learning through discovery and construction of knowledge. Learning moral values should take place through dialogue among class members and by exposing students to moral dilemmas for which there is no single answer.

Contrary to Kant's ethics, which is monological, discursive ethics is dialogical; it does not say what values should be thought and how they should be interpreted but rather focuses on the process of how communication should take place, in our case in the classroom, so that agreement is reached about the values, their interpretations, and their implementation. Regarding specific issues, such as whether or not to block a certain web site, communication should follow the rules of discursive ethics, i.e. testing the arguments of both sides, while focusing on enabling participants to understand the argu-

ments of the other side and to test their accuracy and validity. Throughout the process, all participants, students, and teachers, should be included in the discussion, and consensus should be reached rationally, based on the quality and certainty of the arguments presented in the discussion. This procedure gives legitimacy to the decision. Derived in this way, it ensures that all participants are actively involved in the process, thus increasing the likelihood that the decision will be truly accepted and implemented by the participants.

Values discussed in this way have legitimacy and their validity can be tested in the real social context. This type of discussion supports the moral development of students and fosters developing attitudes and further behavior that are in line with the discussed values. In this regard, according to Løvlie, attention should be paid to the practical dimension of attitudes, because each of the attitudes developed in the debate has its practical consequences for the behavior of the social agents, i.e. the students (Løvlie, 2007, p.182).

Additionally, there is another aspect that should not be disregarded and should be carefully considered. Namely, the social agents, in this case the students, are not only rational but also emotional beings. What works as an argument in the classroom may not work in a family or community setting. These settings do not always function on a rational basis and can sometimes be strongly influenced by various culturally inclined stereotypes, prejudices, and biases. This may cause a conflict between what is discussed in the classroom and what is accepted in the family and community, which, when strongly emphasized, may lead to confusion among students. In such situations, students should be offered emotional support from teachers and classmates in addition to rational explanations.

Finally, the content of norms, values, and behaviors discussed in the classroom should be in accordance with students' age and level of intellectual and moral development. This means that complex terms should be clearly explained, and the examples and arguments given should be appropriate so that students can cognitively understand and grasp their meaning.

3.1. Discursive Ethics and European Values

European values are guidelines for the interpretation of circumstances and facts in the lives of European citizens. Although some of them have a long tradition, they are in a process of constant change. According to Paunio, what they lack is a unified legal system that would protect them, but still in

the legal systems of European countries most and especially the key values are well founded (Paunio, 2013, p. 176).

These values in European plural societies bring a certain stability and predictability to the behavior of social agents. This is ensured in the educational context by value education, which can be considered a multifaceted process of socialization in schools, i.e. transfer of dominant values in society and ensuring the connection between the individual, the group and society (Zajda, 2023, p. 51).

Values are culturally internalized, shared and transferred ideas of what is considered good and acceptable, as a way of behaving and as social processes. They are associated with the value system. Values are also related to the behavior of social agents such as the expectation that individuals will be honest, tolerant, courageous, and peaceful. Similarly, they are related to moral values like truth, respect, justice, and many others. These are the values that most students have already accepted and internalized through the process of socialization. However, considering the fact that students come from different socio-cultural backgrounds, this set of values may differ from one cultural group to another. In this regard, Durkheim wrote about the differences between family education or upbringing and school education (Durkheim, 2011). He noted that the school's task is to make a common social universal world out of these different social (nowadays also virtual) worlds in which students live, and which are related to their socio-cultural backgrounds, with an established value system that is accepted and applied by everyone.

Following this, discursive ethics and a dialogical approach to values can provide a solid basis for their internalization, which can be achieved through the educational process and the application of appropriate teaching approaches.

4. TEACHING EUROPEAN VALUES THROUGH CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION

Preparing students to be active citizens who contribute to the continuous progress and development of society requires educating them appropriately and equipping them with the attitudes, skills and values necessary for active citizenship. This is a process that starts at an early age and requires a systematic and organized effort that can be achieved through the education sys-

tem. In this regard, in the last decade, education policy makers have paid special attention to citizenship education, with the intention of serving as a systematic effort in promoting fundamental values and fostering mutual respect in society.

According to the European Education and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA), in its *Report on Citizenship Education at Schools in Europe* (2017) citizenship education aims to promote and foster the harmonious coexistence and development of individuals and communities and "supports students in becoming active, informed and responsible citizens who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and their communities at national, European and international levels" (EACEA, 2017, p. 3). Accordingly, citizenship education teaches students to behave responsibly, to consider the interests of others, to understand the role and functioning of institutions, and to help them acquire the competences necessary for fulfilling their social and political duties in society. The focus is on the proactive attitude and participatory role of students (EACEA, 2017).

In defining this concept, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2015) promotes a broader perspective, using the term "global citizenship education" which refers to developing "a sense of belonging to a broader community and common humanity. It emphasizes political, economic, social, and cultural interdependency and interconnectedness between the local, the national, and the global... and aims to be transformative, building the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes that learners need, so that they will be able to contribute to a more inclusive, just and peaceful world" (UNESCO, 2015, pp. 14-15). Global citizenship education includes three core conceptual dimensions: cognitive, socio-emotional and behavioral. The cognitive dimension refers to the acquisition of knowledge, understanding, and critical thinking about local, regional, and global issues, as well as an understanding of the interconnectedness and interdependence among countries. The socio-emotional dimension refers to a sense of belonging, shared values and responsibilities, empathy, solidarity and respect for diversity. Finally, behavioral dimension refers to the ability to act effectively and responsibly at the local, national, and global levels, for a more peaceful and sustainable world. (UNESCO, 2015)

In the *European Reference Framework* (2006) citizenship competence is determined as one of the key competences. It relies on an understanding of social, economic, and political concepts and structures and enables indivi-

duals to act as responsible citizens and to participate in social and civic life. This competence is based on knowledge of basic concepts and phenomena relating to individuals, groups, society, the economy and culture. It also includes an understanding of the common European values, a critical understanding of the main developments in national, European and world history, an awareness of the aims, values and policies of social and political movements, and an awareness of diversity and cultural identities in Europe and the world. In terms of skills, it refers to the ability to engage effectively with others in the common or public interest, to think critically, solve problems, and make decisions, to engage in debate at all levels, and to participate in community activities.

In schools, citizenship education competence includes four areas: 1. Interacting effectively and constructively with others; 2. Thinking critically; 3. Acting in a socially responsible manner; and 4. Acting democratically (EACEA, 2017). The 2017 Eurydice study confirmed that citizenship education is part of the national curricula for general education in all countries. At lower levels of education, the focus is on teaching students how to interact effectively with others and behave in a socially acceptable manner, while at higher levels the emphasis is on developing critical thinking and democratic behavior. This aligns with students' abilities for abstract and analytical thinking and coincides with the age at which they gain the right to vote. Teachers play a crucial role in the learning process and in guiding students to acquire the necessary competencies. Furthermore, activities outside the classroom and in the community are also very important.

Throughout Europe, countries have adopted different approaches regarding the status of citizenship education. There are three main curriculum approaches: as a cross-curricular theme, where its objectives and content are transversal across the curriculum; as integrated into other subjects or learning areas, usually with humanities/social sciences; and as a separate subject. Regardless of the curricular approach chosen, this shows that citizenship education is given special attention and importance in all European countries.

4.1. Skills Necessary for Learning European Values

In the conditions of hyperreality, in a post-conventional society, the application of the principles of discursive ethics can support the process of learning European values and developing the skills considered necessary in contemporary society, such as critical thinking and creativity. These skills are essential in helping students effectively navigate the complexities of diverse societies, while considering the need to maintain co-existence and cooperation.

Critical thinking is an intellectual process of active and multidimensional conceptualization, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of information gathered through observation, experience, reflection, and communication that leads to the creation of beliefs and action (Scriven & Paul, 2007, p. 1). This skill enables students to critically examine given situations, engage in rational argumentation, draw conclusions, and make rational decisions. It also enables students to proactively engage in debates and learn through problem solving. Considering this, the entire educational process should focus on developing students' critical thinking skills, broadening their knowledge base, and building their intellectual capacities, in order to prepare them to fulfill their civic responsibilities in society.

Developing these skills through open and constructive dialogue is extremely important, especially if we want to avoid the criticism that education reproduces the dominant ideology. The opportunity for open discussion and free discourse in the classroom and among students indicates that value education discusses dominant values, and thus the dominant ideology, but does not necessarily reproduce it (Zejda, 2023, p. 53). Strengthening students' critical thinking skills will ensure that students are able to think independently and not allow themselves to become the subject of manipulation and influence of any kind.

When it comes to creativity, its main attribute is the ability to think "outside the box" or outside the dominant patterns of reasoning and finding new solutions (Mompoint-Gaillard et. al., 2022, p. 22). As a concept, creativity is complex and has many dimensions. In general, it refers to the ability to generate ideas that are new, appropriate, and usually not generated by most people (Craft, 2005; Sternberg & Lubart, 1999).

The ability to generate and implement creative ideas is a value in itself. Its main characteristic is originality and is closely related to curiosity to explore

new things, to consider different ideas when faced with a problem, and to combine multiple ideas and concepts to solve a problem. Creativity is usually seen as a talent, an innate quality of a person, but it can be cultivated with the right approach. Education should motivate students to use these skills to effectively solve the everyday issues and challenges they face.

4.2. Approaches to Teaching European Values

Considering the complexity of the process of teaching European values, it is necessary to use different strategies that will help students to understand, internalize, and learn how to apply European values in their everyday lives (Kennedy, 2007). There are two aspects to this. First, the teaching of values, as part of moral education, is a complex process for which memorization of facts is not enough. Instead, it requires three components to be included: intellectual, affective, and behavioral. The intellectual component refers to acquiring knowledge about the values and norms of behavior and the cognitive understanding of the used terminology. The affective component is seen in developing appropriate feelings, attitudes, and beliefs that are "emotionally colored" and lead the individual to feel the obligation to act appropriately. Finally, there is the behavioral component, which refers to the willingness of the individual to act in accordance with accepted values and norms. The behavioral component, through the action taken is crucial because the action is a real representation that the value is accepted and internalized (Mitevska, 2010). Secondly, all students are different and have different ways of learning. This should be recognized and validated through the use of different teaching approaches and strategies that allow each student to find approaches that best suit his or her learning style.

The question of how to teach European values inevitably leads to the question of classroom culture and the needs of students in the 21st century. Students in a postmodern society learn by doing. To achieve this, they should be encouraged to think, analyze, evaluate, apply knowledge and skills, create, and interpret (Gholam, 2019, p. 112). Accordingly, the methods of teaching and transmitting European values should be active and include: debates, discussions, simulations, animations, role-playing, multicultural projects, using multimedia tools, watching videos, documentaries, reading and discussing books and using other educational materials (Asderaki & Sideri, 2020, p. 265). The aim is for students to be more active and engaged in the learning process, to think critically about the content, to understand the me-

aning of the concepts they learn, and to be able to apply them in their everyday life.

In the following, some strategies and approaches are suggested to provide teachers with multiple perspectives and ideas on how to teach European values.

- Inquiry-based learning allows students to explore topics of interest, gain knowledge, and understand processes (Mompoint-Gaillard et. al., 2022, p. 22). This is student-centered learning in which students are encouraged to engage in processes characteristic of scientific research work. In inquiry-based learning, students are given a specific topic to research. Through asking questions, gathering information, and discussing the results, students are expected to formulate a clear statement or presentation about what they have learned. It helps students develop new knowledge through active participation and engagement in the process of inquiry (Shostak, 2011). This type of learning is based on curiosity to observe phenomena, ask questions, draw diagrams, make calculations, look for patterns and connections between phenomena, interpret and evaluate analyses and conclusions, communicate and discuss new solutions.
- Cooperative learning is an approach to teaching in which students are divided into small groups and given a task to complete. Each member of the group has a role, which is, a task that he or she is expected to perform. Each student must make an effort and actively participate in achieving the group's goals (Leighton, 2011). Groups can be made up of students who are different in terms of learning ability, gender, cultural, ethnic and/or social background. This can be especially significant when working on topics related to values, as it allows students to gain insight into perspectives different from their own. Cooperative work should promote positive interdependence and individual responsibility (Johnson & Johnson, 2009). Tasks are designed to require students to interact with each other in order to complete the tasks and achieve the group goal. Structured in this way, cooperative learning can be an effective approach to learning about European values.
- Argumentation and dialogue promote awareness of the importance of dialogue as a tool that encourages thinking. An argument pre-

supposes at least one statement and one premise, and argumentation is the process of constructing arguments dialogically and dialectically (Schwartz & Baker, 2016). Guiding students in learning to argue thorough the process of dialogue teaches them to construct and identify valid arguments, to offer additional and supporting arguments in favor of the thesis they consider correct, to examine and anticipate alternative arguments and counterarguments, and to know how to respond (Rapanta, 2019). Dialogue helps participants learn about European values, interact with others, and develop communication skills. A prerequisite is the willingness to accept the interlocutor's arguments, if they are credible. Argumentation itself is a practice that focuses on the construction, critique, and revision of statements on the topic. The credibility of arguments increases when they are supported by evidence, so students are encouraged to explore the topics of discussion more deeply. Additionally, listening to the interlocutors' opinions, tolerance, and the ability to consider multiple perspectives are important skills learned in this process.

- A particular approach to teaching called *Philosophy for Children* (P4C) was developed by Lipman, Sharp, and Oscanyan (1980). Their intention was to develop a pedagogical program that would help students, especially younger ones, to improve the process of thinking through philosophical dialogue. It is based on social constructivist theories of learning, which point to social interaction (dialogue) as a mechanism for internalizing new and more complex ways of thinking and speaking. It is believed that when students engage in fruitful discussion, it activates an effective way of thinking and speaking. Through discussion, students exchange arguments and make judgments. This empowers them to "think for themselves" and at the same time, through dialogue, exchange of ideas, questioning, and challenging, they develop a common understanding of the issues discussed in a collaborative way, creating what is called "community of inquiry". In this regard, the pedagogical objective is to strengthen student's capacities for inquiry, in order to help them reach their own reasonable judgments about issues that arise in their own experience (Oyler, 2016; Spiteri, 2017).
- Debate differs from dialogue in that it focuses not only on expressing one's own opinion and reaching an understanding with the one's

interlocutor, but also on making a better impression on the audience, i.e., winning the debate. Debate is characterized by contrasting opinions, in which arguments are presented that support one's own opinion and point out the weaknesses of the opponent's opinion and arguments. Debate allows students to understand and become aware that there are different and legitimate points of view on every issue. Debate is closely related to critical thinking and active learning. It encourages students to analyze and think critically (Gervey, Drout & Wang, 2009).

- Role-playing is one of the most useful techniques for learning European values such as democracy, human rights, and equity. These activities are fun for the students, and they lead to in-depth learning through the acquisition of experience. This strategy is very useful in arousing students' interest in certain values, as well as in building attitudes. The experiential learning which occurs during role-playing stimulates interest in the subject matter and promotes greater student involvement in the learning process. Role-playing increases motivation and promotes students' intellectual development. It also encourages student's empathy (Poorman, 2002) which helps them to better understand the content and to overcome racial prejudices, all of which has a positive influence on their ability to better understand the problems they are dealing with.

- Project-based learning differs from traditional approaches (Maida, 2011, p. 765). This approach has spread relatively quickly and is widely accepted. It is a student-centered approach where students are given the task to explore real-world problems and challenges and finding a solution. Throughout the process, students are encouraged to use various technological solutions, and computer programs, as well as their research skills. It requires students to connect knowledge, skills and procedures. In this approach, the teacher creates the learning environment, but his or her role is more of a moderator and coordinator than an instructor, while students work autonomously and are focused on achieving realistic solutions (Railsback, 2002). Through the combination of individual and team work, students develop their organizational, research, and communication skills. Additionally, this approach contributes to developing critical thinking, cooperation, creativity, and innovation. Project-based learning builds

students' awareness of the interdisciplinary perspective when facing real-world challenges and enables them to perceive the diversity of possible solutions. To solve problems when working on projects, students must have knowledge and skills from different disciplines and be able to combine and apply them in creative ways. This implies that students should develop skills of adaptability and holistic thinking (Hanney & Savin-Baden, 2013).

- Besides the above-mentioned approaches, applied in formal education, non-formal and informal education also provide numerous opportunities for learning European values. They help students to learn through experience and practice, outside the school context. Students develop abilities, build capacities, and acquire competencies. It also fosters empathy, shared decision-making, and coexistence (Tzagkarakis & Kritas, 2021, p. 156).

5. PRACTICING EUROPEAN VALUES BY STUDENTS

As discussed previously, students learn about European values through the citizenship education curricula. One of the values discussed and covered as crucial is democracy. Learning about democracy mainly involves explaining the concept and the role and functioning of democratic processes and institutions. When it comes to its practical application, students are involved in the decision-making process related to certain aspects of school life. However, this kind of teaching about democracy conflicts with the liberal perspective on the right of citizens to choose. It seems that the educational system implies one of the political systems and the values compatible with it, which seems as trying to enforce it and thus preserve the status quo in society. However, teaching democracy must go beyond merely explaining democratic processes and institutions. Students should become familiar with democracy in its real context, which includes its mechanisms and dynamics of changing the situation in society.

A practical example of the functioning of democratic mechanisms in the educational process are the protests that took place within the Norwegian Student's Organization (NSO). There, students opposed the national tests that had been introduced a few years earlier and that were to be carried out in four age categories for students aged 16-19 (Løvlie, 2007). The NSO commented on the Ministry of Education’s decision to publish the test re-

sults online, as this would violate students' right to privacy. Additionally, it was noted that students may not want to participate in the global competition that the Ministry is pushing them into by accepting the OECD-PISA tests. This is a concrete example of students demanding that their interests as individuals and students be respected. By doing so, they stepped out of the role of passive students and became active participants in the education system. They exercised their democratic right, as promoted by the teaching of citizenship education.

The dilemma that arises is whether education functions according to the democratic principles promoted by citizenship education. The experts in the theory of social systems, such as Luhmann, indicate that each of the social subsystems has its code by which it functions, and problems usually arise when the rules of one system are transferred to another, i.e. when the rules by which democracy functions are transferred to the education system. For example, if the rules of democracy are transferred to the economic system, instead of the owner of a company appointing a manager, the manager would be appointed by the employees through voting. However, the economic system functions according to rules that are different than the political system, just as the education system operates according to different rules than the economic and political systems. Each of the systems is autonomous and has its own logic of functioning. The function of the economic system is to make profit, the function of democracy is to protect the rights of citizens so that they can participate in decision-making processes, while the function of the educational system is to transmit knowledge, skills, and values to students. Its main aim is to prepare students to live, work, and contribute to society. Equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills, as well as a well-structured value system, is of great importance in preserving the most important European values.

6. CONCLUSION

In order to preserve and maintain the foundations of European society, the teaching of European values and their transfer to younger generations is of utmost importance. This is due to the very nature of values, which are the pillars of any society and strongly influence and guide peoples' behavior and actions. Teaching values in itself can be very challenging, as it is not only based on the transfer of information but also requires acceptance and internalization into one's own value system. Because of their complexity,

the commonly accepted European values need to be transferred in the most suitable and effective way. This paper presents how discursive ethics can be applied in postmodern hyperreality and intersubjective understanding of reality through various teaching strategies, including argumentation, dialogue, discussion, role-playing, inquiry-based and project-based learning, and cooperative learning. These strategies emphasize the student-centered approach in teaching European values as the main tendency in contemporary education.

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RESPONSIBILITY AS A VALUE IN CURRICULA OF CROSS-CURRICULAR TOPICS IN THE REPUBLIC OF CROATIA AND EDUCATIONAL POLICIES IN THE EU

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ABSTRACT

Continuous changes in society are also reflected in the educational system. National strategic plans, curricula and legal regulations are harmonized with the framework of European values and principles. The framework of the national curriculum of cross-curricular topics determines aim, purpose, educational expectations, learning and teaching structure, and evaluation of a specific cross-curricular topic, the realization of which is mandatory in all types of education and at all levels. The advantage of guidelines and clearly set goals for learning and teaching is that they allow teachers the freedom to create, i.e. to use teaching methods and strategies in a creative way, and students to be actively involved in the educational process. Since responsibility is a value that is clearly defined by the "National Curriculum Framework" in the Republic of Croatia, for the purposes of this paper, all national curricula of cross-curricular topics were analyzed, with an emphasis on the development of student responsibility. After a theoretical analysis of the concepts of the cross-curricular curriculum, the representation of the value of responsibility in the educational goals of learning and teaching in the curricula of cross-curricular topics was analyzed in relation to strategic documents from the European Union. It is not possible to fully predict the process of education and care, nor the level of adoption of the planned learning and teaching goals. However, with high-quality and responsible preparation of

the educational process, humanistic approach to students, their active participation and continuous creation of the curriculum, success will certainly not be absent.
Keywords: *cross-curricular topics, curriculum, educational policy, Europeanization, values*

1. INTRODUCTION

The constant changes in society (technological development, social migration, economic crisis, COVID pandemic...) are also reflected in the educational system. Therefore, educational documents emphasize a comprehensive approach to student development and the importance of lifelong learning, which should enable individuals to develop professionally and develop skills to better adapt and respond to the challenges of daily life. Accordingly, it is necessary to develop contemporary competences, i.e. knowledge, skills and abilities that enable them to take responsibility for their own lives, but also for the community, the environment, nature and future generations. This value is of great importance because of its impact on society. Being responsible means acknowledging one's own feelings and those of others, taking control and having self-control, telling the truth, taking responsibility and dealing with the consequences of one's actions. Living with this value creates a responsible society that takes action in all areas. But to promote responsibility as a value in children from an early age, we must really live this value, be an example, be a supporter, and help our children to grow into identities of highly responsible students and citizens.

When it comes to personal responsibility, the term is not easy and simple to define, and the definition has changed in various researches and over time (Malinauskas, 2019). However, it can be said that personal responsibility is a multidimensional construct that includes cognitive, behavioral, moral, and emotional components (Swaner, 2005). This would mean that individuals consider their choices and possible consequences before making a decision about a procedure, thinking not only about themselves but also about others. According to Mergler, personal responsibility is the ability to control one's own behavior, feelings, and thoughts, and the willingness to accept blame (responsibility) for the consequences that arise (Mergler, 2007). Taking responsibility reduces the possibility of acting recklessly and harming oneself and/or others (Mergler & Patton, 2007). It is therefore important to encourage and develop it from an early age. In this sense, responsibility as a value should be promoted at all levels of education, especially in early childhood

education and care and in primary school. These are the years in which children make the greatest progress in their moral, social and cognitive development. Responsibility flourishes in primary school as children begin to have more opportunities to participate in decision making, which indicates an increase in their obligations. Considering that parents and teachers are a child's first mentors and educators - we have a great responsibility as a society, especially as scientists and teachers, to point out the significance of this value for the society of the future. This guiding thread served as the impetus for the authors to explore the incorporation of this value in cross-curricular topics.

The curriculum as a basic document of education provides guidelines for practical activities (Previšić, 2007) and encourages the full personal development of students (MZOŠ, 2011). According to the *National Curriculum Framework* (MZO, 2017), the educational values of knowledge, solidarity, identity, responsibility, integrity, respect, health and entrepreneurship are emphasized. When it comes to the development of students' responsibility, the *National Curriculum Framework* emphasizes that "education and upbringing promote the active participation of children and young people in social life and strengthen their responsibility for the general social welfare, nature and work, as well as for themselves and others" (MZOŠ, 2011, p. 22). It is also emphasized that "responsible action and responsible behavior presuppose a meaningful and conscientious relationship between personal freedom and personal responsibility" (MZOŠ, 2011, p. 22). Therefore, it can be said that responsibility is one of the values of the curriculum that affects pedagogical practice and educational outcomes.

The *National Curriculum Framework*, as an overarching national curriculum document, establishes the national curriculum of cross-curricular topics that define "the purpose, goals, structure, educational expectations, learning and teaching, and evaluation of a specific cross-curricular topic" (MZO, 2017, p. 9). The implementation of this curriculum is mandatory in all types of education and at all levels. Since responsibility is a value that is clearly defined in the *National Curriculum Framework*, and in the European Education Area, for the purposes of this work, all national curricula on cross-curricular topics were analyzed, with a focus on the development of students' responsibility in Croatia and EU strategic documents. In June 2024, European values were defined in the EU strategic agenda for 2024-2029. These values should be a priority in every European country. Therefore,

after the theoretical analysis of the concept of cross-curricular topics, the representation of the value of responsibility in the educational goals of learning and teaching in the curricula of cross-curricular topics was analyzed in relation to strategic documents of the European Union.

2. THE THEORETICAL ANALYSIS OF THE CONCEPT OF THE CROSS-CURRICULAR TOPICS

Curriculum is a word of Latin origin which means a course, i.e. a sequence, and includes the processes of planning, organization, implementation and control (Previšić, 2007). The curriculum is used to achieve educational goals but in a way that enables every individual to achieve the desired developmental goals and tasks through their own engagement (Previšić, 2007). In terms of content, the curriculum includes operationalized learning objectives and content, teaching methods, teaching situations, teaching strategies, and evaluation of the educational process and the goals achieved (Matijević, 1999). The curriculum determines what is taught or learned and what is not. The basic strategy of the curriculum is the strategy of student-centered learning (Antić, 1999). Therefore, it can be said that the curriculum is a systematic and standardized way of planning, regulating, implementing and evaluating the educational process (MZO, 2017). It can be defined at different levels, for example as a national curriculum, a school curriculum, a subject curriculum or some curricula for cross-curricular topics.

It should be noted that in modern education, the curriculum is student-centered, which means that the interests, experiences and needs of students are taken into account. In this way, students are co-creators of the curriculum and share responsibility. Students' experiential and active learning, motivated teachers working with students, but also collaboration with parents, create a stimulating, collaborative and supportive environment in which students can make the most progress (Schiro, 2013).

Curricula for cross-curricular topics determine the objectives, purpose, educational expectations, structure, learning and teaching, and assessment of a particular cross-curricular topic (MZO, 2017). Curricular objectives and expectations are mandatory in all types of education and at all levels and are implemented in various forms and methods of educational work (MZO, 2017). Educational expectations are defined at the end of the individual educational cycles that comprehensively address the student – the 1st cycle

(preschool, the first and second grade of primary school), the 2nd cycle (the third, fourth and fifth grade of primary school), the 3rd cycle (the sixth, seventh and eighth grade of primary school), the 4th cycle (the first and second grade of a four-year secondary school; the first grade of a three-year secondary school) and the 5th cycle (the third and fourth grade of a four-year secondary school; the second and third grade of a three-year secondary school) (MZO, 2017).

In the Republic of Croatia, there are seven national curricula with cross-curricular topics. These are:

1. Curriculum for Personal and Social Development,
2. Curriculum for Health,
3. Curriculum for Sustainable Development,
4. Curriculum for Learning How to Learn,
5. Curriculum for Entrepreneurship,
6. Curriculum for the Use of Information and Communication Technology and
7. Curriculum for Citizenship (MZO, 2017).

In the continuation of the chapter, the characteristics of the curriculum of each cross-curricular topic are explained in detail.

2.1 Curriculum for Personal and Social Development, Curriculum for Health and Curriculum for Sustainable Development

The aim of the cross-curricular topic *Personal and Social Development* is to encourage the full development of students so that they become responsible, productive, creative, independent, happy, healthy and cooperative individuals who are willing to contribute to their communities. It helps to ensure that students develop responsible behavior and take care of their own health and quality of life, their achievements and interpersonal relationships they build throughout their lives (MZO, 2019c).

Five educational goals of learning and teaching are named, and the three domains of the cross-curricular topic *Personal and Social Development – Self, Self and others* and *Self and society* – are linked by a holistic approach. In this way, students are supported in developing responsibility for their

own lives and for the sustainable development of society, enhancing their own opportunities and creative potential, in recognizing personal interests and life vocations, and in building personal integrity (MZO, 2019c).

The aim of the cross-curricular topic *Health* is learning and teaching, i.e. the development of positive attitudes of students towards a healthy lifestyle and health in general, as well as the acquisition of knowledge and skills to realize the potential and ability of students to take care of their own health, i.e. lifelong responsible behavior. Health is understood not only as the absence of disease, but also as "physical, mental and social well-being" (MZO, 2019, p. 5).

Six educational goals of learning and teaching and three domains of the cross-curricular topic *Health* are identified. Domains are the following - *Physical Health, Mental and Social Health* and *Help and Self-help*. The aim of these thematic units, i.e. organizational areas, is to educate and train students so that they can be healthy, responsible, satisfied, self-confident and successful people (MZO, 2019).

The aim of the cross-curricular topic *Sustainable Development* is to prepare students for appropriate, responsible and sustainable social behavior in order to achieve their own and general well-being. It encompasses the ecological, social and economic dimensions of sustainability and their interdependence. It provides students with knowledge, skills and competence development and encourages them to act responsibly towards the environment, nature and the community (MZO, 2019b).

Five educational goals of learning and teaching and three domains of the cross-curricular topic *Sustainable Development* are identified – *Connection* (answers the question "what?"), *Action* (answers the question "how?") and *Well-being* (answers the question "why?"). The aforementioned thematic units, i.e. organizational areas, form an integrated unit that encompasses the key principles of sustainability, active action, and responsibility and rights in achieving well-being (MZO, 2019b).

2.2. Curriculum for Learning How to Learn and Curriculum for Entrepreneurship

The aim of the cross-curricular topic *Learning How to Learn* is to help students develop knowledge and skills of self-regulated learning and apply them proactively in the context of lifelong learning. It contributes to students' ability to manage their educational and professional development (MZO, 2019e).

Four educational goals of learning and teaching are named and four domains of the cross-curricular topic *Learning How to Learn*. The domains are: *Applying learning and information management strategies*, *Managing your learning*, *Managing emotions and motivation in learning* and *Creating a learning environment* (MZO, 2019e).

The aim of the cross-curricular topic *Entrepreneurship* is to develop entrepreneurial thinking and behavior in students as well as the characteristics and working habits of entrepreneurial people, i.e. to develop entrepreneurial skills. At the same time, students are thought to act responsibly in all areas of professional life (MZO, 2019d).

Six educational goals of learning and teaching and three domains of the curriculum of the cross-curricular topic *Entrepreneurship* are identified. The domains are: *Thinking entrepreneurially*, *Acting entrepreneurially* and *Economic and financial literacy*. Through these domains, students will acquire and develop entrepreneurial skills that they will need in everyday life (MZO, 2019d).

2.3. Curriculum for the Use of Information and Communication Technology and Curriculum for Citizenship

The aim of the cross-curricular topic *Use of Information and Communication Technology* is to teach students how to use information and communication technology in a responsible, efficient, appropriate, contemporary and creative way. It encourages students' critical thinking, inquisitiveness, self-confidence and safety, the development of communication skills, and the responsible use of technology without health consequences (MZO, 2019f).

Six educational goals of learning and teaching and four domains of the curriculum of the cross-curricular topic *Use of Information and Communication Technology* are identified. The domains are the following - *Functional and*

responsible use of ICT, *Communication and collaboration in the digital environment*, *Research and critical evaluation in the digital environment* and *Creativity and innovation in the digital environment*. The thematic units, i.e. the organizational areas, are interconnected and build on each other. They enable the development of general digital literacy, i.e. the development of students' digital competence (MZO, 2019f).

The aim of the cross-curricular topic *Civic Education* is to train and empower students to participate actively, responsibly and effectively in a civic, democratic environment. The core values promoted in the curriculum are responsibility, freedom, human dignity, solidarity and equality. Particular emphasis is placed on the development of a sense of responsibility, i.e. the students' responsible attitude towards public goods and the community as well as their willingness to contribute to the common good (MZO, 2019a).

Four educational goals of learning and teaching and three domains of the curriculum are the cross-curricular themes of *Civic Education* are identified. The domains are: *Human rights*, *Democracy* and *Social Community*. The contents of these thematic units, i.e. organizational areas, complement and interlink each other and enable the development of students' civic competence (MZO, 2019a).

3. ANALYSIS OF THE EDUCATIONAL GOALS OF LEARNING AND TEACHING FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY IN THE CURRICULA OF CROSS-CURRICULAR TOPICS

Student responsibility is one of the values stated as an educational goal of learning and teaching (MZOŠ, 2011; MZO, 2017). Therefore, the development and promotion of responsibility, along with independence, self-confidence and creativity, is one of the educational objectives identified according to the *National Curriculum Framework* and the *Framework of the National Curriculum* (MZOŠ, 2011; MZO, 2017). The concept of responsibility runs through all cross-curricular topics and is explicitly mentioned nine times in the defined educational goals (25% of the total number (N = 36) of educational goals for learning and teaching cross-curricular topics) (Table 1).

In the curriculum of the cross-curricular theme *Civic Education*, responsibility is explicitly mentioned in one learning and teaching goal: “the deve-

lopment of civic competence that enables students to fulfil their civic role effectively as informed, active and responsible members of social communities at all levels" (MZO, 2019a, p. 7).

In the curriculum of the cross-curricular topic *Sustainable Development*, responsibility is explicitly mentioned in three learning and teaching goals: (1) "acquiring knowledge of the diversity of nature and understanding of the complex relationships between humans and the environment, developing critical thinking and personal and social responsibility necessary for sustainability", (2) "developing solidarity and empathy towards people, responsibility towards all living beings and the environment and motivation to act for the benefit of the environment and all people" and (3) "encouraging future-oriented thinking and developing personal responsibility towards future generations, which is a prerequisite for creating a society based on sustainable development" (MZO, 2019b, p. 7).

In the curriculum of the cross-curricular topic *Personal and Social Development*, responsibility is explicitly mentioned in a learning and teaching goal: "Responsible behavior towards oneself and others in the community, decision-making and planning of education, lifelong learning and professional development in modern society and the world of work" (MZO, 2019c, p. 6).

In the curriculum of the cross-curricular topic *Entrepreneurship*, responsibility is also explicitly mentioned in one learning and teaching goal: "Understanding the economic environment, developing economic and financial literacy, familiarizing oneself with basic economic concepts (creating new values) and behaving in a socially responsible manner" (MZO, 2019d, p. 7).

In the curriculum of the cross-curricular topic *Learning How to Learn*, responsibility is not explicitly mentioned in the defined educational goals of learning and teaching. However, the description of the topic states that an active, successful learning process enables students to make progress in taking responsibility for their own learning (MZO, 2019e).

In the curriculum of the cross-curricular topic *Use of Information and Communication Technology*, responsibility is explicitly mentioned in a learning and teaching goal: "Use information and communication technology responsibly, morally and safely" (MZO, 2019f, p. 7).

In the curriculum of the cross-curricular topic *Health*, responsibility is explicitly mentioned in two learning and teaching objectives: (1) “Encourage a responsible approach to one's own health and a responsible and supportive attitude towards the health of others” and (2) “Acquire basic knowledge and skills for a positive attitude and responsible health-oriented behavior that contributes to maintaining and improving physical, mental, emotional and social health and to safeguarding and improving the quality of life” (MZO, 2019, p. 7).

For better transparency of the total number of defined educational learning and teaching goals in the curricula of the cross-curricular topics and the presentation of responsibilities in these, the results are presented below in Table 1.

Table 1. Representation of the value of responsibility in the educational goals of learning and teaching in the curriculum of cross-curricular topics

	The total number of defined educational goals for learning and teaching in the cross-curricular topic	The total number of defined educational goals for learning and teaching in the cross-curricular topic focusing on student responsibility
Curriculum of the cross-curricular topic Civic Education	4	1
Curriculum of the cross-curricular topic Sustainable Development	5	3
Curriculum of the cross-curricular topic Personal and Social Development	5	1
Curriculum of the cross-curricular topic Entrepreneurship	6	1
Curriculum of the cross-curricular topic Learning How to Learn	4	0

Curriculum of the cross-curricular topic Use of Information and Communication Technology	6	1
Curriculum of the cross-curricular topic Health	6	2
In total (Σ)	36	9

The interesting thing about the results of the analysis is that in the educational objectives of learning and teaching in the curriculum of the cross-curricular topic *Learning How to Learn*, students' responsibility is not explicitly mentioned, although it is mentioned as one of the values in the description of the topic itself. In contrast, the concept of student responsibility appears at least once and at most three times in the educational goals of learning and teaching in other cross-curricular topics.

4. ANALYSIS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION STRATEGIC DOCUMENTS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF STUDENTS' RESPONSIBILITY IN EDUCATION

The European Union (EU) sets a strategic agenda every five years in terms of its upcoming priorities. Strategic plans are often implied by contextual changes that EU countries (i.e. Member States) are facing. With regard to these challenges, the EU prepares for the future needs of society. In this sense, the strategic plan for 2024-2029 focuses on the "upholding European values within the EU" (EU, 2024) as well as ensuring secure and competitive Europe.

The European Commission often proposes some kind of recommendation which is then adopted by the European Council. This is how *Council Recommendation on Common Values*, *Inclusive Education and the European Dimension of Teaching* was published in 2018. This document promotes all European values such as "human dignity, freedom, democracy, equlity, the rule of law and respect for human rights, including the rights of persons belonging to minorities, as set out in Article 2 of the Treaty on European Uni-

on" (Council of the European Union, 2018). Furthermore, the European Education Area promotes quality education and training for all teachers in Europe. "The EU works with its Member States to support the development of quality national school education systems and promote collaboration on issues of shared concern" (European Commission, 2024a). The European Commission renews their vision of the European Education Area in terms of quality and equity in primary education by setting out a *European Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning* and by recommending the *Pathways to School Success*.

Key Competences for Lifelong Learning were set in 2018 and are in unity with the European *Pillar of Social Rights* (Council Recommendation of 22 May 2018 on key competences for lifelong learning, ST/9009/2018/INIT, OJ C 189). This framework sets eight key competences and interestingly, responsibility as a value is crucial to all of them. Furthermore, these key competences were additionally detailed in the EntreComp: *The Framework* (Bacigalupo et al., 2016). "EntreComp defines entrepreneurship as a transversal competence, which applies to all spheres of life: from nurturing personal development, to actively participating in society, to (re)entering the job market as an employee or as a self-employed person, and also to starting up ventures (cultural, social or commercial)" (Bacigalupo et al., 2016, p. 8). To conclude, values are the most important foundations of the EntreComp: *The Framework*. When compared to Croatia (see Table 1), the EU promotes responsibility at a much higher level as a value in entrepreneurship competence in all EntreComp model areas. "The progression in entrepreneurial learning is made up of two aspects: (1) Developing increasing autonomy and responsibility in acting upon ideas and opportunities to create value; (2) Developing the capacity to generate value from simple and predictable contexts up to complex, constantly changing environments." (Bacigalupo et al., 2016, p. 16). For example, "I can take responsibility in seizing new opportunities and when facing unprecedented challenges in value-creating activities" is one of the EntreComp model competencies (Bacigalupo et al., 2016, p. 33). Even in the DigComp model framework, the safety competence is based on children's responsibility in sharing and receiving information online, protecting data privacy, well-being and the environment in the most responsible way (Diković & Terlević, 2024). As a concluding notion, the LifeComp framework stresses that EU indicates "the relevance of its common foundational values as a key driver for imagining new ways of schooling,

learning, and relating to each other, and to the environment" (Sala et al., 2020, p. 12).

The European Council Recommendation on *Pathways to School Success* evolves around school education as a predictor of developing "inclusive, fairer and more prosperous societies". It not only educates young children to develop competences, but also helps them to become "responsible, resilient and engaged individuals". However, schooling is in the hands of teachers, so these pathways can only be successful if competent teachers ensure equitable and inclusive education, considering contextual differences (European Commission, 2024b).

With regard to the aforementioned contextual differences, EU Member States have all the legislation to shape the teaching and learning process at the national level. This "encourages a shared responsibility for the development of young people" (European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, 2021, p. 11), which is in accordance with the 2018 *Council Recommendation on Common Values, Inclusive Education and the European Dimension of Teaching*.

Responsibility as a value in EU strategic documents is in the responsibility of each educational member (i.e. school staff) to act in accordance with EU principles and values, national laws and curriculum documents, followed by school policies and procedures (Schola Europaea, 2022). Additionally, the Parliamentary Assembly (2001) emphasizes the responsibility of parents in the education of their children, as education is the "root of the development of every human being and of society", and it starts at birth in the family home.

When it comes to responsibility as a value promoted in children and youth, it is commonly described as part of an educational process. "Education is the foundation for personal fulfilment, employability, and active and responsible citizenship" (European Commission, 2020, p. 2). This describes education as a process of developing children into competent and responsible European citizens. That is how the society endorses European values and promotes them to a higher level of implementation.

To conclude, Croatia, in unity with the EU (and as one of the Member States), is working intensively on development of competent and responsible children from their early age (see strategic documents: *Quality Framework in ECEC*, *Encouraging Quality in Early Childhood Education and Care*

(ECEC), *Key Data on Early Childhood Education and Care in Europe*, *Europa 2020*, *Recommendation on Investing in Children*, *Starting Strong: Key OECD Indicators On Early Childhood Education and Care*; *Early Childhood Care: Accessibility and Quality of Services*, *Rethinking Education*). Nevertheless, the issue that has been raised is whether it is possible to determine national educational process success without seeing its implications in the future. The European Education Area strategic framework is a valuable resource for addressing this question. National policymakers should recognize this framework as a crucial tool for fostering cooperation in education and training within the European Education Area and beyond.

5. CONCLUSION

The importance of responsibility is defined as a value in all curriculum documents (MZOŠ, 2011; MZO, 2017). It is mentioned in the descriptions of cross-curricular topics and their domains as well as in the defined educational goals of learning and teaching, which are then elaborated in the learning outcomes. The curriculum, in its complexity and multidimensionality, provides the framework for education, reflected in the complementarity of content, goals, tasks and, more generally, in the process of planning, implementing and evaluating the educational process.

The advantage of guidelines and clearly formulated learning and teaching objectives in curricula for cross-curricular topics is that they give teachers the freedom to be creative, i.e. to use teaching methods and strategies creatively, and give students the opportunity to participate actively in the educational process. Finally, when learning goals and outcomes are clearly defined, the process of planning learning and teaching, and thus the implementation of the educational process itself, is facilitated because there is no doubt about educational expectations. Of course, it is not possible to fully predict the educational process and the degree of realization of the planned learning and teaching goals, but with quality and responsible preparation of the educational process, humanistic approach to the student, active student participation and continuous curriculum creation, success should certainly not fail to materialize.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that although teachers have the freedom to use creative teaching methods to achieve these learning objectives, it is questionable how much these cross-curricular topics are implemented in the

classroom, since they are not a primary part of the content of individual subjects. Also, the question is how well teachers are trained to instrument and implement such outcomes in the classroom. Do they have enough support and adequate conditions for quality implementation? Do they have the time? Are they intrinsically and extrinsically motivated enough to do that? In this sense, future research should focus on practical studies that could answer these questions, explore what challenges teachers face, whether there are certain conflicts in the curriculum, and whether it is possible to reach a consensus that keeps in mind the well-being of children, and thus the well-being of society.

It should also be noted that each educational institution is specific with its own culture and needs. Therefore, the content of the curriculum should be adapted to the goals of the individual educational institution, of course, taking into account the legal framework and fundamental values. At the same time, one should always think about the needs of students and their complete individual development, including the development of responsibility for themselves and the community. One of the ways to achieve this is certainly the curriculum with cross-curricular topics that highlight the importance of developing responsible behavior in students. However, we should be ahead of the curve, making strategic plans, constantly working on improving the curriculum, working on prevention rather than "putting out fires" after mistakes are made that can have devastating effects on our children and society. It is time for individuals to carry the change - but they must see the change in themselves, reflect and take responsibility. It can be concluded that responsibility is a value that a person needs throughout his or her life. Therefore, it is important to continuously develop it in students in all subjects and extracurricular activities. Curricula with cross-curricular topics do just that.

In accordance with aforementioned, it can be concluded that Croatia, in regard to primary education, really meets the standards of the European Education Area. In fact, it follows them according to European values, especially in promoting responsibility as a value in curricula of cross-curricular topics. Nevertheless, it is crucial to strategically plan for the improvement of children's educational process at the national level, but always in harmony with EU strategic recommendations. After all, we really are part of the European society - we might as well live up to it.

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A CASE STUDY ON DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION IN FINNISH UPPER SECONDARY EDUCATION: EVERYDAY PRAXIS, "VALUE JARGON" OR SOMEWHERE IN BETWEEN?

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the education given on democracy, human rights, and other European values in Finnish teaching education. The author draws on previous studies, existing literature, curricula, and questionnaires on teacher trainers' and upper secondary school students' perceptions. Earlier studies suggest that democracy and human rights in the Finnish education system and teacher training remain unsystematic, implicit, and dependent on individual teachers' own interests. These previous studies emphasize democracy and human rights being seen as either distant from everyday education or 'declarationist value jargon' embedded in curricula without real substance. In August 2024, I conducted two surveys, one with upper secondary school students (n=63) and the other with teacher trainers (n=11) at one teacher training school in Finland. The content analysis of the data shows that democracy, human rights and other European values are, to some extent, present in most classrooms at this upper secondary school. Upper secondary school students identify explicit European values such as human rights, implicit values such as democracy, and the relative absence of the rule of law. Teacher trainers prioritize equality as a practice in their work with upper secondary students and student teachers. This case study suggests that the collected data reflects an educational shift from 'value jargon' towards everyday praxis, although systemic barriers and practical challenges remain.
Keywords: *European values, human rights education, democracy education, Finnish upper secondary school, teacher education, teacher trainers, content analysis*

1. INTRODUCTION

Several societal issues have emerged, including racism (FRA, 2017), the number of hate crimes (Rauta, 2017, p. 8), violations of free speech and the rising support for autocratic rule (Lührmann & Lindberg, 2019). Climate activism (Rissanen et al., 2024) and wars in Ukraine and the Middle East (Värri, 2024) have become increasingly salient, creating a critical need to be addressed both by the education system at large and specifically by teacher education.

Two previous Finnish studies (Rautiainen et al., 2014; Kasa et al., 2021) have demonstrated that the integration of European values, specifically democracy and human rights education into the education system remains unsystematic and relies on individual teachers' initiative. These two previous studies examined student teachers' experiences within the context of their pedagogical studies. In contrast, this study explores the perception of upper secondary school students' and teacher trainers' at Tampere University Teacher Training School. The first of the previous studies (Rautiainen et al., 2014) indicated that European values were not prioritized in curricula, teaching and culture. This led to the conclusion that further development was necessary to enhance the visibility of European values within the curricula and the prevailing culture of Finnish schools (Fornaciari & Männistö, 2015). After the first study (Rautiainen et al., 2014) and shortly before the second study (Kasa et al., 2021) the new and updated national curriculum for upper secondary school was published (Finnish National Agency for Education (FNAE), 2019; Teacher Training School of Tampere University (TTSTU), 2021). This curriculum explicitly incorporated European values (e.g. human rights and democracy).

Education on European values is limited in Finland (Lehtimäki & Rajala, 2020). In previous studies, Finnish teachers have reported such education as 'obvious yet alien' (Matilainen, 2011) and have largely neglected to elaborate on human rights violations or problems in the Finnish context, such as racism, the treatment of indigenous people, and violence against women as well as sexual and gender minorities (Rautiainen et al, 2014). Prior research suggests that a salient factor contributing to the notion that European values do not inherently permeate the classroom environment is what scholars have termed as 'national exceptionalism' (Sirola, 2017). That is to say, the promotion and instruction of European values is considered more imperative in other countries than in Finland.

This article aims to make a comparison between the results of the 2014 and 2019 studies (as published in Rautiainen et al., 2014 and Kasa et al., 2021) and the situation in 2024. To this end, a case study was conducted examining teacher trainers' and upper secondary school students' perceptions of European values. The hypothesis is that following the latest national curricula reforms of 2015 and 2019 (TTSTU, 2021) there should be a distinct shift towards explicit inclusion of European values into upper secondary school education visible both in the answers given by teacher trainers as well as upper secondary school students. The research question guiding this study is as follows: To what extent are European values incorporated in the upper secondary school curriculum, as analyzed in this case study? Furthermore, what are the perceptions of students and teacher trainers at this school regarding the integration of European values within the classroom education context? In this article I will 1) briefly introduce the concept of European values in education, along with a discussion of the challenges confronting this pedagogical approach, 2) present the Finnish upper secondary school context, 3) undertake an examination of teacher trainers' (n=11) and upper secondary school students' (n=63) perceptions on the education provided on European values through an analysis of variance (ANOVA) among means in the survey data.

2. EUROPEAN VALUES: THEORETICAL AND PRACTICAL OBSERVATIONS

This section will address certain theoretical and practical themes related to European values. The objective of this section is to understand European values as something substantial that is interconnected with prior scientific research and prevailing educational practices. Firstly, European values are defined as a set of basic principles that underpin the European Union. This study aligns with the European Union's official characterization of these values, as outlined on its official website. The European Union defines European values as comprising the following concepts: human dignity, freedom, democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights (EU, 2012). Secondly, democracy education and human rights education have been understood as separate educational fields (Toivanen, 2009), while many governments claim that they have fulfilled their commitment to democracy and human rights education simply by teaching social studies, and, more specifically, citizenship education (Osler & Starkey, 2010, p. 113). However,

from an educational perspective, democracy education and human rights education are interdependent: human rights need democracy to achieve inclusivity (Osler & Starkey, pp. 116-127) and "human rights need democratic processes to be actualized" (Kasa et al., 2021, p. 71).

An important distinction when studying the implementation of European values in classroom education is that of 'explicit' and 'implicit'. These terms describe how European values are or can be practiced in educational settings (Müller, 2009, pp. 8-9): 'explicit' refers to international norms and mechanisms as well as subject matter that explicitly discusses any of the aforementioned values. Conversely, the term 'implicit' pertains to any challenges that may arise during the implementation of European values, such as structural inequality or violations of human rights. Additionally, it encompasses any actions or subject matter that embody the fundamental principles of European values.

Prior studies on this subject suggest that in Finland the education on European values has been mostly implicit (Matilainen, 2011). The Finnish national curriculum for upper secondary school (FNAE, 2019) includes several direct references to all six European values (EU, 2012). However, this same curriculum clearly emphasizes, above all else, the promotion of linguistic and cultural plurality (Filpus, 2023, pp. 55-58). While the current Finnish national curriculum is clearly aligned with the European values, it cannot be concluded that the fundamental values articulated in the national curriculum would directly stem from these European values. A more plausible hypothesis is that the fundamental values included and articulated in the current national curriculum (FNAE, 2019) have their origins in the earlier national curricula (such as that published in 2015) as well as the United Nations' *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. An analysis of the writing process of the current national curriculum revealed no evidence of European officials or documents having been consulted or having exerted any discernible influence on the document (Filpus, 2023, pp. 59-61).

Notwithstanding, the absence of an *explicit* delineation of concepts such as democracy, the rule of law, and human rights within the context of classroom education render them into opinions instead of shared fundamental values. That is to say, it is imperative for teachers to comprehend that human rights are legally binding and not merely hollow rhetoric (Toivanen, 2009, p. 43). If European values are mentioned in various curricula (such as FNAE, 2019 and TTSTU, 2021) without being explicitly taught in Finnish

schools, these values would be reduced to 'declarationism' without any real substance. The investigation of this phenomenon is particularly salient within the Finnish educational context, as Finnish teachers have previously articulated their perception that democracy and human rights education are best entrusted to external experts (Matilainen, 2011).

3. THE FINNISH CONTEXT: CURRICULA AND EUROPEAN VALUES IN UPPER SECONDARY SCHOOL AND TEACHER EDUCATION

Human rights and democratic values are the basis of Finnish legislation. *The Constitution of Finland* (1999/731) encompasses fundamental and human rights (sections 6-21), and section 22 stipulates that "The public authorities shall guarantee the observance of basic rights and liberties and human rights." The national curriculum for upper secondary school (FNAE, 2019) designates democracy and human rights as fundamental values and binding obligations. The curriculum of the upper secondary school where this case study was conducted states (TTSTU, 2021):

> "The respect for human rights and human dignity is the foundation stone of upper secondary school education. The education provided in upper secondary school is based on international human rights agreements. During their upper secondary education, the student will form a structured understanding of fundamental civil and human rights, the values and norms these rights are founded upon, and the actions that promote and maintain these rights. The upper secondary education enables the students to analyse their own values as well as to analyse the existing tensions between human rights and our shared reality."

None of the European values is explicitly mentioned as an educational area in the national curriculum (FNAE, 2019). However, the TTSTU curriculum from 2021 mentions human dignity five times (in basic values as well as in relation to subjects such as social studies, secular ethics, and music). Freedom is mentioned 31 times, most often the freedom of expression and opinion, but also, to a lesser extent, the freedom of religion and conscience, as well as the right to move and reside freely. The curriculum dedicates a significant number of mentions to democracy (88 instances), equality (48 instances), and human rights (103 instances). In this document, freedom, democracy, equality, and human rights are designated as educational domains in various subjects, including social studies, secular ethics, history, philosophy,

music, arts, foreign languages, Finnish language, health education, and religious education. The rule of law is mentioned nine times, predominantly in the context of social studies but also in philosophy.

The Finnish school system and teacher education are characterized by autonomy and research-based teaching, which are themselves products and consequences of large-scale reforms undertaken by the Finnish government in the 1970s (Tirri & Kuusisto, 2022). In practical terms, this signifies that all qualified teachers have a Master's degree, and that teacher education follows the scientific principles of validity and reliability (Kasa et al., 2021). Another specificity of the Finnish educational system are teacher trainings schools, which currently comprise a network of 11 schools administered by universities. The primary objective is to produce competent primary school teachers and subject teachers. These schools are entrusted with the responsibility of not only cultivating and maintaining the professional competencies of teacher trainers but also spearheading the dissemination of contemporary academic research within the domains of primary and secondary education, as well as teacher training (eNorssi, 2022).

Previous studies (Rautiainen et al., 2014; Kasa et al., 2021) have articulated concern over the fact that teaching and teacher training lack focus on integrative topics such as human rights and democracy, and that European values are marginal topics in Finnish teacher education. A similar concern regarding the absence of critical democracy education has been articulated (Lehtomäki & Rajala, 2020), coupled with a perceived lack of human rights education in the Finnish education system (Matilainen, 2011, pp. 65-68). However, a previous study (Kasa et al., 2021) noted that:

> "[C]ompared with the situation reported in 2014, democracy and human rights education has been strengthened [in both Finnish curricula and teacher education]. However, it is still mostly based on efforts of individual teacher educators rather than the institutional strategy to strengthen democracy and human rights education."

The objective of this case study is to analyze and discuss the question of whether this phenomenon will persist in 2024.

4. METHODS AND MATERIAL

This study was conducted at the Upper Secondary School of Tampere University Teacher Training School. Therefore, the data collected and presented in this case study does not adequately represent the Finnish national upper secondary education. However, the data should provide a reliable representation of the school where this study was carried out. With less than 300 students, the Upper Secondary School of Tampere University Teacher Training School is relatively small compared with other upper secondary schools in Tampere. Nevertheless, as this case study school is an integral part of the only local school tasked with teacher education, its role and importance cannot be measured simply by looking at the number of pupils and students. Rather, keen understanding and attention must be paid to this school's cumulative role as a place where subject and class teachers alike receive their primary, firsthand experience of their future profession as educators. Given the limited number of upper secondary school designated for teacher training in Finland – only eight in the national set – this study offers a significant insight into the educational journey of adolescents in fostering European values. The data presented in this article was collected in August 2024 through a survey given to upper secondary school students as part of a school-specific module at the Upper Secondary School of Tampere University Teacher Training School. This module combined the subject matter of two distinct school subjects: social studies and English.

4.1. The Data Collection Process

A total of 63 students (or 25 %) of upper secondary school level participated in this study. Of these, 33 had previously enrolled in the school-specific module during the autumn of 2023. However, these students responded to the semi-structured questionnaire of this study in August 2024. The remaining 30 students participated in this study and provided their answers to the same semi-structured questionnaire after attending two consecutive lessons, delivered in English as part of the school-specific conjoined module on the topic of human rights, also in August 2024. A ten-minute period was allocated at the end of the second lesson for the students to complete the questionnaire. In total, eleven (or 44 %) of the teacher trainers working at the Upper Secondary School of Tampere University Teacher Training School participated in the survey of this study.

Both questionnaires (one elicited responses from students aged 16 to 18 and the other from teacher trainers) employed a semi-structured approach, incorporating both open and closed-ended questions. The first subject matter question for students was 1) "How clear are the following six concepts to you?", followed by the six European values on a Likert scale (from "very clear" to "very unclear") and preceded by an extract from the official website of the European Union explaining in layman's terms the meaning of the six European values. The second subject matter question for the students was 2) "Choose the best option: I have learned the meaning of the following concepts [of the six European values] by attending comprehensive school and upper secondary school" followed by a Likert scale (from "completely agree" to "completely disagree"). The third subject matter question for the students was 3) "Which of the following European values are reflected in the classroom education provided for you (e.g. history, social studies, philosophy, ethics, and/or English language)?" followed by a Likert scale (from "very comprehensively" to "not at all"). The questionnaire administered to students included only one open-ended question, which was optional: "Explain the answers you gave in the previous three questions, i.e. add any information that you feel is relevant to understanding and analyzing your previous answers". The inclusion of a single open-ended question was intended to encourage students who had previously completed the course to dedicate the necessary time and effort to completing the survey.

The questionnaire administered to teacher trainers included three open-ended questions, of which two were obligatory. Each closed question was followed by an open-ended question, thereby enabling the teachers to elaborate their responses to the preceding closed question. The teacher trainers were asked to reflect on their work with upper secondary school students and student teachers, considering how European values are present these spheres of their work (with Likert scales varying on each European value from "very comprehensively" to "not at all present"). As with the upper secondary students, the teacher trainers were also given a similar opportunity at the end of their survey to elaborate on the answers they had given to the earlier questions. Both questionnaires were administered in the Finnish language.

The informed consent of participants was respected in this study. Their answers were completely optional, and students gave a varied number of answers to questions. Only those who gave permission for research were

analyzed. In accordance with the data minimization principle of General Data Protection Regulation (GSPR, 2016/679), answering any of the two surveys was made anonymous to encourage honest responses. The Ethical Review Board determined that a more thorough examination of this study was not necessary, given that all participants were at least 16 years of age, had provided their informed consent to participate in the survey, and that no personally identifiable information beyond age and gender (female, male, non-binary, prefer not to say) was collected from the respondents. The only potential compromise in terms of respondents' identity concerns teacher trainers in subjects with only one designated teacher at the school which this case study focuses on. However, direct quotes taken from responses provided by teacher trainers have undergone anonymization.

4.2. The Data, Methodology and Their Limitations

For students, age and gender were deemed as consequential information as these factors may or may not demonstrate that older students or, by the same token, female students, might have a better understanding of European values and their implications. In the case of teacher trainers, background information was collected regarding the subjects they teach. This was primarily done to enable comparisons between different school subjects, i.e. how much they differ from each other in terms of teaching European values to teenagers within the context of Finnish upper secondary school education. It is imperative to acknowledge that European values are an integral component of subjects such as history and social studies (TTSTU, 2021). Conversely, teachers of disciplines like physics or chemistry might encounter minimal or no external demand necessitating the incorporation of European values into their lesson plans and classroom discourse.

Group 1 comprised 33 respondents, primarily senior students who had studied social studies in conjunction with English during the autumn of 2023. Group 2, comprising 30 respondents, primarily second-year students, was studying social studies in conjunction with English during August and September of 2024. Group 3, comprising 11 teacher trainers, primarily included subject teachers in various disciplines such as history, social studies, secular ethics, philosophy, religious education, psychology, foreign languages, biology, geography, mathematics, chemistry, and physics. Notably, Group 3 also included a special needs teacher and a teacher who currently does not

teach any subject. It is noteworthy that there was an absence of respondents among the Finnish language, visual arts, and music teachers.

The answers provided by the students yielded predominantly quantitative data (as evidenced by the Likert scale questions). However, one open-ended question yielded qualitative data. The responses provided by the teacher trainers exhibited a slightly greater proportion of qualitative data compared to quantitative data. The qualitative data was analyzed using inductive content analysis (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

Because answering was entirely optional both for students and for teacher trainers, it is possible that those who were disinterested or perceived the topic to be irrelevant did not respond to either of the questionnaires. Consequently, the collected data may be subject to bias, as it is often the respondents who already demonstrate interest in the topic who provide a significant proportion of the answers. To enhance semantic validity (Weber, 1990, p. 21), the fundamental concepts of European values were presented verbatim as explained on the official website of the European Union (EU, 2012) to all respondents at the commencement of the questionnaires.

The exact questions posed to the respondents, as previously detailed in this chapter, have not been validated through previous research. The objective of these previous questions is to elucidate the research question of this article, which is as follows: To what extent are European values taught in the upper secondary school under consideration, and what are the perceptions of both students and teacher trainers at this school regarding European values within the context of classroom education?

Constructing themes from the collected data (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018) was carried out by applying content analysis on multiple levels. The quantitative data was initially subjected to meticulous analysis using Microsoft Excel encompassing both the ANOVA test and simple numerical averages. Concurrently, the qualitative data underwent systematic and inductive review to facilitate a comprehensive overview, enabling the identification of possible categories as well as prevalent key terms and idioms (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). The coding and themes functioned as subcategories in this process. It should be noted that not all references included in the categories were unambiguous. In instances where the given answers and sentences therein included overlapping themes, these answers were divided up between the thematic categories.

The limitations of the methodology include the possibility of bias due to the influence of the school-specific module (social studies and English) on students and optional answering on both students and teacher trainers. The findings from the Upper Secondary School of Tampere University Teacher Training School cannot be extrapolated to other schools, students, or teachers, as they were exclusively collected from students and teacher trainers at a single Finnish teacher training school. Be that as it may, the open-ended questions in both questionnaires gave the respondents the opportunity to elaborate and to clarify subjective meanings, which also helped with interpreting the answers (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018).

5. RESULTS

The participant demographic was as follows: 20 individuals were 18-year-olds, 33 were 17-year-olds and 10 were 16-year-olds. The gender distribution was as follows: 36 identified as female, 24 as male, two respondents did not want to choose a gender, and one respondent identified as non-binary. The predominance of females is consistent with the observation that a majority, and sometimes only a slight majority, of students in most Finnish upper secondary schools are female (FNAE, 2018). The focus on second- and third-year students is justified for two reasons: First, the data were collected in mid-August, a period when first-year students are typically adjusting to their new school environment. Second, the inquiry into European values and their presence in upper secondary school education necessitates respondents who have already completed a substantial number of courses during their upper secondary education. Margin of error has not been declared in the following results due to the systematically small sample sizes.

5.1. Quantitative Data (upper secondary school students)

In an attempt to provide an answer to the first half of the research question of this study (i.e., to what extent are European values taught in the upper secondary school of this case study) the upper secondary school students were asked to evaluate their understanding of each of the six European values on a scale from very clear (5) to unclear (1). The collected answers have been presented in median figures in Table 1. The analysis revealed that the concepts of equality, democracy, and human rights emerged as the most comprehendible to the adolescent respondents. The concept of the rule of

law, however, was the sole concept that the respondents appeared less certain about, with the median figure just below 4 (clear). The average figure for all six European values was 4.5 indicating that these upper secondary school students expressed a sense of understanding, either clear or very clear, for these values.

Table 1: All students: How clear are the concepts of European values to you (on a scale of 1 to 5)?

Equality	4.73
Democracy	4.65
Human rights	4.62
Freedom	4.60
Human dignity	4.44
Rule of law	3.97
Average	**4.50**

The groups demonstrating the highest levels of confidence in their understanding of European values were female subjects aged 16 (n=7) and 18 (n=12), with an average figure of 4.57. The average figure for female subjects aged 17 (n=17) was slightly lower, at 4.42. Conversely, males demonstrated the least confidence in understanding the European values. The average figure for males aged 16 (n=3) was 4.16, for males aged 17 (n=15) it was 4.39, and for males aged 18 (n=6) it was 4.33. When the variants of gender and age were entered into the ANOVA test along with individual European values, only the equality coupled with gender stood out ($p=0.013$, $df=59$), meaning that the value of equality is understood differently by upper secondary school boys and girls. The analysis revealed no statistically significant differences in the ANOVA test results, with p-values ranging from 0.08 (in the case of human rights coupled with gender) to 0.920 (in the case of freedom coupled with gender). The degrees of freedom varied between 59 in tests where gender was used as a variant (including only students who identified as either male or female) and 62 in tests where age was used as a variant.

Furthermore, upper secondary school students were also asked to react to the following statement: “I have learned the meaning of the following concepts [of the six European values] by attending comprehensive school and upper secondary school”, thereby evaluating the importance of school education in terms of how well they have learned to understand each of the six European values. The collected data was analyzed on a scale from strongly agree (5) to strongly disagree (1). It should be noted that the option of “I do not understand this concept” (0) was also provided in the survey, but it was only selected once by one respondent in the case of the rule of law.

Additionally, upper secondary school students were further asked to assess the comprehensiveness of European values in their upper secondary school education. The collected data was analyzed on a scale from very comprehensively (5) to very restrictedly (1). It should be noted that the option of “not at all” (0) was also provided, but it was only selected by three respondents, all in the case of the rule of law.

Table 2: All students: The importance of school in learning about European values (on a scale of 0 to 5, on the left); How comprehensively are the European values presented in upper secondary school (on a scale of 0 to 5, on the right)?

Democracy	4.52	Human rights	4.44
Human rights	4.44	Democracy	4.43
Equality	4.35	Equality	4.32
Human dignity	4.05	Human dignity	4.14
Freedom	3.95	Freedom	3.94
Rule of law	3.57	Rule of law	3.33
Average	**4.15**	**Average**	**4.10**

The median responses are displayed in Table 2. Democracy followed by human rights were chosen by adolescent respondents as the values the school had done the most to instill. The respondents identified the rule of law and freedom as the European values that the school might have neglected or taught them the least. The average figure on the importance of school educa-

tion in teaching the European values was 4.15. This suggests a general consensus among the respondents regarding the statement that they have learned the meaning of the European values at school. When the variants of gender and age were subjected to the ANOVA test together with individual European values (in questions 2 and 3), once more, only equality coupled with gender stood out ($p=0.05$, $df=59$), meaning that in terms of perceived importance of school (in learning about European values) the value of equality is understood differently by upper secondary school boys and girls. Otherwise, there were no statistically significant differences in the ANOVA test results in questions 2 and 3 with p-value varying between 0.061 (in the case of democracy coupled with gender in question 2) and 0.961 (in the case of the rule of law coupled with gender in question 2). As previously, the degrees of freedom varied between 59 in tests where gender was used as a variant (including only students who identified as either male of female) and 62 in tests where age was used as a variant.

Human rights followed by democracy and equality were chosen by adolescent respondents as the values that were most comprehensively represented in upper secondary school education. The European values that the respondents indicated as being of particular importance to the school were the rule of law and freedom. The average figure on how comprehensive the education on the European values at the upper secondary level according to the students was 4.10. This suggests that the respondents think the European values are quite comprehensively presented in different subjects in upper secondary school education.

5.2. Quantitative Data (teacher trainers)

Teacher trainers at the Upper Secondary School of Tampere University Teacher Training School were asked to assess how comprehensively the European values are presented in their own work with upper secondary school students. The collected data was analyzed on a scale ranging from “very comprehensively” (5) to “very restrictedly” (1). It is noteworthy that the option of “not at all” (0) was also provided, though it was not selected. The resulting data is presented as median figures in Table 3.

The data indicates a notable consensus between students and teacher trainers regarding the scope of the rule of law instruction (a median score of 3.33 among students and 3.36 among teacher trainers). In contrast to the students,

the teacher trainers identified equality (4.55) as the European value that should be imparted most distinctly in their work (the distinction between referring to equality as a value or a practice is not clear). In Table 2, the students emphasized the importance of human rights (4.44) in the education they had received, followed by democracy (4.43) and only then equality (4.32). The average figure with which the teacher trainers evaluated their own work with upper secondary school students on the subject of European values was 3.98, which does not fall far below the average figure given by their students (4.10). This suggests that the teacher trainers see the European values as being quite systematically present in their teaching.

Teacher trainers were further asked to assess how comprehensively the European values are present in their work with student teachers. The collected data was analyzed on a scale ranging from "very comprehensively" (5) to "very restrictedly" (1). It should be noted that the option of "not at all" (0) was provided, yet it was not selected. The collected responses are presented as median figures in Table 3.

A modest yet discernible shift emerges when comparing the responses of teacher trainers who were asked to assess the attainment of European values in their own teaching and their work with student teachers. In the context of their own work with their own students, teacher trainers place greater emphasis on equality (4.55) compared to other European values, while they understate the rule of law (3.36) and democracy (3.55) in their own teaching. Conversely, when assessing student teachers, the respondents continue to place significant emphasis on equality (3.91) while downplaying the rule of law (3.18) and highlighting human dignity (3.82) and democracy (3.64). It is noteworthy that the figures provided by the teacher trainers are lower in the context of their work with student teachers compared to their work with upper secondary students.

Table 3: All teacher trainers: How comprehensively are the European values presented in upper secondary school education (on a scale of 0 to 5, on the left); How comprehensively are the European values presented in teacher training (on a scale of 0 to 5, on the right)?

Equality	4.55	Equality	3.91
Human dignity	4.18	Human dignity	3.82

Human rights	4.18	Democracy	3.64
Freedom	4.09	Freedom	3.55
Democracy	3.55	Human rights	3.55
Rule of law	3.36	Rule of law	3.18
Average	**3.98**	**Average**	**3.61**

In the context of an analytical framework encompassing upper secondary school education and teacher training, a statistical analysis was conducted through the implementation of an analysis of variance (ANOVA) test. This approach was employed in conjunction with the assessment of individual European values. The outcomes of this analysis revealed the absence of statistically significant differences, with p-values ranging from 0.076 (in the case of equality being present in upper secondary education) to 0.782 (in the case of the rule of law being present in upper secondary education). The degrees of freedom (df) remained constat at 20 throughout the analysis.

5.3. Qualitative Data (upper secondary school students)

A total of 25 out of 63 students decided to respond to the only open-ended question posed, which entailed providing context and elucidating the choices they had made in the close-ended questions. The content categories were derived through inductive content analysis of the open responses (see Table 4). The most frequently referenced significant themes were 1) everyday praxis at school (regarding European values), 2) inadequate education (or rather the perceived lack of certain European values in education), 3) discussion on which subjects teach European values, 4) the perceived quality of education on the topic of European values, and 5) questioning the relevance of European values being taught at school. Occasionally, a student's response addressed more than one of the content categories. In such instances, the response was allocated across all five primary categories, resulting in a total of 37 references within a set of 25 answers.

Table 4. Categories in students' responses on how they perceive the teaching of European values in upper secondary school

No. of references	Category	Illustrative quotes
12	Everyday praxis at school	'Treating all students equally' 'All school subjects mention these values in some way' 'Upper secondary school education has so far placed emphasis on human rights' 'Our school is a member of the UNESCO Associated Schools Network, which means that human rights are often highlighted'
10	Inadequate education	'I have only heard about the rule of law a few times' 'The rule of law has been probably mentioned briefly but it has never been thoroughly delved into' 'I do not know what the rule of law means so I cannot comment on how it is being taught at our school' 'All of the European values, with the exception of the rule of law, are very clear in my opinion'
8	Subjects teaching European values	'Freedom is often discussed in secular ethics' 'In history we have mostly discussed the topics of human rights and equality' 'All European values are very much present in social studies' 'In my opinion human rights have not been discussed anywhere apart from English 4'
4	The perceived quality of the received education	'The rule of law and human rights are the most technical and thus the clearest of these values, so it's easier to actually learn about them at school' 'I have not learned the meaning of all the European values so that I could define them correctly' 'These values have been extensively taught in the modules I have so far studied'
3	Questioning the relevance of European values in the classroom	'I have learned much more about human dignity and freedom at home than at school' 'I am not even sure how the European values could be a part of our school education in practice'

Approximately one-third of the students (n=25) who decided to respond to this open-ended and optional question analyzed the answers they had previously provided to the close-ended questions, with a particular focus on the everyday praxis of European values within their school setting. Most

answers (n=12) in this category emphasized how human rights have been taught more comprehensively in comparison with the other European values. One student provided a rationale for this observation, citing the membership of the school in the UNESCO Associated School Network. Some respondents (n=3) focused on reflecting what European values mean in practice in a school environment and proposed that treating everyone equally and fairly corresponds with the spirit of the European values.

Another recurrent theme in the students' responses pertained to the concept of the rule of law, which the students perceived as having received minimal attention in their education thus far. A few respondents (n=10) articulated their sense of foreignness to the notion of 'the rule of law'. The majority of respondents acknowledged having encountered the term 'the rule of law' in some context, yet the meaning of this value remained opaque to them. The third and final category of frequently mentioned themes (n=8) pertained to the concreate examples provided by the respondents on which European values had been imparted in specific subjects. In practice, this meant that the responding students drew much attention on how certain European values were extensively taught in disciplines such as secular ethics, philosophy, social studies, history, and English.

The remaining two categories garnered minimal attention, with assessments by students (n=4) on the quality of education on the topic of European values taking a slight lead within this category. A few students (n=3) expressed reservations about their ability to perform if they were suddenly tested on their knowledge of European values, while two students reported their confidence and satisfaction with how European values have been taught in their current school. Only three respondents expressed reservations about the relevance of European values instruction in upper secondary school. Two of them openly questioned the point of teaching European values at school and another respondent emphasized the role and importance of the family in shaping student's understanding of European values, potentially at the expense of school-based education.

5.4. Qualitative Data (teacher trainers)

It is noteworthy that the data provided by teacher trainers in the humanities (n=4), such as history, social sciences, and philosophy, constituted 52.4 % of the total qualitative data collected in the teacher trainers' survey. Meanwhile, non-subject teachers (n=2) provided 24.8 %, natural sciences (n=3)

11.5 %, and foreign languages (n=2) 11.3 % of the qualitative data analysed in this chapter. These percentages seem to suggest that the majority of the education provided to students in upper secondary school on the subject of European values is entrusted to the humanities.

5.4.1. European Values in Upper Secondary School Education

The content categories presented in Table 5 were developed based on four main subject groups: humanities, natural sciences, foreign languages, and non-subject education. Finnish language, visual arts, and music were not represented in the data.

Table 5. Categories in teacher trainers' responses on how they perceive the teaching of European values in upper secondary school education

No. of references	Category	Illustrative quotes
4	Teacher trainers in humanities	'Democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights are taught more comprehensively. Human dignity and freedom, on the other hand, are more abstract concepts.' 'Individualistic values are emphasized more in [ethics, philosophy, and religion] than societal values.' 'Different subjects are valued differently, a concrete example of this is the current scoring method used when applying for higher education.' '[In psychology] freedom and its restrictions come up in connection with involuntary treatment. Human dignity from the perspective of scientific research and research ethics are also discussed.'
3	Teacher trainers in natural sciences	'[In geography] human rights in particular are discussed/studied during lessons using examples and game-like methods.' 'European values are not part of the subject matter content in mathematics.'
2	Non-subject teachers	'[European] values are at the heart of social studies, and history, they have a place in the curriculum as well as in the university strategy and in the values of our school.' '[In special needs education] human rights, equality and human dignity are the common thread of inclusive study practices and student support.'
2	Teacher trainers in foreign languages	'[European values are] mostly implicit in the learning materials, except in those modules where [these values] are actually a part of the overall theme.' 'Equality, human dignity and human rights are strongly visible in the international aspect of foreign language subject matter.'

A total of 11 (or 44 %) teacher trainers from all major subject groups, with the exception of Finnish language, visual arts, and music, participated in this study. The questionnaire administered to the teacher trainers included three open-ended questions, two of which were mandatory. Since the amount of data collected in these three questions was no larger than 1,085 words (in Finnish), this data has been summarized through inductive content analysis of open answers and presented based on each of the four subject groups (i.e., humanities, natural sciences, foreign languages, and non-subject teachers) (Tuomi & Sarajärvi, 2018). The qualitative data concerning teacher trainers' views on the presence of European values in upper secondary school education is exhibited in subchapter 5.4.1, while the data concerning teacher trainers' notions on the presence of European values in teacher education are presented in subchapter 5.4.2.

According to teacher trainers specializing in humanities (n=4), European values such as democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights are of central importance to subjects like history and social studies, where they are explicitly taught and discussed. However, more abstract values like human dignity and freedom are less straightforward to define and thus harder to teach comprehensively. The respondents further elaborated that European values implicitly emphasize broad academic education, which is increasingly at odds with current Finnish educational practices, which prioritize natural sciences over other subjects through a points system that favors natural sciences when upper secondary school students apply to higher education. According to these teacher trainers, this new trend undermines the traditional value of a well-rounded education and forces students to make career-defining choices at an increasingly young age. Furthermore, subjects like religious studies, secular ethics, and philosophy incorporate such European values as freedom and human dignity. In these subjects, according to the responsible subject teacher, there is a slight emphasis on individual over societal values. In the domain of psychology the responsible subject teacher asserts that the field aligns with European values by exploring the impact of social structures on individual behavior, basic psychological needs, and the balance between freedom and its limitations. Human dignity is examined in psychology through research ethics and the study of health and disability.

The responses provided by non-subject teachers (n=2) highlighted the fact that European values, especially human rights, equality, and dignity, are central to inclusive education. The respondents further emphasized that the-

se aforementioned values are embedded in the Finnish national curriculum, Tampere University's educational strategy, and the fundamental principles of the UNESCO Associated School Network. Notably, the Tampere University Teacher Training School is a member of this network. According to the non-subject teachers, while students are entitled to professional support, they also bear responsibility for their own success. The work of non-subject teachers aims to cultivate students' life, time, and studying management skills, thereby empowering them to actively engage in their school community, personal life, and broader society. This approach aligns with the UNESCO *Salamanca Declaration* (1994) and is supported by the Finnish upper secondary school law, which advocates for inclusivity through differentiated teaching, special needs education, and guidance services, thereby ensuring the full participation of all learners.

The teacher trainers in natural sciences (n=3) emphasized experimentation, observation, and the theoretical understanding in their teaching. European values are discussed in relation to the history of chemistry and physics, and are most clearly visible in geography, particularly social geography, where human dignity and human rights are highlighted through concrete examples from global news, gaming, and role plays. In the context of mathematics and other natural sciences, European values manifest implicitly in teaching methodologies and classroom discourse, though they are seldom evident in the subject matter itself.

Teacher trainers in foreign languages (n=2) have indicated that European values are usually an implicit part of their subject matter, with the exception of one or two modules in which these values are part of the actual subject matter. Values like equality, human dignity, and human rights are strongly emphasized in foreign language education due to its international nature. However, concepts like democracy and freedom are more challenging to detect, particularly among upper secondary school students, and freedom is noted for its various and often challenging interpretations. The rule of law, being a highly technical concept, poses the greatest challenge for inclusion in foreign language education.

5.4.2. European Values in Teacher Training of Subject Teachers

The content categories in Table 6 were constructed based on four main subject groups: humanities, natural sciences, foreign languages, and non-subject education. Finnish language, visual arts, and music were not represented in the data.

Table 6. Categories in teacher trainers' responses on how they perceive the teaching of European values in teacher education

No. of references	Category	Illustrative quotes
4	Teacher trainers in humanities	'The module which the student teachers get to teach affects how much emphasis and attention is given to certain values.' 'In philosophy, [European] values are a part of the basic subject matter and thus constantly on display.' '[European values] are bread and butter issues for student teachers in social studies.' 'The [guidance] given to student teachers includes education on student body democracy, and optional guidance is also available on cultural diversity.'
3	Teacher trainers in natural sciences	'There are no teaching trainees [in biology and geography].' 'The history of chemistry and physics is touched upon from time to time, and values are also discussed in connection with the history of these subjects.' 'The training given to a student teacher is based on transparency and equality, built and based on each person's individual needs.'
2	Non-subject teachers	'A student teacher in social subjects should certainly encounter at least some of the [European] values, due to them being very central to the subject matter of history and social studies.' 'Special needs teacher training is currently being launched at our university.'
2	Teacher trainers in foreign languages	'The guidance given to student teachers is based on the perspective of the groups each student teacher is teaching. [European values] are also central to didactical studies.' 'The curriculum for subject teacher training emphasizes human dignity, equality, human rights, and democracy; in practice these values are made visible through the education given in upper secondary school.'

With regard to the humanities as a subject group (n=4), the European values are integral to teacher training, yet their influence is reflected unevenly. The emphasis on specific European values in teacher training varies significantly depending on the modules that student teachers teach, with some values, like the rule of law, receiving less explicit attention. According to the respondents, the hidden curriculum in schools perpetuates the unequal importance of different subjects, leading students to perceive some school subjects as more valuable than others. This phenomenon stands in direct opposition to the fundamental principles of European values and the ideal of a well-rounded and balanced education. One respondent noted that European values are more prominently integrated into subjects like philosophy, secular ethics, and religious studies. This same respondent elaborated on a broader societal transition from political ideologies to general values that has been occurring since the 1990s and would suggest increasing support for concepts such as European values. In the humanities subject group, the focus of student teachers is on cultivating humanistic understanding and appreciation for cultural diversity. Optional training is available on topics such as gender-sensitive teaching, promoting equality and equity in schools, and the cultural history of different minority groups in Finland. These approaches aim to instill a deeper appreciation for European values in future educators.

However, the non-subject teachers (n=2) acknowledged their limited understanding of how teacher training addresses European values, yet they assumed that comprehensive teacher training programs include discussions on these values. They stressed that student teachers in history, social studies, and philosophy should engage with European values, as these are central to their respective subject matter. One non-subject teacher highlighted the importance of teaching the confrontation between democracy and dictatorship in the history of the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as covering the rule of law in social studies. The other non-subject teacher also mentioned that special education teacher training is currently being introduced at Tampere University, and that the process of its introduction reflected the ongoing discussions on the university's basic values and the development work of special education’s curriculum. Both non-subject teachers noted that equality is addressed on various levels in upper secondary education, though its depth in teacher training varies by subject.

In natural sciences, student teachers have some freedom to influence the implementation of their training and practice lessons. Teacher training in

these subjects is based on open, honest, and equal discussions that respect everyone's viewpoints and experiences. However, the respondents (n=3) noted the absence of student teachers in biology and geography at their school.

In the training of teachers of foreign languages, European values are discussed both in theory and practice. According to the respondents (n=2), the curriculum for teacher training emphasizes human dignity, equality, human rights, and democracy as key values. These values are not only highlighted in the theoretical aspects of education but are also transmitted through the practical experiences of student teachers. This occurs as student teachers engage in classroom teaching, which they later analyze with their trainers, ensuring that these fundamental values are incorporated into their teaching practices.

6. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this case study was to build upon two prior studies that examined the integration of democracy and human rights education within the context of Finnish teacher education (Rautiainen et al., 2014; Kasa et al., 2021) and to address the following research question: To what extent are European values taught in the upper secondary school of this case study, and what are the perceptions of both students and teacher trainers at this school regarding European values in the context of classroom education?

The students at the Upper Secondary School of Tampere University Teacher Training School generally expressed a clear understanding of European values, with equality (followed closely by democracy, human rights, and freedom) being the most comprehensible and the rule of law the least comprehensible value to them. The students identified democracy and human rights as the most frequently taught European values in school, while the rule of law and freedom were perceived as less emphasized, indicating a general agreement that their school is effective in teaching these values. When analyzing variance (ANOVA) the results showed that equality as a value is interpreted differently, and that the importance of school education in promoting equality is perceived differently by female and male respondents. The responses of students to open-ended questions highlighted such themes as the practical application of European values in the classroom, the inadequacies in the instruction of the rule of law, and divergent views on the

importance of school in imparting these values. The extensive teaching of European values was frequently noted in subjects like social studies, history, secular ethics, and philosophy, highlighting how humanities tend to focus on these values more than other subjects. Only two respondents openly questioned the relevance of teaching European values in upper secondary school context.

Both students and teacher trainers agreed on the limited teaching of the rule of law, with trainers prioritizing equality (either as a practice or a value) more than students. It is noteworthy that both teacher trainers and their students provided highly similar ratings concerning the scope of education imparted on European values (teacher trainers reported an average of 3.98, while students reported an average of 4.10).

Teacher trainers prioritize equality as both a topic and a practice in their teaching with upper secondary students and student teachers. However, these trainers place less emphasis on the rule of law and democracy. Teacher trainers generally assign a lower rating to their teaching of European values when working with student teachers and a higher rating when working with upper secondary students. The responses from teacher trainers suggest that humanities represent the primary domain for teaching European values in upper secondary school.

Subjects such as history and social studies explicitly address values like democracy, equality, the rule of law, and human rights. Teachers in humanities express concern that current Finnish educational practices, which prioritize natural sciences through a points system favoring these subjects in higher education admissions, undermine the holistic academic education supported by European values. In subjects like religious studies, secular ethics, and philosophy, there is a focus on individual rather than societal values. In psychology, the exploration of human dignity is intertwined with research ethics, fostering a nuanced understanding of the balance between freedom and its limitations. Non-subject teachers emphasize that human rights, equality, and dignity, are central to inclusive education, which is supported by Finnish law promoting differentiated teaching and special needs education. In natural sciences, European values are discussed primarily in social geography, while in other natural sciences, they are implicitly present in the methods and practices used in the classroom. Foreign language teachers, due to the international context of their subject matter, emphasize

European values in their teaching although explicit teaching of these values is limited to specific modules.

The responses provided by the teacher trainers' addressed the subject of European values in teacher training, emphasizing the inevitable variation depending on the modules assigned to each student teacher, which consequently leads to certain values being accorded less explicit attention. The optional training in the humanities subject group, which encompassed a variety of topics, is designed to cultivate a more profound appreciation for European values among student teachers. The subject group of foreign language instruction underscores the efficacy of integrating and reinforcing European values in the teaching practices of future educators through a dual approach of practical classroom experiences followed by reflective analysis. The subject group of natural sciences highlights the fact that teacher training is a process grounded in open and respectful discussions that uphold principles of human dignity, equality, human rights, and democracy.

Two previous Finnish studies (Rautiainen et al., 2014; Kasa et al., 2021), to which this study seeks to provide a continuation, showed that in Finland, education on European values is unsystematic and dependent on individual teachers' own initiative. The latter study (Kasa et al, 2021) concluded that European values had become explicit in the new national curriculum for upper secondary education (FNAE, 2019) but had otherwise remained 'declarationist' jargon without any meaningful substance. The data of this case study corroborate the results that demonstrate a shift towards the integration of European values into everyday praxis rather than remaining confined to 'value jargon' or being contingent upon individual teachers' initiative, albeit within the context of a single Finnish upper secondary school.

In previous studies, Finnish teachers had reported that education on human rights was "obvious yet alien" (Matilainen, 2011) and that elaboration on human rights violations or problems in the Finnish context had been largely neglected (Rautiainen et al, 2014). This case study demonstrates that European values are explicitly incorporated into the curriculum, i.e., as part of the subject matter, in humanities and, to a lesser extent, in foreign languages. In the case of social geography, these values are also taught in natural sciences. The case study further demonstrates that European values are implicitly taught in foreign languages, non-subject education (e.g., in special needs education), and even natural sciences, primarily through teaching methods and, secondarily, through discourse on the history of various natu-

ral sciences. It should be noted that the data collected in this case study is limited to the Upper Secondary School of Tampere University Teacher Training School. However, a study encompassing a more extensive sample of upper secondary schools within the Finnish national set of teacher training schools could potentially yield analogous results.

If we consider the possibility that this case study can serve as an indicator and an example of wider Finnish educational context, it can be suggested that, based on studies conducted by Rautiainen (et al.) in 2014 and Kasa (et al.) in 2021, as well as this case study, there appears to be a shift from "obvious yet alien" and "declarationist" jargon towards everyday praxis. However, the data collected for the case study reveal ongoing challenges. Specifically, the responsibility for teaching European values explicitly remains primarily with the humanities (e.g., history, social studies, philosophy), which is far from ideal. Furthermore, the current upper secondary school system in Finland seems clearly to favor natural sciences over all other subjects, which can hardly serve as a basis for education that well and truly incorporates the European values.

Finally, the "lack of explicit references to human rights education" in teacher training, as expressed by student teachers (Kasa et al., 2021) reflects, based on the data collected by this case study, rather the differences between different subject groups and the unavoidable variation depending on the modules each student teacher gets to teach, rather than differences between individual teacher trainers. However, this research is limited, and wider research is needed to identify and address any potential barriers and challenges impeding the education of European values within the network of Finnish teacher training schools. As this case study focused on teacher trainers and upper secondary school students, more up-to-date research is needed on student teachers and their education on European values. In conclusion, further investigation is needed to determine the optimal measures necessary for European values to have their full effect in the field of education.

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HOW CRITICAL THINKING SUPPORTS EDUCATION FOR DEMOCRATIC VALUES: IS PHILOSOPHY WITH CHILDREN AN APPROPRIATE TOOL?

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ABSTRACT

The article explores the essential role of critical and analytical thinking within the Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture. It critiques the framework's portrayal of thinking as secondary to other competencies, arguing that critical thinking is vital for effective democratic education, especially in an era of rising populism that endangers democratic values. The author highlights the limitations of existing definitions of critical thinking, which often lack clarity and depth. The article draws upon John Dewey's analysis of idle, pure, and reflective thinking to underscore the importance of reflective thinking for educators and learners alike. It contrasts Dewey's concept of reflective thinking with Martin Heidegger's distinction between calculative and meditative thinking, warning against the dominance of calculative thinking, which can lead to superficial judgments. The article advocates for integrating both calculative and meditative thinking in education, asserting that true quality in education must prioritize reflective practices. By fostering deeper understanding and critical engagement, democratic societies can better address complex challenges and nurture informed, thoughtful citizens. Balancing traditional knowledge with contemporary skills and attitudes is vital for effective education. Critical thinking, an integral component of educational competencies, relies on a foundation of knowledge; students must engage with content stored in memory to enhance their thinking abilities. Memory functions actively, and overloaded short-term memory can disengage learners. Educators should foster critical thinking while ensuring that students possess sufficient background knowledge. Rote memorization is to be avoided; instead, teaching should make learning meaningful and memorable. Techniques like storytelling can aid retention. Moreover, the training of thought requires a nuanced approach, incorporating both critical and analytical

skills, and emphasizing the interplay between knowledge, skills, and values in educational frameworks.
Keywords: *critical thinking, philosophy with children, Competences for Democratic Culture, post-truth, cognitive psychology*

1. RETHINKING CRITICAL THINKING

1.1. Critical Thinking in the Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture

Thinking skills, or more precisely, analytical and critical thinking skills, are delineated in the *Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (Council of Europe, 2018a) as a part of a more extensive set of skills, alongside autonomous learning, listening and observing, empathy, flexibility, adaptability, communication, cooperation, and conflict resolution. There are several points to reflect on here, but the main question is: What does the position of thinking within the *Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* suggest?

Does it signify that we engage in a myriad of activities (e.g., learning, feeling, valuing human rights, participating in politics) and only think occasionally, or is thinking integrated into the entire process? While it is reasonable to assume that the authors and policymakers did not intend to convey that thinking is secondary, it is nevertheless important to examine the message as it is received. As articulated within the framework, it appears to imply that thinking is but a minor component of democratic competencies. The framework appears to lend support to the notion of an enlightened ruler saying: "Argue as much as you like and about whatever you like but obey!"

It is comprehensible that democratic competencies cannot thrive in a strictly rational environment. Indeed, the presence of a strictly rational environment within society would indicate an essential element overlooked. Emotions, by their very nature, are an inherent element of societal dynamics, even in domains like science, politics, economics, and ideologies such as libertarianism. Moreover, we must acknowledge the irrational elements within the values of civil society because, after all, we are human beings, not machines.

> "Sometimes people suppose that only fascist or aggressive societies are intensely emotional and that only such societies need to focus on the cultivation of emotions. Those beliefs are both mistaken and dangerous. They are mistaken, because all societies need to think about the stability of their political culture over time and the security of cherished values in times of stress. All societies, then, need to think about compassion for loss, anger at injustice, the limiting of envy and disgust in favor of inclusive sympathy. Ceding the terrain of emotion-shaping to antiliberal forces gives them a huge advantage in the people's hearts and risks making people think of liberal values as tepid and boring." (Nussbaum, 2015, p. 2)

Accordingly, it is essential to be aware of the irrational elements within any ideology or framework and to embrace them as integral facets of their complexity. However, it is equally imperative to contemplate the practice of critical thinking, particularly within the context of democratic society, as a pivotal skill. Understanding the position of critical thinking is crucial; otherwise, we risk being swayed by charismatic leaders as was explained in *Economy and Society* (Weber, 2019, p. 342). This lesson from Weber is not merely theoretical; it is pertinent at the present moment, as evidenced by the global rise of populism, including in the USA and Europe (Wajner et al., 2024).

In a world governed by international organizations that often lack a foundation in critical thinking, the emergence of post-truth politics is not unexpected - it is an easily predictable outcome. The misconception of critical thinking has become fertile ground for the exploitation of skepticism toward cultural authorities such as academic disciplines, cultural values, journalism, and politics. Rather than fostering genuine criticism, this skepticism usually leads to conspiracy theories and analogous forms of what has been termed "post-truth" (Krstić, 2022, p.127). Moreover, Krstić claims that the urgency of introducing the word "post-truth" into public discourse is indicative of a superficial understanding of truth, stemming from an absence of critical thinking (Krstić, 2022, p. 106).

1.2. Why Definition Matters?

In order to effectively integrate thinking skills into the *Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*, it would be beneficial to reflect on the nature of thinking itself-to understand, as much as we can, its essence, role, and value in democratic education.

1.2.1. Definitions of critical and analytical thinking - skills from the "Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture"

Descriptors of critical and analytical thinking skills, as presented in the *Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*, clearly outline how these skills can be disseminated, evaluated, and applied; however, their "essence" is presented in definitions.

> "Analytical thinking skills are those skills that are required to analyze materials of any kind (for example texts, arguments, interpretations, issues, events, experiences) in a systematic and logical manner. Critical thinking skills consist of those skills that are required to evaluate and make judgments about materials of any kind." (Council of Europe, 2018, pp. 46-47a)

The definition of analytical thinking skills is circular: they are defined as 'skills needed for analyzing.' The addition of the phrase 'in a systematic and logical manner' does not contribute to the clarification of the definition. This is because the analysis can be either systematic and logical or it is not analysis at all.

The definition of critical thinking is completely vague; it resembles sophistic advertising presented in Plato's dialogues or the promotion of *mathesis universalis*. It is evident that no singular skill or method exists that can universally enable an individual to evaluate and make judgments about all types of materials. Each domain of human intellectual engagement has its specific subject matter and unique mental and existential approaches. Furthermore, this definition offers no insight into the essence of the skills required for evaluation and judgment.

Additionally, the delineation between critical thinking and analytical thinking is problematic. Inherently, critical thinking encompasses analytical thinking and without it, critical thinking cannot be truly considered as such. The analysis of critical thinking is in itself, a critical thinking skill. In certa-

in definitions of critical thinking analytical skills are enumerated as an integral component, as illustrated in the student textbook *Critical Thinking: A Student's Introduction* (Bassham et al., 2008, p. 1).

These issues with the definitions and classifications of thinking skills may appear speculative or purely theoretical. However, even if they are regarded as "merely" theoretical concerns, they can wield substantial consequences for implementation. Teachers who aim to educate students in critical thinking must first understand what critical thinking entails, rather than automatically creating checklists with descriptors or simply adopting standards.

An educator should be a reflective thinker, engaging in critical analysis of the concept of critical thinking to enhance their practice. There is always the possibility of discovering new descriptors or eliminating existing ones. Thinking is a process, and as such, it should be cultivated and developed.

1.2.2. Lexical Definitions of Critical Thinking

A meticulously formulated definition facilitates reader engagement with the content, prompting critical reflection on its essence. If a definition is circular or inaccurate, it has the potential to mislead learners.

Generally, definitions are not the most effective method of introducing thinking skills, as will be explored later in this article. Nevertheless, reflecting on existing definitions can serve as a beneficial introduction to thinking skills, allowing us to recognize the diversity of authors' perspectives on critical thinking. This reflection can encourage us to find our authentic positions and improve ourselves as critical thinkers.

The plethora of definitions for critical thinking is not unexpected. For instance, in his work *Thinking in Education*, Matthew Lipman lists 31 different definitions (Lipman, 2003, pp. 55-58). A similar, albeit less extensive, compilation was made by Alec Fisher (Fisher, 2001, pp. 2-5).

All contemporary definitions can be traced back to Dewey's concept of reflective thinking, which will be further explained in the next segment of this article. In the present section, three definitions will be examined. The first is a widely used definition, the second is derived from a student's syllabus, and the third is an attempt to construct a more suitable definition, based on critical reflection on traditional and commonly used ones. Notably, the last definition is also widely accepted.

i. Critical thinking is reasonable, reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do (Noris & Ennis, 1989, p. 3)

ii. Critical thinking is the general term given to a wide range of cognitive skills and intellectual dispositions needed to effectively identify, analyze and evaluate arguments (Bassham et al., 2008, p. 1)

iii. Critical thinking is that mode of thinking – about any subject, content or problem – in which the thinker improves the quality of thinking by skillfully taking charge of the structures inherent in thinking and imposing intellectual standards upon them. (Fisher, 2001, p. 5)

Paradoxically, all of these definitions are both overly broad and overly narrow. They are broad because they rely on ambiguous and abstract concepts, yet they are too narrow because they exclude the subject matter of thinking.

The first definition is employed and functions effectively as an operational definition. However, it emphasizes the product of critical thinking - the decision - rather than the process itself. Matthew Lipman has noted that judgment is a product of critical thinking; nevertheless, the primary focus of critical thinking should not be on the product.

> "These definitions provide us with insufficient enlightenment; the outcomes (solutions, decisions, acquisitions of concepts) are too narrow, and the defining characteristics (reasonable, reflective) they suggest are too vague. For example, if critical thinking is whatever thinking it is that results in decisions, then deciding what doctor to go to by picking a name at random out of a phone book would have to count as critical thinking." (Lipman, 2003, pp. 209-210)

In the second and third definitions, the ambiguity is, to some extent, mitigated by enumerative content. However, these definitions fail to consider the actual content of thinking. This limitation directs us toward another approach for exploring the concept of critical thinking.

1.3. What Is (Critical) Thinking?

Defining critical thinking, or any form of thinking, is inherently challenging because we must engage in thinking to define it. A definition should not be circular; therefore, when we attempt to define thinking, we risk falling into circularity and obscurity. This is why some authors prefer alternative approaches instead of strict definitions.

Additionally, it is important to note that we do not need to explain what thinking is to introduce educators or learners to the tactics and approaches for training thinking skills. Instead, the objective should be to provoke reflection on thinking within the context of education. Thinking is a process, and as such, the introduction to thinking training should also be a process. A definition is a result, not a process; therefore, we should embrace various approaches.

1.3.1. The Pragmatics of a Word

To understand the necessity of thinking skills in democratic education, it is beneficial to explore their origins. It is necessary to delve into ancient philosophy, as the contemporary understanding of thinking differs significantly from that in ancient paradigms. While Descartes is often regarded as the founder of modern critical thinking, the legacy of critical thinking primarily originates from the philosophy of John Dewey.

To establish effective training in thinking, Dewey conducted an inquiry into the meaning of the term "thinking." As a result of this pragmatic analysis, he identified three distinct senses in which the word "thinking" is used: idle thinking, pure thinking, and thinking based on previous experience and beliefs.

Idle thinking refers to the natural flow of thoughts that we cannot control—essentially, anything that comes to mind. The second sense, which Dewey problematizes, relates to thoughts that are not currently present to our senses. This type of thinking can be termed "pure thinking," encompassing mental activities such as daydreaming, gossiping, and speculation.

The third sense of thinking involves beliefs rooted in our reflected or un-reflected experiences. When based on un-reflected experiences, thinking may manifest as mere opinion or simple belief. However, reflected experience is where critical thinking resides. Dewey designated this form of thinking as "reflective thinking."

> “Active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends, constitutes reflective thought.” (Dewey, 1909, p. 6)

Upon initial consideration, this definition bears a striking resemblance to the one implemented in the *Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture*. However, Dewey later clarifies that the three or four meanings of the word "thinking" are not clearly divided. Perhaps in an effort to persuade readers of the necessity for thinking training, he overlooked the need to problematize the concept of reflective thinking itself. This omission is perplexing, given that Dewey provided an implicit reflection on thinking but did not explicitly articulate or emphasize it. Instead of focusing on this reflection, he directed his inquiry toward approaches for training thinking, which, while undoubtedly valuable, might not have been sufficiently beneficial for the present exploration.

1.3.2. Two Types of Thinking

The model of thinking that Dewey defined as reflective thinking is frequently referred to as instrumental thinking; Dewey himself used the term "instrumental logic." When discussing instrumental thinking, it is considered a pure skill, which is inherently abstract and formal. This formalization has the potential to portray thinking skills as empty vessels capable of being filled with any content, ranging from coffee to poison. The practical outcome of this formalization is the definition of critical thinking as the ability to evaluate and make judgments about various materials or to decide what to believe or do.

The training of thinking as a formal operation or a universal skill applicable to any content resembles a musician who merely follows chords or tabs without creating harmony or feeling in the music. While a musician may be technically skilled, he may not embody the essence of good musicianship. Similarly, one can improve their thinking skills yet still lack understanding of the essence of thinking.

This presents a philosophical problem, which is never purely theoretical; it carries practical consequences. Implementing a variety of critical and formal thinking skills without reflecting on thinking itself can lead to superficial judgments.

In numerous articles, lectures, and books, Martin Heidegger warned of the dangers of instrumental thinking. His critical reflection on scientific progress can be summarized in his phrase “flight from thinking” (*der Flucht vor dem Denken*). Aware of the absurdity of his stance in an era dominated

by science, Heidegger provided an explanation. In his 1960 speech *Gelassenheit*, he classified thinking into two types: calculative and meditative thinking (*rechende Denken und besinnliche Nachdenken*). The former, as Heidegger describes, aligns with Dewey's concept of reflective thinking, while the latter can be regarded as both a reflection on reflective thinking and a form of self-reflection.

This understanding of critical thinking or critical and analytical thinking skills corresponds to calculative thinking. While we recognize the importance of calculative thinking, as mathematicians have always emphasized, the question remains: Is training in this type of thinking sufficient? Calculative thinking relates to progress and development.

> "Calculative thinking races from one prospect to the next. Calculative thinking never stops, never collects itself. Calculative thinking is not meditative thinking, not thinking which contemplates the meaning which reigns in everything that is." (Heidegger, 1966, p. 46).

On the other hand, what about sustainability? Heidegger warned of the dangers of technical thinking, and we are witnessing the consequences of the dominance of calculative thinking. The rise of populism and global warming are both evident and visible symptoms of this trend. These two issues are interconnected; for instance, in a presidential debate in September 2024, Kamala Harris noted that Trump has previously referred to climate change as a "hoax". Trump's populistic rhetoric and global warming is not as enigmatic as it may initially appear - both phenomena stem from the same underlying calculative thinking.

It is evident that anti-populist rhetoric is also based on calculative thinking, a fact that is relevant to our inquiry. Rather than examining ramifications of calculative thinking, our focus is on the very act of calculative thinking itself. Indeed, populist and anti-populist narratives are two sides of the same coin. The populist threat would not be so pervasive if political movements and other stakeholders did not adopt populist tactics to remain in the public spotlight. Consequently, the populist narrative has emerged as a legitimate instrument of power facilitated by calculative thinking (Krstić, 2022, p. 130).

According to Heidegger, the most pressing threat does not merely encompass global warming, populism, or the looming prospect of a Third World

War. The oversimplification of these issues, by reducing our analysis to these factors, diverts our attention from fundamental issues at hand.

> "In this dawning atomic age, a far greater danger threatens-precisely when the danger of a Third World War has been removed." (Heidegger, 1966, p. 56)

This seemingly paradoxical assertion underscores Heidegger's critical intervention. While a Third World War could exterminate humankind, calculative thinking is already eroding our humanity. The possibility of a Third World War looms, but the reality of calculative thinking is certain and evident. The true menace does not lie in calculative thinking itself, as it can be both beneficial and threatening; rather, the menace lies in the reduction of all thought to calculative thinking alone.

Returning to the presidential debate about global warming, it can be concluded that calculative thinking can be a tool for devising strategies to mitigate climate change. We certainly need calculative thinking. However, we need more than just calculative thinking.

If we want to understand ourselves as thinking beings, we must engage in meditative thinking (*besinnliche Nachdenken*). While calculative thinking excels in fields like science, technology, and economics, meditative thinking possesses its own unique value that is essential for attaining a more profound comprehension.

> "It is worthless for dealing with current business. It profits nothing in carrying out practical affairs." (Heidegger, 1966, p. 45)

It may sound amusing, but meditative thinking shares similarities with idle thinking; this connection is not merely superficial. Meditative thinking has its roots in idle thinking (*σχολή*). This type of thinking is a privilege afforded to those who have leisure time, a circumstance that is not necessarily conductive to generating profit.

> "He who offers 'a penny for your thoughts' does not expect to drive any great bargain." (Dewey, 1909, p. 2)

Leisure time and idleness should be privileges of a democratic society. It is unwise to overlook the origins of our civilization. While a civilization can progress and develop without meditative thinking, this type of thought allows us to reflect on the meaning of progress and development, including

their consequences, challenges, and benefits. In the context of contemporary frameworks, meditative thinking is crucial for addressing sustainability.

Heidegger's insights can serve as a cautionary example, urging us to prioritize sustainability. His concept of *Gelassenheit* can be interpreted as a foundation for a new framework for sustainable development. Specifically, the fourth goal of the Sustainable Development Goals—quality education—should prioritize true quality over the mere quantitative expansion of educational infrastructure and its access (United Nations General Assembly, 2015, art. 59). The adoption of a purely calculative approach in this domain may lead to a decline in thoughtful engagement and potentially compromise the well-being of humanity.

Following Heidegger's observation of the difference between meditative and calculative thinking, pursuing profit alone is the most certain way to miss the opportunity for profit, as it is a result of calculative thinking. In this context, profit represents sustainable development, which can be achieved through calculative thinking. However, this approach also tends to avoid self-reflection and meditative thinking.

1.4. Balancing the Competences

Supporters of traditional education often overvalue knowledge, while contemporary educators emphasize skills and attitudes as primary educational objectives. Teachers need to acknowledge the validity of both perspectives, as a lack of understanding between these two viewpoints can impede the development of comprehensive educational competence. The real challenge is establishing a meaningful connection among the various components of competencies.

How can we balance critical thinking—an essential element in all lists of educational competencies—with knowledge and attitudes? It can be argued that critical thinking without knowledge is ineffective, however, this assertion lacks depth. Critical thinking, like any other type of thinking, is contingent on knowledge. Thinking always involves engaging with specific content, so when we train our students in critical thinking, we practice it using the content stored in their short-term or long-term memory. Thus, students require knowledge to enhance their thinking skills.

Thinking operates in short-term memory by utilizing content from sensory, short-term, and long-term memory. While this explanation is simplified, it suffices to illustrate the point. Memory is not a mere repository of reminiscences; remembering is an active process. Learned content is not safely stored; instead, learning does not occur through the mere cataloging of data obtained through the senses. Learning involves active acquisition of various pieces of sensory and other information. Hebb's rule emphasizes the connection between remembering and understanding: each time we encounter the same face, we recognize different aspects of it, constructing our mental image (Dale, 2012, pp. 46-47). This notion of perpetual learner agency finds resonance in Kant's transcendental logic.

Thinking relies on short-term memory, which is designed to be quick and operational. However, since short-term memory is still a form of memory, it attempts to retain any new concepts or content it encounters. Consequently, if memory becomes overwhelmed with attempts to remember, the thinking process may slow, become tedious, and disengage the learner, diminishing motivation (Willingham, 2009, p. 18).

Students with a robust foundation of knowledge are better equipped to enhance their critical thinking. Conversely, education that fosters critical thinking can deepen students' background knowledge (Willingham, 2009, p. 22). The relationship between these two processes is straightforward: if long-term memory is well-stocked, working memory will not become overloaded by the need to remember. As Willingham (2014, pp. 28-51) notes, short-term memory retrieves information from long-term and sensory memory.

Moreover, we do not only remember facts and data; we also remember procedures. Last school year, I had an interesting experience with my energetic students, who developed a keen interest in solving Rubik's cubes and competed to determine who could solve them most rapidly. I requested that they refrain from doing so during philosophy class, and they generally complied with my request. However, I found their proficiency in solving the cube to be a valuable teaching opportunity. Since I had never solved a Rubik's cube myself, I invited them to teach me. They demonstrated the method for solving one side of the cube but were unable to explain the rest of the process! They had merely memorized the algorithm and executed it automatically.

Cognitive psychology findings discourage rote memorization. The process of memorization cannot be fully automated or "drummed" into students; thus, teachers should not expect such activities from their learners. The act of remembering involves an interaction between short-term and long-term memory, wherein new information is combined and integrated in various ways. While some information from the environment will be stored in long-term memory, much of it will not. As Willingham (2014, p. 54) asserts, memory is the residue of thought.

Consciously or unconsciously, learners decide what to remember during the thinking process. Therefore, creating a list of data that students should remember is ultimately futile. The significance lies not in the information deemed important by educators, but in what students choose to retain. Educators must make learning content meaningful so that students will retain parts of it.

This demand may seem challenging; teachers must employ their unique creativity and professional expertise to make learning content accessible and memorable. Fortunately, a wide array of techniques exists. For example, Daniel T. Willingham highlights the effectiveness of storytelling in education, noting its advantages:

a. Stories are interesting.

b. Stories are easy to remember.

c. Stories are easy to understand.

(Willingham, 2014, pp. 66-69)

An intriguing example is presented in a workshop on human rights by Ćurko and Cah, where a story is narrated in the first person as a letter written by a fictional character, Jose, from Mozambique (Ćurko and Cah, 2020, p. 34). This narrative evokes strong emotions, which can be vital for understanding, remembering content, and fostering empathy.

Thus, another crucial factor to consider in our training of thought is the role of prior knowledge.

1.5. A New Horizon in the Training of Thinking

Once, one of my students claimed that training in thought is not possible. She was provoked by her reading and interpretation of a sentence by Jaspers.

> "Philosophical thought must always spring from free creation. Every man must accomplish it for himself." (Jaspers, 1960, p. 9)

She understood thinking as an authentic, meditative process, and she contended that this type of thinking cannot be simply transferred, as is possible in STEM fields; for example, evidence in mathematics or physics can be learned, and this evidence, along with the process of problem-solving, can be stored in our long-term memory.

Another student reflected on the process of interpretation and asked about the correct interpretation of a philosophical article. She was in doubt about the correctness of her interpretation. In fact, this student expressed concerns that her background knowledge and learning experience would be sufficient to express a philosophical idea. Her question went straight to the point and provided me with the opportunity to explain what a teacher should and can do to cultivate diverse modes of thinking among students.

It is evident that we must rethink existing approaches in the training of thought, despite the common perception of this training as a new component of educational frameworks. In reality, it is not new at all, in the sense that definitions, training approaches, objectives, and proposed skills do not align with contemporary demands.

In light of these considerations, the following four points are proposed for reflection on the training of thought:

> I. The distinction between critical and analytical skills should be replaced by a set of thinking skills.
>
> II. The training of thought must include both calculative and meditative thinking.
>
> III. Education for the training of thought must seriously take into account the importance of background knowledge.
>
> IV. Finally, the connection between attitudes, skills, knowledge, and values must be transparently described as part of the description, and perhaps even explained by a few descriptors.

2. PHILOSOPHY WITH CHILDREN AND THINKING SKILLS

Philosophy with children is an educational approach that has been demonstrated to enhance various thinking skills and different types of thinking. There are different classifications of thinking skills and types proposed by various authors, but we can put that aside for now. The main idea is to create a stimulus and lead a discussion (agenda). Originally, in Lipman's approach, the stimulus was a story. As a high school philosophy teacher, I try to use traditional philosophical content as a stimulus. Sometimes it is an article, and other times it is content related to the philosophical tradition.

Facing the different demanding content from the philosophical tradition, my students need to remember and understand numerous concepts, ideas, and theories, and they must learn how to comprehend and implement complex philosophical terminology. In this case, thinking skills are tied to philosophical content and the philosophical way of living.

2.1. An Example: The Medicine Show

In order to improve my students' background knowledge about theories of truth, I created a workshop based on a holistic approach and philosophy with children. I found that this part of the course is very difficult for students (ages 16-18) because they were unable to find any meaningful content or application in the textbook.

A practitioner of philosophy with children commonly encounters students who try to answer questions correctly and expect feedback from the teacher at the end of a workshop. Typically, students want to know if their answers are right or wrong.

> "Generally, in a traditional manner, when the teacher uses questioning as a working tool, it is clear for the students that the purpose is to bring about a 'good answer', the consequence of this being that any wrong answer will be sanctioned in a way or another." (Brenifier, 2007, p. 195)

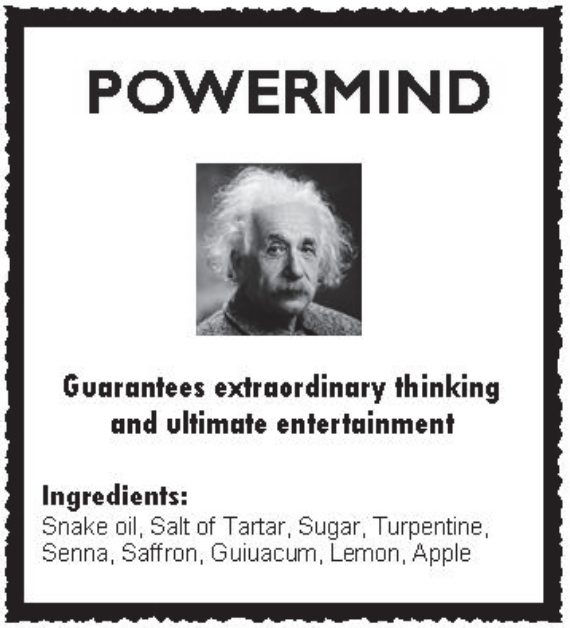
It is imperative for practitioners to explain to children that philosophical responses are not reducible to mere dichotomies of right or wrong, true or false, and so forth. This concept stands in stark contrast to the habits students acquire through their formal education.

2.2. Workshop Outline

This workshop aims to propose an alternative approach for introducing students to the transcendence of the true/false paradigm. I found inspiration in Western movies (such as *Little Big Man*), where traveling traders sell their medicines, potions, bitters, and elixirs. Participants are invited to delve into the nature of truth and falsehood, right and wrong, and to inquire into the very concept of truth itself.

As a stimulus for the workshop, a bottle labeled *Powermind* was used. It advertises improved thinking abilities, elevated mood, and enhanced communication skills. The practitioner can also show the video for the song *Say, Say, Say* by Michael Jackson and Paul McCartney at the beginning of the workshop.

An exemplar of the label affixed to the bottle is provided below:



In the philosophical tradition, a few sentences from Plato's *Protagoras* can support the stimulus.

> "Indeed, the risk you run in purchasing knowledge is much greater than that in buying provisions. When you buy food - and drink, you can carry it away from the shop or warehouse in a receptacle, and before you receive it into your - body by eating or drinking you can store it away at home and take the advice of an expert as to what you should eat and drink and what not, and how much you should consume and when; so, there is not much risk in the actual purchase. But knowledge cannot be taken away in a parcel. When you have paid for it, you must receive it straight into the soul: you go away having learned it and are benefited or harmed accordingly." (Plato, *Protagoras*, 314a)

The bottle of *Powermind* has been demonstrated to resolve the aforementioned issue by facilitating the preservation and transfer of wisdom, thereby enabling its application in various settings.

The community of inquiry is then invited to explore whether the so-called "magic potion" works without opening the bottle. The main question is: How can we check if the advertisement is a scam or not? The "magic potion" is transferred from one individual to another, and each participant proposes a strategy for assessing the validity of the advertisement.

In this workshop, students are encouraged to engage with the bottle, examine the contents of the label, use mobile devices for internet searches, recall their previous knowledge, or acquire new information. The content of the label is intentionally created to make correlations between different school subjects and life outside of school. In this example, I used a picture of Albert Einstein, but it could feature someone else (a scientist, philosopher, or movie character). Additionally, the ingredients can correlate with science (senna), movies, and video games (snake oil), etc. The scene as a whole illustrates a well-known performance in U.S. history.

In most cases, students will propose several procedures that fit different theories of truth. At that moment, they will discover that the potion provokes thinking and entertainment without needing to consume it (reflecting the pragmatic theory of truth). The absence of a listed percentage for each ingredient will be noted, providing a valuable opportunity to delve into the philosophy of Paracelsus and the realm of toxicology. Someone may also

propose bringing *Powermind* to the lab to verify (or confirm) its contents, creating an opportunity to notice the difference between confirmation and verification.

The following reflection questions are intended to facilitate discussion or may be posed to students:

- If *Powermind* is deemed harmless, how can I know if it is beneficial?
- How could I know if *Powermind* made me more intelligent?
- What is the difference between wisdom and intelligence?
- Do I really want to consume this potion if it works?
- Is instantly gained wisdom really wisdom?

3. WHAT MAKES PHILOSOPHY WITH CHILDREN STAND OUT?

The term "children" should not be the source of confusion. Philosophy with children is still philosophy. It is not some kind of philosophy adapted for humans in the early stages of development; rather, it is the genuine practice of philosophy. When we engage in philosophy with children, it is not a mere imitation of what serious philosophers do, as a child might imitate a driver in a toy car. So-called serious philosophers and child philosophers engage in the same activity.

> "A marvelous indication of man's innate disposition to philosophy is to be found in the questions asked by children. It is not uncommon to hear from the mouths of children words which penetrate to the very depths of philosophy." (Jaspers, 1960, p. 9)

As philosophy is not the same for all philosophers, philosophy with children is not the same for all practitioners. Nevertheless, almost all approaches to philosophy with children consider that philosophy is not only critical thinking. Furthermore, critical thinking cannot be separated from other types of thinking. Critical thinking is impossible without creative thinking, as the latter generates ideas, and the former evaluates them.

Although philosophy with children has its foundation in Dewey's philosophy, this educational approach is not strictly tied to instrumental logic, reflective thinking, or critical thinking. Lipman, a pioneering figure in the

field of philosophy with children, advocated for *multidimensional thinking* (Lipman, 2007, p.197), which involves the interaction of creative, critical, and caring thinking. The outcomes of this interaction are thinking skills such as inquiry, reasoning, translation, and information-organizing skills (Lipman, 2003, p. 178).

In contrast, Brenifier presented three registers of philosophizing: intellectual, social, and existential (Brenifier, 2007, p. 12). According to Brenifier's descriptions, the intellectual and social registers are primarily associated with calculative thinking, while the existential register is rooted in meditative thinking. An essential point in the existential register - or, as the author explains, *to be oneself* - is founded on the ancient philosophical idea of the identity of thinking and being.

Keeping in mind the need for both calculative and meditative thinking, Lipman's and Brenifier's models complement each other perfectly (Lipij et al., 2024, p. 135). Thus, the practice of philosophy with children addresses cognitive abilities in their totality, thereby enhancing thinking skills and fostering education for democratic values.

All descriptors of "analytical and critical thinking skills" in the existing *Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 35) show that thinking skills are understood exclusively as calculative thinking. Self-understanding, self-knowledge, and integrity are classified as knowledge. Furthermore, the descriptor "self-knowledge and critical understanding of the self" is entirely framed in terms of calculative thinking (Council of Europe, 2018b, p. 46).

When cognitive competences are reduced to calculative thinking, Heidegger's warning is disregarded completely. This is a grave issue, especially in light of the rapid development of technology. Heidegger's intervention primarily sought to address how humans relate to technology. Although his proposition may appear rudimentary and somewhat naive – suggesting that technical instruments should be used as any other tools - current evidence shows that the so-called Z generation is beginning to establish this kind of relationship with technology. Moreover, research conducted at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford found that Zoomers tend to philosophize, prefer in person communication, and wish to learn traditional philosophical content (Katz et al., 2021). I reached a similar conclusion through action research with my own students, which indicated

that a combination of calculative and meditative thinking is not merely an ideal, but rather an approach that is well-suited to the Z generation.

Finally, cognitive psychology, as previously discussed in this article, emphasizes the importance of encouraging and motivating students to establish a strong foundation of knowledge. This concept aligns with the ancient idea of hylemorphism, originally promoted by Aristotle. The notion of thinking as a form (which resonates with the definition of formal logic) underscores the necessity of content for this skill. The content of thinking is, in turn, knowledge. Students must cultivate their capacity for critical reflection on knowledge, necessitating the presence of knowledge as the object of their critique. A lack of knowledge creates fertile ground for manipulation, whether in the form of post-truth or other sophisms, as demonstrated in this article.

Taking all the presented ideas into account, I dare to suggest balancing knowledge and skills as elements of competence: both are necessary. Heraclitus wrote that "much learning does not teach one to have understanding" (frag. 40), yet the same author claimed that "philosophers must be learned in many things" (frag. 35). As the next stage, we must consider both meditative and calculative thinking in order to develop education that can effectively respond to the demands of the contemporary age.

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ART AS A TOOL FOR STIMULATING CRITICAL THINKING AND PROMOTING EUROPEAN VALUES

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the potential of art to stimulate critical thinking and foster European values in educational contexts. By drawing on the theoretical insights of philosophers such as John Dewey and Herbert Read, it examines the transformative potential of integrating artistic practices into education. The discussion emphasizes how art can serve as a medium to promote empathy, dignity, and democratic engagement, which are fundamental to European values. The study incorporates practical examples from workshops designed to engage participants in reflective and creative processes, fostering both analytical and emotional responses to complex societal issues. These workshops, aimed at various age groups, demonstrate the capacity of art to bridge cultural and ideological divides, encouraging dialogue and mutual understanding. The article argues that education through art not only enhances cognitive skills but also cultivates ethical and civic awareness, making it an essential component of modern education systems. This work contributes to the growing body of literature on art-based education by presenting a comprehensive framework for its application in fostering critical thinking and promoting core European values such as tolerance, solidarity, and respect for human rights.
Keywords: *art in education, critical thinking, democracy, European values*

1. INTRODUCTION

Art education involves shaping artistic expression and sensitivity and forming a well-rounded personality. It also includes transferring art to other areas of human activity. The role of art in education is multi-layered and encompasses much more than mere familiarization with art and works of art and aesthetic development itself. Art can contribute to the development of critical thinking, creativity, emotional intelligence and social skills, thus enabling students to become complete individuals who are able to recognize, interpret and react to the world around them.

It is crucial to distinguish between art education and education through art. Art education refers to a specialized form of education that emphasizes the study of art and the cultivation of artistic skills. This includes learning techniques, theories, art history, critical analysis and practical creation of works of art. Examples include visual arts, music, dance, drama or sculpture classes, where the focus is on developing students as artists or art connoisseurs. On the other hand, education through art employs art as a medium to attain broader educational objectives, which can include the development of critical thinking, emotional intelligence, social skills, creativity and understanding of the world. In this context, familiarizing oneself with art and works of art is not the ultimate objective, rather, it serves as a catalyst for other forms of learning and development. This approach integrates art into the educational process, thereby making it a key element for fostering a broader range of skills and comprehension among students.

The concept of education through art finds its origins in the seminal work of Herbert Read, who in his 1958 book *Education through Art* underscored the universality of art, stating the following:

> "Art is one of those things that just like the oxygen and the soil are everywhere around us. We almost never think about it, though. That is why art is not something that can be only found in museums and art galleries or in old cities like Florence and Rome. Art, regardless of how we define it, is present in everything we do to please the senses" (Read, 1958, p. 2).

Read's conception of art transcends its mere function as a subject of instruction, envisioning it as a pivotal pedagogical approach applicable to all subjects. The objective of such an education, as articulated by Read, is not merely the cultivation of artists, but rather nurturing children's creative and

imaginative capacities. Once cultivated, these abilities are believed to transcend discipline-specific boundaries, manifesting in diverse domains of human activity. In this regard, education through art becomes a means for developing individuals capable of various forms of expression and critical thinking. As Read states:

> "The aim of education is therefore the creation of the artists – of people efficient in various *modes of expression*" (Read, 1958, p. 11).

In his essays *Education for Peace*, Read emphasizes the role of art in fostering critical thinking, emotional intelligence, and a deep commitment to moral and civic values. At the heart of Read's thinking is the belief that art has a deeply moral and transformative purpose. He contends that education must prioritize moral development, which is closely linked to aesthetic experiences. Read argues:

> "The moral regeneration of mankind can be accomplished only by moral education, and until moral education is given priority over all other forms of education, I see no hope for the world" (Read, 2012, p. 225).

In this context, art emerges as an indispensable instrument in the pursuit of moral education, compelling individuals to engage in reflective processes that challenge their perceptions and encourage the exploration of universal human values. By fostering an awareness of dignity, justice, and empathy, art education aligns with the core European ideals of respect for human rights and equality.

Another central theme in Read's work is the capacity of art to evoke emotional responses and facilitate catharsis. He highlights the therapeutic potential of art, characterizing it as a medium through which individuals can process and transform their aggressive impulses. This function of art is particularly relevant in cultivating peaceful and cooperative societies. As Read explains:

> "Catharsis is precisely a discharge of aggressive impulses, and particularly of the death instinct, through imaginative participation in tragic events" (Read, 2012, p. 24).

By providing a creative space for these emotions, art fosters emotional balance and prevents destructive behaviors, contributing to social harmony and mutual understanding. This perspective closely aligns with the European value of solidarity, as it encourages individuals to engage empathetically with others, thereby bridging divides and fostering unity.

In addition to its emotional impact, Read underscores the importance of aesthetic education in shaping disciplined and cooperative individuals. He believes that engaging with art enhances a sense of responsibility, self-control, and mutual respect, qualities that are essential for democratic participation. As he states, "Education by moral practice, which in effect means education by aesthetic discipline" (Read, 2012, p. 225). Collaborative art projects, for instance, facilitate students' development of cooperative skills, offering tangible experience of the advantages of collaboration over competition. This process not only enhances critical thinking abilities but also reinforces the principles of democracy and collective decision-making.

A key argument in Read's philosophy is the role of art in fostering unity and cooperation, particularly within educational settings. He argues that art education fosters opportunities for collaboration and mutual aid, encouraging individuals to transcend self-centered pursuits.

> "What a child can accomplish unaided in the control or manipulation of things is very limited; but he soon discovers, under wise guidance, that much more can be accomplished by cooperation and mutual aid" (Read, 2012, p. 13).

In a European context, this notion assumes particular significance, as it underscores the need for intercultural dialogue and collaboration to address common challenges. By bringing diverse perspectives together through artistic practices, art education helps build solidarity and a shared sense of purpose among individuals from different cultural and ideological backgrounds.

Furthermore, Read establishes a correlation between art education and the broader ideal of universal peace. He views education as an indivisible force that must equip individuals with the skills necessary to live harmoniously within a global community. In this regard, he asserts: "To the indivisibility of peace must correspond an indivisibility of education" (Read, 2012, p. 25). This statement highlights the importance of integrating art into education systems as a conduit for cultivating the critical and empathetic capacities necessary for peaceful coexistence. By encouraging students to reflect on themes of justice, equality, and human rights through artistic exploration, art education cultivates a generation of citizens who are not only intellectually capable but also emotionally and ethically prepared to contribute to a more just and democratic society.

In promoting critical thinking, Read emphasizes that art stimulates the imagination and challenges individuals to question existing norms and perspectives. He argues that the creative process is inherently analytical, requiring individuals to explore, interpret, and reimagine the world around them. “The creative process involves questioning, exploring, and reimagining the world - skills that are fundamental to critical thinking and problem-solving” (Read, 2012, p. 87). Engaging with art, therefore, fosters students’ ability to navigate the pluralistic and intercultural realities of modern Europe by developing their capacity to analyze complex issues, evaluate multiple viewpoints, and construct their own interpretations.

In conclusion, Read’s insights into art education provide a compelling basis for understanding how art can serve as a tool for stimulating critical thinking and promoting European values. By fostering emotional intelligence, empathy, and collaboration, art education helps individuals connect with others and engage meaningfully with societal issues. Read’s emphasis on the moral and civic dimensions of art underscores its potential to shape not only individuals but also communities, making it an essential component of modern education systems. Through artistic expression, students develop the capacity for introspection, enabling them to reflect on their place in the world and act in support of shared values such as democracy, human rights, and peace. Read’s approach aligns with John Dewey’s perspective that art, by its very nature, is self-contained and devoid of external purpose, and thus invites us to consider art as a dynamic and transformative agent in education, which has the power to shape not only aesthetic dimensions of individual development, but also the ethical, social and intellectual facets.

It is evident that art serves as a strong stimulus for critical thinking as it encourages individuals to question social norms, historical events and contemporary issues through creative expression and interpretation of diverse subjects. In this regard, art projects that address issues of social justice, equality and solidarity contribute to the promotion of European values such as freedom of expression, democracy, human rights, and intercultural dialogue.

2. JOHN DEWEY – AESTHETIC EXPERIENCE, EVERYDAY LIFE AND DEMOCRATIC VALUES

The publication of *Art as Experience* in 1934, during the latter years of his life,[5] marked a significant moment in the reception of Dewey's *oeuvre*. What is often questioned in the reception of the aforementioned work is why Dewey, in a book of nearly 400 pages, does not address how art could be mobilized for educational purposes. The inquiry was initially posed by Read in a footnote of his work *Education Through Art*:

> "I regard it as one of the curiosities of philosophy that when John Dewey, in life, came to the subject off aesthetics (*Art as Experience*, London,1934), he nowhere, in the course of an imposing treatise, established a connection between aesthetics and education" (Read, 1958, p. 245).

According to Hein, Dewey did not consider it necessary to test his ideas on aesthetic education in any of his experimental schools, because he already had an exemplary model in practice: the Barnes Foundation with its very successful method of aesthetic education (Hein, 2016). Dewey saw this method as the quintessence of his philosophical perspective on education. In the opening pages of *Art as Experience*, Dewey underlines the profound interconnection between aesthetic experience and everyday life, highlighting their inherent continuity (Dewey, 1934). According to Dewey, the dichotomy between art and everyday life arose when people began to view art as an independent and separate domain. In this regard, Dewey makes the following observation:

> "The factors that have glorified fine art by setting it upon a far-off pedestal did not arise within the realm of art, nor is their influence confined to the arts... But the arts of the drama, music, painting, and architecture thus exemplified had no peculiar connection with theaters, galleries, museums. They were part of the significant life of an organized community" (Dewey, 1934, p. 7).

[5] John Dewey was 71 years old when he gave lectures at Harvard on which the book was based.

Conventional aesthetic theories perpetuated the alienation of art from daily life, portraying it as an esoteric domain separate from everyday experience, frequently associating aesthetic experience with leisure. Dewey further elaborates:

> "The growth of capitalism has been a powerful influence in the development of the museum as the proper home for works of art, and in the promotion of the idea that they are apart from the common life." (Dewey, 1934, p. 9).

In the modern era, according to Dewey, art is no longer an organic element of society; rather, it has been relegated to institutions such as museums and galleries. These institutions serve a distinct purpose: by separating art from the conditions of its creation and everyday experience, they transform works of art into mere objects devoid of historical context. Within the museum setting, artworks become ahistorical, purely aesthetic objects, acquiring a status of unquestionable value and purpose. This, in turn, disrupts the perceived continuity between art and life, a phenomenon that Dewey regards as problematic. Dewey believes that the division of art into "high" and "low" is a fallacious one. The prevailing notion that only visual art can provide a profound aesthetic experience and convey deeper meanings, while other artistic forms are treated as insignificant – to the point that they are not recognized as art unless they are found in a museum or gallery – is, according to Dewey, wholly untenable. Dewey's position is that the aesthetic experience is not limited to museums and galleries but is present in all aspects of human life. He regards the conventional categorizations of art as extrinsic in their very essence, stating:

> "It is customary, and from some points of view necessary, to make a distinction between fine art and useful or technological art. But the point of view from which it is necessary is one that is extrinsic to the work of art itself" (Dewey, 1934, p. 19).

For Dewey, the foundation of art lies in the aesthetic experience, which is not confined to museums or galleries. This aesthetic experience is present in all aspects of human life and permeates everyday activities. Dewey's conception of craftsmanship as an inherent facet of art supersedes the conventional boundaries between it and artistic pursuits, particularly the "fine arts". Consequently, art's domain transcends formalized expressions, encompassing all facets of human creativity and expression, including education. Goldblatt expounds on this notion, articulating:

> “Art in education nurtures thoughtful reflection, which is essential for transformation. Like a dance of many steps, comprehending art occurs as viewers are emotionally ensnared, reflect, and realize relationships within the artwork and their lives; back and forth between painting and self teaches visual observation as key in resurrecting emotional associations and societal intentions, prompting questions like, "What are humanistic needs in a free society?” (Goldblatt, 2006, pp. 23-24)

Artistic activity and works of art hold a special status within the aesthetic realm, as their form and content serve as an exceptionally suitable medium for conveying qualitative life experiences and enhancing their value, in contrast to mere survival. Dewey describes an artistic experience as a specific aesthetic or predominantly aesthetic experience, noting that works of art are the most prominent examples of aesthetic experience. Dewey further notes that aesthetic experience is not only related to the reception of art but also to the process of creation. In this regard, he asserts:

> “Art is the living and concrete proof that man is capable of restoring consciously, and thus on the plane of meaning, the union of sense, need, impulse and action characteristic of the live creature...[art] is the greatest intellectual achievement in the history of humanity” (Dewey, 1934, p. 25).

While Dewey and Read share a deep belief in the transformative potency of the arts in education, their approaches differ significantly on certain points. For Dewey, art education should not be limited to isolated artistic practices but should foster curiosity and creativity through experiences. Conversely, Read advocates an unstructured, child-centered approach, believing that children possess a natural creative impulse that should be nurtured unrestrainedly. He articulates this as follows:

> "The child has a natural creative impulse which should be given free rein if we wish to encourage originality and the fullest development of personality" (Read, 1958, p. 47).

While Dewey's method integrates the arts into the broader curriculum to develop experiential connections, Read advocates authenticity in self-expression, emphasizing freedom over structure. Ultimately, Read's insights into arts education provide a strong foundation for understanding how art can serve as a tool to encourage critical thinking and promote shared values. By cultivating emotional intelligence, empathy, and collaboration, arts edu-

cation helps individuals connect with others and engage meaningfully in social issues.

The distinction between the two thinkers' perspectives on the role of teachers in art education is also apparent. Dewey sees the teacher's role as a facilitator, helping students connect their artistic pursuits to broader social and cultural contexts. As Dewey articulated:

> "The teacher's role is not to impose meaning but to create conditions under which students can uncover it for themselves." (Dewey, 1934, p. 315).

According to Dewey, teachers guide students toward understanding the connections between their artistic work and the social, cultural, and practical realities that surround them. In contrast, Read's conception of the teacher as a mentor is characterized by its emphasis on nurturing creativity and respecting the autonomy of each child's vision: "The teacher should be a sympathetic guide who respects the autonomy of the child's creative impulse" (Read, 1958, p. 62).

The two thinkers also differ in their understanding of the relationship between art and society. Dewey sees art as a bridge between personal experience and shared understanding, believing that it reflects and shapes the society. On the other hand, Read believes that encouraging creativity in education can lead to a more harmonious society by helping individuals achieve emotional balance and empathy. For Read, art is not merely a reflection of society but also a transformative force that can improve it by nurturing individuals. He notes: "The future of civilization depends on the refinement of human sensibility, and this can only be achieved through the arts" (Read, 1958, p. 88).

In accordance with Dewey's convictions, Eco subscribes to the notion that art and literature function not merely as reflections of reality, but rather, they actively contribute to its creation and transformation. In his work *The Open Work*, Eco explores how works that do not provide definitive meanings require active audience participation, encouraging them to create their own interpretations and achieve a deeper understanding of the work. As Eco notes, open works, such as those created by Alexander Calder, do not offer a single, definitive meaning but instead require the engagement of the viewer. This interaction encourages viewers to think critically, as it compels them to derive meaning from the work themselves:

> “Calder goes still further: his forms move before our eyes. Each of his works is a 'work in movement' whose movement combines with that of the viewer. Theoretically, work and viewer should never be able to confront each other twice in precisely the same way” (Eco, 1989, p. 87).

Informal art, Eco notes, elicits diverse interpretations, prompting viewers to consider varied perspectives rather than acquiescing to initial impressions. This dynamic fosters critical thinking concerning meaning and context of the artistic work:

> “The example of the informal, like that of any open work, does not proclaim the death of form; rather, it proposes a new, more flexible version of it form as a field of possibilities” (Eco, 1989, p. 104).

By challenging established norms and forms, open works of art prompt viewers to reexamine traditional concepts of art and aesthetics, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and reflection on the potential and the role of art. In this regard, Eco asserts:

> “Western culture considers this particular fusion as an aesthetic event characteristic of art. The 'reader' who, at the very moment in which he abandons himself to the free play of reactions that the work provokes in him, goes back to the work to seek in it the origin of the suggestion and the virtuosity behind the stimulus, is not only enjoying his own personal experience but is also appreciating the value of the work itself, its aesthetic quality” (Eco, 1989, p. 104).

Visual art is known to reflect social and cultural changes, thereby providing an opportunity for critical analysis of these changes. Eco asserts that modern art, through its formal characteristics, represents the contemporary experience of the world, including a sense of futility and discontinuity.

> “Thus, although open works are not the only kind of art to be produced in our time, they are the only kind that is appropriate to it; the conventional sense and order of traditional art reflect an experience of the world wholly different from ours, and we deceive ourselves if we try to make this sense and order our own” (Eco, 1989, p. 167).

Through its interactive nature, capacity for diverse interpretation, the ability to critique conventional forms and its reflection on society, visual art encourages viewers to actively participate in creating meaning, question existing norms, and develop a deeper understanding of the world around them.

In *On Ugliness*, Eco explores how the concept of ugliness has changed throughout history, emphasizing that aesthetic norms are socially and culturally conditioned. This understanding can help students realize that aesthetic judgments are not based solely on universal criteria of beauty but are shaped by cultural, historical and social contexts. Eco states the following:

> "Today everyone (including those bourgeois who should have been stunned and scandalized) recognize as (artistically) beautiful all those works that had horrified their fathers. The ugliness of the avantgarde has been accepted as a new model of beauty and has given rise to a new commercial circuit." (Eco, 2007, p. 379).

Furthermore, in an educational context, Eco's work can serve as a catalyst for discussion about how society defines and accepts beauty and ugliness. Students can explore the relationship between these concepts and social norms, prejudices, and power, as well as the role of art in challenging these norms. Eco suggests that individuals who do not understand the context of contemporary art might misinterpret what society considers beautiful, especially if they were to conclude from Picasso's paintings that such faces are attractive in everyday life.

By depicting ugliness, artists have often sought to portray the darker side of human experience, such as suffering, evil, injustice, and social issues. This approach encourages observers to reflect more deeply on the world around them, emphasizing the role of art as both an aesthetic phenomenon and a social and cultural tool that can provoke change and raise awareness about social and moral issues. As Eco asserts:

> "So, we can understand why art in various centuries insistently portrayed ugliness. Marginal as the voice of art may be, it attempted to remind us that despite the optimism of certain metaphysicians, there is something implacably and sadly malign about this world." (Eco, 2007, p. 426).

Eco affirms that the dichotomy between the beautiful and the ugly has lost its aesthetic value. Both concepts can be experienced neutrally, as evidenced by the behavior of youth. The very same young people who align themselves with the aesthetic or sexual ideals propagated by Hollywood also tend to embrace the physical appearances and styles that were once considered unattractive or even repulsive. As Eco notes:

> "And those same youngsters often make themselves up, tattoo themselves and pierce their flesh with pins so that they look more like Marilyn Manson than Marilyn Monroe" (Eco, 2007, p. 426).

The seminal work *On Ugliness* provides a foundational framework for comprehending art through the lens of various disciplines, such as history, philosophy, sociology, and literature. It not only enhances aesthetic sensitivity but also advocates for an interdisciplinary and holistic approach to education, enabling students to perceive art as a complex phenomenon that both reflects and contributes to social and cultural realities.

In her article *How John Dewey's Theories Underpin Art and Art Education*, Patricia Goldblatt emphasizes the importance of historical awareness and context in understanding artistic expression, employing the paradigm of Picasso's *Guernica* as a manifestation of protest against human rights violations and violence (Goldblatt, 2006). An education that engages in critical analysis of art disrupts social norms and fosters profound reflection on ethical issues through open dialogue, as Goldblatt emphasizes:

> "An education that exposes societal abuses in the arts challenges the status quo of destructive behavior. Viewing art and reasoning theoretically invite responsible dialogues. The practiced habit of examining ethical issues, albeit with no simple answers, produces multilayered deliberation of potential actions and consequences" (Goldblatt, 2006, p. 24).

Dewey conceptualizes art as a potent educational instrument that fosters empathy and encourages moral judgments and actions. Through their artistic mediums, artists convey narratives that awaken emotions such as empathy, anger, and humility, thereby connecting art with everyday life. Art transforms public events into public documents that encourage moral action and promote democracy.

Goldblatt further assert that reflecting on good and evil through art leads to moral judgments, while engaging with art fosters active and intuitive knowledge derived from perception, thinking, analysis, and interpretation. While Dewey does not explicitly address the educational potential of art, as Goldblatt states (Goldblatt, 2006), this potential can be observed through several key aspects, as follows:

- *Overcoming the fear of the other*

  The artist's depiction of different cultures and their empathetic immersion in the experiences of distant and foreign civilizations broadens and deepens our perspective.

- *Strengthening*

  Through the analysis and reflection of art, as well as through interaction and learning with peers, students interpret, express and recreate lived experiences, while creating new ideas or works of art.

- *Critical analysis*

  Artistic production and reception are not just mere daydreaming, but rather, they are the pursuit of a qualitative completeness in aesthetic experience. The reconstruction of this completeness requires a deliberate effort, akin to research in everyday life and science.

- *Democracy principles*

  Art acts as a democracy catalyst, encouraging expressions and interpretations that pave the way to personal reflection and transformation.

- *Responsibility*

  Artists raise questions of responsibility and oppression, which are often disregarded by society.

As Dewey and Greene contend, art provides a space for choice, authenticity and the discovery of new aspects of the world. It serves as a catalyst for societal improvement, inspiring and motivating social change. Dewey regards art as a means to achieve democratic goals, calling for participation in social justice issues. Artists such as Van Gogh, Kollwitz, and Seurat use their art to speak out about social conditions and injustices.

> "Käthe Kollwitz, disparaged and banned by Hitler, represents the essence of democracy, showcasing struggles against tyranny and oppression…Art invites participation in matters of social justice" (Goldblatt, 2006, p. 30).

The aforementioned points are closely related to the promotion of European values, which are based on the pillars of democratic societies: tolerance and acceptance of diversity. Overcoming the fear of the "other" is crucial for building a society where the rights of all individuals are respected, regardless of their ethnic, religious or cultural background. This ensures inclusion and equality, which are fundamental values of democracy. Empowering citizens means providing people with the tools, knowledge, and resources necessary for active participation in political and social processes. The existence of democracy is contingent upon engaged and informed citizens who can make decisions about their future. Empowerment strengthens both individual and collective capacity to take responsibility and shape the common good.

Critical analysis is a crucial element of democratic society as it enables citizens to question government decisions, analyze media sources and form their opinions based on facts. Without critical thinking, democracy becomes vulnerable to manipulation and authoritarianism. In a democratic society, responsibility is reciprocal: citizens are responsible for their participation in democratic processes, while leaders are responsible for their actions towards citizens. Responsibility ensures transparency, prevents abuse of power and strengthens trust between citizens and authorities.

In light of these considerations, the development of democracy can be perceived as a continuous process that requires constant adaptation and improvement of democratic institutions and practices. This progression encompasses the reinforcement of rights, freedoms, and equality for all citizens, as well as the adaptation of democratic principles in response to societal changes. This enables democratic values to maintain their relevance and efficacy in facing new challenges.

As demonstrated, art education serves as a valuable instrument for fostering critical thinking. European values, closely related to democracy and critical thinking, are of particular concern. Critical thinking is indisputably the foundation of democratic values, as it enables citizens to question information, analyze arguments, and make informed decisions. In a democratic society, where freedom of expression and pluralism of opinions are crucial, critical thinking ensures that individuals do not take things for granted but actively participate in political and social processes. By engaging in critical analysis, citizens can monitor authorities, prevent abuse of power, and ensure that decisions are made in the interest of the community. Consequently, critical

thinking directly contributes to the preservation and promotion of democratic values. In conclusion, critical thinking and democratic values are closely connected to what we consider European values.

3. EDUCATION THROUGH ART

Art presupposes a process of questioning, seeking and finding meanings that are transformative and associated with what is morally and ethically correct. A work of art, in and of itself, does not constitute a complete narrative. The work "emerges" through its interaction with the audience. This teaching method can evoke an emotional response, foster sensitivity and reaction among students. Life themes such as birth, death, sorrow and joy depicted in art will generate responses that overcome cultural divisions, enabling multiperspectivity.

In recent times, the idea of progressive pedagogy and education through art has been developed by Elliot Eisner (Eisner, 2002). Eisner's approach emphasizes the intellectual aspect of art, challenging the prevailing notion that art necessitates no intellectual engagement, reducing it solely to an emotional component. With this in mind, Eisner points to the following:

> "...work in the arts contributes to the development of complex and subtle forms of thinking. Ironically, the arts are often thought to have very little to do with complex forms of thought" (Eisner, 2002, p. 35).

Like Dewey, Eisner also placed great importance on learning through personal experience. Art, in its various forms, offers a unique type of experience and understanding of the world. Eisner's position is that education through art significantly contributes to the development of creative problem-solving, encourages creative self-expression and enables the emergence of new forms and methods of cognitive thinking (e.g., art as a medium for divergent thinking). Furthermore, he believes that art education helps students perform more successfully in academic tasks that are not directly related to art. Eisner's position is that integrating art into all academic and non-academic aspects of school life fosters an interdisciplinary, holistic approach to education.

> "At a time when the development of thinking skills is particularly important, at a time when schools are expected to prepare people to work in more than a single occupation during their lifetime, the presence of a program that fosters flexibility, promotes a tolerance for ambiguity,

> encourages risk-taking, and depends upon the exercise of judgment outside the sphere of rules is an especially valuable resource" (Eisner, 2002, p. 35).

Accordingly, Eisner's vision of education through art is comprehensive in nature, encompassing not only the development of artistic skills, but also the integration of the cognitive, emotional, and social dimensions of students' growth. This holistic approach to education is designed to equip students with tools necessary to thrive in the complexities of contemporary society. Consequently, Eisner's educational approach is characterized by its emphasis on the cultivation of not only artistic aptitude but also critical awareness, emotional intelligence and social responsibility in students.

Therefore, Martha Nussbaum, one of the greatest contemporary advocates of humanistic education and art in American education, states that Dewey has changed the way American schools understand their mission. In her work *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, Nussbaum advocates for an art and humanistic approach to education, in contrast to the neoliberal concept of education (Nussbaum, 2010). The market-oriented concept of education, due to the desire for faster and greater profit, lacks patience for nurturing these disciplines. She argues that education should not be focused only on economic growth but on the comprehensive development of human personality, including the ability to imagine and understand the experiences of others. Art education can and should be connected to teaching for global citizenship.

> "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 14).

The humanistic aspect of education, which requires imagination, creativity and rigorous critical thinking, is losing the battle against profit-oriented skills, even though these very skills are necessary to keep democracy alive and awake. In that sense, Nussbaum states:

> "Art is a great enemy of that obtuseness, and artists (unless thoroughly browbeaten and corrupted) are not the reliable servants of any ideology, even a basically good one-they always ask the imagination to move beyond its usual confines, to see the world in new ways" (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 24).

Nussbaum notes that education should aim at developing students' narrative imagination defined as the capacity to envision the experiences and perspective of individuals who differ from oneself. She further continues:

> "The ability to imagine the experience of another - a capacity almost all human beings possess in some form - needs to be greatly enhanced and refined if we are to have any hope of sustaining decent institutions across the many divisions that any modern society contains." (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 10).

For Nussbaum, the role of art is twofold: On one hand, art cultivates empathy; on the other hand, it addresses blind spots in culture by confronting issues that provoke social discomfort. According to Nussbaum, art and humanistic education are crucial tools for the development of empathy and preserving democracy, emphasizing their importance in facing the challenges of modern society. It is imperative to acknowledge the significance of art in education and to ensure its adequate incorporation in teaching methodologies. It fosters not only creative thinking but also challenges us to see the world in new ways. This is crucial for maintaining fair and tolerant societies. Moreover, Nussbaum cautions against the potential consequences of market-oriented education that disregards these aspects, suggesting that it may result in erosion of democratic institutions due to its failure to cultivate critical thinking and empathy, which are indispensable for ensuring social justice and equality.

4. ART AS A STIMULUS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL THINKING

In her 1995 book *Releasing the Imagination: Essays on Education, the Arts, and Social Change*, Maxine Greene notes that art has the capacity to liberate the human imagination, thereby engendering novel modes of thinking (Greene, 1995). Through engagement with art, individuals are able to imagine and experience alternative realities, which is a crucial step towards critically reflecting on the current state of affairs and potential changes. Greene believed that aesthetic experiences, derived from encounters with art, enhance awareness of social and political issues. She believed that art has the ability to disrupt the habitual routines, prompting people to critically review their beliefs and assumptions. According to her, art does not provide ready-made answers. It poses questions and engenders dialogue. Engagement with

works of art encourages critical thinking by requiring individuals to interpret, analyze, and reflect on the conveyed meaning and messages. In light of these considerations, it can be argued that art serves a powerful stimulus for cultivation of critical thinking. The bibliography offers extensive support for the assertion that art education can guide students toward critical thinking and help them develop a habit of doing so.

> "First, we establish that students benefit in their critical thinking skills from school tours of an art museum. Schools have to decide how often they send their students on field trips and where those trips should go. … Third, we have established that an arts experience can have a significant impact on critical thinking skills. This suggests that there are real, negative consequences to efforts to reduce the arts in schools." (Bowen, et al., 2015, p. 43).

The assumption underpinning this assertion is that all forms of art have the capacity to serve as a catalyst for cultivating critical thinking skills. This encompasses visual arts, music, and works of applied arts. In addition, institutions that are entrusted with preservation and exhibition of artistic artifacts function as intriguing spaces or classrooms, conductive to the development of critical thinking skills.

> "The arts can illuminate the complexities of our shared experience and our fraught history. They teach us to be critical and thoughtful members of our communities and to strive constantly for the ideal." (Kisida et al., 2021, p. 44).

The preceding discussion underscores the notion that art serves as a conduit for critical thinking and the reinforcement of democratic values. This is not about mere factual knowledge about art and works of art, but about developing an appreciation for thoughtful considerations of art and individual works of art.

5. GUIDING STUDENTS TOWARDS CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH THE INTERPRETATION OF WORKS OF ART

The process of observation, analysis, interpretation, and creation of art can foster the cultivation of creative thinking skills that are not only applicable to the comprehension of art, but also to the broader context of everyday life and social interactions. The interpretation of an artwork often offers multiple interpretations. Observation and analysis of art require the viewer to consider various perspectives. This results in flexibility of thought and openness to new ideas. The interpretation of an artwork can turn critical thinking into a habit. Guiding students towards critical thinking through the interpretation of artworks can be an effective method to develop their analytical and reflective skills. Students can be presented with the reproduction of the work of art, along with basic information about the author, context, and technical details. Then a discussion can be initiated by posing questions such as "What do you first notice in this picture?" or "How do you feel when looking at this work of art?" This can encourage students to focus on reflections about the work of art. Subsequent discussion can focus on the techniques employed by the artist, including brushstrokes, the use of light and shadow, perspective, and composition. The symbolic elements of the artwork and their potential meanings can also be explored. The next step can be contextualization, wherein students delve into the historical and cultural context in which the artwork was created, facilitating a discussion on how events from that period may have influenced the artist and their work. In addition, the biographical context, or the life circumstances of the artist during the creation of the work, can be considered (for example, Vincent van Gogh's *Starry Night*).

5.1. Structured Discussion about Artwork as a Path to Critical Thinking

The act of consuming art often prompts individuals to engage in introspection and contemplate intricate subjects. Engaging in discourse surrounding artistic creations can serve to further refine one's comprehension and cultivate the capacity for critical analysis. A methodology for training critical thinking that emphasizes visual thinking strategies is known as the VTS – Visual Thinking Strategies. Philip Yenawine's work *Visual Thinking Strategies: Using Art to Deepen Learning Across School Disciplines* is considered the pioneer of VTS (Yenawine, 2013). In this work, Yenawine expounds on

the efficacy of VTS in cultivating critical thinking, communication and analytical skills in students. The book also provides specific examples and case studies from practice.

> "Through VTS students also engage in critical thinking, defined as: Reasoning effectively both inductively and deductively; Using systems thinking to analyze the interactions of parts in a whole; Making decisions that include examining evidence, analyzing it from different perspectives, synthesizing and making connections between information, drawing conclusions, and reflecting critically on experiences; and Problem solving by looking at issues in both familiar and innovative ways, and developing significant questions to find better solutions" (Partnership for 21st-century skills, 2011, as cited in Fiedler et al., 2013).

In recent years, the use of comic books and graphic novels as a form of verbal-visual art has become increasingly common in education, both in language and literature classes, as well as in social sciences and humanities or science subjects. Cerić and Cerić, who developed a comic book approach to teaching, emphasize that the creative use of comic books and graphic novels not only facilitates teaching key concepts and skills but also empowers students in critical thinking and questioning the world around them (Cerić & Cerić, 2020).

5.2. Reflection on One's Own Attitudes and Beliefs through the Work of Art

Art can encourage viewers to engage in introspection, contemplating their own attitudes, beliefs and experiences. Self-reflection fosters the capacity for critical thinking, enabling individuals to contemplate their thoughts and behavior. In her essay *Against Interpretation*, Susan Sontag discusses how art can prompt viewers to engage in profound reflection on their interpretations, and how excessive intellectualization can hinder this process (Sontag, 1966). Sontag supports the notion that art should be experiential. It should allow observers to confront their attitudes and beliefs through direct experience. The essay concludes with a provocative statement that invites further reflection.

> "Our task is not to find the maximum amount of content in a work of art, much less to squeeze more content out of the work than is already there. Our task is to cut back content so that we can see the thing at all. The aim of all commentary on art now should be to make works of art-

> and, by analogy, our own experience-more, rather than less, real to us. The function of criticism should be to show how it is what it is, even that it is what it is, rather than to show what it means." (Sontag, 1966, p. 14)

The development of one's own opinion through the use of art enables one to explore and shape their inner beliefs and feelings on a deeper level. Through interaction with a work of art, may it be a painting, sculpture, literary work or music, individuals encounter different perspectives and emotions that they can internalize and interpret in their own manner. Art encourages introspection and reflection on one's personal experiences and values and enables the creation of a unique, personal perspective on the world. Consequently, a work of art functions as a medium for self-expression and the formation of authentic opinions that reflect an individual's unique awareness and identity. By reflecting on art and a specific artwork, children can develop their own, logically grounded opinions. This process is referred to as critical thinking.

6. TWO EXAMPLES OF WORKSHOPS

The selection of workshops was made from an existing portfolio of educational programs that had been designed and implemented by the authors themselves. The main selection criterion was an interdisciplinary approach integrating art, philosophy, and social sciences, as well as a focus on themes relevant to European values such as solidarity, tolerance, and human dignity. To structure the workshops, theoretical *frameworks from John Dewey (Art as Experience),* Herbert Read *(Education Through Art*), and Matthew Lipman (Philosophy for Children methodology) were drawn upon, ensuring a cohesive and reflective methodology. The process of creating art requires critical thinking about choices, techniques, and messages and artists often must reexamine their ideas and make adjustments. This process develops their ability for self-critique. Two workshops will be presented here to illustrate the process, with a focus on the interconnection between art, critical thinking and European values.

6.1. Workshop 1: Playing with Paintings[6]

Duration: 45 minutes

The goals of the workshop:

- To encourage students to accept and understand different opinions
- To introduce students to first-class works of art by European authors
- To develop one's own thinking and critical thinking

Workshop description:

Before the workshop begins, prepare at least five small pieces of paper, each with a different role or occupation, such as a police officer, scientist, doctor, priest or simply "me" (the student who draws "me" interprets the image from their own perspective). You can add more roles as desired. It is not necessary to use only the examples provided.

Start the workshop by presenting a topic for discussion. Show the students a work of art by a famous European artist, such as:

- Salvador Dalí, *The Persistence of Memory*, 1931
- Eugène Delacroix, *Horse Frightened by a Storm*, 1825–29
- Nicolae Grigorescu, *Romanian Village*, 1896

You can also choose works that are not so popular to introduce students to less popular European artists. Select five students and have them form a circle. Give each student a piece of paper or have them pull a piece of paper out of a hat. Each student should think about a work of art from the perspective of the role they have been given. For example, a police officer might see theft or destruction of private memories in Dalí's painting, a priest might see God's warning about the importance of time, a doctor might see a pandemic that is destroying everything, and a scientist might see memories that are slowly fading away. These are just examples from previous workshops. Students need to come up with their own approach. Provide 5 to 10 minutes timeframe for students to prepare their 5-minute speech in which they pre-

[6] The idea for the workshop was taken from the seminar "Art of Questioning" in 2010. It was adapted for the needs of the ETHIKA project – Ethics and Values Education in Schools and Kindergartens in 2015.

sent their view of the painting from the perspective of their role. Encourage students to step into their characters and develop original interpretations. While one student presents, the rest of the class acts as the jury. Their job is to ask at least three questions about each student's presentation and provide counterarguments if they disagree with his/her statements. After everyone has presented their views on the painting, the jury will choose the one with the best arguments who most successfully portrayed the assigned role. In the end, students who played roles can share their personal opinions about the painting and explain why they agree or disagree with the arguments they presented in their assigned roles.

This workshop not only develops critical thinking and argumentation but also prompts students to understand and appreciate different perspectives. This is crucial for their personal and intellectual development.

6.2. Workshop 2: Art as a Means of Political Expression

Duration: 90 minutes

The goals of the workshop:

- To develop critical thinking and analytical skills through reflection and discussion about a work of art
- To encourage empathy and understanding through the interpretation of visual representations of war and its consequences
- To analyze the role of artists in society and their political engagement.
- To evaluate the ethical dimension of art

Workshop description:

This workshop is intended for high school students and can be conducted as an interdisciplinary project or as part of the curriculum for one of the subjects in the field of social sciences and humanities.

First, put students into small groups. Assign each group with one of the previously prepared abstract terms. These can be related to war, peace, fear, hope, suffering, courage, etc. some examples of terms are: "chaos", "freedom", "suffering", "strength", "fear" and "hope". No further explanation is

to be provided on the meaning of the term. The painting that the participant will see later in the workshop is not to be mentioned at this phase.

The task of each group is, through a brief discussion and brainstorming, to come up with a visual image or situation that best represents the term. This image can be abstract or specific. After a few minutes, each group will present their term and describe the image or situation connected to it.

After the introductory activity, Picasso's *Guernica* is shown to the students. They have ten minutes to write down their impressions of the painting or to discuss them in smaller groups. Their task is to choose three terms that they connect to the painting. The teacher then writes all the chosen terms on the board. Together with the students, the teacher analyzes how often the terms are repeated and whether they are suitable for describing the painting. Every term written on the board is briefly discussed. Then, the teacher encourages students to choose three terms from the board that best describe the painting. After that, the teacher briefly explains to the students the historical and social context of *Guernica'*s creation. Then, the students discuss if they stick to their choice of terms or if they would change something after getting acquainted with the painting.

The teacher continues the discussion using the Socratic method, which means asking deeper questions that encourage students to think more about the painting, its meaning, and its connection to the chosen terms.

- Is Picasso's *Guernica* a politically engaged work of art?
- Can a politically engaged work of art truly be a work of art? Or does such a work serve a purpose that has nothing to do with art? Can works of art that are connected to politics be considered works of art?
- Should art be politically neutral?
- Do artists have a responsibility to engage with social issues?
- Can art influence public opinion and political decisions?
- Is the purpose of art social engagement or art in itself?

These are fundamental questions to discuss using the Socratic method. Through discussion, the teacher encourages students to provide additional examples with specific works of art from European history. The workshop

is concluded with two tasks for the students. The students choose the task they want to complete:

1. Draft a short essay on the relationship between art and community engagement
2. Describe *Guernica* purely from the artistic or political point of view

The objective of this workshop is to cultivate students' critical abilities, ethical awareness, and understanding of democratic values. The workshop fosters an active and engaged participation in social processes, encouraging students to become active and aware participants in these processes. The workshop facilitates the integration of knowledge from various disciplines, promoting a holistic approach to education and integrating different perspectives into a comprehensive understanding of complex topics.

7. CONCLUSION

The role of art in education extends beyond the mere development of aesthetic sensibility, technical skills and acquiring knowledge about artists and their works. It represents a key element in shaping the comprehensive personality of students, providing them with the tools necessary for a profound understanding of the world and the ability to critically think about it. Through art, students not only learn about creative expression, but also about how to question established norms, confront complex social issues and develop empathy towards others. This ability of analysis and reflection, which is fostered through artistic activities, is invaluable in the context of modern education that aims to create citizens capable of informed and responsible participation in a democratic society. Moreover, art enables students to explore and understand European values such as freedom of expression, democracy, human rights, and intercultural dialogue. Art projects that address themes such as social justice and equality help students develop a sense of awareness regarding the importance of these values and their application in everyday life. Therefore, art encourages individual development and actively contributes to shaping socially aware and engaged individuals.

The integration of art into the educational process is therefore both beneficial and necessary. It enables students to develop critical and creative thinking skills and the skills necessary to face the challenges of modern society. Art empowers students to become thoughtful and responsible citizens who acti-

vely participate in building a better and fair society. To illustrate these theoretical concepts, the article presents two examples of workshops that demonstrate how art can be used as a tool to encourage critical thinking and promote European values in education, whether in formal or informal settings. These examples demonstrate how, through carefully designed activities, art can be integrated into education to encourage students to engage in deeper thinking, discussion and active participation in the community, thereby emphasizing its importance in contemporary education.

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STRAIGHTENING THE "CROOKED TIMBER OF HUMANITY": SAFEGUARDING THE HUMANITY BY PROMOTING COSMOPOLITAN VALUES IN EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

The global pandemic crisis that erupted in 2020 had starkly revealed how our societies, especially in the arena of international relations, were still vulnerable despite all the institutional arrangements put in place in the aftermath of the World War II. In the climate of increasing political isolationism, the idea of cosmopolitanism, which had experienced a resurgence in the post-bloc world of the late 20th century, had suffered a significant setback. Given that cosmopolitanism is fundamentally based on human commonality, togetherness, and sociability, qualities that were sorely lacking in our everyday live during the pandemic, is it too much to imagine that this "scar" in the global fabric will reshape our societies and political arrangements to such an extent that the idea of cross-border solidarity becomes not only unattainable, but unimaginable? Furthermore, is the idea of shared humanity, which cosmopolitanism endorses, also in danger? This essay will confront these new challenges through a "cosmopolitan defence", invoking Immanuel Kant not as a political or legal cosmopolitan thinker, a role typically attributed to him, but rather as an educational one.
Keywords: *cosmopolitanism, cosmopolitan education, Immanuel Kant, humanity*

1. INTRODUCTION

The year 2020 has taught humanity a crucial lesson: globalization, defined as a series of processes that unify our planet, is not an irreversible phenomenon. Although we are more connected than ever in the first quarter of the 21st century, the pandemic showed that some events can, if not completely negate or reverse these processes, at least temporarily suspend them. Nevertheless, while staying at home and limiting social connections was the only effective means of preserving lives, there was no urgent necessity for theoretical contemplation on the long-term implications for the world. Especially regarding something that most of the world considers ephemeral, such as cosmopolitanism.

The pandemic has shattered our world into some 8 billion pieces, prompting states to acknowledge this fragmentation. Despite the presence of charity and compassion during the crisis at a personal level, it was severely diminished at the state level, to such an unexpected low that, at that moment, we could have been rightly concerned about the survival of our world. The question arose - will we descend into a new Dark Ages, full of barbarism, in which the idea of humanity will be forgotten? All states, from liberal democracies to authoritarian regimes, took a defensive stance and barricaded their borders. But as Wendy Brown asked a decade earlier in her *Walled States, Waning Sovereignty* - why build physical walls in the 21st century (Brown, 2010)? Especially since they rarely succeed in keeping "out" the threats of globalization, be they criminal activity, migration or viruses. As Brown explains with reference to Machiavelli, politics is inherently theatrical, as it is more important to provide a semblance of power than to actually wield it. Therefore, their rationale for responding to the crisis was straightforward – to project the image of stability. Every head of state, from democratically elected presidents to murderous despots, is aware that in times of crisis they can be overthrown by their own populace. To avert such occurrences, they have demonstrated "care" for their own political community, typically by withholding assistance to others, and defending their choices with a rationale that the resources are insufficient for everybody - as the of COVID vaccine distribution issue has bluntly demonstrated (Costello, 2021). Consequently, even collaboration between longstanding, generational allies was strained at best. Everyone was waiting in their own shelter, hoping the storm would pass. And eventually it did.

What other political and societal insights can we draw from the event that took about 7 million lives?[7] If there were any, they were hardly new, at least from the perspective of the *Realpolitik* endorsers in international relations theory. This truly immediate global crisis, which affected the lives of every human being on the planet, had painfully shown that the old "*homo homini lupus*" made famous by Thomas Hobbes was still more than valid regarding relations between states. Unfortunately, it has shown that we are not hurtling towards the peaceful global society that the "cosmopolitan optimists" envisioned, or rather hoped for, some 30 years ago. Consequently, it appears that after the pandemic, cosmopolitanism and its values are not high on the priority list of global society.

Furthermore, the problem might be even bigger. It is not that cosmopolitanism is in danger, but rather that during crises such as the pandemic, even our collective sense of humanity is in danger, as it unfortunately devalued, diminished. In other words, if a global quarantine is imposed again, will it also prove to be the end of the idea of humanity as we know it? Can we safeguard it, save it, no matter what crisis strikes us? This seems like a worst-case scenario, but at the end of the 2010s we were not expecting the pandemic either, so we should also probably be theoretically prepared.

Consequently, we need to examine how we can challenge the mindset that violates our innate human sociability and seeks to isolate our communities and confine us to individual shells just to create a (false) sense of security. How can we show that the world is still out there and not only terror lurks behind our doors? Or how can we expand our circle of compassion to include not only our family and friends, but the entire globe? Again, the answer is simple - education, especially in values that promote our collective sense of humanity.

This essay will focus on cosmopolitanism as a concept, and cosmopolitan education as a method for promoting our collective sense of humanity. To clarify the issue, it will briefly outline the cosmopolitan idea, its historical development, and its current state. Starting with describing its origins in the Ancient Greece, this history of cosmopolitanism will focus in particular on Immanuel Kant and his vital contribution to the development of the idea.

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[7] On COVID numbers, World Health Organization keeps records - https://data.who.int/dashboards/covid19/deaths?n=o

His essays, particularly *Toward Perpetual Peace*, represent the watershed moment in its development, as he was the first philosopher to use a hitherto moral doctrine to give it a political significance (Kant, 1991). Additionally, we will highlight his role in the development of cosmopolitan education, by focusing on the lectures collected in his book *On Education* (Kant, 2003). Finally, we will provide an overview of modern authors who address the challenges of cosmopolitan education and examine the values endorsed by various forms of modern cosmopolitanism.

2. COSMOPOLITANISM(S)

Cosmopolitanism is generally recognized as a moral doctrine that advocates equal respect for all people, both familiar and foreign. Despite appearances, this idea is not an invention of our modern globalized age. Its roots go much deeper into the past, with scholars such as Hugh Harris identifying them in the first monotheistic beliefs advocated by the Egyptian pharaoh Akhnaton fourteen centuries before Christ (Harris, 1927). Conversely, authors such as Moses Hadas express skepticism regarding this assertion, positing that aspects of cosmopolitanism are also evident in the religious teachings of the Phoenicians, Jews, Chinese, Ethiopians, Assyrians, and Persians, which, regrettably, are preserved in an incomplete manner (Hadas, 1943). Nevertheless, most scholars agree that the starting point of cosmopolitanism can be found in the teachings created in Ancient Greece, in the period we call the ethical period of Hellenistic philosophy (Schofield, 1999; Heater, 2002; Nussbaum, 2002).

According to the account of Diogenes Laertius, the concept is believed to have developed in the Stoic philosophical school, although the first proponent was Diogenes the Cynic (Diogenes Laertius, 1979). Diogenes was the first one to claim, “I am cosmopolitan!” (Diogenes Laertius, 1979, VI 63), although this assertion may have been incited by his dissent from the norms of the ancient Greek poleis. As Moses Hadas claims, this was a “rather rebellious reaction against any form of coercion imposed by the community on the individual” (Hadas, 1943, p. 108). Diogenes reportedly faced legal repercussions and exile because either he or his father defaced the coinage of Sinope (Diogenes Laertius, 1979, VI 20). The cynical rejection, then, is not a newly discovered love for the world, but rather an ascetic ideal limited to the individual that dismisses the previous civic loyalty to the political community. Crates, a subsequent student of Diogenes, gives perhaps the

first extant description of the cosmopolis, a concept which became their steppingstone in the development of cosmopolitan idea: “He said that his homeland was a contempt of fame and poverty, which no evil could shake, and that he was a fellow citizen of Diogenes, who was safe from all envy.” (Diogenes Laertius, 1979, VI 93).

Nonetheless, Diogenes’ initially negative idea was appropriated by the Stoic school and transformed into a positive one - all humans are morally equal by virtue of their capacity for reason, which enables them to recognize, understand and adhere to the natural law that governs the cosmos. It is important to note that in the ancient world, where the social order was fundamentally based on the practice of slavery, this Stoic idea that all humans possess reason and deserve equal treatment was nothing short of revolutionary and therefore difficult to sustain. However, it appears that the founder of the school, Zeno of Citium, was not an explicit advocate of cosmopolitanism (Schofield, 1999). Zeno was more concerned with constructing an ideal political society, an intention not unlike that of Plato’s *Republic*. A cosmopolis - a city inhabited by both sages and gods was later derived from his ideas by his disciple Chrysippus (Schofield, 1999). Because of this commonality of humanity in reason, the idea arises that we ought to regard other individuals with affection.

The later development of the Stoic school adapted this primarily ethical idea to the political demands of its time. Consequently, in the late Roman Stoa, under the influence of authors such as Cicero, the commonality of all people based on their rationality gradually transformed into *ius gentium*, the law governing relations between imperial subjects. Despite this newly discovered political purpose, the ethical concept of the universal community remained intact and, when intertwined with Jewish mysticism, it significantly impacted the emerging religion of Christianity. From these foundations emerged the concept of dignity, which recognizes the divine presence in every individual. In turn, the quest for equality and justice inherent in Christianity shaped the theory of natural law, which significantly influenced the formation and recognition of universal human rights in the twentieth century.

After this initial development of cosmopolitanism in antiquity, the idea entered a period of “obscurity” that lasted until the 18th century. Although cosmopolitanism was not directly addressed, numerous teachings significantly influenced the progression of cosmopolitan thought during this period. For

instance, it was influenced by Dante Alighieri and his advocacy of universal monarchy in *De Monarchia* (Alighieri, 1996), but also by the humanist teachings of Erasmus of Rotterdam, who promoted the idea of world peace (Erasmus, 1989), as well as the work of Hugo Grotius, who initiated the concept of human rights - entitlements inherent to all individuals by virtue of their humanity (Grotius, 2005).

However, it may be asserted that the cosmopolitan idea finally experienced a substantial resurgence at the onset of the 18th century, during the Age of Enlightenment. It was a fruitful period for the development of the idea, as it was a time of industrial and trade growth, of geographical discoveries and advances in the natural sciences, but also of a renewed interest in Hellenistic philosophy. Finally, it was an era marked by the initial emergence of the concept of human rights, along with a broader emphasis on the faculties of human reason. Influenced by the events of the American Revolution and especially initial phases of the French Revolution, the idea of cosmopolitanism gained a strong impetus. *The Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen* and the *American Declaration of Independence* emerged from cosmopolitan forms of thinking and in turn strengthened those same thoughts.

During the Enlightenment, the terms "cosmopolitanism" and "world citizenship" were not used to denote specific philosophical theories, but rather an attitude of openness and impartiality (Penman, 2020). Thus, a cosmopolitan was a person who was not a subject of a particular political or religious authority, or someone who was bound by limited attachments or cultural prejudices. Additionally, the term is sometimes used to refer to a person who has led an urban life, who likes to travel, who maintains a network of international contacts, or who feels at home anywhere. Although authors such as Montesquieu, Voltaire, Diderot, Addison, Hume, and Jefferson identified themselves as cosmopolitans in one or more of these forms, their use of the term lacks significant philosophical relevance.

Furthermore, the 18th century witnessed the emergence of an entirely new literary form - perpetual peace proposals (Aksu, 2008). Among the various pacifist initiatives put forward by prominent European thinkers of the era, the most famous and at the same time the most influential was the one presented by Immanuel Kant in his work *Toward Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch* (Kant, 1991). It is important to note that this is not the only text in which Kant addresses cosmopolitanism. In *The Metaphysics of Morals* (Kant, 1996), in the section on public law, he is the first to advocate

cosmopolitan law as a law distinct in its characteristics from both civil and international law, while *in Idea for an Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose* he associates the cosmopolitan state with a historical necessity aimed at advancing the human species (Kant, 1991). The perspectives articulated in these writings reveal that cosmopolitanism takes on a completely new form in Kant. Not only did he provide a turning point in the cosmopolitan thinking of his time, but he also very clearly pointed out the problem that cosmopolitanism still faces today: "The greatest problem for the human species, the solution of which nature compels him to seek, is that of attaining a civil society which can administer justice universally." (Kant, 1991, p. 45).

Indeed, it is difficult to deny that Kant has had a significant impact on our contemporary cosmopolitanism, since he was the first philosopher to address the ethical aspect of cosmopolitanism and then to apply the principles he set forth in that consideration to the questions of international relations of his time. However, focusing solely on his thoughts on the establishment of a global civic society separates them from the complex unity of Kant's cosmopolitan thought and gives us an incomplete view of the subject. Pauline Kleingeld, for instance, believes that *Toward Perpetual Peace*, which Kant wrote toward the end of his life, represents the culmination of his thinking on ethical and legal issues (Kleingeld, 2011). Furthermore, as David Heater repeatedly points out, Kant's vision is essentially holistic and cannot be read in isolation, as it must be contextualized within his conception of cosmopolitan law and his moral philosophy (Heater, 2002). Finally, authors such as George Cavallar argue that the absence of these links could lead to a significant misinterpretation of his cosmopolitan project (Cavallar, 2017).

Still, *Toward Perpetual Peace* needs to be addressed as a central text, as it clearly articulates Kant's belief that humanity could only overcome its "self-incurred immaturity" by allowing individuals to reach their full potential through the promotion a healthy global environment (Kant, 1991). Kant perceives the need for states as a means to ensure the maximum freedom of individuals, which he considers the sole inherent right of humanity. Unfortunately, states coexist in conditions of antagonism, which must be mitigated to enable the flourishing of human capabilities. Absence of order among states leads to conflicts and incessant military preparations that exhaust the state's resources, which could be more effectively allocated for the benefit of individuals. Furthermore, Kant believes that the constant threat of war

fosters hostility toward the populations of other nations, which ultimately corrupts the moral character of individuals. For this reason, Kant strongly believes that external order is essential to the internal structure of states, which leads to the conclusion that local justice depends on international justice, hence necessitating the establishment of an international system to provide it.

In order to prevent a Hobbesian state of nature among nations, Kant presents six preliminary articles in his *Toward Perpetual Peace* that are intended to reduce the likelihood of war, although they cannot establish a lasting peace on their own. Additionally, he articulates three final articles that lead to perpetual peace. These three articles advocate that each country should adopt a republican constitution, that each country should participate in the *foedus pacificum*, that is, a peaceful alliance, and that cosmopolitan right based on universal hospitality must be instituted. The alliance of states that Kant suggests should be a voluntary coalition with the primary goal of securing world peace, which in turn is beneficial for the realization of all inherent human capabilities.

Kant's cosmopolitical ideas have been partially fulfilled in the 20th century with the formation of international organizations like the League of Nations and the United Nations, although both have regrettably demonstrated ineffectiveness, particularly in achieving enduring global peace. This problem was addressed by John Rawls, who was one of the most prominent followers of Kantian political thought in the 20th century. Rawls extended his theoretical postulates of justice from *A Theory of Justice*, which focused on the establishment of social contract constituting a single political community, to the global community in *The Law of Peoples* (Rawls, 1991). His main idea was to maintain the Kantian attitude outlined in *Toward Perpetual Peace* and Kant's ideas about the *foedus pacificum*. Rawls believed that in order to realize the idea of eternal peace we must begin with the idea of the social contract of the liberal democratic constitutional order and then expand it by introducing the second original position at the level at which the representatives of liberal peoples communicate with other liberal peoples. Nevertheless, since not all world populations adhere to liberal principles, Rawls is prepared to offer specific compromises. Within the law of peoples, there is a provision for "well-ordered" communities that, while not liberal, uphold fundamental human rights and engage in non-aggressive foreign policy. Rawls designates such societies as decent. States that contra-

vene these prerequisites are designated as rogue states, burdened states, and benign absolutisms because they lack the claim to mutual respect and tolerance that liberal and decent societies enjoy. The objective of the law of peoples would be achieved if all societies could determine the establishment of either a liberal or decent order, however this appears improbable. According to Rawls, the term "unlikely" imparts to the law of people the essence of a practical utopia because it delineates a feasible social order that links political rights and justice for all liberal and humane societies within the community of peoples.

In addition to Rawls, other contemporary philosophers have examined cosmopolitanism from different perspectives. Martha Nussbaum examines the topic from its ancient foundations, through which she seems to advocate a rather strict concept of cosmopolitanism, that is, one that includes a wide range of duties toward strangers (Nussbaum, 2002). Kwame Anthony Appiah promotes a more realistic concept of what he called "rooted cosmopolitanism", which acknowledges our obligation to assist every human being while prioritizing those we somehow perceive as "closer" (Appiah, 2007). Finally, authors such as Daniel Archibugi and David Held examine cosmopolitanism through the lens of political theory, focusing on the concept of a cosmopolitan society and the foundations of cosmopolitan democracy (Archibugi & Held, 1995). Even this brief examination of history and contemporary issues reveals the intricacy and significance of philosophical contemplation on cosmopolitanism.

Although cosmopolitanism can be simply described as the idea that every individual is a citizen of the world and therefore has duties to the general community of human beings, it is easy to see that there is a wide range of views that could be considered cosmopolitan. Consequently, cosmopolitanism is currently regarded as a lifestyle, a political or legal doctrine, and an ethical commitment to the global community. Sociologist Robert J. Holton refers to the concept of cosmopolitanism as a "coat of many colors" due to the proliferation of terminology associated with it. In the appendix of his work *Cosmopolitanisms*, he lists about 150 distinct variations of the present scientific application of the term, namely its classifications (Holton, 2009). This work will try to overcome this new theoretical chaos with a simpler division, with just three basic types of cosmopolitanism. Specifically, in addition to the fundamental cosmopolitan characteristics common to all variants of cosmopolitanism, which Thomas Pogge delineates as individualism

- where the ultimate units of concern are human beings; egalitarianism - where the status of these units is uniformly accorded to all living beings; and universalism - indicating that this distinct status possesses global significance (Pogge, 1992), there are also notable distinctions among them. For example, some cosmopolitan views consider that all human beings should share certain moral values, and that a good human life requires consideration for the universal community and every human being. Others see cosmopolitanism in the framework of cultural expressions that everyone should appreciate, and finally there are those who imagine a universal community in terms of political institutions that everyone should share. Based on these differences, we will divide cosmopolitan views into ethical, cultural and political cosmopolitanism.

This division should be considered with a degree of skepticism, as the very concept of cosmopolitanism lacks clear delineations. Consequently, we will describe the differences within the idea by employing the term cosmopolitan mode or aspect, rather than the term cosmopolitan type. It is also important to note that these cosmopolitan modes have historically developed in parallel, indicating frequent interconnection and interrelation among them. This not only justifies the use of a less specific term but also underscores that an analysis of cosmopolitanism cannot be conducted without considering its historical development.

Each of the modes represents a distinct category of inquiry for philosophy. Ethical cosmopolitanism questions the role of boundaries that arise from historical contingencies in our moral decision-making, specifically regarding our moral obligations to foreigners. Cultural cosmopolitanism raises the dilemma of how to harmonize a general concern for human life with the specificities of individual life, in particular how to balance universalizing cosmopolitan ideals with the values of individual distinctions. Political cosmopolitanism, conversely, poses inquiries regarding the global political community, or more precisely, if we assume that the process of globalization has brought us to the end of the Westphalian concept of sovereignty, are we already on the threshold of a global, cosmopolitan community? And if so, what kind of political community should it be, and what laws should guide it?

Furthermore, if we agree on the division of modern cosmopolitanism into three aspects, we can easily discern different main values that each of them endorses. For instance, moral cosmopolitanism is focused on equality, or

more precisely, the equality of every human being. It supports the notion that human life has dignity, that is, an inherent worth to which no material value can be assigned, making it for all intents and purposes - priceless. We owe this line of thinking to early Stoics as they were the first to support the claim that all humans are of equal moral worth because of their capacity to reason.

Cultural cosmopolitanism values diversity, especially its appreciation of the different ways of life. It also respects tolerance and inclusion. Although it has been present at the core of the cosmopolitan idea from the very beginning, this mode has only recently received significant scholarly attention. Conversely, political cosmopolitanism gives special value to peace and, through it, to order. Immanuel Kant exemplifies this line of thinking by arguing that is only through peaceful coexistence among nations that the full capacities of individuals, and through them humanity in general, can and will be developed.

Taken together, we can ascertain that the core values that cosmopolitanism promotes are liberal values that have simply been transposed from the state level to the global level. In that regard, cosmopolitan values are similar to the civic values promoted in modern multinational (democratic) states. Furthermore, as liberalism has developed through the political tradition of the West, it is also understandable why cosmopolitan values are viewed with suspicion in those states and political communities that historically do not belong to that tradition.

Finally, it should also be noted that while all modes share the basic cosmopolitan characteristics, their intentions and goals often lead them into contradictions. For example, the fundamental aim of ethical cosmopolitanism is to acknowledge the equality of human status grounded in the moral equality of individuals. This concept partially contradicts cultural cosmopolitanism, which primarily aims to respect diversity. It should certainly be noted that this type of conflict is also inherent to liberalism, and it seems quite likely that cosmopolitanism has inherited this push and pull between egalitarianism and respect for variety from that doctrine. Finally, there is political cosmopolitanism, which aims to establish a stable and effective world political system by developing institutions that promote peace and prevent violent conflict resolution. In contrast to the initial two modes, which are normative, political cosmopolitanism is inherently institutional and thus situa-

ted at the confluence of the other two forms, which influence its ongoing reassessment of objectives.

Following this comprehensive overview of cosmopolitanism, its historical context, and its various forms, we will shift our attention to a pivotal figure in its evolution, the Prussian philosopher Immanuel Kant. Although he was one of the greatest minds of the Enlightenment, and a firm believer in the progress of humanity, he also famously quipped that "nothing straight can be constructed from such warped wood as that which man is made of", now better known as the crooked timber idiom (Kant, 1991, p. 46). Nevertheless, he was not discouraged by our earthly failings, and his whole "cosmopolitan project", which includes his political and moral writings as well as his educational theories, could be considered an attempt to at least "straighten" that crooked timber. In this regard, the next section will deal with his views on the education that would achieve a better future for humanity.

3. KANT AS A FOUNDATIONAL THINKER OF COSMOPOLITAN EDUCATION

It is important to note that although Kant had a significant, if not decisive, influence on modern political cosmopolitanism, his work on educational matters has been seriously neglected. The reason for this lies not only in the enormous influence that Kant asserted in other philosophical fields, but also in the fact that his only direct contribution to the educational discourse was a book called *On Education* (Kant, 2003). This volume is a compilation of his university lectures on the subject, delivered between 1770 and 1780, curated by his younger associate and former student F. T. Rink, and published a year before his death. It does not appear that the lectures, or the notes compiled later, were intended to provide an exhaustive theory of education. Still, the prevalent tone of the book is easy to notice - human nature can be continually improved, and to achieve this goal Kant advocates raising the educational science to academic status, which was an innovative idea in the 18th century. Moreover, it should be said that even in this "unrefined" form, these lectures represent the starting point for thinking about cosmopolitan education, which is increasingly proving to be an important addition to cosmopolitan theory, since it represents the basis of the "cosmopolitical project", which envisions a global political order based on peace, justice, and democracy.

Currently, the prevailing opinion is that Rink's compendium is a collection of paraphrases and misquotations from Kant's other works, which he organized to give them some semblance of order (Cavallar, 2017). Consequently, it is not an easy task to determine Kant's true thoughts on education, as his opinions on the subject are dispersed throughout his extensive writings on politics, history, and ethics. Nevertheless, despite the lack of a systematic publication on education, Kant exerted considerable influence on educational thinkers of his time, such as Pestalozzi and Herbart.

Of course, Kant did not arrive at his educational thought *ex nihilo*. He is in many ways indebted to Rousseau's thought, which is also evident in his views on education. The faculty of autonomy is important for Kant's moral philosophy, particularly as he distinguishes between the realm of nature and the realm of morality, viewing education as the mechanism that connects the two. For example, education leads children from a condition of compulsion driven by their innate desires to a state of moral reasoning, enabling them to perform the correct action through comprehension of its righteousness. Consequently, in Kant's perspective, the ultimate objective of education should be the cultivation of moral character. As Kant sees rationality as a prerequisite for morality, and since children are not yet fully rational, this leads him to view children as neither inherently good nor evil, but rather as naturally non-rational and hence non-moral. It follows that children are not born with the capacity for autonomy, and that they must develop this faculty through the process of education. Therefore, Kant considers that all education should focus on fostering independent thought in children and cultivating their capacity for autonomous moral behavior.

Kant refrained from presenting specific solutions for educational reform, but he did note that Rousseau's *Emile* held interesting suggestions. He deemed the educational practices of his era largely ineffective, as they promoted conformity over autonomy. Consequently, he endorsed the establishment of experimental schools influenced by Rousseau's teachings, particularly *Philanthropinum* school in Dessau, established by Johann Bernhard Basedow. Kant's primary educational aim was to cultivate the moral character of the individual, thereby fostering the emergence of an ideal political community. Furthermore, Kant paralleled the progression of the individual from infancy to adulthood with the evolution of humanity. Consequently, in Kant's view, education has an enormous task, not just of developing the morals of the individual, but also to perfect humanity.

Throughout his lectures *On Education* Kant highlights one central thought – "Man is the only being that needs education" (Kant, 2003, p. 6). Man can only attain his humanity through education, that is, he is merely what education makes of him. Furthermore, it is also noticeable that an individual can only be educated by another individual, specifically by those who have already been educated. In this regard, humanity, viewed solely as a collective, must progressively cultivate its inherent abilities through individual effort by each person. "This much, however, is certain: that no individual man, no matter what degree of culture may be reached by his pupils, can insure their attaining their destiny. To succeed in this, not the work of a few individuals only is necessary, but that of the whole human race." (Kant, 2003, p. 10)

The outcomes of this process are transmitted to subsequent generations not biologically, as in animals, but through education and social and political institutions. Therefore, later generations need to appropriate the skills and knowledge acquired by previous generations before they can make progress on their own. "Education is an art which can only become perfect through the practice of many generations. Each generation, provided with the knowledge of the foregoing one, is able more and more to bring about an education which shall develop man's natural gifts in their due proportion and in relation to their end, and thus advance the whole human race towards its destiny" (Kant, 2003, p. 10) In that sense, education plays a crucial role not only in the realization of cosmopolitan community, but also in the development of individual morality.

Similar to other domains of knowledge, educational theory and practice must evolve over time. Kant believed that a critical breakthrough occurred in his era, influenced by the innovative educational concepts introduced by Rousseau in *Emile* and the methodologies employed in the *Philantrophinum* school. In the essay *On the Common Saying* and the lectures contained in *On Education*, Kant asserted that the Enlightenment had, for the first time in history, developed pedagogical methods that promote independent thought and moral action in children, rather than blind obedience akin to animals who follow directives solely to evade punishment and attain rewards. "Man may be either broken in, trained, and mechanically taught, or he may be really enlightened. Horses and dogs are broken in; and man, too, may be broken in. It is, however, not enough that children should be merely broken in; for it is of greater importance that they shall learn to think" (Kant, 2003, p. 15).

Nevertheless, he indicates that this process will face some difficulties: “One of the greatest problems of education is how to unite submission to the necessary restraint with the child's capability of exercising his free will.” (Kant, 2003, p. 18). That is, how to compel the will while enabling it to use its liberty. Kant in *On Education* tries to provide potential solutions to the problem, not unlike Rousseau in his *Emile*, while emphasizing the importance of treating children as children rather than as diminutive adults.

But since humanity is made up of different individuals, should the education of individuals also imitate the course of the education of mankind through the generations? Kant answer, quite unsurprisingly, is yes. He claims that “children ought to be educated, not for the present, but for a possibly improved condition of man in the future”, but with a caveat (informed by Christian eschatology) that presupposes the commonality of human destiny (Kant, 2003, p. 12). Kant asserts that this educational principle of preparing for a potentially better future is vital because parents typically instruct their children to conform to prevailing circumstances, regardless of their adverse nature. Kant considers this wrong, asserting that parents should provide their children with superior education to facilitate improved conditions in the future. Nevertheless, parents may be the biggest obstacle to cosmopolitan education, but they are certainly not the only one. Kant also observes how rulers use their subjects merely as instruments for their own ends. He concludes with the remark that parents care for the home, rulers for the state, and neither of them has the universal good of humanity as their goal.

Therefore, Kant strongly believes that the basis of all education must be cosmopolitan, but as we see in the former objection, as education generally helps us adapt to the world, which is clearly not ideal, is cosmopolitan education harmful to the individual? Will setting us on a course toward some future ideal hinder us in the present? Kant answers that even though it may seem that we are working against our own benefit, this is only temporary, as overall progress is made toward what is best for the individual. Kant strongly believes that “It is through good education that all the good in the world arises”. (Kant, 2003, p. 12)

Kant also reminds us that all culture begins with the individual, one person gradually influencing others. Only through the collective efforts of broad-minded people who are interested in the universal good of all humanity and who can envision a better world in the future can the progress of human nature toward its ultimate goal gradually be achieved. Kant is hopeful beca-

use the prospect of a theory of education is a glorious ideal, and it matters little if we are unable to realize it at once. He warns us that we must not "look upon the idea as chimerical, nor decry it as a beautiful dream, notwithstanding the difficulties that stand in the way of its realization…" (Kant, 2003, p. 9)

As we can see from these paragraphs, claims such as Louden's that the philosophy of education is central to Kant's overall philosophical program certainly become credible (Louden, 2000). Its central importance stems largely from the commanding position that education holds within his theory of human nature. In Kant's view, education is fundamentally about the effort to realize our humanity. But we must also be reminded that for Kant, education is not the final goal. He has other intentions, which he clearly states in his *Lectures on Ethics*: "The final destiny of the human race is moral perfection, so far as it is accomplished through human freedom, whereby man, in that case, is capable of the greatest happiness… How, then, we are we to seek this perfection, and from whence is it to be hoped for? From nowhere else but education." (Kant, 1997, pp. 220, 221)

Having that in mind, *On Education* articulates Kant's efforts to educate students to become exemplars of human perfection. Kantian education is necessarily a moral education that seeks to instill cosmopolitan dispositions in students, while recognizing that external transformation through education cannot affect internal change because of human free will. Ultimately, we revisit what Kant considers to be the paramount issue in education - the necessity of disciplining the child to cultivate the exercise of free will. Kant maintains that we must be strict, yet refrain from overwhelming them, so that they may develop their own individuality, but only as members of a society. He finishes his exposition by quoting *Tristram Shandy*, a novel by Laurence Sterne, in which the character Toby talks to the fly that has been bothering him for some time, and which he finally lets out of the window: "Go away, tiresome creature; the world is large enough for us both." While this may only indicate tolerance, it can also be seen as a foundational element of cosmopolitan education. Kant certainly thought so when he recommended these words as our motto: "We need not be troublesome to one another; the world is large enough for all of us" (Kant, 2003, p. 36).

4. CONTEMPORARY VIEWS ON COSMOPOLITAN EDUCATION

As can be seen from Kant's example, the topic of cosmopolitan education has long been a concern of philosophers. In recent decades, it has received increased attention, not only through the work of philosophers and educational theorists who have raised these questions, but also through educators who have felt the need to better understand how globalization has begun to affect and sometimes significantly change their profession. They also wanted to provide advice on how to respond to these new realities, both inside and outside the classroom. There is a great deal of work and opinion on this subject, and we will mention three important voices, whose work we will present and attempt to organize in the manner that corresponds with cosmopolitan aspects and values that each of them endorses.

As we have already mentioned, ethical cosmopolitanism asks us not to include something imaginary like political borders into our moral considerations, and it strongly supports the equality of human beings, no matter where they come from. We have already mentioned Martha Nussbaum as a scholar who had an important influence on the resurgence of cosmopolitanism in the 1990s. The basis of her cosmopolitan inclination starts with the focus on the teachings of ancient Stoics to prove that ethics and education are inextricably linked (Nussbaum, 2002). Nussbaum starts her examination of cosmopolitan education by stating that compassion starts with the local. We tend to care more about those who are close to us in some way, family, friends, neighbors… She provides an account of moral development – when a child is little, it recognizes and loves only its own parents; then, after a while, it comes to know and love its other relatives, then its region or local group, then its nation, and finally, if at all, we start loving humanity. It is only through the smaller groups that we come to the larger, and so it is to be expected that the moral emotions associated with the smaller groups will be the most powerful. This follows the account of the ancient Stoic Hierocles of Alexandria, who described our *oikeiosis* as a series of concentric circles. Like Hierocles, Nussbaum claims that our task is to "draw the circles in towards the center", to find ways to extend our circles of care, to strengthen our strong emotions of belonging to the whole world. It is our duty to enhance our ability to imagine the situation of others, to "walk in their shoes". From this, Nussbaum concludes that compassion needs a cognitive element, and since it contains thought, it can be educated. Therefore, teaching compassion is the ultimate goal of cosmopolitan education.

Nussbaum provides an account of this learning in her book *Cultivating Humanity* (Nussbaum, 1997). She considers that learning begins in infancy. At birth, an infant is merely a human being whose needs are universal, such as the need for food and comfort. Eventually, the young child learns to limit its demands by the needs of others. Nussbaum admits that this altruistic learning is shaped differently in each society, but a child's motivation to overcome the hatred of loved ones comes from features of shared humanity. They also bring the child back to that humanity by asking him to see himself as one person among others, not the whole world (Nussbaum, 1997).

Nussbaum claims that our education of a broader world should start in early childhood, before any sort of ideology could interfere. Once children begin to show interest in storytelling, stories about different countries and people can be introduced. In this way, children could find similarities between the distant and the local, and they could learn about different ways of living and thinking in an entertaining way. Later, probably in college, students could be taught courses in human diversity. Nussbaum claims that this education "is for all students, because whatever social role their lives give them, they will need to learn to treat each other with respect and understanding" (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 69).

Furthermore, through this education, the future global citizen must develop an understanding not only of distant cultures, but also of ethnic, racial, and religious differences within his or her own society. In addition, according to Nussbaum, they must develop an understanding of diversity of human ideas about gender and sexuality. "It is up to us, as educators, to show our students the beauty and interest of a life that is open to the whole world, to show them that there is after all more joy in the kind of citizenship that questions than in the kind that simply applauds, more fascination in the study of human beings in all their real variety and complexity than in the zealous pursuit of superficial stereotypes, more genuine love and friendship in the life of questioning and self-government than in submission to authority." (Nussbaum, 1997, p. 84). By following this educational path, the aforementioned Stoic circles of care develop simultaneously, in a complex, interwoven manner. Nussbaum further claims that the final circle of care, the one that encompasses the whole world, is not the last to form. Long before children have any idea of nation or religion, they are painfully familiar with hunger and loneliness, and possibly death. Long before ideology interferes, they know something about humanity.

However, it should also be noted that by her account, even in cosmopolitan education it is not unjustified to give priority to one's own region and its history, since the local is the first sphere in which the cosmopolitan should act. Nussbaum also argues that it would be a mistake to give our students equal knowledge of all histories and cultures. After all, understanding distant cultures and ethnic, racial, and religious differences is not enough. The world citizen, according to Nussbaum, must also develop an understanding of the history and diversity of human ideas about sexuality and gender.

Another important voice in the discussion of cosmopolitan education is that of David T. Hansen. Central to his thought is the motto "teaching is a calling, not an occupation" which he explored in detail in his book *Call to Teach* (Hansen, 1996). This same tenet guides his thinking on cosmopolitan education, which he considers as educational orientation that can help teachers meet the challenges of a globalized world, especially since he believes that concern for the larger world has always been part of the teacher's experience. In his book *Teacher and the World*, he builds his educational approach around cosmopolitanism, that is, a reflective openness to new people and ideas while maintaining a reflective loyalty to local values and commitments (Hansen, 2011). In a sense, we could say that Hansen's educational thought is primarily attuned to the cultural mode of cosmopolitanism, the one that values differences among us, but also between our societies, and is focused on the practical, everyday experiences of teachers in the classroom.

Central to the opinions presented in *Teacher and the World* is a concept called the cosmopolitan prism, which Hansen describes as an orientation to the world that changes our perspective (Hansen, 2011). The cosmopolitan prism is not only a form of tolerance, but also an active endeavor in which we learn, or at least try to learn, from others. Even the most widely travelled person can be parochial in outlook and sense of judgement. Therefore, Hansen concludes that while a cosmopolitan education must include travel, the emphasis should never be on physical movement, but on intellectual, ethical, and aesthetic one.

His central thesis in the book is that cosmopolitan education helps people move closer and closer together, and further apart. This sounds counterintuitive, but it is, Hansen argues, an insight gained from the classroom. During their schooling, teachers and students learn a great deal about each other – their interests, personalities, dispositions, habits, hopes… In this respect,

they grow closer to each other over time, but they also grow apart from each other through a deepening recognition of what makes each of them a unique person. Closeness does not come from the disappearance of differences, but from their sharpened emergence. And once again, one of the central values of cosmopolitanism is recognized - the acceptance of difference.

In this regard, Hansen concludes that cosmopolitanism might not offer a solution to our contemporary problems, but it does offer a new way of thinking, seeing, and acting. Its virtues, in Hansen's view, are threefold. First, cosmopolitanism is supple, as evidenced by the various forms of cosmopolitanism that exist in the real world. Second, cosmopolitanism has shown longevity. It is not always a fashionable idea, but it has stood the test of time. Third, cosmopolitanism represents hopefulness. The hope that the world can be better. The hope that, despite the pressures on education around the world from short-term strategic interests, a cosmopolitan orientation can help educators respond to the contemporary ethos while remaining true to their creative calling. Finally, we should note that these pressures are not new. Kant already noticed that one of the main problems of education is that it is made for the present, and not for the future.

Finally, among the authors dealing with modern cosmopolitan education, we would like to mention Sharon Todd, whose book *Toward an Imperfect Education* (Todd, 2009) is compelling in that it challenges the prevailing notions in the field, by asserting that the current conception of humanity underlying cosmopolitan education initiatives undermines the potential to deal meaningfully with human pluralism. It should also be noted that her focus in the book is on what she calls it "the paradoxical relation embedded in the heart of cosmopolitanism between commitment to universal rights and respect for cultural diversity" (Todd, 2009, p. 152). Moreover, she claims that our current emphasis on rights will not solve the problem of human pluralism.

Although Todd criticizes the idea of humanity based on universality, she does not presume that there are no common bonds, no shared values, principles, and perspectives among individuals. These commonalities originate from the very differences of our ordinary human lives. In this regard, Todd endorses the assertion that the idea of humanity needs to be rethought. "(I)f the humanity is fundamentally plural, then it cannot be posited as singular, unified portrait of what we think constitutes the perfect subject. Pluralism

by its very nature resists an idea of humanity that seeks to contain everyone within a totalizing image." (Todd, 2009, p. 152)

Furthermore, although it may not seem so at first glance, Todd's contrarian cosmopolitan education is closely aligned with political cosmopolitanism in its advocacy for peace. Todd acknowledges that the focus on pluralism has highlighted antagonisms, conflicts, and maybe even the potential for violence. Still, the resolution of these conflicts cannot be accomplished by disregarding the human aspects that initially incited them, or by merely categorizing them as "inhuman". Todd asserts that cosmopolitans are not ignorant of the existence of conflicts in the world. Nonetheless, they seldomly disavow humanness of violence, resulting in an idealized portrayal of humanity. Todd's crucial stance was to challenge the presumption that education should overcome these imperfections by refocusing its attention on the idealized image of humanity. Instead, there is a need for education to face humanity in all its imperfection. Education, from this perspective, cannot be aligned with cultivating humanity, advancing virtues, or implementing principles in isolation, but is closely connected to the practices through which we confront our human limitations. Thus, Todd's depiction of imperfect humanity represents a nuanced moral and political engagement with pluralism. This account urges us to acknowledge the challenges and flaws inherent in all human interactions as an inseparable aspect of our cosmopolitan existence. "Humanity, in this light, is no mere abstraction, but is a responsibility that grows from my proximity to actual others." (Todd, 2009, p. 155), She concludes that although we do not share humanity, we do share the world with others, which necessitates that we face the individuals with whom we share it.

5. CONCLUSION

Teachers are among the principal advocates of cosmopolitanism, a time-honored idea with philosophical foundations that stands for equality and harmonious coexistence among all individuals worldwide, while also fostering cultural interchange across the boundaries that separate us. Consequently, this essay commenced with an inquiry of the status of the cosmopolitan ideal in contemporary society, particularly following the extended period of global quarantine that impacted the intrinsic sociability of our species. There is concern that altered political landscape emphasizing fortified boun-

daries may adversely impact both cosmopolitanism and the fundamental concept of our common humanity that underpins it. However, despite the nobleness of its aspirations, cosmopolitanism seems to have been on the wane even before the pandemic crisis. And the explanation is straightforward - contrary to expectations from thirty years ago. modern cosmopolitanism was not successful in confronting and solving the problems of our globalized world. The epidemic has only exacerbated concerns such as its alignment with Western values and the ambiguity of its fundamental beliefs. Notwithstanding its deficiencies, this essay advocates for the preservation of cosmopolitanism from another era of historical neglect, asserting that the primary means to achieve this should be education, aimed not at the present, but for a "possibly improved condition of man in the future" - in essence, cosmopolitan education.

The essay offers a brief outline of the intellectual history of cosmopolitanism to elucidate the perspective. This history, which acknowledges the origins of the idea in Ancient Greece, emphasizes in particular the crucial contribution of Immanuel Kant to the development of the cosmopolitan concept. His political essays, of which *Toward Perpetual Peace* occupies a special place, because the cosmopolitan proposal presented therein provided a moral worldview with a more solid, political framework. But Kant was also aware that cosmopolitanism could not only be endorsed "from the top", through laws and contracts between rulers and nations, but that it also needed to be supported "from the bottom", through education, in order to help humanity progress from what he calls "self - incurred tutelage" (Kant, 1991). Regrettably, his contributions to educational issues have been largely overlooked until recently. The rationale for this is twofold - Kant still casts enormous influence on various domains of Western philosophy, while his contributions to the educational literature are minimal. Only one book exists, a compilation of his university lectures on the subject. Nonetheless, this book is significant as it illustrates the foundations of what would subsequently be recognized as cosmopolitan education, which will ultimately provide a vital enhancement to cosmopolitan theory.

Undoubtedly, our contemporary world is very different from Kant's, particularly in terms of our enhanced connectivity, facilitated by communication technologies and novel transportation methods. However, the issue that education faced then is still relevant today - education is still designed to accommodate contemporary conditions, regardless of their shortcomings, rat-

her than to prepare us for the future. Parents and leaders direct their children and subjects toward immediate use rather than toward endeavors that would enhance their own lives or those of future generations. In this context, the question arises: What is teacher's role in cosmopolitanism? It is accurate to assert that as teachers we have obligations to our political community and people with whom we share it. But do we, as educators, also have a greater responsibility to the broader human community? If we follow Kant's example, we should raise our children so that they can fully attain their faculties, develop their own individuality, but they should do so only as members of society.

To provide context, we have juxtaposed Kant's views with some other, more modern perspectives on cosmopolitan education. Martha Nussbaum, inspired by the early Stoics, addresses moral concerns regarding our interactions with strangers and advocates expanding our sphere of compassion to encompass the entire globe. Her educational plan is based on the observation that because these feelings of compassion contain a cognitive element, they can be taught. And that education should start early - before any ideologies interfere, so that children know something of what it means to be human. Building upon that foundation of commonality, children can be educated about the broader world. Through this approach, they will identify the similarities and distinctions between the local and the distant, fostering respect for both.

Hansen's approach is firmly rooted in the practical experiences of educators and addresses the issues raised by our globalized world that impact classroom dynamics. His educational proposal is linked to a vision of cosmopolitanism as a reflective openness to new people and ideas, but with respect to local loyalties and commitments. To describe his approach, he uses the term "cosmopolitan prism", which symbolizes a deliberate effort to learn from others. During the process, teachers and pupils become "closer and closer together and further apart", that is, closeness between them arises not from collapsing of the differences but from their sharpened emergence. In this way we recognize one of the central values of cosmopolitanism, the acceptance of difference.

In the end, Sharon Todd presents an unconventional perspective on "imperfect humanity", asserting that our prevailing educational conception of humanity is an idealized notion that detracts from genuine engagement with the plurality inherent in our daily existence. Although she criticizes this uni-

versalizing idea of humanity, she does not negate it, acknowledging the existence of commonalities among individuals. This leads her to the assertion that the idea of humanity needs to be rethought. Consequently, educational methodologies need to be revised, because we need to face humanity in all its imperfections. She concludes that we may not share a common humanity, but we do share a world, and we must now find a way to share it.

This depiction of diverse perspectives in contemporary cosmopolitan education illustrates the significant evolution of this discipline since Kant's times. Yet they all continue to endorse core cosmopolitan values—respect for the equality of individuals, regardless of their origins; the promotion of peace and the appreciation of the differences that define our human existence. During the crises that have profoundly affected our inherent desire for companionship and cooperation, these values have also been put under strain. If we continue to uphold and pursue the project initiated by Kant and like-minded thinkers nearly three centuries ago, the project aimed at the enhancement of humanity, then cosmopolitan education must assume a stronger role. Our educational practices must shift from immediate utility to a broader perspective on (maybe imperfect) humanity in general and its possible, brighter future.

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