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## THE LINK BETWEEN THE CRISIS OF PHILOSOPHY AND THE CRISIS OF PEDAGOGY

**Abstract.** Теоретическая и нравственная слабость структуралистской философии и герменевтики оказала негативное влияние на европейскую культуру, в том числе и на образовательную сферу.

The theoretical and moral weakness of structuralist philosophy and hermeneutics have had a negative influence on European culture, also extending to the educational sphere.

**Keywords:** Структурализм, герменевтика, кризис педагогики. Structuralism, hermeneutics, crisis of pedagogy.

### 1. Structuralism

The crisis of contemporary philosophy, which became evident as early as the second half of the nineteenth century with Nietzschean nihilism, went through the first half of the twentieth century to definitively explode after the second world war.

It was France in particular, in the second half of the twentieth century, that contributed to the affirmation of the structuralist current, which emerged from the linguistic studies of Ferdinand de Saussure. The peculiarity of the Desaussurian approach lies in the detailed analysis of the constituent elements of language, considered, as a whole, as a unitary and organic structure. The original vision of the Swiss linguist, who didn't harbor theoretical ambitions, would have inspired a long series of philosophical, anthropological, critical-literary and sociological studies, marking the sudden transition from a linguistic structuralism to an almost all-encompassing structuralism. Crossing with revisionist Marxism, structuralist fashion marked an entire historical era and exerted a decisive influence on the confused mass of ideological debris that flowed into the sixty-eighth youth movements and the feminist, genderist and ecological substitutes of the following years.

If in the anthropological field the leading figure of structuralism was that of Claude Lévi-Strauss, in the philosophical and sociological field Michel Foucault emerged as a point of reference.

From a wealthy family and a Catholic elementary education, the philosopher spent a youth tormented by the dramatic relationship with his homosexuality, which led him several times to attempt suicide, marking it deeply. Constantly aimed at seeking new sources of stimulus (also through the use of psychotropic substances), with his work Foucault challenged the institutional

forms assumed by capitalist power. From his initial militancy in the ranks of the French Communist Party, the philosopher would later move away to become one of the leading intellectuals of the 1968 youth protest. Foucault's reflection, which has ranged in very vast and heterogeneous fields, has gone down in history in particular for the studies on prisons and for those on sexuality.

In *Surveillance and Punish*, published in 1975, the author argues that the evolution of modern prisons has been conditioned by the advent of capitalist society, based on the constant control of citizens. From this critical point of view, knowledge also loses its neutrality and in turn becomes a means of oppression and surveillance for the use of capitalism. The law, anthropology and psychology contribute, according to the analysis conducted by Foucault, to determine new categories of criminals, to be subjected to preventive control measures to neutralize their subversive potential. According to Foucault, modern prisons are all inspired by the Panopticon, conceived by the English philosopher Jeremy Bentham with utilitarian purposes.

The speciosity of Foucault's discourse isn't to be found in the obvious observation that every form of culture has its own ethical code and tries to protect it through the repression of crime, understood as a dangerous deviation from the norm, but in the relativization of the idea of evil, which reaches up to its implicit negation. Foucault's radical position can be traced back to the anti-metaphysical core of his thought, which rejects any principle of transcendence and observes man from an immanentist perspective of a Marxian matrix. The French philosopher doesn't recognize evil as real, but relativizes it and brings it back to a socio-economic-cultural dimension, which can be modified. Evil, therefore, doesn't exist, except when certain behaviors are sanctioned by the authority, interested only in self-preservation and the maintenance of power. It isn't only the modern prison, therefore, that is reduced to a mere manifestation of capitalist oppression, but the very ideas of crime and the penitentiary system.

The philosophy of Foucault, a great admirer of Nietzschean nihilism, ultimately shows a profound affinity with the Jewish and kabbalistic gnosis, based on the replacement of the idea of evil as deprivation with the idea of evil as the limit and form of good. In the wake of Jewish gnosis, which considers evil in positive terms and good in negative terms (conceived as infinite/formless in itself), Foucault's philosophy critically interprets the codification of criminal law as the limit of human freedom and the opposes a social ideal without controls. In Foucauldian thought there is thus a substantial convergence of liberalism and Marxism, only apparently surprising, because in reality they are political theories sprouted from the common stock of modern, anthropocentric, anti-metaphysical, immanentistic and Gnostic philosophy.

For Foucault, freeing oneself from the control of the capitalist system therefore means rejecting the very idea of crime and prison, and implying social chaos and the regression of humanity to beautiful forms.

On the other hand, according to the French philosopher, it isn't only the prison that exerts an intolerable oppression on the individual, but also the school, the hospital (especially the psychiatric one) and any other institution invested with social functions.

The psychotic dimension of Foucauldian thought is even more evident when the philosopher deals with the themes of madness and sexuality, brought back to forms of the exercise of power, changing but always operating in the course of history. According to Foucault, the very definition of mental illness in medical terms is transformed into an arbitrary violation of the freedom of expression of subjects suffering from psychiatric pathologies. The same happens with sexuality, the conception of which has evolved in modern times to forms of emancipation that cleverly hide the need for political control over the population. The need to talk about one's sexuality so that it's somehow defined and consequently accepted, is transformed into the contemporary form of repression (exercised by the Church and the state). Thus, we arrive at the theoretical premise of the concept of "queer" dear to the LGBT + world, which rejects any form of sexual identification in favor of constantly evolving identities and orientations. The basic idea, the Foucauldian one on liberation from identity, which has been transposed into intercultural sociology and pedagogy, which deny ethnic or religious identity in favor of the nomadic and mestizo ideal.

With Foucault, the shapeless revisionist Marxism transferred the concept of class struggle from the socio-economic sphere to the sexual sphere (generating feminism and genderism) and to the migratory sphere (favoring immigrationist third worldism). The hatred of the French towards every type of limit and form (classically understood as order, cosmos, beauty), of ontological and metaphysical foundation, of logical and conceptual definition, has favored the psychological, moral, social, ethnic and demographic dissolution of the 'West, plunging it into an alienating condition.

Alongside Foucault, Louis Althusser, Jacques Derrida and Gilles Deleuze are ideally placed as leading figures of philosophical structuralism.

More than for Marx's reinterpretation, Althusser rose to the headlines for having strangled his wife for no apparent reason in 1980. Subjected to a psychiatric examination, the philosopher was declared insane and managed to avoid the criminal trial. The profound influence of structuralism on French culture, including the medical and legal fields, was evidently such as to induce complacency to judge the abominable crime committed by Althusser.

The same twisted Foucaultian philosophical ambiguity is found in the works of Derrida, a French philosopher of Jewish origin, severely contested by the scientific world. Trained on the texts of Husserl and Heidegger, Derrida took a particular position within structuralism, eventually arriving at the conception of a deconstructionist philosophy, aimed at a constant and dissolutive criticism of the structures of knowledge. Derridian philosophy, fundamentally hermeneutic, merges the controversial Heideggerian reflection on Western

metaphysics with the structuralist investigation of language, to arrive at the idea that the original and fundamental core of being can only emerge from a language unable to define it.

In the nuanced framework of Derridian thought, the question of animalism assumes a surprising centrality, because the boundaries between humanity and animality break against the corrosive deconstructionist criticism and against the impossibility of a defining language. Reality as a whole, with humanity and animality within it, take on an elusive appearance, in a context marked by suffocating uncertainty.

With Jacques Deleuze, Nietzschean nihilism returns to be the model of contemporary culture, intolerant of schools of thought and categorization. With this in mind, Deleuze positively evaluates Spinoza's pantheistic immanentism and his ethical relativism, understood as overcoming rigid metaphysical thought and its moral impositions. The anti-systematic counterculture exalted by the Parisian philosopher is expressed according to the new stereotype of cultural nomadism, as opposed to the constraints and rules of the past. Deleuze is also responsible for the formulation of a rhizomatic thought, indeterminate and capable of developing in multiple directions, just like the rhizomes (roots) of plants.

In the previous paragraph, it was possible to mention the close link between the hermeneutical philosophy of the twentieth century and French structuralism.

In fact, starting with Heidegger, the attention paid to interpretation as a fundamental philosophical element has imposed itself strongly. This relevance, unknown to classical and medieval thought, is to be related to the crisis of contemporary philosophy, unable to reach a clear formulation of its theories and their systematization. The dowsing character of speculation has brought with it the darkness of a cryptic, ambivalent (or rather ambiguous) language, devoid of a solid conceptual core and solid ontological references. Hence the expansion of the interpretative commitment, which forces the exegete to grasp an elusive, if not completely absent, sense.

It's therefore no coincidence that hermeneutic philosophy has expanded dramatically starting with Martin Heidegger, one of the authors who best represent the turbidity of twentieth-century philosophy. In the absence of logical-linguistic structures related to ontology, the search for meaning is entirely left to the reader, engaged not in understanding the meaning of a text, but in conferring cognitive value on a text that often lacks it. The reading of contemporary philosophical works is effective to the extent that those who engage in it are willing to venture into a game of mirrors that disperses their psychic energies and dazzles them. Therefore, the relativization of philosophy entails an unprecedented involvement of the user, called to become co-author, in an ambiguous and misleading comparison with a text that stimulates the interpretative fantasy in an abnormal way, to the point of unnerving it. If endowed with a sufficient poetic vocation, the hermeneut will emerge victorious from the

exhausting confrontation, with an interpretation that will be true as his own, since contemporary philosophy has been conceived outside and often in opposition to any idea of objectivity and adherence to reality. In this sense, it isn't arbitrary to consider philosophy (like art), as a manifestation of the profound psychological distress of Western man, unable to give shape and meaning to existence, deprived of unifying values and relativized already starting from the Cartesian dawn of modernity. The dissonance between thought understood as a reflection on reality and reality itself has laid the foundations for the immeasurable expansion of hermeneutics, which has become autonomous and invested with a centrality extraneous to the civilizations that preceded the modern and contemporary one.

With Heidegger's work, hermeneutics definitively abandons its original meaning and becomes an interpretation of being (being-in-the-world, to use the author's terminology), understood in existentialist terms in the early period and ontological in the mature period. According to the German thinker, hermeneutics is an innate activity of man, directed above all towards himself and, in the main case of ontology, towards being as a whole.

Despite these important guidelines, applying the hermeneutical principles to the language invented by Heidegger is so complex that it requires a specific philosophical-philological training, which in any case does not protect from misunderstandings, such is the hermeticism of Heidegger's thought.

## **2. Hermeneutics**

Hans Georg Gadamer, a pupil of Heidegger, centered his entire philosophical activity on the concept of interpretation, giving hermeneutics a more extensive meaning than in the past. In *Truth and Method*, from 1960, the author addresses the fundamental problem of the interpretation of reality and the search for meaning. In particular, Gadamer defines the preconditions that make interpretation possible and underpin its value, regardless of the specificity of cultural contexts. The reference to Kant's transcendental categories and Heideggerian philosophy allows Gadamer to make a harsh criticism of the alleged objectivity of Enlightenment and positivistic thought, based on the erroneous idea that the cognitive act reveals the essence of the object to the subject. Knowledge, according to the author of *Truth and Method*, is inextricably linked to preconceptions which, although universal and abstract, are embodied in history and change according to the cultural contexts in which they operate, giving shape and meaning to knowledge. The recovery of the historical dimension of philosophical knowledge doesn't allow Gadamer to overcome the limits of relativism, within which his thought remains circumscribed.

Trained at the phenomenological school of Edmund Husserl, from which the young Heidegger also started, Paul Ricoeur intended hermeneutics mainly as an investigation into the expressive possibilities of language, and in particular of the sacred and poetic one. Behind the literal meaning of the words, according to the French, shines through the symbolic dimension, bearer of an

enormous richness of meaning, not to be understood in logical-defining terms, but as a glimmer of ontological complexity. The principle of non-contradiction is transcended in favor of the polysemy proper to metaphor, which, far from being a simple figure of speech, allows us to go beyond the literal meaning in favor of a broader one. In particular, he interpreted the thought of Nietzsche, Marx and Freud as an overflow of being in contemporary philosophy, emancipated from the rigid schemes of the past. Ricoeurian hermeneutics, clearly contrary to Cartesian rationalism, appears, however, well aligned with Gnostic esotericism and the principle of reconciliation of opposites. Like the structuralists of the time, Ricoeur also reduces evil to a purely existential dimension, relativizing it as a metaphor for sacred language to express the intrinsic limits of the human condition.

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