
Book reviews

Llano, A. (2016).

Otro modo de pensar [Another way of thinking].

Navarra: EUNSA. 224 pp.

«Few people dedicate some time every day to the adventure of conversing with the sort of quiet friends who will tell a story, set their thoughts out for us, or help us guide our life along a promising path» (p. 222). This paragraph from the closing chapter of Alejandro Llano's book sums up the author's aim when he wrote this «other way of thinking». His aim was to share his thoughts with these quiet friends, perhaps giving them a voice through the arguments he sets out to them, perhaps freeing them from «political correctness» and making them think, for «no task is harder or more elusive. Everything conspires to stop us doing it» (p. 9). Perhaps because he is restless and sees the present moment as «serious» and wants to find companions for this «other way of thinking». When reading this book, each chapter is like a chat in a café with Professor Llano, or Alejan-

dro if I may be so bold. The professor, the figure of authority, shines through, but we can also see his closeness when he attempts to share his views on topics he considers to be very important or fitting. So, he navigates through such important topics as education, the family, ethics, politics, social justice, the most humane economy, citizenship, humanism, the university, and transcendence. I say navigate for he clearly cannot examine questions of such importance in great depth in 224 pages, something reflected in the fact that there are occasional leaps in the argument that a specialist in a given area or a well-versed reader might question. Examples of this can be found in the chapter on education where he identifies activity with restlessness (pp. 21 & 22) and in the chapter on the family where he links social poverty and divorce (p. 42) or effusive expressions of affection as enemies of strength (p. 49). However, the author's aim is clearly not to provide a thorough analysis of a topic – although obviously he does on the whole – but instead to show and share

his way of thinking and so offer another way of seeing, interpreting, and acting in this world.

You might or might not agree with him, but you stay at the table in the café and, taking your cup of coffee in both hands like on a quiet autumn or winter afternoon, you decide to continue to listen to the thoughts of a seasoned expert in philosophy, a professor and researcher who has countless publications to his name and a perspective on life that is well-rooted and has a considerable background. This is the most interesting element of this book. It is a mature work in which it appears that the author is no longer interested in specialist treatises or academic accreditation; he is simply interested in communicating what he thinks about the topics in current society that most concern him, something that is most welcome. It does not contain erudite quotations but does sometimes mention authors, as though attempting to show us that this is a kind of reference. Deep down, we can discern a paternal attitude that is thankful for life and for which we too should be thankful, one that aims «to help guide our life along a promising path» (p. 222).

Llano starts by reproaching us; he warns us about political correctness and urges us to think for ourselves, the only way of freeing ourselves from subjugation. To do this, he starts and ends the book by encouraging dialogue as a necessary way of thinking, in particular the respectful dialogue that takes place in reading, and he praises the role of reading in life. Consequently, he

criticises idealisms and extreme individualism.

In the chapter on education he identifies the main problem by considering the most current topics with an awareness of the tensions currently affecting this field. He focuses his attention on the right places – maturity, vitality, fertility, training, learning, and effort – and criticises aimless activism, the appropriation of education by ideologies, excessive bureaucratic control, and the search for an efficacy that is not appropriate for the field of education where a slower pace and fertility are more apt. He also offers a clear attack on pragmatism and the tendency to subordinate education to employability in place of educating a mature personality.

In the chapter on the family, Llano identifies it as «the most fundamental group for creating meaning» (p. 40) and notes that, in a world that perhaps lacks meaning, it is especially important to cultivate and care for family ties. He also sees the family as the locus of «primary solidarity, the most radical and basic sort» (p. 40). The following statement is the key to this chapter: «The great paradox is that the welfare state ignores the radical human source of authentic well-being: the family» (p. 42).

As for «Practical reason and ethical practice», the author shows that «these three concepts – goods, virtues, and rules – can no longer be fully understood by the currently dominant mentality ... we do not accept that there is something like common moral goods, but instead we tend

to think that moral goods are an individual matter ... we have lost the genuine meaning of what virtue might be ... we do not accept moral rules being imposed on us» (p. 61). In light of this, as well as attempting to question the foundations of these modern statements, he restates the importance of the family for overcoming this «stormy weather» (p. 68).

The chapter with the most current references is «Outrage and politics». Here he gives his opinion on whether the «outraged» really are a new phenomenon, returning to the key area of education and the need for it not to focus on purely instrumental knowledge. In a way, he situates us at one of the central points of this book's argument: the importance of the humanities and the family for creating a more supportive and just society.

After this, he tackles «Wealth and inequality» before moving on to «The topicality of the classical world» and the importance of «Leadership and humanism in the new economy». Of these three chapters, «The topicality of the classical world» is worth considering. Here it is easy to see the professor of philosophy who performs an elegant historical reading of how we have come to our current way of thinking, and what its risks and possibilities are. This chapter's level of erudition sets it apart from the other ones.

The author goes on to situate us in the dichotomy between «citizens and unwanted guests». This is clearly the necessary outcome of the preceding three chapters:

«Husserl understood that the disorientation of the Europeans derived from a way of thinking that – by renouncing true knowledge – became incapable of tackling issues critical to existence» (p. 129). He thus offers a critique of mechanism and individualism. In an especially interesting chapter, he encourages us to choose on the one hand between true citizenship that binds us vitally by pursuing the common good and on the other, the role of a spectator who is «silenced» by the welfare state.

With the chapters on «Public administration and humanism», «The reality of fiction», and «Civil humanism: Risks and opportunities», Llano tries to cast light on how a state capable of moving towards the common good through active citizenship would be organised. In essence, he clarifies the relationship between the private and public realms in his humanist «way of thinking». He also emphasises the importance of literature in the understanding of the permanent and essential elements of the human condition and how the classics are necessary for this understanding to be successful and profound. Finally, he supports a civic humanism, like the one he proposes, to replace this «top-down model of colonisation of vital worlds with a bottom-up paradigm of the emergence of civic energies from the family and through supportive communities in the framework of a culture of citizen responsibility» (p. 176).

The book ends with chapters on the relationship he sees between «the current crisis and transcendence» in which he ad-

vocates the logic of the gift, his suggestion for the university where he identifies as a key point its relationship with the Truth, and the invitation to «read and live» that we have been discussing since the beginning.

Ultimately, as the author states, «books have many strong points: they are entirely free to use, they do not aim to overwhelm anyone, they invite without obligations, they can be replaced without envy, and, furthermore, they are cheap» (p. 223). And it is certainly true that Llano's book has many strong points: it is simple and clear, it does not attempt to convince anyone, it presents his way of thinking when covering topics that, as noted above, are important and relevant. It is a mature work by an expert, showing us how he views the world, what he thinks about it, and how we can actively and consciously react to its gaps and weaknesses.

If there is one criticism, it is that Heidegger is occasionally used as a source, and while the author does accurately recognise his role in one the saddest and most repulsive chapters in the history of the university (p. 204), I think that the points that rely on Heidegger could just as well refer to other authors. One other objection is a certain tendency to regard this «other way of thinking» (p. 16) as substantive. I feel this might run the risk of closing down our thinking or of «other people», «some people», seeing it as the «other politically correct way of thinking» and so risking not encouraging everyone to think in-depth and with rigour, vitality, and dialogue, which I believe is the true aim of the book.

This book, as mentioned above, is like spending a few afternoons in a café with the professor and the human being, with a paternal Alejandro Llano in the most positive sense of the word. We may or may not agree with him, but he makes us think about fundamental topics and the connections between them: the only rigorous way of thinking, coherently structuring topics. We should not expect a scholarly book, even though there are chapters where his mastery in handling authors and their thought is apparent, and as this is not one, it is also ideal for the general public and as part of general reading so that students can learn to think with integrity and coherence.

Thank you, Professor Llano.

María del Rosario González Martín ■

Ballester, L. and Colom, A. J. (2015).

Walter Benjamin: Filosofía y pedagogía
[Walter Benjamin: Philosophy and pedagogy].
Barcelona: Octaedro. 253 pp.

In an academic field like pedagogy, which is already widely acknowledged as a science, it is common to find treatises, articles, research projects, and studies that approach education from a scientific perspective. Indeed, this type of text is the most used when training individuals who wish to teach. It is believed that only in this way can they teach with scientific rigour, independently discovering how to prepare hypotheses and fol-

low and apply a method, thanks to the proven certainty of bodies of knowledge previously acquired through these texts. There are even numerous works along these lines for parents who also wish to have the scientific certainty that teachers now enjoy.

In contrast, testimonies, pedagogical writings that approach education taking individual experience as a basis without a method or scientific basis as a foundation, texts simply based on educational observation and reflection in a given moment with concrete experiences as their basis, are becoming ever rarer. These documents do not provide security or certainty, but may be the ones that teach us the most. The work discussed here is a clear example of this latter group, containing in its 250 pages the testimony of a specific life that reflected on education at a given moment in our recent history.

Walter Benjamin: Filosofía y pedagogía covers the academic and personal journey of the German philosopher Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) and dedicates many of its pages to his reflections on education. This uniformly structured work is divided into two large sections preceded by one smaller but no less important one. The first of this work's seven chapters provides a brief overview of Benjamin's biography, chapters two to four cover his main contributions to the field of philosophy, and the last three chapters concern his interest in the field of education. While these parts are all separate, they are all interrelated since, as the authors note, life and thinking were always connected with Benjamin. This makes it hard to understand his pedagogical ideas with-

out understanding his philosophy, and it is almost impossible to delve into his thinking without knowing something of his personal life as this is the undoubted foundation of it. A life, a historical moment, and a thinking interwoven with them; this is Benjamin.

Chapter one concerning his biography shows someone marked from childhood by his education. His dyslexia meant that he was an outsider who was taunted by classmates and teachers alike, causing him severe psychological and performance problems. This is perhaps what led his parents to send him as a boarder to a reformed school – one that believed in the innovative methodologies typical of what in Spain was called the «new school». His time at this school showed him the differences between the iron discipline that ruled traditional schooling and the freedom that characterised the other type of school. He realised here that freedom was much more effective in the education of a child, making the child more human and less subject to the impositions of a capitalist society that, with merely economic aims, used discipline to train but not educate. These initial thoughts based on his experience would combine with his later academic relationship with Marxism to make his philosophy and pedagogy essentially proletarian and counter to the values of the bourgeoisie.

The next three chapters cover his contributions to the field of philosophy and contain what could be called principles. While it is no easy task to set these out in a summarised and systematic fashion, given the fragmentary and sometimes even contradictory nature of Benjamin's

work, Ballester and Colom try with excellent results, making this thinker's work, which is so often confusing thanks to its unsystematic nature more accessible. Chapter two considers his most important proposals as whole. These mainly cover his concept of history and time classified as historical, language, culture, tradition, and technique. As we can see, these are all essential aspects in the development of humanity. Chapter three focusses on his working methods. He thinks and writes in a fragmentary manner, not by choice but because of coherence and need. Human work is never finished; history is not progressive and linear, but instead the past, present, and future are interconnected and are always liable to change. This is why he cannot impose a system but instead explores fragmentary paths that try to illuminate that which has meaning or what we mean when we speak of humanity. In this regard, the concept of collective memory is fundamental, and chapter four is dedicated to it as a coda to the tour through Benjamin's philosophy. The past is alive in our memories and can always resurface in different ways depending on what our experience of it is like. The important thing is not to forget it, not to disconnect from tradition, as then anything becomes possible: good and terrible things alike. This is why education was always essential for Benjamin.

The last three chapters of this book relate to this point. Chapter five considers Benjamin's first pedagogical thoughts, written between 1911 and 1915 when he was barely in his twenties. The ideas here provide a critique of the bourgeois

disciplinary system, praising reformist methodologies that saw the child as a child and not just a potential adult who would have to respond to the demands of his or her society. These are idealist proposals where the youth and liberty that typify this stage of life would govern the future of humanity. These early thoughts are complemented by later ones, analysed in chapter six. These, developed by Benjamin in the 1930s, already show a clear Marxist influence. He criticises highly individualist bourgeois education, arguing for a proletarian education that is class-based and above all collective. Finally, chapter seven covers some passages that are not easily classified, but that are undoubtedly somehow related with education, albeit indirectly.

As we have seen, this work covers a life and a historical period, and their expression in reflections that provide an in-depth analysis of a specific way of viewing education. In a moment when referents seem to have disappeared, where tradition is in stasis and is dormant, a piece like this resuscitates an attitude to life if not a way of thinking; namely, how to conceive of education experientially. We agree with the authors that Benjamin is not an easy thinker, but, «when we do understand him, it is because we understand ourselves and our time better» (p. 105), a time that, counter to Benjamin's claims, does not stop looking forwards without waiting to think about the importance of analysing where we are, where we have come from, and where all of this is leading us.

Alberto Sánchez Rojo ■

Touriñán López, J. M. (2015).

Pedagogía mesoaxiológica y concepto de educación [Mesoaxiological pedagogy and the concept of education].

Santiago de Compostela: Anvira. 382 pp.

«In my opinion, education is an inherently complex object. And the objective complexity of ‘education’ derives from the very diversity of the individual’s activity in educational activity» (p. 340). This statement contains the condensed meaning of and reason behind this book. This is one of the few occasions on which Touriñán has given such a personal opinion on the subject of a book. Therefore, we will use this statement as an introduction to his personal concept of the phenomenon of education and to the *raison d’être* of this work. José Manuel Touriñán holds a chair at the University of Santiago de Compostela, and has over forty years of experience. His academic work has been recognised on many occasions; he holds the Gold Badge from the University of Santiago de Compostela (1998), the Silver Medal of Galicia (1998), and the Gold Badge of the University of A Coruña (2000). He is also an honorary professor at the University of Buenos Aires (1993). From 1990 to 1997 he was also the head of universities and research for the Galician regional government. Touriñán’s work comprises over 250 pieces of research.

His work in this book is important for at least two reasons. The first is epistemological; it provides an in-depth systematic and theoretical examination of knowledge of education that contrasts with the popularisation of pedagogical

knowledge. Indeed, the familiarity and routine nature of the educational experience hide or mask its complexity and the need for rigorous and scientific study. Secondly, this piece is not just intellectual speculation. Instead it is a response to the interest in providing foundations for educational actions and dissemination and giving them pedagogic meaning based on (autonomous) educational science itself and not as something subordinate or marginal (as Touriñán explained in a piece in 1988 in the journal *Educación*). It is, therefore, an elemental (and foundational) book for anyone studying pedagogic disciplines, from undergraduate students to doctoral students and even lecturers who have the exciting task of teaching theoretical and philosophical knowledge of education and introducing people to them. This is expressed through a clear didactic aim with over 40 explanatory tables. Therefore, we do not regard this as a work for disseminating the subject to the general public, nor is it intended for parents who want pedagogical guidelines.

This work comprises eight coherently organised chapters that provide a holistic overview of education, in other words, an overview of the features that lead us to classify certain processes as education. Furthermore, to frame it adequately, we should also mention other works that complement its themes and go into them in greater depth, namely the book *Dónde está la educación: actividad común interna y elementos estructurales de la intervención* (Where is education: Common internal activity and structural aspects of intervention, Netbiblo, 2014). These total

over a thousand pages exclusively dedicated to understanding education and knowing what education is in order to intervene in it and create educational fields.

Chapter one introduces a series of conceptual tools for (re)constructing a pedagogical hermeneutics around the meaning of education to overcome the antinomies that burden its content. In effect, Touriñán, following Esteve and others, identifies a series of criteria for accurately discussing educational phenomena. These defining features meet the criteria of content, form, educational use, and balance, to go from being a merely nominal definition to being a real one.

The chapter dedicated to the educational relationship (chapter two) is, to some extent, a necessary methodological continuation or prolongation of chapter one. In this chapter, Touriñán attempts to distinguish and identify the distinctive nature of a type of relationship, the educational relationship, which is different and distinct from other types of relationship that might also arise in the educational context while not strictly being educational. These include relationships of care, communication, and coexistence. Therefore, the educational relationship is axiological, personal, and hereditary and is also integral, gnoseological, and spiritual (p. 116). It is the moment in which education comes into play, it is a *risk* that demands an appropriate understanding of liberty and neutrality (p. 123 and *passim*) and, as Touriñán himself senses, leads us towards an understanding of the educational relationship in terms of commitment, responsibility, and compassion.

In chapter three the educational relationship is exposed to intercultural reflection insofar as this is understood to be a way of describing education based on the educational principle of diversity and difference. This chapter considers how education should approach coexistence in plural and diverse areas. Touriñán understands intercultural education as the use and construction of axiological experience of diversity and difference within education as a whole (p. 157) with the aim of ensuring students can choose and implement their own life plans (p. 161) based on the notion of identity and cultural rights (p. 170). Educational provision in each place must consider the question of coexistence. However, this chapter lacks a more holistic perspective that including the environment and nature; in other words, one that not only covers intercultural education but also environmental education.

Two elements are added in chapter four that consider the real definition (insofar as it is an internal activity guided by an aim) of the concept of education in greater depth and explain the reasoning behind a *mesoaxiological pedagogy*. This chapter explains how Touriñán moves from a nominal definition of education to establishing its real definition and the criteria accompanying it. In effect, the real definition of education is the convergence of character and meaning; the character of education is its determination, while its meaning is what distinguishes it. In other words, the specific perspective or focus serving the link established between the self and the other (p. 179). Both character and meaning

are part of the features that determine the real definition of education. Once this real definition has been established, cultural areas can be turned into educational fields (p. 187).

As well as developing the «real definition» of education, this chapter is important as it examines the «mediated» condition of education in greater depth, not just education as an autonomous field, but also as necessary knowledge for transforming cultural areas into educational fields. However, as Arendt previously observed, pedagogy cannot be entirely freed from the specific subject being transmitted; in other words, mediation is necessary. We cannot assume that pedagogy is sufficient for constructing educational spheres; knowledge of cultural areas is also necessary, hence the need for mediation.

Education for the development of societies (chapter five) can be seen as a necessary expansion of the work on intercultural and civic education in chapter three. While intercultural and civic education is based on the rights of the third generation (based on identity), education for development is a way of understanding the development of «planetary citizenship» based on solidarity and guided by the rights of the fourth generation. This new educational field also includes education for sustainability, consumption, and entrepreneurship. The environmental concern that was lacking in chapter three is present in this chapter.

This pedagogical concern for developing a global citizenship must be understood not just in terms of solidarity and

development. The idea of a citizenship that goes beyond the geographic and cultural boundaries of one's own community is old; what is new is that this notion is only now a historical socio-political need. Understanding what it means to belong to humankind is an ethical requirement that addresses education. This international dimension in courses and campuses is ever more important in university education and is not restricted to learning foreign languages.

Chapter six aims to make an argument for the need for specialised professional competences for those working in the field of education, based on the foundations and status offered by the knowledge that characterises education. Developing these professional competences is intimately related to the educational function. Therefore, the specific characteristic of the pedagogic function is to create pedagogical facts and decisions that make it possible to justify, explain, and discover what and how any states of things, events, and educational actions are produced and should be produced (p. 243). What is important about this chapter is the author's ability to connect the need for specific professional competences to the pedagogical function, thus establishing a bridge or nexus between professional needs and the demands deriving from an individual's knowledge of education. Consequently, it is possible to state that the pedagogical function is identified as a specific activity based on specialised knowledge (p. 247).

This chapter, entitled «Where is education: About mesoaxiological pedagogy»,

along with chapter one contains the basic core question of the work: what makes pedagogy mesoaxiological? Because any area of experience must be turned into a medium or field of education (p. 330). This transformation would just be a technical procedure were it not for the moral element that characterises educational processes. This element requires a transformation in which values (mesoaxiological) are integrated, not just into the «process» (the student's dignity prevents us from treating him or her however we wish) but also into the intentions, in other words, taking into consideration the aims of the process or of the educational activity itself. Touriñán's greatest success, in our opinion, lies in how he integrates values into the process of educational transformation through two elements: the pedagogical mentality and the perspective (p. 344).

The last chapter in this book – «Applying mesoaxiological pedagogy: Artistic education as an educational field» – could be nothing other than an example, an application of the knowledge of education contained in the preceding chapters. In other words, what we should do to develop pedagogically an area of culture such as art and turn it into an educational field. Art was not chosen by chance, and it reveals the inherent complexity of educational processes, which are frequently compared with artistic processes in that the outcome is an original work and not a mass-produced one. Educational action, as Touriñán notes, not only offers a theoretical-practical perspective, but also an intrinsic artistic and aesthetic

one (p. 343). Consequently, it could be claimed that artistic education, in that it is a value chosen as an educational end, is an educational field subject to extrinsic aims.

We cannot end this analysis without mentioning another of this book's strengths. Unlike the technological pedagogy of the 1980s and some current utilitarian pedagogical mentalities, Professor Touriñán opts for an axiologically *mediated* form of mediation. Although he could have gone into this topic in greater depth, the very important role he gives to values in constructing the areas of education or setting educational aims and so on seems to us to be very successful. The following statement from the final chapter is a good example: «not everything is valid as content in the aims of (artistic) education». This is something that could well be generalised to any of the fields developed as educational; *not everything is valid*.

Juan García Gutiérrez ■

Vázquez-Cano, E., López-Meneses, E. and Barroso, J. (2015).

El futuro de los MOOC: retos de la formación online, masiva y abierta [The future of MOOCs: Challenges for massive, open, online training]. Madrid: Síntesis. 207 pp.

The various editions of the Horizon Report, led by the New Media Consortium and Educause, collate studies about the future use of technology and

coming educational trends in various countries. The ninth edition of this report examines the impact of MOOC (Massive Open Online Courses) training platforms on the current educational landscape. Faced with the need for life-long training of human capital in the knowledge society setting, efforts are being made in the educational sphere to boost, promote, and reactivate the development and economic growth of countries by using technology as an effective instrument for helping to teach literacy to the population and democratise knowledge. Consequently, taking a technological and innovative approach in higher education and occupational training and pre-university education, it is important to make the most of Web 2.0 resources and create new learning scenarios through virtual communities for social construction of knowledge from a cooperative, pedagogical, and inclusive perspective. Accordingly, the work discussed here considers the workings of MOOCs, the philosophy of which should be aimed at meeting the educational needs of contemporary society by offering new informal and non-formal learning scenarios that serve all citizens and have a democratic focus to eradicate the digital and social divide. The most significant features of the book's seven chapters are set out below.

The opening chapter presents the defining features of the MOOC phenomenon along with the identifying features of these platforms. The different types of online educational platforms are analysed and, from a variety of approaches, a critique is made of the current train-

ing model in place from an economic perspective, as well as of the didactic and pedagogic aspects that comprise and support it. The chapter ends by offering an in-depth analysis of the main challenges that must be faced to guarantee their sustainability, alluding to a practical proposal about sMOOCs (sustainable MOOCs), the aim of which is to overcome the limitations MOOCs have shown up to now.

Chapter two considers one of the main challenges the MOOC movement must confront: finding a sustainable economic model. An overview is provided of the current dominant economic models as well as an analysis of the advance of the evaluation and experimentation systems, raising questions such as whether MOOCs should charge for certification or extra course content, or instead propose an open model but charge for complementary services, such as tutoring. Furthermore, it considers the possibility of exploiting the analysis obtained and derived from the thousands of students who join the platforms, or even through including advertising in this type of social environment. The chapter ends with a series of economic options aimed at ensuring the sustainability of these platforms so that they continue to be freely available and accessible to all.

Chapter three uses a cooperative and open position to refer to the connectivist paradigm that must support MOOCs to encourage learning based on professional competences among the students. To do this, a change in student and teacher roles is needed, with teachers providing tutoring as a key element in the educa-

tional process to make possible constructive, autonomous, and meaningful learning by students. The chapter concludes by setting out the advantages and disadvantages of MOOCs in the view of experts.

Chapter four provides an overview of current and future technological models and their application to MOOCs. It emphasises the importance of new digital learning strategies for the immediate future through content curators, online comments, information categorisation and filtering programmes (recommendation systems), learning algorithms, multi-platform systems, intelligent and self-adapting tutorial systems, robots, and new virtual self-evaluation models. It ends with a proposal for didactic design in MOOCs that emphasises the utility of interactive learning activities.

Chapter five takes article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that every human being has the right to an education, as its starting point. The chapter's aim is for MOOCs to act as a mechanism for closing the digital and social divide, thus making possible true democratisation of knowledge. Consequently, starting from the basic features of MOOCs as massive, open, accessible, and free training platforms, and bearing criteria of sustainability in mind, access to these courses should allow for multilingualism, multiculturalism, and people with functional diversity. Furthermore, it underlines the potential of smartphones and BYOD (bring your own device) initiatives, from a pedagogical perspective and for alleviating shortcomings in technological facilities

in educational centres owing to lack of funds. Following a series of studies, conclusions are reached that focus on the possibility of universally extending an online training mode in different socioeconomic and cultural settings by using mobile devices as a resource to enable better accessibility for disadvantaged or developing people and settings. The models of attention for people with functional diversity in terms of accessibility are then considered, and the chapter ends by reviewing MOOCs in non-university education such as occupational and business training settings.

Chapter six expands on the main indicators that can be used to measure the quality of MOOC courses, the national and international bodies charged with measuring, aspects of standardisation in mass settings, and the certification and regulations in place for online education in the Spanish setting. It also summarises different pieces of research published in high-impact academic journals to establish what type of analysis and results are being obtained in research into the quality of MOOCs.

Finally, chapter seven sets out the most significant features of the MOOC movement since its appearance in Spain in 2012, its current position in higher education, and the best-established models at present. The institutions that have implemented MOOC-based educational provision in higher education are considered, a list of website addresses and search engines for courses in this format is given, and finally a study of the MOOC platforms most frequently used by Spanish universities is provided.

In conclusion, this work offers an in-depth analysis of the MOOC phenomenon and their importance in the field of higher education, concentrating on the desirability of establishing a type of MOOC based on connectivist and constructivist models where students play a key role in jointly constructing knowledge, promoting a type of autonomous, collaborative, cooperative, participative, and ubiquitous online learning where the teacher acts as a tutor. Consequently, the implementation and effectiveness of MOOCs does not so much rely on increasing the number of them but on achieving a pedagogical aim regarding quality that encourages new virtual learning environments where participants, with a Web 2.0 attitude, are interconnected, beyond the economic, institutional, or technological aspects on which the current debate focuses.

Noelia Margarita Moreno Martínez ■

Cano García, E. and Fernández Ferrer, M. (Eds.) (2016).

Evaluación por competencias: la perspectiva de las primeras promociones de graduados en el EEES
[Competence based evaluation: The perspective of the first cohorts of graduates under the EHEA].

Barcelona: Ediciones Octaedro. 156 pp.

Spanish universities have now turned out their first cohorts of graduates edu-

cated under the terms of the European Higher Education Area (EHEA). As is stated and argued in the prologue to this work, this makes it an ideal time to collect information about the competences these students acquired on these new degree programmes based on their perceptions, those of graduates from the old licenciature degrees, and those of academic staff, programme coordinators, employers, and experts. The preface to this work also describes the hypotheses presented, the main aims of the study, the common framework of competences created for all participating universities and qualifications, the methodological perspective or paradigm, the research methodology, the data collection instruments, and the participating respondents.

Starting from data collection, this book is arranged in nine chapters, where the authors use quotes and references to guide the reader clearly through the topic of skills-based evaluation and the main results of the research performed while also providing explanations.

In chapter one, Ibarra and Rodríguez introduce some basic questions about developing competence-based evaluation, this topic currently being of interest given the need to move from a model focussed on evaluating knowledge to a model focussed on evaluating competences. In this way, they frame the object of study and make an important contribution concerning the use of technology in evaluation processes.

In chapter two, Pons, Barrios, and Iranzo set out a statistical analysis of the data from the questionnaire sent to new graduates from the four courses analysed at the seven state-run public universities that participated in the research. The results are compared with other previous studies (PROLEX, REFLEX, and others) in the categories analysed.

In chapter three, Giné, García, and Halbaut try to answer the question of how evaluation contributes to learning and the development of competences. In this case, the results are displayed organised by the students' discussion groups to delineate possible explanations for the development of skills-based evaluation processes (especially cross-cutting ones) and what the new graduates associate with them. In other words, students' voices are collected with regards to where we should attribute the effect of evaluation on the development (or not) of competences. This chapter also presents, among other elements ordered from most frequent to least frequent, the characteristics combined by the strategies that, in their view, are most closely connected to the development of competences.

In chapter four, Fabregat, Guardia, and Forés set out the opinions of academic staff regarding evaluation. Based on the open-ended and closed questionnaires and a comparison with other studies that consulted university teaching staff, the current state of play is described according to the opinions of the teaching staff from the universities and courses participating in the project. Their voices, alongside the views of the graduates, can offer

clues to the eventual opportunity to introduce changes in the evaluation process and, where appropriate, introduce ways of achieving them.

In chapter five, Tierno and Ion, based on a lexical-metric analysis of the interviews with programme coordinators, present their opinions and suggest what the role of these academic leaders is and could be in the university setting. In fact, these authors refer to specialised literature on teaching collaboration and coordination in the university and reflect, with the voices of the academic leaders consulted, on what trends are apparent in the competence evaluation process.

In chapter six, Cabrera, Portillo, and Padres build on the results of the interviews held with employers, attempting to interpret the distinguishing elements that they supply regarding competence evaluation processes and instruments. The employers' view about the *what* and *how* is analysed in this chapter: *what* competences are most highly valued in graduates and *how* they should be evaluated, both in universities and in selection processes.

In chapter seven, Benedito and Parcerisa present the opinions of experts in university pedagogy about the process of competence-based evaluation. This chapter covers the positive aspects of competence-based design and the risks and difficulties that can be encountered when applying it. In other words, the authors of this section review the strong and weak points that teachers from the field of pedagogy see in the competence-based

focus, and set out their proposal for future lines based on this analysis, asking where these might lead, to improve the quality of higher education.

Chapter eight is especially valuable as it offers an overview of the findings of the work, setting out the convergences and divergences in the perspectives of the different agents who participate in the project. In this chapter, Fernández provides an overview and an organised and verified joint holistic analysis of the collection of information that has created explanatory results based on the previous six chapters. She provides a possible triangulation of the various agents from the seven universities and the four courses consulted who participated in the project, with the aim of making suggestions to improve future evaluation processes. In effect, Fernández indicates that this triangulation could be a key element to ensure that future designs result in a graduate profile that is closer to and in line with the demands of all agents involved in higher education.

Chapter nine is important as it offers an overview of the book's content. Cano provides an exhaustive and in-depth analysis of the future challenges in competence-based evaluation, based on the results of this book's research. Here, the reader can find a diagnosis of challenges and a list of proposals that might contribute to improving evaluation processes for developing competences.

In my opinion, this book enables a reflection on evaluation in higher education, defined as the corner stone of

the system, making new contributions regarding the paths that competence development and in-depth and authentic learning by students should follow. It combines a recent theoretical corpus with substantiated documentation and the findings this research reveals, allowing for a good overview of the state of the question for the topic under consideration.

In particular, from chapter two to chapter seven, the authors participating in the research provide the reader with the findings of the project, organised according to the six types of respondent (recent graduates, licence degree holders, teaching staff, programme coordinators, employers, experts in university pedagogy), using textual quotations from the narratives produced by the different data collection tools used. Also, each of these six chapters is complemented by the analysis of other studies based on consulting current literature, allowing for a deeper understanding of the state of the art in the topics covered. Finally, these results are combined in chapter eight where an organised and tested overview of them is provided, allowing for a better understanding of the topic being consideration.

In short, this book is highly recommended. It offers an analysis of the impact of educational evaluation on the development of competences in the university setting, of ways to advance the design and practice of competence-based focuses in higher education, and provides a better understanding of the impacts of competence-based designs (fundamentally in re-

lation to evaluation methodologies). Consequently, it will of use to teachers and researchers, as well as schools and scholars and researches who are interested in higher education.

Laia Lluch Molins ■

Orden Jiménez, R. V., García Norro, J. J., and Ingala Gómez, E. (Eds.) (2016).

Diotima o de la dificultad de enseñar filosofía
[Diotima or the difficulty of teaching philosophy].
Madrid: Escolar y Mayo. 367 pp.

Although philosophy seems to be indivisible from how it is taught and communicated, a sufficient distinction is not always made between research into philosophy and the processes of teaching it. Consequently, an explicit reflection on the methodology of learning philosophy is sometimes missing. This is precisely during a period when the discipline's position in syllabuses has been reduced to the extent that it is now almost absent. It is increasingly necessary and relevant to study how it is taught and its importance as a subject.

This book, coordinated by Rafael V. del Orden, Juan José García Norro, and Emma Ingala, includes many of the papers presented by speakers at the Jornadas Internacionales de Innovación Didáctica en la Enseñanza de la Filosofía [International philosophy teaching workshops], held in late 2014 at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Complutense

University of Madrid. This conference brought together academics, secondary-school teachers, philosophers working in non-formal teaching settings, and students on the master's degree in teacher training to share their reflections on questions relating to the teaching of philosophy at present, such as the implementation of the European Higher Education Area in the field of philosophy, the move from knowledge-transfer to teaching competences, the problem of evaluating philosophy learning, the position of philosophy teaching in Spain and other countries, philosophy competitions or debating contests, and experiences of teaching innovation, among others.

Accepting Kant's famous adage that philosophy can only be learnt by philosophising, many philosophy teachers have traditionally been aware that, above all, they teach their students competences rather than content, anticipating how the EHEA insists strongly on the value of competences, as though calling for a fundamental change of approach the teaching-learning process.

Diotima o de la dificultad de enseñar filosofía, the title of which refers to Socrates' teacher who taught him all he knew about love, contains four sections: «The role of the philosophy teacher», «Philosophy's place in teaching», «Philosophy teaching by country», and «Didactic experiences and innovations». Although the book contains almost thirty papers, here we will limit ourselves, on grounds of space, to four of them.

In «Transformaciones didácticas» [Didactic transformations] Johannes Rohbeck, from the TU Dresden, takes as his starting point philosophy teaching as a process of mediation of knowledge that involves the teacher's effort to explain philosophical ideas and concepts, and arguments from the philosophical tradition, without forgetting the ultimate aim of teaching how to philosophise. He distinguishes three basic types of mediation between philosophy and teaching, that correspond to three philosophical focuses and involve their respective didactic theories.

When starting from philosophy as an academic and theoretical speciality that is shaped by the philosophical tradition and the current system, the teacher's role involves a sort of reproduction of philosophy. Consequently, a mere *didactic of reproduction* that uses the deductive method is debated.

When the essence of philosophy is defined as dialogue, focussing on the practice of teaching, the teacher's task entails discussion with the students. A *thesis of constitution* is discussed here that would use the inductive method.

If we distinguish between philosophy and the teaching of philosophy as two autonomous and independent spheres, the didactic potential of the practice of teaching under the assumption of a productive distance from philosophy increases. Rohbeck therefore proposes his *transformation model*, to which an «abductive» method (in the sense of the American pragmatist Charles S. Peirce) would correspond.

Rohbeck understands «didactic transformation» as a strategy in the didactic discourse that shapes the choice and modification of what is transmitted: «That which is regarded as fundamental in academic philosophy (for example, formal logic) might have a secondary role in teaching practice. In contrast, that which is regarded as something very specific and particular in philosophy (for example, certain methods), might become a fundamental procedure in teaching practice. And, finally, topics that for university philosophers are merely marginal (like certain textual genres, beyond the habitual treatises), might be the centre of attention in a school» (p. 15). He assumes, therefore, that concepts and arguments acquire their meaning through the context in which they are positioned within certain discourses, as the discursive field decides the semantic function.

This «didactic transformation» involves extrapolating and reformulating the currents of thought of contemporary philosophy in the philosophical procedures or practices that are learnt in class and that students can apply autonomously, such as analytical philosophy, constructivism, phenomenology, dialectics, hermeneutics, deconstruction, or experimental philosophy, among others. In this case, philosophical competences are vital, and must be transmitted in the classroom through dialogue, conversation, reading texts, or writing essays.

Ultimately, it is a matter of «extracting the living implementation from a di-

rected methodical philosophical practice and turning it into achieved competences» (p. 18), bringing philosophical theories into habitual, everyday practices. Methods are not just technical skills but instead a fundamental attitude of philosophy, and so their transmission helps fulfil the objective of students learning to do philosophy for themselves.

García Norro, of the Complutense University of Madrid, complains that teaching focusses exclusively on aptitudes and that teaching of attitudes of has been neglected, as while aptitudes give students knowledge and power, they do not give them the will without which action is impossible. One mindset that has become pervasive is «the conviction that, all things considered, we do not have the right to implant attitudes and that we do not know how to verify whether we have achieved this if we do try it. To a *moral* inability (I have no right to do this) is added an *effective* inability (I would not know how to do it, above all because I lack the resources to verify whether I have achieved it)» («Aptitudes y actitudes del profesor de filosofía» [Aptitudes and attitudes of the philosophy teacher], p. 28). This condemns teaching to failure. We all teach each other continuously, even without intending to, as it is a necessary consequence of personal interaction. The teacher is not the only educational agent and society creates a series of attitudes in the student that might not be the most desirable ones.

García Norro suggests teaching six fundamental attitudes for future second-

ary school teachers: reflexivity, research, respect for the law, collaborative work, civic commitment, and professional conscience. The two complementary ways attitudes can be taught are through reflection (ever since Plato's dialogues, philosophy has reflected on the virtues, their definition, purpose, and nature) and by example (in other words, exercising these virtues). In the same way that the theoretical teaching of aptitudes is complemented by exercising them, in the realm of attitudes it is also necessary for students to see them fulfilled in the behaviour of their teachers.

Enrico Berti of the University of Padova argues for using the history of philosophy, not just to teach philosophy but also to teach other disciplines such as history, literature, physics, or biology. This does not mean that it is necessary to give oneself over to a merely doxographic, relativistic, and sceptical form of teaching, but instead that a philosophical method must be adopted that involves evaluating the internal coherence of systems, of the attitude for facing the problems in which their origin and their truth or falsehood reside. In other words, a critique of the systems and a proposal of alternative solutions.

We must, Berti warns, be conscious of the limits of this position; a completely impartial presentation of philosophy is impossible, in order to create a history of philosophy it is always necessary to have a concept of philosophy, in other words, to have a philosophy, whether elaborated by oneself or by someone else.

A complete and homogeneous knowledge of all of the history of philosophy is also impossible.

For his part, Tomás Calvo Martínez reflects on the «Funciones formativa e informativa de la Historia de la Filosofía» [Educational and informative functions of the history of philosophy]. He notes that historical interest in philosophy is usually associated with a culturalist vision of philosophical thought that sees it as another cultural manifestation, while most philosophers reject this reductionism and defend the specificity of philosophy, even if they do see it in different ways.

«Doxography» (exposition of differing opinions), the «philological history of philosophy» (based on the rigorous study of texts and materials), and the «philosophical history of philosophy» (that seeks its meaning and is based on different moments of the systematic unfolding of reason itself) would be the three main ways of conceiving the history of philosophy.

Calvo argues for a certain integration between the philological and philosophical concepts of the history of philosophy, eliminating their deficiencies and strengthening the educational and informative aspects of the discipline. «Harmonically integrating both perspectives will make it possible to discuss philosophy in its own history, and more broadly, the different historical-cultural contexts in which philosophical reflection has developed. And it will also serve to educate students in argumentation and critical

reflection on the ultimate and most fundamental philosophical questions that humankind has historically raised and continues to raise» (p. 90). To do this, he proposes reconciling doxography and the history of philosophy with the moment of «appropriation» and reconciling philosophical history with the moment of overcoming estrangement and «distance» as constitutive moments of the hermeneutic task of comprehension.

From the other papers in this book, the following ones are particularly noteworthy: Ignacio Pajón Leyra's paper on the recovery of rhetoric in the teaching of philosophy, Javier Gracia Calandín on the systematisation of experiences in ethics based on a Comenius exchange, Annalisa Caputo on the laboratory experience of *Philosophia ludens* philosophy didactics at the University of Bari, and Gemma Muñoz Alonso on the impact of the digital environment on philosophy teaching.

Ultimately, *Diotima o de la dificultad de enseñar filosofía* is a very interesting book that helps us think about philosophical education and provides guidance on the challenges this sets us for the future. Although the distinction in philosophy between the mode of discovery or research and the mode of exposition or transmission of knowledge is not as marked as in other areas, philosophy teachers must reflect on how they teach their discipline without delegating this task exclusively to the figures of pedagogues or experts in didactics.

Didactic reflection belongs to the essence not only of teaching philosophy but

also to philosophy itself. Philosophy that includes a reflection in other areas of knowledge and consequently establishes itself as a *metaknowledge* (philosophy of science, philosophy of history, philosophy of religion, philosophy of art, etc.), must

also by definition include a *metaphilosophy*. In a manner of speaking, both the teaching of philosophy and didactic reflection are integral parts of philosophy.

Ernesto Baltar ■

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