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Philosophy and “science of education” in Italy in the early of the 20th century (1)

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Abstract

The *Rivista Pedagogica* (1908-1939), founded and directed by Luigi Credaro (1860-1939), was the most important early 20th century Italian pedagogy journal. The *Rivista* developed Herbart’s model of pedagogy, based on the means and goals of education being joined together while remaining separate entities, in a critical and anti-dogmatic view, combining the positivist approach to empirical and experimental sciences and the Kantian idea of the transcendental foundations of experience. The *Rivista* gave birth to an interpretation of the educational facts focused on such concepts as relationality and antinomicity and of the educational aims being strongly bound to their historical and social context, without attempting to replicate what already exists.

Key words: History of Education Italy, 20th century, Herbartism, Kantism, Positivism.

La Filosofía y la “Ciencia de la Educación” en Italia en los primeros años del siglo XX

Resumen

La «*Rivista Pedagogica*» (1908-1939), fundada y dirigida por Luigi Credaro (1860-1939), fué el más importante periódico pedagógico italiano de los primeros años del siglo XX. La «*Rivista*» desarrolló el modelo pedagógico de Herbart en modo *crítico* y *antidogmático*, conjugando la prioridad gnoseológica atribuida por el positivismo a las ciencias empíricas y experimentales con las estancias kantianas de la fundación trascendental de la experiencia y del «primado de la razón práctica». El resultado es una teoría de la educación fundada sobre conceptos de relacionalidad y antinomicidad y una visión de los fines de la educación histórica y socialmente condicionados, pero de forma dinámica y no homologante.

Palabras clave: Historia de la pedagogía italiana, siglo XX, Herbartismo, Neokantismo, Positivismo.

INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the twentieth century in the Italian philosophical and pedagogical circle there were two main “poles” or “sides”.

The first, in which Neo-Kantians and Positivists converged, was characterized by the re-working of Herbart’s pedagogy and its two-layered ethics/psychology structure and it strived to find a balance between the two main philosophical currents that composed it and also aimed at affirming and consolidating: a) the epistemological superiority of empirical and experimental sciences in the study of Man and Society; b) the freedom of man and absoluteness of values. The main voice of this theory was the *Rivista Pedagogica* (1908-1939) founded and directed by Luigi Credaro (1860-1939).

Credaro, Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Rome from 1902 to 1935, was the “vanguard” of this current: his successful book *La pedagogia di J. F. Herbart* of which there were five editions, from 1900 to 1935, played a major role in the revival of studies on the philosophy of Herbart (for further details on this model of philosophy of education and

epistemology of pedagogy see Cambi, 1989; for further details on Credaro’s life and intellectual evolution see D’Arcangeli, 2004; for further material on the *Rivista Pedagogica* see D’Arcangeli, 2012; on Herbart’s followers in Italy see Volpicelli, 2003). This model, with his the philosophy/science relationship in pedagogical knowledge devised, is a forerunner of present-day “critical pedagogy” (Cambi, Ed., 2009; Muzi, Ed., 2009), was hegemonic up until World War I, in parallel with the project that involved liberal-democratic modernisation of political and social life carried out by the Italian liberal statesman Giovanni Giolitti (Gentile E., 2003; Mola, 2003), of which the model represented the corresponding and organic expression from the theoretical point of view, the point of view of school’s function and role and of the educational policies that the same theoretical framework generated (Chiaranda, 2005; Chiosso, 1983). In addition to acting as a developer and organising force of culture, Credaro also took direct action: he was a Member of Parliament since 1895 (then Senator since 1919), a leading figure of the Radical Party, and the Minister of Education from 1910 to 1914, and while in charge he managed to pass Law No. 487 of June 4, 1911, called the Credaro Daneo law thus including also the name of Edoardo Daneo, former Minister of Education, which moved control and administration of Italian primary schools from municipalities to central government (a reform which was crucial in eradicating illiteracy) (Betti, 1998; De Fort, 1996).

1. PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN ITALY IN THE EARLY OF THE 20th CENTURY: THE PREVAILING CURRENTS OF THOUGHT

The other view was represented by Giovanni Gentile’s neo-idealism. In 1902 Gentile founded, with Benedetto Croce, *La Critica*, one of the most important Italian philosophical journals of the Twentieth Century. Gentile was one of the leading forces in the revival of Hegelianism in the Italian culture of the century: a revival that evolved into hegemony after the First World War. The neo-idealism of Croce and Gentile became part of a strong front in unofficial and non-academic Italian culture, the so-called “culture of the journals” which included, among its leading figures, also Giovanni Papini and Giuseppe Prezzolini, with their irrational pragmatism, and the journals *Leonardo* (1903-07) and *La Voce* (1908-16). This front, united, led a fierce polemic against positiv-

ism, not only because of its scientism and materialism, but also for its Enlightenment roots and its democratic openings. The neo-idealism opposed the actions of the Giolitti government and supported a decidedly elitist and conservative social-political model (see Garin, 1966, 1978, 1983, 1987, on philosophy in Italy at the turn of the 20th century, and Asor Rosa, 1975 on the cultural debate in the Giolitti era and the repercussions of the debate on politics). Gentile's Hegelianist interpretation reprises Bernardo Spaventa's 19th century theory ("mentalism") and condenses all of reality in the act of thinking (actualism), thus merging pedagogy with his philosophy of the Spirit, founding its identity while negating independence (for further interpretations of actualism, see Natoli, 1989; Sasso, 1995; for more on Gentile's works on pedagogy and school see Gentile G. 1901, 1913, 1914, 1920, 1921, 1923, 1925; for further details on the relationship between philosophy and pedagogy/school in Gentile, see Cambi and Giambalvo, Eds., 2009; Spadafora, Ed., 1997; Spadafora, 2006). Over time, the theoretical differences within the idealist framework that Croce (with his "theory of distinct") and Gentile shared, grew and evolved into two different, opposing political stances and ultimately Croce, after the Matteotti assassination in 1925 became one of the staunchest opposers to the fascist regime. Gentile, on the contrary, embraced and supported fascism, becoming one of its leading intellectuals: when, after the "March on Rome" Mussolini was appointed head of government Gentile became Minister of Education, and he later devised and developed his well-known "reform" of the Italian school (1922-1924; see Gentile G., 1924), a reform which Mussolini called "the most fascist of all fascist reforms" (Charnitzky, 1996, provides further insight on the "reform" and its relationships with Fascism's school policies). Gentile kept supporting fascism even after the regime's fall on September 8, 1943: he joined the Republic of Salò forces and kept fighting until his capture and later execution by Partisan forces in Florence in 1944 (a detailed biography of Giovanni Gentile can be found in Turi, 2006). Although Gentile's support of Fascism brought his "School" a huge influence first and a heavy criticism later, his approach to the identity of pedagogy is still important today.

A third philosophical and pedagogical pole is the one led by Antonio Banfi (1886-1957) and his critical rationalism. Antonio Banfi belonged to the generation that came after Gentile's and like him he was a philosopher of European magnitude. His thought developed in Germany

through the Marburg School Neo-Kantians as well as Simmel and Husserl. His philosophy consisted of a strong phenomenology of education that deeply analyses the category structure of pedagogy with a transcendental approach. His thought was then reprised after World War II by Giovanni Maria Bertin’s problematicism (Banfi, 1986; Bertin, 1975).

In this paper I will briefly analyse and describe the Neokantian-positivist philosophy of education, so far held considered of lesser status by the Italian historiography of pedagogy which has for long been influenced by theoretical and historiographical paradigms of Idealism, Marxism and Catholic Personalism (as well as by an incomplete, biased and somewhat distorted interpretation of Dewey’s theory of education and educational knowledge, see Spadafora, 2011), whereas, considering also the current status of the philosophical and pedagogical debate, the Neokantian-positivist philosophy of education surely deserves a more thorough analysis and interpretation.

2. THE GENESIS AND GOALS OF THE *RIVISTA PEDAGOGICA*. THE CENTRAL ROLE OF LUIGI CREDARO

The *Rivista Pedagogica* was founded in June 29, 1907, together with the National Association for Pedagogical Studies of which the *Rivista* was the intended Organ. The Association and the *Rivista* saw the light thanks to an initiative of Luigi Credaro, Director of the journal from its first issue (January 1908) to the last (January-February 1939) – an issue which was indeed finished only a few days before his death, with almost no interruptions except for the time of his term as Minister of Education and his term as General Civil Governor of Venezia Tridentina, today Trentino Alto Adige, 1919-1922.

The Association was the centre of an ambitious project and, in Credaro’s plan it was supposed to represent a point of reference for all the “experts” in the field of education (the Association’s openness to all types of teachers makes it unique still today) and also to unify and focus the teachers’ energies. The Association also aimed at becoming (through the implementation of research and experiments, the organization of congresses and conferences as well as information campaigns, training courses and refresher courses) the driving force of a profound renewal of pedagogical studies and of the debate about them in order to go beyond

the boundaries of the “provincial” outlook and radically rebuild all of teachers’ education and training with the aim of providing them with specific professional skills and, ultimately, to reorder the Italian School System on new bases.

The staff of the *Rivista Pedagogica* included most of the best-known Italian philosophers and pedagogues of the time. There is total consensus that such a result was achieved not only thanks to Credaro’s prestige and organizational capacities but also thanks to the programmatic convergence *in re* of two thought currents: the “critical” positivism of the successors of Roberto Ardigò (1828–1920) which aimed at recovering autonomy of the spirit and the centrality of ethical and moral ideals within the framework of the naturalism of Ardigò himself but at the same time without the materialistic and deterministic restraints of the same theory, which had found expression in the *Rivista di filosofia e scienze affini* (1899-1908) of Giovanni Marchesini (1868-1931), author of the pragmatism-inspired theory of idealities as fictions (for Marchesini’s works see 1905, 1913, 1924, 1931, for insights on his work, see Dal Pra, Quaranta, Guarnieri and others, 1982; Zago, Ed., 2014); and the Neo-Kantianism, which aimed at redefining in anti-dogmatic sense the nature and function of philosophy, which was voiced principally by the *Rivista filosofica* (1899-1908) directed by Carlo Cantoni (1840-1906), former teacher of Credaro (on Italian Neo-Kantianism, see Ferrari M., 1990, 2006, in particular “Il neokantismo italiano tra storiografia ed etica”, pages 13-31; Malusa, 1977; Maresca, 1924a. For more on Cantoni see Genna, 2005; for more on the *Rivista filosofica* see Guarnieri, 1981). At that time, both sides were dominated by interest for the study of the relationship between the natural world and the world of values and the epistemological debate had focussed on the “new” science of psychology; and although there had already been attempts at developing, albeit with a “critical” basis, a new metaphysics (in-between a non-rigid monism and a radical dualism), the path of *humanistic* philosophy (also called “humanistic criticism”) and the consolidation of the “primacy of *Practical Reason*” had led to an ethical investigation that emphasized the irreducible complexity and the solutions of continuity in the spiritual life.

Credaro had been a collaborator of both the *Rivista filosofica*, and of the *Rivista di filosofia e scienze affini*, and therefore an active participant to the life and development of both of these currents of thought. Because of this he was able to grasp their internal dynamics and devise the theoretic-

cal “place” where both currents could meet and start a successful path together. It is important to point out that the birth of the *Rivista Pedagogica* occurred one year after the foundation of the Italian Philosophical Society (1906) and also one year before the publishing life of *Rivista di filosofia* (the Society’s organ until 1927) began. *Rivista di Filosofia* was the result of the merger of the two magazines we mentioned above, and featured the same staff of *Rivista Pedagogica* but its purpose was to implement the more strictly theoretical programme of what was defined the *fronte anti-idealistico* [anti-actual idealism front] (Cambi, 1989).

Credaro’s education and overall intellectual journey made him, quite naturally, fit for the role of protagonist in this story. Credaro had been, during his time at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Pavia (1879-1883) a student of Carlo Cantoni, one of the leaders (with Francesco Fiorentino, Felice Tocco, Filippo Masci, Giacomo Barzellotti) of the nineteenth-century Italian neo-Kantians (see also D’Arcangeli, 2004, pp. 55-122). He was in fact the first member of a “school” who counted among its members Giovanni Vidari, Erminio Juvolta, Alfredo Piazzi, Guido Villa, Giuseppe Mantovani (Credaro, 1934), although Credaro soon abandoned the spiritualistic and ontologizing version of criticism of his Master. During his study time in Leipzig (1887-1888) Credaro approached Herbart’s philosophy and pedagogy and Wundt’s experimental psychology on one hand (Credaro, 1887, 1888), and on the other he also developed his historiographical and philosophical researches on the diffusion of Kant’s philosophy in Italy as well as on the Greek philosophy of the Hellenistic age (*Lo scetticismo degli Accademici*: Credaro 1889, 1893), which were rewarded with the chair of History of Philosophy at Pavia (1889). These researches allowed him to refine and develop his gnoseological empiricism and his all-human *morale dell’umana certezza* [morality of human certainty].

Like all Neo-Kantians Credaro suffered from a contradiction (which remained mostly in the background) between the recognised primacy of empirical and experimental knowledge, which apparently lead to determinism, and the desire to preserve the autonomy of the spirit and to ensure the absolute ideal. Such an intent had to be pursued while avoiding being trapped (in accordance with Kant’s lesson) by metaphysical postulations, but at the same time it implied failing to find satisfaction from the transcendental-formal solution Kant himself had provided for the moral problem.

In the middle of the last decade of the nineteenth century Credaro thought he could get out of this impasse by combining empiricism and the “Primato della Ragion Pratica” [Primacy of Practical Reason] in a focussed, personal commitment to practical work (his candidacy for the Radical Party and his first term as a Member of Parliament, started in 1895); at the same time the pedagogical “vocation” he had continued to cultivate in his Leipzig days, under the sign of Herbart and his followers, further consolidated inside him. In this same time he published his work *La pedagogia di G. F. Herbart* (1900) and he was appointed to the Chair of Pedagogy at the University of Rome, a position held since 1874, by Antonio Labriola; this represented the final step of his project, that was both pedagogical and political in nature (as are the two “applications” of Herbartian ethics) and consisted in a profound transformation of Italian life and society through education, with the Association and the *Rivista* being basic elements and tools.

With *La pedagogia di G. F. Herbart* Credaro also developed a possible answer to the dilemmas that gripped positivism and Neo-Kantianism. Herbart’s educational theoresis consisted of two profoundly interconnected “directions”: the affirmation of the need to achieve a precise knowledge of the student (and in particular of its psychic dynamics), and therefore the use of a rigorously scientific approach and the affirmation of the centrality of the moral dimension, which indeed was the ultimate aim of the educational process. Both directions had a series of requirements and needs that, on a merely speculative level, were difficult to match and combine together, but that instead co-existed (although the synthesis between them was evidently problematic) in Herbart’s pedagogy. Herbartianism (as a whole, not just the pedagogy) became a part of the theoretical re-elaboration carried out by positivists and neo-Kantians.

In summary, Credaro sensed that the *humanistic* philosophy to which “critical” positivism and Neo-Kantianism converged, which was realistic and dualistic but also critical and non-dogmatic and forcefully (in opposition to actualistic syntheses) reiterated the irreducibility of facts and values, of “being” and “must-be”, of science and morality, could only develop to its best by transfiguring into a pedagogy. From that intuition came the complex model of reflection and educational knowledge brought about by his *Rivista Pedagogica*. In the *Rivista* the Kantian appeal to both the “fertile lowland of experience” on the one hand, and

the “conditions of possibility” (and a transcendent reading of the same) on the other was combined with the Herbartian view of pedagogy as divided in “ethics” and “psychology”. While the affirmation of the autonomy of pedagogy implied its emancipation from the “protection” of metaphysics, it also maintained unchanged, at the core of its epistemological architecture, the relationship with philosophy.

The concept of pedagogy and the theoretical framework (which was Herbartian, but also Kantian and critical-transcendental) of which Credaro was among the leading figures and strongest advocates were closely related and would also become integral part of a complex cultural-political project of *educazione nazionale* [*educating the nation*] of which the *Rivista* was the main “laboratory” and centre. Credaro was, among teachers, and generally in the world of education and culture, regarded as one of the most devoted and consistent interpreter of this project also from the political and legislative points of view. Despite all that, even in the earliest pages of the *Rivista* there is no trace of a *pedagogy* made of mere *teaching* or of mere transmission of ideals and values developed elsewhere, or dictated from the outside. In other words, the answer that Credaro and the intellectuals that contributed to the *Rivista* had prepared to meet the urgent demand, the need to *make the Italians* (It: *Fare gli Italiani*) which was the proposal of an education oriented on the values of citizenship, participation, responsibility and civic spirit, solidarity, secularism and tolerance (in other words the distinguishing traits of the *democratic pedagogy* (it: *pedagogia democratica*) - of the *Rivista* that were opposed to the positions of cultural and political nationalism) was not an extrinsic answer but rather one that was consubstantial to a specific theoretical model, the one for which education acquires but also reviews, interprets and modifies the ideals and the spiritual heritage of its time.

3. THE HISTORY, THE THEMES AND THE PROTAGONISTS OF THE *RIVISTA PEDAGOGICA*

In the Giolitti era the main focus of the *Rivista* had a strong socio-political as well as pedagogical relevance, and it was education of the people and for the people (this age culminated in the aforementioned Daneo-Credaro Law of 1911); in addition to that an issue that was extensively dealt with was the training of teachers (namely of elementary school teachers). At the centre of this pedagogy’s theoretical framework was the

idea that if pedagogy has to become an instrument of democratic transformation of society it must become scientific in nature: this of course requires a heavy work on the possible conceptual connections and combinations between “science” and “education”. The *Rivista* discussed, among others, *experimental pedagogy* and experimental methods in education (see for example, in Italy, the Experimental Pedagogy Laboratory and the “Renewed” Elementary School – Pizzigoni, 1909, 1914 – or Ernst Meumann’s works outside Italy – Della Valle, 1908), but also (perhaps more) *experimental psychology* (with the pioneers of this subject in Italy, that is Sante De Sanctis and Francesco De Sarlo: see amongst others Bencini, 1908, De Sanctis, 1910; De Sarlo, 1915; Jeronutti, 1909); the *Rivista* also detailed the work of the Jean-Jacques Rousseau Institute of Geneva, the *Institute of Educational Sciences* established in 1912 (Ferrari G. C., 1913; see also Romano, 1931); on the pages of the *Rivista* several connections were made to expand towards the international horizons of educational research, and this behaviour persisted throughout the history of the *Rivista* except during the Great War and in the late thirties; in 1911 the *Rivista* also published the first review in Italian of John Dewey’s *The School and Society* (1899), written by Cristina Pironti.

After the difficult years of the First World War, Giolitti’s liberal-democratic project was rapidly and violently abandoned. This, the subsequent political, ideological and institutional authoritarian turn brought about by the fascism, not to mention Actual idealism’s conquering cultural hegemony (a fact closely related with Giovanni Gentile’s conversion to fascism and his appointment as Minister of Education in the 1922-24 Mussolini government following the “March on Rome”) and last but not least Gentile’s becoming a leading intellectual of the Fascist Regime were hard blows for the *Rivista Pedagogica*. The *Rivista*, however, reacted by launching a courageous battle against Gentile’s “school reform” and also by starting a process of profound review and discussion of its own theoretical framework. Although the battle ended with a defeat and the process was left unfinished, both left important traces. At the end of the Twenties, the Concordat between the Italian state and the Vatican marked a further turning point in the cultural climate, with the Fascist Regime appropriating and adopting Thomistic realism, the official philosophy of the Church: the generalized revival of pre-Kantian ontologism and of Catholic thought had an influence also on the *Rivista*. The realistic “rebirth” or “counter-reform”, and the gradual decline of actual

idealism started in 1929, did not succeed in restoring, in the *Rivista*, the ideas of scientific pedagogy found in the Giolitti era, also because both the premises and the aims of that "science" were (albeit at very different levels of individual awareness) the openness of values and the building of a progressive and democratic social and civil model.

There were, however, notable exceptions. One such example is the neo-Kantian Mariano Maresca (1884-1948), with his formal and transcendental analysis of the educational act, set in a critical and relationalistic theoretical framework his ability to read (and understand all the problematic relationships) through the Herbartian end-means relationship and also through the relationship between science and philosophy in pedagogy and to grasp the irreducibly and constitutively antinomian condition of education (1916; 1925b; 1937) as well as to reconstruct its relations with other spheres of spiritual life, that is science, philosophy, religion, and so on (Maresca dedicated several works to this analysis on the *Rivista Pedagogica*: Maresca 1925a, 1926, 1927, 1934; for further research on Maresca see Bontadini, 1996; Cambi, 1989, pp. 98-107 *et passim*; Giammancheri, 1972; Mulè, 2001). Another is neo-Kantian Alfredo Poggi (1881-1974), socialist, committed to exploring the relationships between Marxism and criticism and the relationships between philosophy and religion in an ethical and pedagogical outlook (1925, 1944, 1961), while at the same time defining the "Outlines of a pure foundation of educational theory" ("*Lineamenti di una fondazione pura della teoria educativa*", 1926) and analysed the consequences of the *Krisis* on of contemporary Europe on the "Educational problem" (1938. For further material on Poggi see Cambi, 1989, pp. 46-48 *et passim*; Torrini, 2001). Yet another one is the post-positivist Ludovico Limentani (1884-1940), a student of Ardigò and Marchesini, who, after having stressed the probabilistic nature and the practical function of forecasting in social sciences (1907), identified the specific "form" of morality in the "conscience of duty" that accompanies the action (1913), and then researched the psychological and social-historical origins of the ethical rules and distilling a refined reading of life and moral education (for information on his main works published by the *Rivista*, see 1921, 1923, 1927-1928; for further information on Limentani, see Garin, 1983, pp. 235-255; Ferrari M., 2006, pp. 99-140). The last name I would like to remember is the "critical" and "phenomenological" spiritualist Francesco De Sarlo (1864-1937) who, influenced by Brentano and his "*Psychology as a sci-*

ence of the spirit" (It. *Psicologia come scienza dello spirito*), based on the experience of the subject and clearly distinguished from the "empirical psychology", which he also intensively studied (he founded in 1903 the first Italian Cabinet of experimental psychology: see Albertazzi, Ciminio and Gori-Savellini, Eds., 1999; Guarnieri, 2013), developed a detailed realistic replica to the actual idealist claim of being able to exhaust all of reality in the act of thought and was a staunch supporter of scientific education (*amongst the works of De Sarlo, see 1903, 1918, 1925, 1928; amongst his works published on the Rivista Pedagogica, see 1924; for more on De Sarlo see Ferrari M., 2006, pp. 283-310 et passim; Garin, 1966, pp. 56-61 et passim; Mondella, 1984*).

An even more significant and innovative contribution was provided, once again, by Credaro who did not support the Fascist Regime and as result of that was progressively isolated and cut off from political and institutional life. Because of this from 1923 onwards he returned to full-time researching and lecturing and this made him able to sense the direction and perhaps the most profound sense of the evolution of the theoretical paths of the philosophies and pedagogies that became part of the *Rivista*.

CONCLUSIONS: THE *RIVISTA PEDAGOGICA* BEYOND AND TOWARD THE *SCIENCE OF EDUCATION*

From the Twenties onwards Credaro became more and more involved in the study of contemporary educational and teaching theories and methods on one hand and on research and studies in child, cognitive and dynamic psychology on the other, culminating with an approach to "*Freud's psychoanalysis*" of which he analyzed the relationship with the "science of education" (Credaro, 1934). The phrase "science of education" is repeatedly and constantly used: this is first of all a sign of a courageous appropriation and of a vigorous defence of an idea of pedagogy focussed on experimentation and scientific research that seems to hint at further approaches in which that appeal to experience was located, albeit in a more problematic way, in far broader horizons.

In addition to the Director's articles, in the *Rivista*, from the second half of the Twenties onwards another strand consolidated and grew, though it always remained in the background. This "strand" included, amongst other things: an approach, neither occasional nor trivial to the cognitive psychology of Jean Piaget (Anchieri, 1929; Maffi, 1929;

Raffa, 1932, 1934; Spadaccini-Raffa, 1939; plus less frequent references to Claparède and to globalism of Ovide Decroly: Anchieri, 1928; Anonymous, 1933); in-depth researches on the educational “repercussions” of Psychoanalysis, also from the Adler school (Banissoni, 1926); the periodicals focussed on Durkheim and on the sociology of education (Jacovella, 1925; Irdi, 1928) and, although that is not “scientific pedagogy”, but rather “alternative pedagogy”, the consolidation of relations with the international organizations of the “new education” and with the activist movement in general. This is also evident from the significant interventions in the *Rivista* of its leading members, such as Maria Montessori, which in 1933 published “*Educazione alla guerra o educazione alla pace? La pace e l’educazione*” [“*Education to war or education to peace? Peace and Education*”](Montessori, 1933), already published under the supervision of the Bureau International d’Éducation, not surprisingly at a moment in which the definitive breakup between Montessori and the fascist regime was taking place.

As regards the *science of education*, it should be noted that in more than one occasion Credaro demonstrated a tendency to transform the *fact* (It. *fatto*) into *value* (It. *valore*) in terms of “scientific”, namely sociological, outcomes (in 1903 he pointed out the ideal nature of *solidarity*, in 1935 the ideal nature of *nationality*: see Credaro 1903; *I Redattori della Rivista*, 1935): from that we could easily conclude by liquidating its *science* as affected by a *naturalistic fallacy* or downsize it to just a didactics of science or a theory of education. In truth, in Credaro the force of things, the story that thinks in our place is always present, an unavoidable necessity; this harsh, merciless realism however never destroys but rather always accompanies the onset, the eruption of the “*perspective*” or, to use Credaro’s words, “Ogni grande sistema di pedagogia, da un lato è un’interpretazione dei bisogni e delle aspirazioni che stanno in fondo alla coscienza contemporanea, dall’altro è uno sguardo che varca l’orizzonte comune, una protesta e un’anticipazione mentale” [“Every major system of pedagogy is on one hand an interpretation of the dreams and aspirations that form the foundations of contemporary conscience and on the other is a look that goes beyond the shared horizon, a protest and a mental anticipation”] (Credaro, 1903: 7-8).

In other words there is, in Credaro the (not fully developed) idea that pedagogical knowledge should mediate between the most rigorous, even gritty realism of the facts and the focus on ideals and on the drive towards

utopia; or also the idea of an education that seeks its own reference values for itself and in itself, with the tools of non-dogmatic science and philosophy, under the light of the *practice* (practice which is critically monitored and evaluated by science and philosophy), almost echoing, in this idea, John Dewey and the means-ends relationship of *Theory of Valuation* (1939) or the relationship between theorizing, empirical and experimental science and ideals described in *Reconstruction in philosophy* (1920, 1948).

In summary: the *Rivista Pedagogica*, thanks to the decisive contribution of Credaro, was the “home” of development of a complex model of pedagogy, that was not only based on an organic relationship of pedagogy with the other “human sciences”, first of all with psychology and sociology but it also expressed, or rather tried to define a new concept of “scientificness”, different from that of Ardigò’s positivism and pertaining to the subjects that dealt with man and the spiritual life (while never forgetting the positivist focus on experience and empirical investigation): in this concept a core epistemological role was played by the relationship with philosophy which was indeed to be regarded as different from metaphysics or ontology, and was to be understood as science’s critical analysis of the methods and results and as a reflection on values and *ideals*. This pedagogical model, which from the very beginning was fundamentally structured on the Herbartian dyad of “means” (psychology and other human sciences) and “ends” (ethics, and therefore philosophy) of education soon started to show tangible signs in the reflection and contributions of Credaro in the *Rivista* from the mid-Twenties onwards and evolution/transformation to a *science of education* with clear Dewey traits.

Notas

1. This paper is a revised and expanded version of the speech Philosophy of education in the «Rivista Pedagogica» (1908-1939), presented on August 21, 2014 in the Symposium Philosophy on education in Italy in the early of the 20th century, part of the 14th Biennial World Conference of the International Network of Philosophers of Education (Arcavacata di Rende Campus, Cosenza, August 20-23, 2014), featuring Amanda Fulford, Giuseppe Spadafora and Giovambattista Trebisacce, supervision by Marco Antonio D'Arcangeli.

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