An Island's Lazy Eye. Interweaving Pedagogical Dimensions in *Fire at Sea*[1]

PAOLO BONAFEDE

Docente a contratto di Pedagogia della socialità digitale – Università di Trento

Corresponding author: paolo.bonafede@unitn.it

GABRIELE BRANCALEONI

Dottore di ricerca in Letteratura per l'infanzia - Università di Bologna

Corresponding author: gabriele.brancaleoni@yahoo.com

Abstract. In this study, the two authors focus on the analysis of Gianfranco Rosi's documentary film Fire At Sea in which a child, just as a contemporary Virgil, becomes the narrator of an emblematic historical context and peculiar socio-cultural dynamics. The setting of the island of Lampedusa and Rosi's characters are symbolically used to reflect on the human tragedy in the Mediterranean Sea and question its relational outcomes on an existential level: meetings, clashes, rejection, indifference, recognition, care. This research aims to provide a double reading of this filmic narration by taking into account the dialogical relation between representation and ethics. The film is interpreted through the lens of children's literature and of collective imagery analysis, thus exploring its narrative dimension from the point of view of philosophy of education and its axiological reflections.

Keywords. Childhood Representations - Narrative Analysis - Philosophy of Education - Liminality - Aestethic Gaze - Pedagogy of Care - Pedagogy of Hospitality - Fire at Sea

1. Interweaving Pedagogical Dimensions in *Fire at Sea*

The choice to delve into the analysis of Gianfranco Rosi's documentary film *Fire at Sea*[2] stems from the will to address the filmmaker's question about the possibility for a human being to actually see the *Other* in front of them. The film is investigated from a pedagogic standpoint. In this light, given the juxtaposition between the theme of otherness and childhood[3], the acts of "seeing" and then "looking" require specific interpretative tools to read, comprehend and disentangle the film's message within the vortex of images and symbols which characterizes mass media and their cultural productions[4]. For this reason, this analysis relies on the hermeneu-

---

[1] Gabriele Brancaleoni: ch. 1.4; Paolo Bonafede 2-3-5.
[2] G. Rosi, (2016), *Fuocoammare (Fire at Sea)*, Italy: Stemal Entertainment, 21Uno Film, Cinecittà Luce, Rai Cinema, Les Films d'Ici, Arte Cinema, ARTE France.
[3] See M. Bernardi, *Letteratura per l'infanzia e l'alterità. Incanti, disincanti, ambiguità, tracce,* FrancoAngeli, Roma, 2016.
[4] According to Antonio Faeti studying children's literature requires to monitor and analyse an extended sample

tic notions provided by both children's literature and philosophy of education[5]. Rosi's poetics prompts a pedagogic reflection on the hypothetic relationships with otherness as well as on the human sensorial capacity to *look*. Indeed, one needs to learn to look in order to comprehend, meet and accept otherness, otherwise he/she will end up ignoring or even rejecting it in all its manifestations. *Fire At Sea* invites to a complex multi-layered reading: on the one hand, Rosi directs the viewer's gaze across the landscapes of an emblematic site, Lampedusa, where new social dynamics are surfacing and a historically as well as socio-politically determined tragedy is taking place; on the other hand, the filmmaker's poetics entails an existential question which goes beyond history and universally encompasses the whole human kind.

The first and true storyteller is and remains that of fairy tales[6]. Starting from Walter Benjamin's considerations on the art of storytelling, Rosi's film is analyzed following clues ascribable to a fairy-tale dimension[7] in order to explore the deep, universal meanings of the story. Such hermeneutic quest for symbols and signs ultimately aims to emphasize the communicative power of this narration from (and of) the border.

2. Geopolitical location

A reflection on the migrant crisis and its effects on inner reality as well as on factual relationships first requires a symbolic place serving as the stage of this existential tragedy: Lampedusa. Owing to its latitude (35°30' N), further south than Algeri and Tunisi, Lampedusa belongs to the African continent from a geographical viewpoint – suffice it to compare the dis-

---

of different mediums and cultural products, including those usually dedicated to adults. Analysing this landscape can provide clues and interpretative starting point to develop new and more complex hermeneutics. In this case the presence of a children character make *Fire at sea* a really interesting document that provide a particular and emblematic representation of childhood. «*Il medium più direttamente rivolto ai bambini [il libro] viene così ricollegato ai mezzi di comunicazione che, a volte, sono strettamente riservati agli adulti e, generalmente, sono in grado di riferirsi anche a questo tipo di fruitori. Una critica attrezzata, con nuovi strumenti interpretativi, per studiare le comunicazioni di massa, si rivela quindi particolarmente adatta, non solo ad occuparsi della letteratura per l'infanzia, ma anche a sottrarla al ghetto in cui fatalmente la si racchiude se non si tenta di scoprire come essa sia sempre collegata a particolari settori del mondo culturale degli adulti, via via dilatando o registrando, per proprie autonome esigenze, le più varie suggestioni raccolte in quella dimensione*» (See A. Faeti, *Letteratura per l'infanzia,* La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1985, p.30).
[5] The paper proposes a different analysis from those offered in the reflections of other contributions on the same film, such as: A. Angelone, *Italian documentaries and immigration*, in G. Lombardi, C. Uva (eds), *Italian Political Cinema: Public Life, Imaginary, and Identity in Contemporary Italian,* Peter Lang, Berna, 2016, pp. 69-80; V. Anishchenkova, *The battle of truth and fiction: Documentary storytelling and Middle Eastern refugee discourse*, «Journal of postcolonial writing», vol. 54, n. 6, 2018, pp. 809-820; S. Ponzanesi, *Of shipwrecks and weddings: borders and mobilities in Europe,* «Transnational cinemas», vol. 7, n. 2, 2016, pp. 151-167; V. Zagarrio, '*Not even in a dream'. Emmigration and immigration in new Italian cinema,* «Journal of Italian Cinema & Media studies», vol, 4, n. 3, 2016, pp. 421-438; G. Zhang, *Documentary films on migrations in Italy: characteristics and ethics,* «Journal of Italian Cinema & Media studies», vol, 6, n. 1, 2018, pp. 3-14.
[6] According to Benjamin the character of the Narrator is the one who exercises the social responsibility of passing on, preserving memory and giving advice. With the arrival of modernity the art of storytelling fails and with it all the functions that this art fulfilled. The sapiential and epic dimension of the storytelling finds its highest manifestation in the ancestral form of the fairy tale: a genre that encapsulates the complexity of the human destiny translated into metaphors of agnition, of identity research, of overturning of classes and roles, of compensation of the last, of resilience in facing the trials that precarious life presents. (See W. Benjamin, *Il narratore*. Einaudi, Torino, 2011, p.71).
[7] See *Tutto è fiaba. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio sulla fiaba*. Emme Edizioni, Milano, 1980, pp. V-XIX; see M. Bernardi, *Infanzia e fiaba*, BUP, Bologna, 2007; see S. Calabrese, *Fiaba*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1997; see F. Cambi, *Itinerari sulla fiaba*, ETS, Pisa, 1999.

tance from Sicily (205 km) and Tunisia (only 113 km). Together with Lampione, Lampedusa is an African island borrowed by Italy and now become European territory. It is both the common ground and the intersection point of foreign lives, thus acquiring different connotations. As a border land, the island is connoted as a marginal and marginalized space with respect to both the national and European contexts, especially given its distance from the continent it belongs to. However, Lampedusa is a harbor, a crossing point, the first stop of the central Mediterranean route connecting Africa and Europe and, as such, it is also a place for meetings and exchanges, relations and proximity. This is Lampedusa's paradoxical duplicity: the border land as well as the unreachable destination[8] and place of hope. The Door of Europe[9] is an emblematic sculpture in this respect: it is the threshold of a continent connoted by the possibility to be both open and closed. In the last years, this symbolic ambivalence demanded an actual stance regarding immigration policy and how the foreign or, in general, other human beings, has to be received on account of the increase of migratory flows along the Mediterranean routes.

Starting from 2011, the year of the Arab Spring, Lampedusa became the dock where, for different reasons, African migrants seeking fortune in Europe landed. From 2011 to 2013, this phenomenon reached abnormal proportions with respect to the national average[10] and then showed a rather stable trend in absolute terms, with remarkable variations with respect to the average according to waves of migrations. This led to the implementation of national[11] and European policies to oppose uncontrolled immigration[12]. Data stress the urgency to tackle how a 20-km^2 land with less than 6,000 inhabitants can relate with foreignness. No matter the degree of acceptance of their presence, castaways ultimately come into contact with islanders, including those portrayed in *Fire at Sea*, thus creating a seamless mental space where the encounter with otherness is necessarily reconsidered.

3. Between politics and pedagogy: from the borders to the dialogue

In the filmic narration of *Fire at Sea*, the island of Lampedusa becomes the privileged place for a reflection which can be extended to the national, European and global debate on the encounter and clash between different identities and culturally distant humanities sharing the same land.

---

[8] In the central Mediterranean, from 2014 to 2019, 15505 migrants died or disappeared, equal to 2.3% of the people who tried to reach the coasts of Malta or Italy. Source: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/676. (20/10/2019)

[9] Sculpture inaugurated in June 28, 2008. It is on the hill near the seaport of Capo Grecale, in the southern promontory of Lampedusa. It is the work of the artist Mimmo Paladino, who used a special reflective ceramic for both solar and lunar light. So the sculpture becomes a symbolic lighthouse for migrants and castaways.

[10] In 2011, 51,753 of the 62,962 migrants disembarked in Italy arrived at the port of Lampedusa, Linosa and Lampione (82% of the total flow); the proportion was 5,202 of the 13,627 total (38%) in 2012 and 14,753 of the 42,925 total (34%) in 2013, respectively. Further data on landings and migrant policy are provided by the Ministry of the Interior of the Italian Republic. See: http://www.interno.gov.it/it/sala-stampa/dati-e-statistiche/sbarchi-e-accoglienza-dei-migranti-tutti-i-dati. (15/09/2019)

[11] See, in particular, the so-called *Memorandum* and the 2017 agreement between Italy and Lybia as well as the DL 113/2018 and DL 53/2019 security decrees. See: http://www.governo.it/sites/governo.it/files/Libia.pdf; https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/12/03/18A07702/sg; https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/06/14/19G00063/sg. (07/09/2019)

[12] In 2014, 4,194 of the 170,000 migrants disembarked in Italy arrived at the port of Lampedusa, Linosa and Lampione (2.4% of the total flow); the proportion was 21,692 of the 153,842 total (14%) in 2015; 11,557 of the 181,436 total (34%) in 2016; 9,057 of the 119,369 total (7.5%) in 2017; finally, 2,468 of the 23,370 total (15%) in 2018. See: http://www.interno.gov.it/it/sala-stampa/dati-e-statistiche/sbarchi-e-accoglienza-dei-migranti-tutti-i-dati. (10/09/2019)

Over the last decade, from a political point of view, the compelling question of relational proximity was instinctively addressed in terms of restrictive selection. As much as this position may be accounted for by rationality, national and community policies clearly entail a relational closure which goes from a macro to a micro dimension, from a political to an existential sphere[13]. Thus, Lampedusa became the first of many closed borders: the door of Europe came to resemble a barrage rather than a bridge between continents: it is the outpost where Europe, having transformed coastal nations into border guards, fights its undeclared war against migrants, passed off as "fighting against traffickers"[14]. The history of the Mediterranean Sea is connected to exchanges and sharing by different cultures and – currently – 22 countries lapped by its water. Nonetheless, nowadays the Mediterranean Sea has turned into a wall of water which is even more impassable and lethal than many other walls[15] and barriers against immigration which have been built worldwide to separate human beings[16]. This paradox is clearly evident in *Fire at Sea*: the call for "the law of the sea" and the saving of human lives clashes with the island, which metaphorically becomes a fortress of separation and abandonment of castaways to their fate[17]. The migratory flow issue is seriously endangering the "European citizenship" project – i.e., a small version of a wider cosmopolite and post-national ideal. Indeed, this situation has exasperated the sense of belonging to a territory and reinforced the ideal of a nation-state serving as the guardian and bulwark of defense against exogenous threats[18].

This political stance is disputable from a pedagogical point of view on account of the inescapable relational vocation of the *anthropos*. And such vocation is the prerequisite of any educational and formative act, regardless of the intercultural perspective[19]. A psycho-politics of the walls refers to the tragic nature of a segregation which, despite every apparent sense of security, is always also self-segregation[20]. The creation of a border is also an act of bordering and isolating ourselves. It implies an abandonment of dialogism by taking shelter in a solipsistic space inhabited by individualism. Starting from Bertolini's thought,

---

[13] Such switch from a political to a pedagogic and individual dimension is maintained in the light of further sociological studies comparing the Italian situation with other context. The closest example can be found in France, where the strict relation between integration policies and social questions is particularly evident: «Le racisme n'est pas seulement celui de la violence, celui de l'assassinat, ou, plus ordinairement, plus banalement – banalité affligeante – celui de la vie quotidienne, le mépris qui se lit dans le regard et qui se traduit dans des conduites méfiantes, soupçonneuses, peureuses; il est aussi celui qui est inscrit dans les institutions et dans leur fonctionnement lorsqu'il s'agit de cette catégorie particuliére de sujets et d'assujettis qu'on appelle "immigrés" – qui y est inscrit parce qu'il l'était déjà dans les catégories par lesquelles on perçoit et on constitue l'immigration» (A. Sayad, *L'immigration ou les paradoxes de l'altérité,* Raisons d'agir ed., Paris, 2006, p. 43).
[14] See D. Di Cesare, *Stranieri residenti. Una filosofia della migrazione,* Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 2017, p. 210.
[15] This was often called the "age of walls". See: http://www.infodata.ilsole24ore.com/2017/08/07/muri-divido-no-mondo-la-mappa-interattiva/ (13/09/2019).
[16] Michel Foucher found that in 2016 up to 320 political frontiers existed worldwide, with a total length of over 248,000 km. See: M. Foucher, *Le retour des frontières,* CNRS èditions, Paris, 2016.
[17] This clashes with the actions of Lampedusa's inhabitants, devoted to rescue activities on a daily basis. The narrative dimension, paving the way to a universe of plural meanings, enabled Rosi to show such separation between the islanders' daily life and the tragedy of the Mediterranean Sea.
[18] D. Di Cesare, *Stranieri residenti*, p. 245.
[19] A. Bobbio, *Pedagogia del dialogo e relazioni di aiuto,* Armando, Roma, 2012. The central role of the relationship in human life is evidently accompanied by the importance of the inner dimension. See: M. Musaio, *Pedagogia della persona educabile: l'educazione tra interiorità e relazione,* Vita e Pensiero, Milano, 2010.
[20] D. Di Cesare, *Stranieri residenti*, p. 205.

research on phenomenological pedagogy had highlighted the *existential primacy* of the person in a relationship for a long time, by conceiving intersubjectivity[21] as an opening to the *Lebenswelt* within which human identity is shaped[22]. By recognizing Bertolini's contribution to the debate, policies based on the separation between human beings are clearly refuted since, from a pedagogical point of view, those who choose to build a wall, for fear of the other, for the need to protect themselves from all that is foreign, end up suffering the consequences. And such consequences include the lack of enrichment for individual and collective identities. Thus, the very possibility to welcome and host should be proactively reconceptualized as an essential and universal substrate of human actions[23]. Therefore, besides individual and isolated acts of openness, today's policies can represent an opportunity for redemption, thus ascertaining from an educational point of view how human otherness should be a structural rather than occasional part of a pedagogy of hospitality.

These very considerations are represented in Rosi's tragic and symbolic narration. Indeed, in *Fire at Sea*, the act of looking has a pedagogical value. The gaze – in an ethic and aesthetic sense– is a sign of relational openness. This is clearly highlighted by the film in its descriptions, questions, narrations and discussions. The strict bond between the understanding of cultural symbols and the development of self-conscience unfolds along its scenes. The transfer between perception and imagery is an invitation to "feel inside", leading to an emotional consonance involving empathy. In so doing, the filmic narration increases human sensitivity and the capacity to feel other people's sorrow, help them, support them and understand their pain and tragedy[24]. For these reasons, Rosi's work on Lampedusa produces new meanings: the insular border represented can turn into a horizon where human lives peacefully confront each other.

4. *Fire at Sea:* the lazy eye of a suspended human kind

To analyze a work of art, one needs understand the artists' profile, for instance, by studying their technique, their characteristic traits, and their stylistic influences and recognizing the performative obsession usually at the core of their representations as well as the uncontrolled nuances of marginal details. During the second half of the nineteenth century, Giovanni Morelli[25] proposed a study on paintings by focusing on such secondary

---

[21] P. Bertolini, *Pedagogia fenomenologica,* La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 2001, pp. 278-295.

[22] Problematicistic reflection stresses the "possible relations" between the elements characterizing a model of antinomy which, as Bertin argued, is nurtured by egocentric and heterocentric needs. In Bertin, however, this dialectical relationship is distraught, impossible to solve according to the conciliation model based on the I – world bond. See: G.M. Bertin, *Educazione alla ragione,* Armando, Roma, 1968, pp. 62-68. Nonetheless, the analysis of the different types of relationships is a philosophical and educational task, to show the prominence of relational dynamics in this field. See: G. Scuderi Sanfilippo, *Il razionalismo critico come problema pedagogico. Banfi, Bertin e il senso della pedagogia,* Pellegrini, Cosenza 2005, pp. 147-155.

[23] To host and to be host of the foreigner is also the experience of hosting ourselves as foreigners, in which "to host" means "to recognize". To host a foreigner freely, without asking anything in return, means to recognize the true essence of the "self". If the Other asks for hospitality it is impossible to abandon them and be unsympathetic with them. Free hospitality, far from the economic mechanism of exchange of gifts and favours, is an intrinsic part of individual essence and, as such, it is universal. See: E. Jabés, *Il libro dell'ospitalità* (1991), trad. di A. Prete, Raffaello Cortina, Milano 1995.

[24] I. Wojnar, *Autocoscienza estetica dell'uomo*, «Rassegna di pedagogia», vol. 66, n. 1-4, 2008, p. 286.

[25] Morelli is an art historian who, under pseudonyms, postulated the controversial method of recognition of

details as hands, fingers, nails, and ears as hints of the artist's personal and characteristic trait. According to Morelli, when depicting minor elements in a scene, the artist tends to lower their control level and thus reveal through such marginal elements their individuality with no deformation induced by the dominant canon of the time. Morelli's semeiotic inquiry method subsequently influenced Freud's approach[26] based on the overall reading of symptoms, including those seemingly irrelevant and served as the grounding of Ginzburg's methodology of micro-historical research[27].

By using the same inquiry method to delve into Rosi's cinematographic poetics, the first recurring element revealing the filmmaker's deeply personal trait is the dimension of the *margin* and the position of the *dropout* as a privileged point of view. This features characterizes the peculiar collocation of subjects in his documentaries as well as their profiles and the ways in which they are filmed. In each documentary, Rosi gives new shape to the marginal space, the liminal zone of conflicting cohabitation between opposites, the site of abjection, anormality and amorality, the place of transformation as well as of temporal absence: the river Ganges in *Boatman*[28], the desert in *Below the Sea Level*[29], a motel room in *El Sicario Room 164*[30], the Grande Raccordo Anulare (literally, "Great Ring Junction") motorway in *Sacro Gra*[31], the island in *Fire at Sea*. Within the margin, Rosi always selects common people that are decadent and ruined by the passing of time or by consuming experiences. Indeed, unlike the individuals reassuringly recognized as part of normal categories, these subjects are a metaphoric as well as a narratively truthful embodiment of

---

fake reproduction of paintings and influenced the approach of Freud's psychoanalysis and Carlo Ginzburg's historical investigation. See C. Ginzburg, *Miti, emblemi e spie. Morfologia e storia,* Einaudi, Torino 2000.

[26] See S. Freud, *Il Mosè di Michelangelo,* in Id., *Saggi sull'arte, la letteratura e il linguaggio*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 1991.

[27] See C. Ginzburg, *Il filo e le tracce. Vero, falso, finto,* Feltrinelli, Milano, 2006; see C. Ginzburg, *Storia notturna,* Einaudi, Torino 2008.

[28] In his first work, *Boatman* (1993), Rosi followed for a whole day Gopal, a boatman ferrying tourists across the river Ganges: an Indian *Charon* guiding the viewer across the transformation of a community torn by the search for balance between tradition and modernity. The Ganges is a market, a place of meeting and exchange, the setting of funeral rites and sacred ceremonies. It is also the margin chosen to attempt to capture representative fragments of a community, filmed from a wobbly canoe, with scenes keeping bound together life and death in dialogue.

[29] In *Below the Sea Level* (2008), the filmmaker shows the life of the invisible homeless living in the desert 200 miles from Los Angeles and 40 meters below the sea level. These men and women live alone, in run-down caravans stuffed with all kind of things. They created a microcosm whose atmosphere resembles that of a post-apocalyptic dystopian film with ghost-like human beings, consumed by their isolation, are drawn together by their common struggle to survive in poor conditions. Such "sub-marine" obtundation evokes moon-like scenery shaping the distance within which existential paths intersect and collaborate, love and keep each other company, in the attempt to fight solitude and bewilderment and to find a new meaning in life despite its derailment and interdiction.

[30] In *El Sicario Room 164* (2010), the margin shaping the content of the documentary is the room of an anonymous motel, giving the title to the work. In this room, Rosi collects the testimony of a Mexican drug cartel hit man. He is a professional murderer, kidnapper, torturer, raised by a powerful criminal organization controlling the Mexican border, corrupting police officers, and ruling over drug market. This clever and perverted character with a hidden face shocks the viewers with his quiet technical precision as he describes his appalling duties.

[31] After a long period away from Italy, Rosi returned to his homeland to engage in a project run by urban planner Nicolò Bassetti aimed at re-narrating Rome through the voices and images of people and places from the deep suburbs. This is how *Sacro GRA* is born (2013). In this case, the circularity of the junction (the Grande Raccordo Anulare/ "Great Ring Junction"), which can be potentially run over and over again, is combined with the wordplay of the title to recall a circle of Dante's *Inferno*, where the distance from the center relegates and condemns to a chaotic as well as endless and eternal dynamism.

the authentic conditions of the living in their process of becoming, their caducity and fragility, constantly in contact with the difference characterizing and *shaping their existence*[32].

In all his works, Rosi puts forward his *poetics of the distance* by using a neorealist documentary style in clear contrast with the documentary inquiry which is now popular in the United States of America. Given the absence of sensationalist theses and antitheses, the filmmaker captures his characters in their existential individual truth. By using a film technique which resembles the work of ethnographic research[33], Rosi aims to collect his subjects' spontaneous manifestations and authentic behaviors. The juxtapositions and narrative choices made during the editing phase are appointed to reveal the poetic poignancy of the paradoxical paucity of rejected, outcast, even obscene, or simply minor, marginal, forgotten lives. Rosi's works are a collection of characters crystalized in the present of their encounter with the camera and the absoluteness of their feelings and attitudes. They have no past and no history, unless it is deemed useful to clearly outline the profile of the icon these characters are asked to represent. It is a collection of human types, parodies of women and men, ruins and survivors, and unusual singularities.

It may be argued that, along his artistic career, Rosi increased his familiarity with the interaction and dialogue with the weird and the foreign, with the otherness characterising above all those who are subjected to the transformations of becoming processes, in places where all are equally state-less and the only belonging left is their belonging to human kind.

By delving into the core of the analysis of *Fire at Sea*, among all of Rosi's works, this documentary stands out for its clear intentions and its ethically driven mobilization. The choice to give visibility to a tragic phenomenon known as "the holocaust of our time"[34] becomes the filmmaker's personal answer to a pressing historical question. Though preserving the distance which characterises his style, Rosi outlines an impalpable plot presented to the viewers as an ineluctable question with a narration made of conflicting oxymora and by gradually guiding the public to the encounter with the horror of tragedy through the gaze of patently symbolic and metaphoric characters. Moreover, among these elements, we can also find fairy-tale traits[35], which help convey a universal scope of the narration[36]: the island of Lampedusa, Samuele, doctor Bartolo, and the shipwrecked

---

[32] See R. Fadda, *Promessi a una forma.* Franco Angeli, Milano 2016, pp. 84-112.

[33] Rosi's shooting method requires a long phase of learning about the contexts and subjects selected for the documentaries. The scenes are filmed by the director himself with no troupe only after several months devoted to the process of rapprochement and inclusion in such context. In so doing, the presence of the filmmaker as well as of his camera can become invisible and irrelevant for the subject filmed.

[34] Press conference from the 2016 Berlin International Film Festival: https://www.repubblica.it/spettacoli/cinema/2016/02/13/news/berlino_applausi_per_fuocoammare_-133340575/ (18/09/2019).

[35] The analysis was conducted on the basis of Vladimir J. Propp's studies. In particular, in *The Historical Roots of the Wonder Tale* (1946), he deconstructs the fairy-tale by retrieving in it the narrative transposition of rituals and social dynamics which pertain to tribal communities. In such communities, rites of passage had the function of marking the steps of a person's life and celebrating the flow of time, thus giving symbolic prominence to the changes it brought the members of the tribe as well as to natural forces sustaining them. Rites served to define the territorial and ethical boundaries of a community by clarifying its norms and rejects as well as what was vital and deadly, favorable and unfavorable for its survival. See V. J. Propp, *Le radici storiche dei racconti di fate,* trad. it. di C. Coisson, Boringhieri, Torino 1981; See M. Bernardi, *Infanzia e fiaba.* BUP, Bologna, 2007.

[36] By virtue of its ancestral origin, its residual and sedimentary structure composed by human history the major existential themes, the fairy-tale is subject to migrations from a genre to another, crossing the boundaries of media and slipping into works which do not pertain to children's literature, though still analyzable under the lens of imagery studies. See M. Bernardi, *Infanzia e fiaba*, pp.209-223.

refugees are the four protagonists whose dynamics intertwine in a way resembling the original core of the fairy-tale, i.e., the initiation rite[37].

The initiation rite marked the tribe members' passage from childhood to adulthood within the framework of a transformation and transmission ceremony. This physical, psychic, and social transition was portrayed as dramatizations of momentary death and rebirth. The initiate was first separated from the structured conformation of the family and led to an experience of reunion with pre-social and pre-identity assets, communion with nature, name loss, incestuous reconnection with the prenatal life. In a *liminal space*[38], the initiate was buried, drugged, temporarily blinded, dressed up, sew up in carcasses and animal skin in order to be reconnected with the Whole, brought back to Mother Earth womb and introduced to sexual practices. The liminal space of initiation was the place of the indistinct, the primordial magma in which life and death, survival and disappearance mixed. The rite was celebrated by an inhabitant of the *limen*, the *shamanic character*, the elder man or woman of the village, the wizard or the witch, the Master or Mistress of Nature, keeper of the gates seemingly separating and putting in contact the world of the living and the world of the dead. With the powers coming from the connection with the afterworld and by the favor of forebears and tutelary deities, this figure preserved the memory and wisdom from the past, was able to control elements and living creatures, communicate with animals and plants, and had the knowledge of the latter's benefic and curative properties. In the tribe, their task was to ferry souls and celebrate rites of passage concerning births, deaths, propitiation and purification rituals. The shaman was entrusted with the novices to make them aware of their finite nature and the need of a relationship with their past, so that, within a narrative dimension[39], they can project themselves toward the fulfilment of a future open up to the possible. In a marginal space, the initiation introduced what in Heidegger's philosophy[40] would be called the awareness of your own finitude, of your "throwness", of the necessity of taking care of your own and others *Dasein*[41].

By looking for the elements associated to the dynamics of initiation, it is possible to find the leitmotifs of the fairy-tale unravelling throughout the scenes of the film.

First evidence: *Lampedusa*. The island is described with a slow rhythm, long fields over vast spaces, and soft sounds: the waves breaking on the rocks, the wind whistling

---

[37] Among the different marginal rituals, the initiation rite marked the tribe members' passage from childhood to adulthood, from the passivity of being taken care of to the act of taking care of the sustenance and survival of the village. The rite was composed of three phases: the first phase of estrangement consisted of the separation of the child from the places of daily community life and the next relegation into forest, or swampy, marginal areas, where the person managing the rituals lived. This phase was followed by the liminal and the reintegration ones: the novice experienced a period of temporal suspension, marked by tests and learning, after which he was allowed to return to his community as an adult and member of the wise men's council. See A. Van Gennep, *I riti di passaggio, (*1981), Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 2012; J. Frazer, *Il ramo d'oro,* (1968), Bollati Boringhieri, Torino, 2018; V. Turner, *La foresta dei simboli. Aspetti del rituale Ndembu*, Morcelliana, Brescia, 1976; V. Turner, *Dal rito al teatro*, Il Mulino, Bologna, 1986.
[38] A. Szakolczai, *Liminality and Experience: Structuring transitory situations and transformative events,* «International Political Anthropology» vol. 2, n. 1, 2009.
[39] The core of the ritual was a narrative performance in which the novice was told his primogenital origin: through the tribe's founding myth, the young was able to take possession of his original past and give new meaning to the future.
[40] See M. Heidegger, *Being and Time,* (1927), tr. J. Macquarrie, E. Robinson, Blackwell, Oxford 2001, §41, p.235; §53, p. 304; §65, p. 370; §68a, p. 385.
[41] See L. Mortari, *La pratica dell'aver cura*, Mondadori, Milano, 2006.

though the vegetation, the rolling of the fishermen's boats anchored at the dock, the children's secluded games, a radio listener to a local issuer asking for songs and auspicious dedications, the sea urchin pickers' underwater apnoea, seen *through the looking glass*[42] of the deep sea, as if separated by an intrauterine amniotic sac, from which the wavy graveyard is just the usual, familiar fishing area.

The island can be associated to the liminal space of the rites of passage: it is a limited and distant area, separated from the places where social life takes place, hard to reach only through impervious paths, free zone for temporary stays. One may expect a narration leading to encounter with the end, the bewilderment, the disarming slaughter of the people drowned in the sea. Yet no encounter occurs. And such absence makes the metaphor even stronger. No interruption, no emergency, no inrush of the tragedy, no question, no *krisis*. The island and the islanders' lives become the metaphor of an apathetic, linear routine that goes on undisturbed, untouched by any new, unforeseen, unexpected, deviant event or person. The liminal transformational space, deprived of its celebratory dimension of the transient, becomes a meaningless immutable chasm.

Second Evidence: *the young soothsayer*. The character of Samuele is the embodiment of childhood in all its authenticity, devoid of stereotypes, adult-like movements and attitudes[43], and unaffected by performative needs. The subject of Rosi's shoots is Samuele in his daily life as a 12-year-old boy, divided between his child condition and the clumsy simulation of the tasks of the seafaring islander he is about to become. Samuele is a Lampedusan *Dickon*[44]. He keeps a primordial relationship with the forces of nature, witnessing the symbiosis and the harmony which characterise a pantheistic vision of childhood[45]: he speaks with birds, plays among the tree branches and the prickly pears of his island because so far he has not been trained to the challenges of the sea and navigation. The boy is represented in a dimension of separateness and autonomy from the adult world; he is still free to waste his time playing and wandering, free to roam in an "unproductive" time that reminds us the playful suspended dimension of the children in the Kenneth Grahame's *The Golden Age*[46] and Louis Pergaud's *La Guerre des boutons*[47].

Samuele is the initate in the film. The strongest symbolic element which accounts for this hypothesis is the "lazy eye", whose meanings point at opposite directions: on the one hand, the metaphor of blindness stands for the inability to see "Otherness", i.e., the refugees; on the other hand, the mutilation of the eyes evokes *the sedimented imagery connected to the capacity to see something else*[48], something beyond, together with the ability to name things and cast light on the inscrutable: "*il sacrificio oblativo dell'occhio*

---

[42] See L. Carrol, *Le avventure di Alice nel paese delle meraviglie, Alice al di là dello specchio,* Einaudi, Torino 2015.

[43] See M. Contini, S. Demozzi, *Corpi bambini. Sprechi d'infanzie*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2016.

[44] Dickon is one of the character of *the secret garden*. He represent the helpful mentor, with healing powers, able to communicate with nature. See F.H. Burnett, *Il giardino segreto.* Mondadori, Milano 1993.

[45] See G. Grilli, *Bambini, insetti, fate e Charles Darwin*, in *La letteratura invisibile*, a cura di E. Beseghi e G.Grilli, Carocci, 2011; See G. Grilli, *Perché Pinocchio è un'icona universale? Ipotesi, spunti ermeneutici e un indizio Paleoantropologico,* «Journal of Theories and Research in Education» 11, 3, 2016.

[46] K. Grahame, *L'età d'oro.* Traduzione di A. Motti. Adelphi, Milano 1984.

[47] L. Pergaud, *La guerra dei bottoni.* Traduzione di G. P. Colombo. BUR, Milano 1997.

[48] G. Durand, *Le strutture antropologiche dell'immaginario*, Dedalo, Bari 1984.

è iperdeterminazione della visione in veggenza"[49]. Moreover, blindness characterises both the novice and the character appointed to introduce him to the change of the visual paradigm[50]: the one-eyed figure who sees in the darkness is a chthonic, monstrous (the latin *monstrare* means "bring to the attention", "make visible") image often linked to such ambiguous and obscure characters as the mentor who guides the initiation and inhabits the threshold between this world and the underworld, bearing the scars and the marks of this ambivalence[51].

The blind eye then enables the communication with the underworld. Thus, in phenomenological terms, the mentor and the novice are provided with an *eidetic* gaze[52] which can grasp the truth of reality[53], free from the sensible and prejudicial *doxa* of the superficial gaze.

Suffice it to think of the blindness of such mythical characters as Odin, Homer, and Tiresias, Charon's burning eyes in the canto III in Dante's Inferno, the witch's glass eye capable of revealing a person's death in Tim Burton's *Big Fish*[54], and Ivy's salvific blindness in M. Night Shyamalan's *The Village*[55].

Samuele's lazy eye prepares the viewers to the possibility to look at the tragedy with attention/care, but even in this case there is no encounter. Therefore, Samuele becomes the metaphor for a *waiting initiation*, an initiation which is still in progress and is still unaware of the wounds inflicted by caducity. Samuele thus metaphorically symbolises the risk of an unfinished transformation and uncomplete humanisation process, the only potential and temporarily suspended ability to see beyond. Indeed, it mirrors the filmmaker's urgent call for a universal reflection with no clear outcome. However, not all is lost. There is still hope in the encounter with the shamanic character of the film.

---

[49] Ivi. p. 151.

[50] See V. Propp, *Le radici storiche dei racconti di fate,* cit., pp. 100-120; See M. Bernardi, *Letteratura per l'infanzia e metafore letterarie*, BUP, Bologna, 2009, pp. 98-108.

[51] Suffice to think about the figures of the ogre and the witch and the monstrous and deadly features of mentor characters: they are devouring, menacing, horrible, deformed, limping, cannibal creatures which move by using winged sandals or other tools and keep enormous treasures from the underground. See M. Bernardi, *Infanzia e metafore letterarie,* cit., pp. 81- 108.

[52] Phenomenological appearance is not a mere "semblance" of the hidden noumenic reality, but rather an "eidetic" gaze grasping the essence (*eidos*) of phenomena in their intuitive manifestation and their "coming into the light". Phenomenological reason casts new light on phenomena with no objectification in the attempt to explain them. Phenomenology simply let them show as they appear (*tà phainòmena*). Indeed, it is consistent with the original meaning of "*phenomenon*", in which the root "*phòs*" indicates the light – from which the verb illuminate, bring to light (phàino) derives. As stressed by Bertolini, pedagogy must know how to grasp the essence of the phenomenon it is studying, and such essence emerges from the very concreteness of the experience. Indeed experience is not an abstract category but rather a complex *erlebnisse*., i.e., "a relational experience", "a situational experience". Cfr. P. Bertolini, *L'esistere pedagogico. Ragioni e limiti di una pedagogia come scienza fenomenologicamente fondata*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1988, pp. 91-104.

[53] The deep ethical feeling connoting this wounded gaze thus represents a desire of comprehension, which may be hindered by contemporary society, for instance, through the seduction of the world of images and the ongoing incitement to de-commitment prompted by persuasive messages promoting appearance and consumption. See G. Mollo, *Globalizzazione ed espansione della coscienza,* «Rassegna di pedagogia», 3-4, 2005, p. 256.

[54] T. Burton, *Big Fish*, 2003, USA: Tim Burton Productions, Columbia Pictures Corporation.

[55] M. N. Shyamalan, *The village*, 2004, USA: Touchstone Pictures, Blinding Edge Productions/Scott Rudin production.

Third evidence: the healer. Doctor Bartolo is introduced as the man who heals the suffering, who receives and holds any sorrow, who takes care of wounds and accompanies people through transitions. He is shown while doing an ultrasound to a pregnant woman, who has just landed after a long journey. He is upset as he remembers all the autopsies on the bodies of children, mothers, young people who died while crossing the sea. The healer is the only contact point between the island and the shipwrecked victims, the only depositary and witness of other people's suffering. He is aware that a wound links him to the otherness of foreigners coming from the sea. Bartolo is the man who remembers and witnesses all these tragedies, and preserves a past that cannot be forgotten.

A few minutes before the end of the film, Samuele goes to the doctor's studio, showing respiratory distress and symptoms of anxiety. This is the moment in which a possible change can occur. Can Samuele ultimately have access to the narration of the end? Will Samuele, metaphorically representing the future and hope for alternative utopian horizons, meet and accept the Otherness represented by the foreigners? Will the fake rifle shots, aimed at an unknown enemy, turn into healing and openness?

The film's ending is open. The boy, sitting on the pier, shoot at the sky, but while humming a tune. The song is the main theme of the film: "Fuocoammare", i.e. *Fire at Sea*. The oxymoronic title evokes the coexistence of antithetical natural elements (fire and water), through a soft, pleasant song about a past of war which still has to be remembered.

5. "Watch with new eyes": rediscovering the aesthetic value of space and time as coordinates of a hospitable gaze

Rosi's final is puzzling and problematic: Samuele's growth can lead to complete blindness. He may not be able to see refugees as a form of otherness shaping his own identity in a dialogic way. Conversely, Doctor Bartolo's shamanic healing may strengthen the lazy eye so he can see once again. Therefore, Samuele may activate the soothsayer's eye, which can grasp a possible encounter, beyond the routine of his life on the island.

It is likely that this crossroad encloses Rosi's only statement to his viewers: indifference, lack of communication between individuals, and the annihilation of emphatic impulses become concrete risks when unexpected and undesired encounters take place. From a pedagogical point of view, this is a problem for several reasons: on the one hand because any authentic educational effort is based on the relationship[56]; on the other hand, informal moments and unforeseen encounters are fundamental in a pedagogical and educational context[57] and, therefore, it is imperative to remain open to the existential experience of possibility, indefiniteness, and novelty[58]. In this respect, the primacy

---

[56] P. Bertolini, *Pedagogia e fenomenologia*, p. 47.
[57] See: D. Demetrio (ed.), *Educare è narrare,* Mimesis, Milano-Udine, 2012, pp. 50-51.
[58] Closure is always deprivation. Relegating the unpredictable "outside" from our doors will not lead us to live serenely "inside" our homes, entangled in our institutionalized customs. Someone will always knock and to wake up in the middle of the night will become more and more difficult and painful if we do not learn to look at the unpredictable, keeping the life of consciences awake, outside our usual and static patterns of thought. This is the greatest legacy of Piero Bertolini's thought. See V. Iori, *The scholar who gave life and breath to phenomenological pedagogy in Italy: Piero Bertolini*, «Encyclopaideia», vol. 45, 2016, pp. 18-29.

of sight is re-affirmed. The "educated" act of seeing can have axiological implications for pedagogy by prompting a new theoretical conceptualisation of the notion of hospitality. Indeed, pedagogy can restore the centrality of the act of seeing and, in so doing, extend sensorial and esthetical implications to the domain of axiology. Thus, sight entails a perceptive as well as ethical act which adds value to hospitality. In this sense, the methodological approach selected preserves both critical and foundational aspects[59], in order to deconstruct preconceptions and recreate new signification paths.

Once again, Lampedusa is the starting point and the scenery where its inhabitants and migrants can meet. It is an inhabited land and a place of passage and, in this light, it can provide with a proper comprehension of what hospitality means from the viewpoint of human inhabiting. The etymology of "to inhabit" clearly suggests the linguistic distortion generated by the division between human beings. In Latin, *habito* is intrinsically connected to *habeo* and refers to the idea of a permanent possession and belonging[60]: the body installs itself in a space, plunges into it almost to become one and unique. That space belongs because of the frequency, the habit with which man lives; so the self is identified with the place that lives[61]. The inhabitant and the habitation are so blended that the mere statement of "staying" in a given place soon turns this *status* in a privilege, an individual property which is mandatory and consolidated. And this way of thinking makes humans forget an ineluctable fact, i.e., their transitory, precarious, mutable, and mortal nature. Temporal dependency lies beneath the illusion of eternal possession. This reflection clearly stems from Heidegger's conceptualisation of being in relation to time. His notion of *Dasein* refers to the transitory condition of being, i.e., a condition of "throwness", dejection[62], and finitude which characterise human existence: *das "Wesen" des Daseins liegt in seiner Existenz*[63].

Mortality reminds us of time passing by and thus adjusts the paradigm of inhabitation according to spatial and temporal coordinates. Existence is just an interval between the beginning and the end[64] which turns everybody into travellers or, better said, migrants on Earth. The temporary nature of life entails a new reading of inhabitation according to the category of transience[65], turning the possession of a habitation into the hospitality of a stay. In this respect, *Fire at Sea* serves as a warning: the alternation between the daily routine of a number of islanders and the rough shots of ship holds full of dead bodies is a visual translation of the *memento mori* phrase, marking the destiny of all men and women. The first step is represented by the detachment of "inhabiting" from "possessing" and its rewriting in the category of "being" and "existence". In so doing, people's power to see otherness, once concealed by preconceptions and predeterminations, can be restored. In other words, the prominence of existing over inhabiting, biology over law, and aesthetics over norms is recognised. Life engenders and shapes upon itself these secondary dimensions. This means that existing is also the first pedagogical act and, therefore, living can be considered a synonym of educating: indeed, life

---

[59] See F. Cambi, *Metateoria pedagogica. Struttura, funzione, modelli*, Clueb, Bologna 2006; Id., *Attualità della filosofia. Nota*, «Studi sulla Formazione», vol. 13, n. 1, 2010, pp. 277-280.
[60] Cfr. M. Cortelazzo, P. Zolli, *Dizionario etimologico della lingua italiana,* Zanichelli, Bologna, 1979, p. 35.
[61] D. Di Cesare, *Stranieri residenti*, p. 164.
[62] In german, *Geworfenheit*. See: M. Heidegger, *Being and time*, § 38, p. 219.
[63] Ivi, § 9, p. 67.
[64] «In the being of *Dasein* there is already the "between" referred to birth and death» (Ivi, § 72, p. 424).
[65] See M. Pesare, *Abitare ed esistenza,* Mimesis, Milano-Udine, 2009.

is an event moulded by the material and spiritual density of human relations[66]. And such relations inevitably acquire an educational and formative meaning, regardless of their specific intention. The pedagogic discourse then has to focus on the crucial role played by perception. On this basis and given the prominence of the human dimension of sensibility, pedagogy and aesthetics are intimately connected. By using Rosmini's terminology, without "feeling of life"[67] all conceptual and artificial superstructures – including the prerogative of possessing a habitation – tumble down. The priority of feeling is therefore not ancillary. It depends directly on the indisputable primacy that life maintains in the conformation of the human being[68]. The reasons are evident.

First of all, perception is a synthetic human activity which turns sensorial data into fluid and mutable meanings which have to acquire a sense[69]. Subsequently, the full immersion into the experience of reality leads to "feel the life"[70] instead of judging it as a cold object to observe rationally. To live is actually a perception of living: on the basis of this form of original understanding, the process of understanding of existence can be activated. And in such process, all meanings (moral, cognitive, and so on) are deployed according to the sensorial and vital dimension of the human being. In this way, an aesth-etical process is also activated, binding together life, experience and education by virtue of their interdependence[71]. This intimate union with life is highlighted in *Fire at Sea*. Through the narration of Samuele's childhood, the contact with nature and the taste for direct experience are retrieved. And this means that the visceral connection between childhood and life feeling is also emphasised. By prompting this process of repossession of life, sensorial experiences gain prominence. Among them, this study stresses the crucial role of visual perception[72], when trained to deconstruct preconceptions and prejudices with a pure, curious, and open eye showing a true interest in what stands in front of it[73]. The child's lazy eye indicates that a treatment is required: his sight must be restored in order to teach the young how to see reality with his own eye[74].

There are further implications: to affirm the priority of existence means that specificity depends on spatial and temporal coordinates. Again, Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* is the key-reference: the "between" connoting the essence of *Dasein* has to be read in spatial and tem-

---

[66] See G. Tognon, *Est-etica,* La Scuola, Brescia, 2014, p. 7.

[67] See A. Rosmini, *Antropologia in servizio della scienza morale,* Città Nuova, Roma 1979, p. 43; Id., *Teosofia,* Città Nuova, Roma, vol. 13, p. 343.

[68] P. Bonafede, *L'altra pedagogia di Rosmini,* Università di Trento, Trento 2019.

[69] G. Tognon, *Est-etica*, p. 10.

[70] A. Rosmini, *Antropologia in servizio della scienza morale,* pp. 42-58.

[71] Ivi, p. 48.

[72] In so doing, pedagogical action aimed at seeing can reiforce the power of the gaze and, in particular, the partial point of view, engendered by a combination of emotions, values, and sensations. And this gaze is still capable to experience wonder. See A. d'Ecclesia, *L'estetica. Un percorso educativo alla ricerca di verità*, Bastogi, Foggia, 2008.

[73] Husserl is extremely clear on this point: the phenomenological and aesthetic act of seeing are strictly connected. See R. Taioli, *Su una lettera di Husserl a Hofmannsthal sull'estetica*, http://biblioteca-husserliana.net/testi.html (21/09/2019). The difficult task of "seeing" reality freely – i.e., with no prejudice and constant temptation to overlap it with theory – is frequently part of the pedagogic field, where a phenomenological approach is imperative to cast new light on the educational experience, parenthesising (through "epoché") mental habits and blatancy concerning the capacity to "see". The phenomenological gaze tries to read events beyond their contingency in order to grasp their essence. See V. Iori, *Lo studioso che ha dato vita e respiro alla pedagogia fenomenologica in Italia: Piero Bertolini,* pp. 18-29.

[74] M. Gennari, *Estetiche dell'ambiente. Linguaggi per l'educazione,* Sagep, Genova, 1988, p. 27.

poral terms. The temporal *distensio* (endurance) of being that has always been[75] shows the coincidence between human structure and time dynamics, i.e., the identity between *Dasein* and *Zeit*. The actual time is neither objective nor subjective, natural nor anthropological. It is not a *thing*, but rather a happening of processes in the world which acquire their meaning only on account of human being[76]. If time is not a thing, and, as said, existence and temporality coincide, then the person «*ist kein Ding, keine Substanz, kein Gegestand*»[77]: the person is not a thing, a substance, an object, and thus cannot be localised. Just as time, space coincides with existence: *Dasein,* as "being-in-the-world", is "spatial"[78]. Given its presence in the world, *Dasein* gives consistency and discloses the world.

These three dimensions – existence, space, time – are inseparable. They are the premises behind every other connotation that individual lives acquire as human beings. In this sense, a pedagogy aimed at retrieving the primacy of sight to look at the Other has to restart from spatial and temporal coordinates to place and give place. In order to look at each other, people need to find the time and place for an encounter triggering the emphatic recognition[79]. Sight opens up to an interpersonal closeness: visual contact establishes bonds, reduces distances, tears down the walls of solitude and self-referentiality. This theoretical reflection is supported by multimedia devices, used to raise viewers' awareness[80], and experimental research in the fields of psychology and sociology which have been investigating the link between sight and relationships for over forty years. The first studies focused almost exclusively on love relationships[81]. Subsequent inquiries used standard questionnai-

---

[75] This connects the existentialist thought with Augustine of Hippo's patristic reflection. Briefly, Husserl's considerations about time are linked to the intuitions of Augustine, defined the "fundamental master/teacher" of every subsequent postulation about time. See E. Husserl, *Per la fenomenologia della coscienza interna del tempo* (*Zur Phänomenologie des Inneren Zeitbewusstseins 1893-1917*, hgg. v. Rudolf Boehm, «Husserliana», Bd. X,, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1966), a cura di A. Marini, Franco Angeli, Milano 1998, p. 43.

[76] The doctrine of meaning has its roots in the *Dasein* ontology. See M. Heidegger, *Being and Time,* § 34, p. 210.

[77] The person is given as the actuator of intentional acts connected in the unity of meaning (*Being and time,* § 10, p.71). So Heidegger says that every entity from the mode of being unlike being there must be conceived as senseless, by essence deprived of any meaning (Ivi, § 32, p. 188).

[78] Ivi, § 22, p. 135.

[79] A recognition prioritizing the aesthetic dimension of existence primarily stems from the visual channel. It is no coincidence that the mirroring method Carl Rogers developed for psychotherapy is also employed in the field of education. In this respect, see M. Contini, *Comunicazione ed educazione,* La Nuova Italia, Firenze, 1980; V. Boffo, *Per una comunicazione empatica,* Ets, Pisa, 2005; M. Fabbri, *Problemi d'empatia,* Ets, Pisa, 2008; M. Fabbri, *Il transfert, il dono, la cura. Giochi di proiezione nell'esperienza educativa,* Franco Angeli, Milano 2012.

[80] In this respect, Amnesty International produced the famous video *Look beyond borders: four minutes experiment* to raise the public opinion's awareness about the refugees' tragedy. The video includes the following caption: «Only when you sit down opposite a specific person and look into their eyes, you no longer see an anonymous refugee, one of the migrants, and notice the human before you, just like yourself – loving, suffering, dreaming... 20 years ago, psychologist Arthur Aron discovered that 4 minutes of looking into each other's eyes can bring people closer. Using this discovery, we decided to carry out a simple experiment, during which refugees and Europeans sat opposite each other and looked into each other's eyes. Clearly, it is most important to give each other time to better understand and get to know each other. The experiment was conducted in Berlin: the city, which - first of all - is a symbol of overcoming the divisions, and secondly, seems to be the centre of the contemporary Europe. We wanted the movie created on the basis of the experiment to be as symbolic as possible – and to touch upon the general divisions between people». Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypLjsxHVElQ. (30/08/2019).

[81] See: P. Ellworth, L. Ross, *Intimacy in response to direct gaze*, «Journal of experimental social psychology», vol. 11, n. 6, 1975, pp. 592-613; J. Kellerman, J. Lewis, J.D. Laird, *Looking and loving: the effects of mutual gaze*

res on the general interpersonal dimension to find ways to favour interpersonal closeness based on the encounter with strangers sharing the same place in a given moment in time[82]. Recent studies finally showed the beneficial effects of "the watching eye" in terms of activation of favourable social behaviours and positive evaluation of other people[83]. The act of finding the time and place to look at each other is therefore pedagogical and sympathetic, and is able to overcome divisions between human beings. A gaze grounded upon the awareness of existing prior to inhabiting, of being prior to having, can transform the ways in which we encounter other people, whoever they are. This is the challenge faced by Samuele in *Fire at Sea*. If won, this challenge may redefine the whole notion of inhabiting and turn it into a co-habiting experience. To exist, to be-in-this-world entails the acknowledgement of coexistence and requires an educational drive towards cohabitation. In particular, cohabitation reconceptualises the human being as a relational plurality, rather than a singularity: there is a permanent and irreversible obligation to co-exist with all people – no matter how foreign, no matter how distant – sharing the same right to exist on the same planet. The prefix "co-" stands for "being with" and symbolises the grounding of all connections and relationships. It is the substrate of human existence and, as such, it foreruns any political decision, which should actually be taken on the basis on this ineluctable assumption[84].

Once again, if co-habitation is the indirect outcome of the priority of existence, it is also bound to spatial and temporal coordinates. On the one hand, as for the spatial dimension, it means to make space and create a sense of closeness. The *ethos* of inhabiting is fostered by the act of "making room": ethics is thus conceptualised as space, where other people's qualities and flaws are disregarded and a common ground is created. This is how the crystallization engendering borders and margins can be avoided[85]. On the other hand, in addition to closeness, the prefix "co-" entails simultaneity. In a world crossed by the presence of countless exiles, to co-habit means to share spatial proximity in a temporal convergence. Each person's past can be expressed as a joint present in view of a common future. Thus, ethics is both space and time.

In conclusion, from an ethic and aesth-etic point of view, space and time not only unfold simultaneously with existence, but also become categorical imperatives for a pedagogical axiology which, on the basis of a renewed gaze, relies on the criterion of hospitality.

Bibliography

Angelone A., *Italian documentaries and immigration*, in G. Lombardi, C. Uva (eds), *Italian Political Cinema: Public Life, Imaginary, and Identity in Contemporary Italian*, Peter Lang, Berna 2016, pp. 69-80.

---

on feelings of romantic love, «Journal of Research in Personality», vol. 23, n.2, 1989, pp. 145-161.

[82] See: A. Aron, E. Melinat, E.N. Aron, R.D. Vallone, R.J. Bator, *The experimental generation of interpersonal closeness: a procedure and some preliminary findings,* «Personality and social psychology bulletin», vol. 23, n. 4. 1997, pp. 363-377; A.J. Elliot, C. Sedikides, G.D. Reeder, W. K. Campbell, *The relationship closeness induction task,* «Representative research in social psychology», vol, 23, 1999, pp. 1-4.

[83] L. Conty, N. George, J.K. Hietanen, *"Watching Eyes" effects: when others meet the self,* «Consciousness and Cognition», vol. 45, 2016, pp. 184-197.

[84] D. Di Cesare, *Stranieri residenti,* p. 247.

[85] Z. Bauman, *Strangers at out door,* Polity Press, Cambridge 2016.

Anishchenkova V., *The battle of truth and fiction: Documentary storytelling and Middle Eastern refugee discourse*, «Journal of postcolonial writing», vol. 54, n. 6, 2018, pp. 809-820.

Aron A., Melinat E., Aron E.N., Vallone R.D., Bator R.J., *The experimental generation of interpersonal closeness: a procedure and some preliminary findings,* «Personality and social psychology bulletin», vol. 23, n. 4. 1997, pp. 363-377.

Bauman Z., *Mortalità, immortalità e altre strategie di vita.* Il Mulino, Bologna 2012.

Bauman Z., *Strangers at out door,* Polity Press, 2016.

Benjamin W., *Il narratore.* Einaudi, Torino 2011.

Bernardi M., *Infanzia e fiaba*, BUP, Bologna 2007.

Bernardi M., *Letteratura per l'infanzia e metafore letterarie*, BUP, Bologna 2009.

Bernardi M., *Letteratura per l'infanzia e l'alterità. Incanti, disincanti, ambiguità, tracce,* FrancoAngeli, Milano 2016.

Bertin G.M., *Educazione alla ragione*, Armando, Roma 1968.

Bertolini P., *L'esistere pedagogico. Ragioni e limiti di una pedagogia come scienza fenomenologicamente fondata*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1988.

Bertolini P., *Pedagogia fenomenologica*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 2001.

Beseghi E. eGrilli G. (a cura di), *La letteratura invisibile*, Carocci, Roma 2011.

Bobbio A., *Pedagogia del dialogo e relazioni di aiuto*, Armando, Roma 2012.

Boffo V., *Per una comunicazione empatica*, Ets, Pisa 2005.

Burnett F. H., *Il giardino segreto.* Mondadori, Milano 1993.

Cambi F., *Attualità della filosofia.* Nota, «Studi sulla Formazione», Firenze University Press, 13, n. 1, 2010, pp. 277-280.

Cambi F., *Itinerari sulla fiaba*, ETS, Pisa 1999.

Cambi F., *Metateoria pedagogica. Struttura, funzione, modelli*, Clueb, Bologna 2006.

Calabrese S., *Fiaba*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1997.

Carrol L., *Le avventure di Alice nel paese delle meraviglie*, *Alice al di là dello specchio,* Einaudi, Torino 2015.

Contini M., *Comunicazione ed educazione*, La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1980.

Contini M., Demozzi S., *Corpi bambini. Sprechi d'infanzie*, FrancoAngeli, Milano 2016.

Conty L., George N., Hietanen J.K., *"Watching Eyes" effects: when others meet the self,* «Consciousness and Cognition», vol. 45, pp. 184-197.

Cortelazzo M., Zolli P., *Dizionario etimologico della lingua italiana,* Zanichelli, Bologna 1979.

d'Ecclesia A., *L'estetica. Un percorso educativo alla ricerca di verità*, Bastogi, Foggia 2008.

Demetrio D. (a cura di), *Educare è narrare,* Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2012.

Di Cesare D., *Stranieri residenti. Una filosofia della migrazione*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2017.

Durand G., *Le strutture antropologiche dell'immaginario*, Dedalo, Bari 1984.

Elliot A.J., Sedikides C., Reeder G.D., Campbell W. K., *The relationship closeness induction task,* «Representative research in social psychology», vol, 23, 1999, pp. 1-4.

Ellworth P., Ross L., *Intimacy in response to direct gaze,* «Journal of experimental social psychology», vol. 11, n. 6, pp. 592-613.

Fabbri M., *Problemi d'empatia*, Ets, Pisa 2008.

Fabbri M., *Il transfert, il dono, la cura. Giochi di proiezione nell'esperienza educativa*,

FrancoAngeli, Milano 2012.

Fadda R., *Promessi a una forma.* FrancoAngeli, Milano 2016.

Faeti A., *La camera dei bambini*, Dedalo, Bari 1983.

Faeti A., *Letteratura per l'infanzia,* La Nuova Italia, Firenze 1985.

Foucher M., *Le retour des frontières*, CNRS èditrions, Paris 2016.

Frazer J. (1968)*, Il ramo d'oro*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2018.

Freud S., *Saggi sull'arte, la letteratura e il linguaggio*, Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 1991.

Gennari M., *Estetiche dell'ambiente. Linguaggi per l'educazione,* Sagep, Genova 1988.

Ginzburg C., *Miti, emblemi e spie. Morfologia e storia*, Einaudi, Torino 2000.

Ginzburg C., *Il filo e le tracce. Vero, falso, finto*, Feltrinelli, Milano 2006.

Ginzburg C., *Storia notturna*, Einaudi, Torino 2008.

Grahame K., *L'età d'oro*. Traduzione di A. Motti. Adelphi, Milano 1984.

Grilli G., *Perché Pinocchio è un'icona universale? Ipotesi, spunti ermeneutici e un indizio Paleoantropologico*, «Ricerche di Pedagogia e Didattica – Journal of Theories and Research in Education», 11, 3, 2016.

Heidegger M., *Being and Time,* (1927), tr. J. Macquarrie, E. Robinson, Blackwell, Oxford 2001.

Husserl E., *Per la fenomenologia della coscienza interna del tempo* (*Zur Phänomenologie des Inneren Zeitbewusstseins 1893-1917*, hgg. v. Rudolf Boehm, «Husserliana», Bd. X,, Martinus Nijhoff, The Hague, 1966), a cura di A. Marini, Franco Angeli, Milano 1998.

Infelise Fronza R., *La saggezza dell'infanzia e il mondo intermedio*, in «Aut aut», 191-192, 1982.

Iori V., *Lo studioso che ha dato vita e respiro alla pedagogia fenomenologica in Italia: Piero Bertolini,* «Encyclopaideia»*,* vol. 45, 2016, pp. 18-29.

Jabès E., *Il libro dell'ospitalità* (1991), trad. di A. Prete, Raffaello Cortina, Milano 1995.

Kellerman J., Lewis J., Laird J.D., *Looking and loving: the effects of mutual gaze on feelings of romantic love, «*Journal of Research in Personality», vol. 23, n.2, 1989, pp. 145-161.

Mollo G., *Globalizzazione ed espansione della coscienza,* «Rassegna di pedagogia», 3-4, 2005, p. 256.

Mortari L., *La pratica dell'aver cura*, Mondadori, Milano 2006.

Musaio M., *Pedagogia della persona educabile: l'educazione tra interiorità e relazione*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano 2010.

Pergaud L., *La guerra dei bottoni*. Traduzione di G. P. Colombo. BUR, Milano 1997.

Pesare M., *Abitare ed esistenza,* Mimesis, Milano-Udine 2009.

Ponzanesi S., *Of shipwrecks and weddings: borders and mobilities in Europe, «*Transnational cinemas», vol. 7, n. 2, 2016, pp. 151-167.

Propp V. J., *Le radici storiche dei racconti di fate*, trad. it. di C. Coisson, Boringhieri, Torino 1981.

Rosmini A., *Antropologia in servizio della scienza morale,* Città Nuova, Roma p. 43.

Rosmini A., *Teosofia,* Città Nuova, Roma, vol. 13, p. 343.

Sayad A., *L'immigration ou les paradoxes de l'altérité*, Raisons d'agir, Paris 2006.

Scuderi Sanfilippo G., *Il razionalismo critico come problema pedagogico. Banfi, Bertin e il senso della pedagogia*, Pellegrini, Cosenza 2005.

Szakolczai A., *Liminality and Experience: Structuring transitory situations and transform-ative events*, «International Political Anthropology» vol. 2, n.1, 2009.

Tognon G., *Est-etica,* La Scuola, Brescia 2014.

Turner V., *La foresta dei simboli. Aspetti del rituale Ndembu*, Morcelliana, Brescia 1976.

Turner V., *Dal rito al teatro*, Il Mulino, Bologna 1986.

Tutto è fiaba. Atti del Convegno internazionale di studio sulla fiaba. Milano, Emme Edizioni, 1980: V-XIX.

Van Gennep A., *I riti di passaggio*, (1981), Bollati Boringhieri, Torino 2012.

Wojnar I., *Autocoscienza estetica dell'uomo*, «Rassegna di pedagogia», 1-4, 2008, p. 286;

Zagarrio V., '*Not even in a dream'. Emmigration and immigration in new Italian cinema,* «Journal of Italian Cinema & Media studies», vol, 4, n. 3, 2016, pp. 421-438.

Zhang G., *Documentary films on migrations in Italy: characteristics and ethics,* «Journal of Italian Cinema & Media studies», vol, 6, n. 1, 2018, pp. 3-14.

Filmografy

T. Burton, *Big Fish*, 2003, USA: Tim Burton Productions, Columbia Pictures Corporation;

G. Rosi, *Fuocoammare* (Fire at Sea), 2016, Italy: Stemal Entertainment, 21Uno Film, Cinecittà Luce, Rai Cinema, Les Films d'Ici, Arte Cinema, ARTE France;

Boatman, 1993, Doc&Film Production;

Below the sea level, 2008, Italy: 21uno Film;

El Sicario, Room 164, 2010, Usa, Italy: Les Films d'Ici, 21uno Film;

Sacro GRA, 2013, Italy: Doclab, Rai Cinema, con il contributo del MiBAC, La Femme Endormie, con il supporto di Regione Lazio - Filas, CNC Centre Nationale de Cinematographie, Roma Lazio Film Commission;

M. N. Shyamalan, *The village*, 2004, USA: Touchstone Pictures, Blinding Edge Productions/Scott Rudin production.

Webliography

http://biblioteca-husserliana.net/testi.html

https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/mediterranean/location/676

http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/IT/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32015D1601

https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2018/12/03/18A07702/sg

https://www.gazzettaufficiale.it/eli/id/2019/06/14/19G00063/sg

http://www.governo.it/sites/governo.it/files/Libia.pdf

http://www.infodata.ilsole24ore.com/2017/08/07/muri-dividono-mondo-la-mappa-interattiva/

http://www.interno.gov.it/it/sala-stampa/dati-e-statistiche/sbarchi-e-accoglienza-dei-migranti-tutti-i-dati

https://www.repubblica.it/spettacoli/cinema/2016/02/13/news/berlino_applausi_per_fuocoammare_-133340575/

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ypLjsxHVElQ