

Commitment in educational practice. Piero Bertolini's ideas on maladjustment and juvenile delinquency

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ABSTRACT

*The concept of intentional consciousness, taken by Piero Bertolini from Husserlian phenomenology, is central to his pedagogical perspective. It expresses the substantive way of our being-in-the-world, and affects the quality of the relationship we establish with it. This contribution begins with a reference to chapters II and III of *L'esistere pedagogico*, aiming to examine this concept; it then describes its application also to the field of re-education. This is because: a) from 1958 to 1968, the phenomenological approach allowed Bertolini to tackle the difficult reality of maladjustment and juvenile delinquency in "new" terms; b) today, Piero Bertolini's interpretations of "that" reality and consequently his practical proposals still constitute the most commonly adopted pedagogical reference; c) the commitment to re-education, which in chronological terms concerned the first part of his professional life, allowed Bertolini, right from the outset, to characterise his pedagogy as the outcome of a continuous interaction between theory and practice.*

Parole chiave: *Epoché – Intentional consciousness – Education – Re-education – Difficult minors*

L'impegno nella prassi educativa. Le idee di disadattamento e delinquenza minorile in Piero Bertolini

*Il concetto di coscienza intenzionale, che Piero Bertolini ha ripreso dalla fenomenologia di Husserl, è centrale nella sua prospettiva pedagogica. Esso esprime la modalità costitutiva del nostro essere-nel-mondo ed incide sulla qualità del rapporto che stabiliamo con esso. Questo contributo inizia con un richiamo ai capitoli II e III de *L'esistere pedagogico*, allo scopo di approfondire tale concetto; quindi ne mostra la declinazione anche in ambito rieducativo. Ciò per i seguenti motivi: a) perché l'approccio fenomenologico, nel decennio 1958-1968, consentì a Bertolini di affrontare in termini "nuovi" la difficile realtà del disadattamento e della delinquenza minorile; b) perché le linee interpretative di Piero Bertolini rispetto a "quella" realtà e le conseguenti sue proposte operative, in Italia, costituiscono ancora oggi il riferimento pedagogico più seguito; 3) perché l'impegno sul versante rieducativo, che cronologicamente riguarda la prima fase della sua vita professionale, permise a Bertolini di caratterizzare, fin dall'inizio, la sua pedagogia come l'esito di una continua interazione fra teoria e prassi.*

Keywords: *Epoché – Coscienza intenzionale – Educazione - Rieducazione – Minori difficili*

L'esistere pedagogico, Ragioni e limiti di una pedagogia come scienza fenomenologicamente fondata, published for the first time in 1988, is certainly Piero Bertolini's greatest work. Indeed it covers all the topics that most interested him as a scholar of phenomenology, as defined by German philosopher Edmund Husserl (Prossnitz, Moravia, 1859 – Freiburg im Breisgau, 1938), and contemporary pedagogy, but also includes them as a structured, articulated set, aiming to explicitly express and reason in detail his idea of *pedagogy as an eidetic, empirical and practical science*. In my contribution I will not discuss the value of these three important characterisations, as I intend to focus on another sphere of the *L'esistere pedagogico*, and start by explaining the reasons behind this choice. More specifically, I will focus my thoughts on the concept of *intentional consciousness*, starting from and reflecting carefully on this, and, for the time being by points, listing the reasons underlying this choice. Here are a few:

- Piero Bertolini's pedagogy was developed starting from this idea;
- It is therefore the foundation of his pedagogy;
- The concept can already be found in his early works (Cf. for all, Bertolini, 1958; 1965), and therefore not only in later life (Cf. for all, Bertolini, 1988);
- It is therefore a constant presence in Piero Bertolini's thought;
- He refers to the concept in both educational and re-educational terms;
- It characterises Piero Bertolini's pedagogy and thus makes it specific compared to other pedagogical perspectives, while allowing for the possibility for dialogue with these;
- It expresses our way of being-in-the-world, and qualifies us first and foremost as *relational*;
- Consequently, we may define Bertolini's pedagogy as neither subjectivistic, similarly to idealism (despite the centrality of the subject), nor objectivistic, similarly to materialism (despite recognising the incisive nature of the materials and human environment on the individual), but rather relational and intersubjective;
- From here, in this pedagogical vision, comes the recognition that the subject is always partly responsible for his condition and, therefore, his condition is not only and merely the result of circumstances and external factors;
- The concept of intentional consciousness also underlines the existential importance the ability to *give sense and meaning* has for a subject, in other words, a *value* in the phenomenical, material and human world;
- It shows the importance of the concept of "value" in pedagogy and education, even when dealing with a "secular" pedagogical perspective, i.e. rationally and not ideologically founded, as indeed was that understood and meant by Piero Bertolini.

The return to subjectivity and the foundation of phenomenological pedagogy

Husserl (1997) defined consciousness (*Erlebnis*) as the “pure I”, or “phenomenological residue”, or again as the “characteristic region of being”. Consciousness is therefore the very essence of subjectivity, its most authentic part, the landing point of bracketing, never integral nor definitive, realized by virtue of the *epoché* towards the natural existence. Literally the “suspension of judgement”, for Husserl *epoché* represents a particular way of being-in-the-world, qualifying the relationship we establish with it.

In other words, more specifically Husserl posed the problem of man’s self-clarification, and in this objective recognised the necessary assumption of “liberation” of the individual from false beliefs and false opinions that cloud the mind. He also recognised that this process of clarification, performed through the “reduction” of our experience with the real, leads to the pursuit of an authentic relationship with ourselves and with the world, to the extent in which this process does not stop at a superficial level, but reaches deeper, affecting the world of space and time in which things exist and in which man lives his everyday life. With *epoché* or the “suspension of judgement” the theory of the natural attitude, which refers to the naive and acritical acceptance of the world, which is “placed in brackets” or put out of action, in order to avoid activating any experience of the real in a naive, acritical and thus direct manner. The origins of the trend – commonly applied to science as much as to existence generally – of considering reality as something *extraneous* to consciousness and not immanent to it, come from a similar natural, objectivistic or “worldly” attitude. From this, the original sense is lost and, along with it, the attention towards subjectivity; and again, from this, the inability to go to things, and, in other words, understand the original lifeworld (*Lebenswelt*).

The operation of *epoché* is necessary for Husserl as it allows us to leave that tight, unauthentic sphere of the consciousness of the common man (ordinary consciousness), and stop to think of things and then subsequently go back to them in a new light, with a different vision. In this way Husserl invites us to doubt: in his opinion, doubt does not oppose knowledge, indeed it constitutes its deepest and most vital roots. In the same way, only if we have doubts and perplexities over what appears known or taken for granted can we proceed beyond, discover new aspects of reality, identify new instruments for investigation, in brief, know more and better. If doubt must be radical, in the sense that it is also applied to the subject who doubts, for Husserl it cannot in any case be absolute. Bracketing, understood as a continuous process towards both the world and ourselves, does not concern consciousness which, quite the opposite, as I have already mentioned, represents the “phenomenological residue”. Indeed, in Husserl’s opinion, consciousness, because it is a phenomenological residue and not pure nothing, is not worldly, but rather *apodictic*, i.e. certain and not demonstrable (Husserl, 1965). In this perspective, the irrefutable proof of my existence is not therefore “I think” but “I am”. Consciousness is therefore the principle, the presence of me for myself, the being. And it is in the profound life of consciousness, revealed following a cathartic process of *epoché*, that the fact of being true and authentic is manifested, in brief, that being that makes sense. Bertolini (1988) takes on board Husserl’s reflections, and in this regard writes

[...] it is in the sphere of authentic experience, it is in the profound life of consciousness, revealed by bracketing[or epoché], that it is possible to understand the truest meaning of the world and our existence; and it is here that we can discover the essential opening of the I, the individual, the other, intersubjectivity, and together the most authentic and productive table of values. (ibidem, p. 64)

and adds

we can therefore state that transcendental reduction must be considered as the necessary path to reaching a level of authentic existence ... [a path] that can never be followed by man in its totality and completeness ... [an effort that] always translates into an "educational" discourse, referring both to one's own education and that of the other. (ibidem, p. 60)

The world's being authentic can thus be traced back to the immanence of consciousness, while the return to subjectivity sets the conditions for allowing Bertolini to construct a phenomenologically founded pedagogical discourse.

The phenomenological residue, the pure I or consciousness, which cannot be doubted, is also the place of origin of all the possible meanings of the world:

man becomes conscious of himself in the world, discovering himself at the origin of the many and complex meanings it contains. (Bertolini, 1988, p. 61)

For Husserl, indeed, but also for Bertolini who makes reference to him, consciousness is always *consciousness of*, as it relates to the material and human world and gives it a value, i.e. sense and meaning. In the light of this perspective, the relationship between I and the world is not therefore a specular relationship or the simple, direct recording of information; if this was the case the subject would be extraneous to all that he lives; but rather one of interpretation, i.e. active participation, by giving meaning, to the perceived and lived existence. In other words, the meaning of the world and its objectualities is established starting with the intentional actions of pure consciousness. Borrowing from his Maestro Brentano the concept of *intentionality*, Husserl states that every act of consciousness is intentional, it is a "stretching out to" something as if a specific object, while the object "reveals itself to":

And it is precisely in the essence of every *Erlebnis* that we find that it is consciousness, but also what is consciousness, and in which determinate or indeterminate sense it is, where naturally we have to consider in which way the sense, which inseparably fits into its horizon, contributes to its determination. (Husserl, 1965, p. 77)

If every *Erlebnis* points intentionally to the world and in this activity becomes the bearer of sense and meaning, we can understand why for Husserl, and consequently for Bertolini, there is a general problem of a careful analysis of *how* consciousness makes its objects intentional, in order to clarify their genesis and implications. But there is also a more specific problem of a preliminary “eidetic reduction”, epoché, in which all common judgement is suspended and in which every theory is placed in brackets, to allow the phenomenon to emerge in all its genuine essential actuality and can be understood in all its authenticity.

The reference to Husserl’s phenomenology has been necessary thus far in order to clarify Bertolini’s main founding theoretical assumptions in constructing and establishing a phenomenological pedagogy, inspired by the thoughts of the German philosopher. We have seen the function of epoché, we have underlined the importance of a return to subjectivity and, with it, to an authentic life. Let us now see the more direct and explicit repercussions in the pedagogical field, with a closer look at Piero Bertolini’s thought.

Intentional consciousness, education, re-education

I ended the last paragraph by stating that the preoccupation of *how* consciousness intentions the world is central to Piero Bertolini’s pedagogy. This preoccupation is understood very clearly if we pay attention to the two *objectives* Bertolini considers his own, one the *educational process*, the other *re-educational process*. In short, as regards the sphere of education, in his opinion this involves guiding, without recourse to heavy forms of conditioning and standardisation, the subject in education towards the construction/constitution of his own personal *vision of the world*, which is never definitive nor unchangeable, and which over time defines itself through individual intentional actions of consciousness or *experiences*. A subject’s vision of the world must be understood as a focus, a point of view on the world, a sort of interpretative filter or grille of the world, through which the subject relates to himself. In chapter III of *L’essistere pedagogico*, in paragraph 39 Bertolini gives the following title: “The intentionality of consciousness as a central point of reference of the educational process” (1988, pp. 100-103). This underlines the importance of this objective. As regards the re-educational process, the intentionality of consciousness is once again a central reference; however in this case it means not constructing but deconstructing the vision of the world of the subject in re-education, in order to then reconstruct it once again. This is because Bertolini considers that deviancy, difficulty, hardship, juvenile

delinquency are caused by a limitation, defect or lack of intentional consciousness. Ultimately, it is the quality of the relationship of signification that links every individual to his environment and the consequent vision of the world, that interest phenomenological pedagogy, in both normal educational conditions and in conditions of deviancy; thus it is here that he places particular attention. Let's now see in which way, considering for the purpose above all the sphere of re-education.

As underlined thus far, in Piero Bertolini's pedagogical perspective a subject's development is linked to the type of *relationship* he establishes with the world, through intentional consciousness. The indispensable premise is his constitution by "passive genesis", the necessary point and start of his "active genesis", which is why the subject's "active signification" starts from an already connoted world. Precisely that world which, through epoché, as we have seen, Husserl suggests the use of "bracketing", distancing themselves from it and thus moving away from those connotations and those implicit and sedimented significations which prevent us from going "beyond" and breaking away from those prejudices and common sense. In this sphere of maladjustment, the more or less profound laceration of the I-world relationship, it can be considered the product of a lack of or altered functioning of the intentional consciousness. In one case this is a question of *lack of intentionality*, in the *distortion of intentionality* (Bertolini, 1965). In both cases these are interpretative models of deviancy, understood in an open, non-rigid manner, identified by Piero Bertolini between 1958 and 1968, when he was in charge of the "Cesare Beccaria" juvenile prison in Milan. In the first stages of his professional life, the phenomenological approach allowed him to tackle the difficult reality of maladjustment and juvenile delinquency in an "alternative" manner to how such problems were tackled at the time. This approach allowed him to understand how far their own vision of the world affected the behaviour of *difficult boys*, and how significant the working presence of their *subjectivity* was. Which naturally did not exclude the importance of various environmental factors, which could have characterised the life stories of these youths. The everyday contact with those groups of learners also allowed Bertolini to check the validity of his own interpretative lines and reach a clear, two-fold recognition: on one hand, that there is a "co-responsibility" of the individual in determining his own behaviour; and on the other hand, that, in order to be effective, a pedagogy of "recovery" should work on the subjectivity of difficult boys. I will now proceed with an investigation of these last observations, starting from the two interpretative models of deviancy proposed by Bertolini:

1) *Distortion of intentionality*

The distortion of intentionality springs from a kind of "excess of I". It concerns a subjectivity that deems itself to be omnipotent, and which relates to reality as if it was an object-prey. The world of things is thus something to devour. This subjectivity does not recognise the limits set by things and by others, it thinks it can do everything and comes into contact with others by adopting behaviour that is totally instrumental and lacking respect for otherness. Many behaviours based on manifestations of disobedience and rebellion, aggressiveness, violence,

lack of self-control, irresponsibility, can be traced back to a vision of the world that revolves around an excess of I. The difficulties generally faced by personalities of this kind may be mainly of two kinds: a) a sense of failure and a tendency to perceive the world as hostile, when everyday reality contradicts that sense of omnipotence; b) paralysis of action, when the gap between the ideal self and the real self is too great or cannot be filled.

2) *Lack of intentionality*

Also in this case we refer to subjects who are unable to recognise the intimate relational structure of reality, who are therefore unable to relate to the material and human world and recognise and respect its presence. The subject in fact appears unable to transform the reality that surrounds him in order to make it significant for him but which at the same time is compatible with the projects and values of others. He remains constricted and imprisoned within the boundaries of a vision of the world which is dominated by the sense of self nullity faced with the things of the world, which appear to him as if they have their own autonomous and overwhelming force. The dominating point of these personalities is the idea of a present understood as “here and now”, thus without any opening or orientation towards future plans, overcoming the contingent situation. These subjects live without any form of motivation or ability to plan, so their everyday lives are consumed in the immediate term, and they become lost in a kind of devastating fatalism. They live their lives “suffering”, under the crushing weight of a powerful reality that is experienced as predominant, with no positive horizons. Thus comes a perception of intense dissatisfaction, the experience of profound discomfort that originates from a malaise that is first and foremost interior. This “excess of the world” leads to three main categories of possible, interacting behaviour: a) the search for immediate satisfaction that usually marks this kind of subject is destined to show itself as illusory, and end in the here and now in which it was born and experienced. This leads to a passive adaptation to the world, or else the absorption, exploitation and use of the world as much as possible, but in both cases living without offering one's own contribution to improving the world that is considered a source of hardship and frustration; b) escape from the self, lack of confidence, lack of self-acceptance, of both limits and potential; c) conscious self-depreciation, which may even go as far as suicide.

The two interpretative models of deviancy that are inherent in Piero Bertolini's phenomenological pedagogy are representative of *experiences* which go beyond the circumscribed sphere and into the sphere of maladjustment and juvenile delinquency; they therefore extend and embrace other ages of life and forms of emotional “feeling”, not necessarily pathological, nor dissonant from social norms. They therefore offer important keys for interpreting human behaviour and consequently suggest appropriate and corresponding interpretative and operational guidelines.

Initial re-educational strategies and dilation of the field of experience

In the considered pedagogical viewpoint, to embark on the educational intervention, a first necessary step to be taken is that of seeking to understand if and to what extent certain “objective” existential conditions can negatively impact the intentional activity of the subject in re-education. In some cases we have to remove them from an inappropriate and unfavourable existential context; in this way we begin an authentic programme of *destructuring* past habits in order to then proceed with a second phase which Bertolini calls *new educational restructuring*, in order, through this, to experience the initiatory “value” of change:

The passage to new forms of everyday life constitute an evident moment of discontinuity of the past.
(Bertolini & Caronia, 1993, p. 103)

The new forms of organisation of space, time and relations should be presented to the boy as *situations with a precise meaning*, i.e. that of “being a threshold” towards a new horizon of possible relations between oneself and the phenomenological world. The educator has the task of recovering the educational value of this distancing from the past, so that the transformations of their own “situationality” are a way of starting to think of themselves in a different way, a “different” person from before. Examples of taking this direction are those activities which aim to modify old styles of self-presentation and the way of being with others. Appearing is not always indifferent to being, as negligence in dressing, the indifference to or refusal of any regulation of etiquette governing one's own self-presentation and relationship with others, often bearing witness to the particular way in which the subject perceives himself and the world. It is therefore necessary to

make those habits and visible signs of the self disappear, as they prevent boys from recognising themselves or at least seriously limit their possibility to perceive themselves in a new way. (Bertolini & Caronia, p. 111)

In this first phase, it is important to seek to understand the interpretation the subject has given to his own dissonant behaviour and, above all, seek to understand if their interpretation may hinder or neutralise a re-educational intervention.

Another important direction for the meaning of the re-educational action, considered an integral and necessary part of the whole process, is represented by that which Bertolini defines as the boy's *dilation of the field of experience*: this moment is functional to achieving a new point of view of themselves and of the world.

According to Bertolini, that which generally characterises the biography of “difficult boys” is the fact of having – any number of - experiences, “of *the same kind*” which unfortunately help to constitute the possible conditions for a dysfunctional genesis of the act of consciousness. It is therefore necessary to support subjects in re-education in having experiences that are different from those they have previously had, to bring them closer to things, values and environments that offer dignity and are filled with meaning, which will first and foremost be discovered in the relation with the educator, that important *significant adult figure*. If we agree with Bertolini’s hypothesis, i.e. that irregular behaviour is the result of a vision of the world that focuses on a distorted way of thinking of the I-world relationship, which makes this be perceived as the product of a “sense of self-nullity”, then one of the main tasks of the re-educational process becomes that of fuelling in the boys the positive sentiment of *existential optimism* towards their own relationship with the world:

Existential optimism refers to that sense of fulfilment that comes from thinking oneself as being the origin of an investment of sense to the world able to achieve oneself starting from the constraints imposed by reality and through a practice of negotiation of meaning with others. (Bertolini & Caronia, p. 123)

Building a dignified environment around a difficult boy, where he can find references with significant adults, and thus value; allowing him to live experiences and situations linked to the experience of both natural and artistic beauty, opposed to the deafness towards beauty which seems to be manifested recurrently in difficult boys; educating him to the challenge of tackling difficulties, working on his sense of adventure, the charm of the unexpected, the extraordinary and so on. Without omitting from the list the experiences of the other and with the other, a fundamental pedagogical moment, an obligatory passage for achieving a change in the difficult boy’s vision of the world. If the boy does not have this kind of experience, he will not achieve the recognition of the intersubjective – the relational – “background”, of every action or knowledge of the world and the self. From here, the importance of creating the experiences of the other in the form of group life, developing a sense of “belonging to...” in the boy. The experience of the other as a group controlled pedagogically by the educator figure also becomes the opportunity for experimenting practices of continuous correlation between individual action and social scenario.

We will also find these topics, thought and experimented by Bertolini for difficult boys at the Beccaria in Milan between 1958 and 1968, in *L’esistere pedagogico*, subsequently and this time referring to the educational process; in particular in Chapter IV, when the author refers to “intentional directions” of the *mutual relationship*, of the *possibility*, of *sociality*; moreover in Chapter V, when, referring to the “operational procedures and tools of a pedagogy as science”, he makes reference of the *methodological principle of the extension of the field of personal experience of the learner*, to gain an appropriate development of an

authentic *joie de vivre*. With this, we see how much Bertolini underlined, on several occasions, how the two processes of educating and re-educating, while with some differences, in his opinion have many analogies, as in both cases, as I have already stated, it is a question of focusing on the subject's vision of the world and paying attention to their way of finding meaning in the world, to identify their shortcomings and potentials. The aspect that makes the two processes different concerns their respective relationship with the dimension of time and the time categories. For Bertolini, every educational intervention focuses on the time dimension of the *future*: this involves guiding the subject *towards*, helping them to *strive for*, pursue a path *together* with him, stimulating him to take control of the experiences he already possesses (the *past*) in an aware manner, then going beyond that in an autonomous direction but in an intersubjective and relational time. When the educational process has no problems, a subject's past becomes the starting point for moving forwards towards a future that has not yet been set in stone. The difficult boy also has a past, and the educator who has him in care must certainly and inevitably take that past into consideration. However, the re-education process follows an inverse path to the education process, and proceeds from the *future to the past*. This is because, according to Piero Bertolini, the difficult boy will never be able to understand the shortcomings of his past and then distance himself from it if he has not first had the opportunity to have different experiences with significant adults. Only in this way will his distorted vision of the world be undermined and modified. This is the reason for the first re-education strategies and the dilation of the field of experience described above.

Phenomenological pedagogy and the interpretation of deviancy: still a paradigm today

Studies by M. Foucault (1992) showed throughout the 19th century, two different ways of understanding and intervening in diversity began to be manifested and consolidated. The first groups into the category of the “mad” and the “segregation of the senseless” an indistinct and undifferentiated crowd of different subjects, thieves, tricksters, slackers, rebels, beggars, vagabonds and other figures considered part of the idle, poor and unemployed population which potentially represented a risk and constant danger for the public order. According to Foucault, in the 17th century diversity wore the mask of madness, and was the answer, removing and excluding, to a repressive need for order and morals. This first method was then overlapped by another (Foucault, 1976), which, on the contrary, was based on the principle of “inclusion”, and disciplinary practices of differentiation of the phenomenon of the plague; a new representation of social control that led to an interest in the study of the individuality of different subjects, according to the possibility of their recovery and social correction. Thus began a new production of knowledge and with it a different exercise of power, not repressive and moral but rather “normalising” and scientific. It is the result of what Foucault (1976) refers to as the “positive technology of power”, as the *device of inclusion*, in contrast to that based on *exclusion*, also has positive and useful effects.

The scientific and cultural framework in which the field of the various figures of diversity were placed in the 19th century represents a central focus on bio-medical, medical-

legal, anthropological, sociological, psychological knowledge, and lies fully within the positivist paradigm and the deterministic, predictive, causal and etiological references. From this context, pedagogy initially appears excluded and delegated rather than dealing with questions concerning correctional treatment and preventive surveillance (Barone, 2011).

As regards the Italian situation, the idea of the possibility of recovering maladjusted subjects began to come to the fore, not only in the pedagogical field, only in the second half of the 1900s, thanks to some events which introduced fractures into the settings and interpretations of the past, fostering the appearance of an interest in understanding “subjectivity”, i.e. “who” is the person with dissonant, problematic behaviour. Among the events contributing to restoring complexity and problems to deviant behaviour, in terms of deviant minors, it is important to remember the establishment of the Juvenile Court which in 1934 declared the peculiarity of legislative action targeting the management of minors. In this light, the establishment of the Juvenile Court was certainly an important and innovative way of focusing on the specific nature of youths and the youth condition; however, at that time they were both a legal context characterised by a prevalence of criminal and repressive purposes, rather than pedagogical and re-educational ones. Another turning point in the treatment of juvenile deviancy took place in 1956, with law no. 88 of 25 July and law no. 1441 of 27 December, when finally the 19th century concept that ultimately aimed at the “correctional treatment” of minors fell into disuse, welcoming the results of studies and research that highlighted the connection between the social environment and deviant behaviour (Barone, 2011).

With his *Per una pedagogia del ragazzo difficile*, in 1965 Piero Bertolini produced an authentic paradigmatic rift in the field of pedagogy on the topic of juvenile deviancy and maladjustment (Barone, 2011), thus inaugurating the re-educational vision described herein. A pedagogical-re-educational perspective that is still very much followed in Italy today, not only among pedagogists, and that I personally consider a still very current “classic”, as, despite the fact that the reference context has greatly changed today, it responds to needs of humanity that go beyond the barriers of time and space. In other words, the interpretative and operational guidelines offered by Piero Bertolini on the ideas of juvenile deviancy and maladjustment, lead in my opinion to the following effects:

- They restore dignity, attention and consideration to every subjectivity, even those marked by the limits of maladjustment;
- They seek an empathic and authentic relationship with subjectivity, aiming to capture the sense and subjective meaning behind each manifestation of maladjusted behaviour;
- They allow us to tackle the topic of re-education in relational terms, and interactive terms between the individual and the environment, both subjective and objective *co-responsibility*;

- They thus go beyond a binary, dichotomic logic, the rigidity of the realm of “either...or” of deterministic interpretations that assign the causes of deviant behaviour either to subjectivity or to the environment;
- They offer the subject in re-education educational opportunities for re-emerging and redemption.

Other effects could be gleaned from all that I have discussed above, referring to the thought of Piero Bertolini in order to outline his ideas on pedagogy and education, above all in a re-educational key, in this contribution. But I prefer to conclude in a different way, borrowing the enchanting words of C. Palmieri, which we find in the new updated edition of *Ragazzi difficili* (Bertolini & Caronia, 2015):

The re-edition of this book aims to pay homage to a Maestro, and his ability to bear witness to his pedagogical vision. It also aims to be a gift to those students or educators who did not have the chance to meet him and get to know him, to be able to measure up to this testimonial. A testimonial which, as we have sought to demonstrate, we feel is not only still current today but indeed truly essential. (ibidem, p. 23)

This goes not only for Italy but also abroad.

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