

The authority of legacy and the renewal of the world according to Larrosa

A autoridade do legado e a renovação do mundo segundo Larrosa

La autoridad del legado y la renovación del mundo según Larrosa

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Highlights

Proposal for innovation in thinking about education based on experience and meaning.

What experience allows us to think, say, and do in the pedagogical field.

Restoring the concept of authority in education (authority of tradition).

Abstract

What would it be like to think about education not based on the relationship between science and technology and/or theory and practice, but rather on the pair experience and meaning? Considering that the analysis of philosophical and literary texts and the reflection on his own experience as a teacher are the axes of Larrosa's intellectual experience, we find a discussion around this proposal in the theoretical reflection of authors such as Benjamin and Heidegger. Later, in a dialogue with Arendt's work, aiming at a conception of school that considers the common and the capacity of new generations to renew the world, Larrosa innovates our possibility of thinking about the conception of experience in school by insisting that authority must be given to the world, to tradition (restoring the idea of authority – not to the subject or the teacher). However, what does experience allow us to think, say, and do in the pedagogical field?

[Resumo](#) | [Resumen](#)

Keywords

Experience. Meaning-making. Authority.

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| Introduction

In the writings of Jorge Larrosa from the 1990s, such as in the book “Tremores” (Larrosa, 2014), and from the 2000s, such as in the book “La experiencia de la lectura” (Larrosa, 2003), we find reflections that seek to indicate a new way of thinking about education. Not from the traditional relationship in the educational field between science and technology, or between theory and practice, but proposing something that he says is more existential: from the pair experience and meaning. In other words, Larrosa proposes thinking about experience and the elaboration of its meaning in the pedagogical field. However, the texts from this period focus on pointing out a path, a possibility, an opening to the unknown. More recently, in books such as *Waiting for no one knows what* (Larrosa, 2018a) and “[P] para professor” (written with Karen Christine Rechia [Larrosa & Rechia, 2019]), we find elaborations on how that pair, experience and meaning, can be thought of in school.

This shows us how Larrosa opens a path of thought and develops it in his experience of thought. It also shows us how education, for Larrosa, has a direct relationship with life and not primarily with learning, for example. It has to do with a world that is worth living in, according to his words (Larrosa, 2014, pp. 36-37) (and that is why it seems to him such an important issue to think about and insist on).

The central point for Larrosa, therefore, is life, the experience of life, our unique way of living it. “Therefore, placing the educational relationship under the tutelage of experience (and not of technique, for example, or of practice) is nothing more than emphasizing its implication with life, its vitality” (Larrosa, 2014, p. 74). The experience/meaning pair gives us the possibility of thinking about education in a different way – a way that takes life into account first and foremost. It is as if we were opening up a new grammar of thought in education. With this new grammar, the bet is that we will have new schemes of thought, new effects of truth, new meanings in education. What does the idea of experience allow us to think, say, and do in the pedagogical field?

Larrosa draws on several thinkers to formulate the relationship between experience and meaning in education. Walter Benjamin, Martin Heidegger, and Hannah Arendt are key thinkers in this context, which is why this essay is divided into three parts and a conclusion. In the first part, we will focus on Benjamin's conception of experience. For this thinker, the beginning of the century is characterized by the loss of experience. The formative stories told from one generation to the next would have lost their authority in favor of information and novelty. The reality of the First World War also brought a world desolate due to experiences that we do not know how to elaborate, that cannot be transmitted symbolically. We are left with no experience, without a common knowledge that can advise us, guide us. It is as if the past lost its power, and even the gift of listening, the work of listening, of elaborating a meaning of a story disappeared. Larrosa even turns to Giorgio

Agamben when he states, more recently, that daily existence has become unbearable in big cities – as if nothing touched us anymore.

Larrosa also draws on Heidegger's reflections on experience. In this second part, we highlight how experience is thought of as something that touches us, happens to us, passes through us. To do this, we need to be open to the world, willing to put ourselves in danger, exposed to something unknown. Thus, experience demands courage from us, because it involves experiences that transform us – that involve our being, our way of being. At this point, it is important to emphasize that we cannot confuse experience with information and/or opinion – something that, in fact, prevents us from experiencing. In the same way, experience should not be confused with experiment, as we will see. Also, the lack of time, life in an incessant flow, and the obsession with the new would be responsible for the loss of experience. In other words, experience demands a way of being that is counterintuitive in contemporary times: it demands patience, listening, attention, interest, openness.

Arendt, in turn, starts from a crisis in education. It is a serious crisis, since the essence of education is focused on the beings who are born into the world. These new beings need to become responsible for the world they will inherit. Arendt emphasizes the importance of schools transmitting the world to the new generation so that they can transform it. We would be in crisis precisely because we have an inheritance, but no heirs; especially in the United States of America, Arendt states that there is a pathos for the new, as if the past had no meaning for new generations; we would be experiencing a crisis of transmission – the idea of the common.

The challenge, for Larrosa, in this case, is to give authority to tradition in the form of books, studies, rescuing the sense of the common. The teacher, in this case, would be responsible for bringing to light what deserves attention and interest in the world so that young people can renew it, so that they can create a world worth living in. Listening to this tradition, inheriting it, would be a way of experimenting in school. What Larrosa points out to us again is to shift the place of authority: neither in the teacher nor in the student, but in tradition.

| Reclaiming experience: reclaiming tradition

“Experiência e pobreza” (Experience and Poverty) and *“O narrador”* (The Storyteller), (Benjamin, 1994) are essays written in the 1930s that start from what Benjamin calls the loss or decline of experience. The concept of experience that Benjamin works on in these essays refers to experiences that are passed down from one generation to the next – experiences that are told, for example, with the authority of old age (with proverbs) or in a verbose way (in stories); or even of travelers who have visited distant lands, different cultures, etc. and, therefore, have something to tell (they have the authority to tell what they experienced, to pass something on). After having traveled a path, a story can become commonplace. Experiences that are not always immediately understood by young people, but that acquire meaning throughout life – proverbs, stories that are invoked at opportune

moments for children and young people so that they gain meaning and become part of their lives.

In Benjamin, tradition therefore entails a true formation and also a transformation in the person – something that is common to a generation and that is considered important to preserve (in each one). Benjamin's example is of a story of a father who, on his deathbed, tells his children that there is a treasure hidden in his land; the children dig everywhere and find nothing. However, when autumn arrives, his harvests become the most abundant in the region. Only then do they realize that they have received an experience: the treasure was work; wealth comes from this experience. The father is heard; the children respond to what he transmits – having heard the father's word, something happens (the new generation acquires knowledge).

This story shows us a way of making knowledge common – a lesson from the experience of other generations that the father passes on to his children. However, with war, with the power of technology, the individual is subjected to impersonal forces that profoundly change our way of life and so quickly that we are unable to even assimilate what we have experienced. Benjamin tells how people returned mute from the battlefields of the First World War: what they experienced cannot be conveyed in words or assimilated symbolically – as if they had experienced a shock, something traumatic, for which there is no language that can translate what was experienced, creating the impossibility of a symbolic response to what was experienced. For Benjamin, this would be one of the manifestations that we are experiencing a loss of experience – the inability to give a transmissible symbolic form to an experience. In fact, beyond events such as war, with the development of technology in general, we would be increasingly connected to the immediate, to the new – as if the past no longer had power in our lives and was not worth remembering.

Thus, our cultural heritage would no longer mean anything to young people – as if stories from distant times no longer had any meaning for a new generation. Benjamin even announces that this is “a new barbarity”: when the poverty of experience is no longer private, but of all humanity (Benjamin, 1994, p. 115). This new barbarity would be a rupture with the past: as if only the new had meaning. Thus, the poverty of experience “[...] drives us to move forward, to begin again, to be content with little, to build with little, without looking either to the right or to the left” (Benjamin, 1994, p. 116).

The loss of experience is, therefore, a manifestation of a loss of authority of tradition. In fact, of the very idea of tradition, of that which is shared and transmitted from generation to generation: something that is taken up and transformed – something that provides continuity between generations and a sense of community. The generation that followed the barbarities of war created this new barbarity: not allowing itself to be touched by the past. In other words, the men of his time did not wish to inherit the experiences of tradition. Here is his diagnosis of the time: “We have become poor. We have abandoned one after another all the pieces of human heritage, we have had to pawn them often at a hundredth of their value in order to

receive in exchange the small coin of the ‘present’” (Benjamin, 1994, p. 119). However, this loss did not happen suddenly. Benjamin observes how the bourgeoisie of his time create a form of refuge in their homes, which leads us to think of a difference between experience (Erfahrung) and living (Erlebnis). Experience is a common, communal experience; living refers back to individual private life, to an idea of solitude. For example, in Benjamin’s time, in the midst of large cities, some people created a kind of personal refuge in their homes, creating an environment that tries to remedy the loss of experience. Benjamin gives us the example of glass in early 20th century architecture: the transparency of the glass makes the interior of the house public and without mystery, unlike Victorian houses with cozy interiors, full of characteristics of the resident’s interiority; these are like a refuge within the anonymity of large cities. Jeanne Marie Gagnebin, reflecting on this point in Benjamin, highlights that the bourgeois individual suffers a depersonalization that he tries to remedy through the private appropriation of experiences, whether in “[...] his ineffable experiences (Erlebnisse), his feelings, his wife, his children, his house and his personal objects” (Gagnebin, 2007, p. 59).

The loss of experience is correlated with another loss: for Benjamin, the art of storytelling is on the verge of extinction (Benjamin, 1994, p. 197). According to Benjamin, it is increasingly rare to find someone who knows how to tell a story: “It is as if we were deprived of a faculty that seemed safe and inalienable to us: the faculty of exchanging experiences” (Benjamin, 1994, pp. 197-198). Storytellers find their source in the experience that is passed from person to person, just as the knowledge of distant lands that travelers bring back associated with the knowledge of the past. This is not knowledge of an informative nature, but knowledge that requires the listener to surrender to the story without any commitment to its verifiability (since it is not information); something that, when it makes sense, changes the way the listener sees the world. That is why the true nature of narrative, according to Benjamin, has a purpose; some teaching; a suggestion; something that can be elaborated for life: “The advice woven into the living substance of existence has a name: wisdom. The art of storytelling is dying out because wisdom – the epic side of truth – is becoming extinct” (Benjamin, 1994, pp. 200-201).

This process of loss has been going on for a long time; the decline of experience is becoming more and more declining every day. With technology, this decline becomes more immediate. In Benjamin’s time, what most influences this decline is a new form of communication: information (Benjamin, 1994, p. 202). Information is what most characterizes an uprooting of the past. This is how, in the 1930s, the dissemination of information on the radio, for example, would cause people to distance themselves from the past, becoming interested only in what is happening now; if possible, in what is happening live – as immediate as possible, because it is easier to verify (it would have a more “concrete” consistency). “The epic side of truth”, as Benjamin characterizes the narrative, loses its value in the face of the new:

Knowledge, which came from afar [...], had an authority that was valid even if it was not controllable by experience. But information aspires to immediate

verification. Above all, it needs to be understandable “in itself and for itself.” It is often no more accurate than the old stories. However, while these stories often resorted to the miraculous, it is essential that the information be plausible. In this respect, it is incompatible with the spirit of narrative. If the art of narrative is rare today, the dissemination of information is decisively responsible for this decline. (Benjamin, 1994, pp. 202-203)

Benjamin uses the example of the radio, on which we listened to news from all over the world. Even with so much information, Benjamin claims that we are poor in experiences. Information is given to us followed by explanations. In narration, on the other hand, there is a great deal of care taken to avoid explanations: it is necessary to go through the experience so that the story acquires meaning. With information, we do not need to interpret; everything is transparent (Benjamin, 1994, p. 204).

Transparency does not force us to think, it does not change our way of being. A story, on the other hand, is memorized; the better it is memorized, the more it is assimilated and in increasingly deeper layers. Old stories are still capable of arousing astonishment and reflection in us today. This is fundamental, because it shows us the power of the past – as can be seen in his theses on history: “[...] nothing that once happened can be considered lost to history” (Benjamin, 1994, p. 223). It is this power of history that is lost when we break with the past and are only interested in the new.

Alongside Benjamin's reflections, Larrosa reminds us, in the text *Experience and its Languages*, of testimonies from survivors of the Second World War and/or totalitarian regimes such as the Soviet Union in which they describe how the events experienced in these situations cannot be elaborated. He takes up, for example, a speech by Imre Kertész in which he describes how he survived Auschwitz, Stalinism, the end of socialism, among other things, and asks himself whether what he experienced is of any use or whether it was in vain. If your experiences are your life, this questioning puts into play the very meaning of his life, his formation (what formed his personality). The experiences lived in the 20th century by Kertész have the effect of destroying himself, his personality, because they are experiences in which the person seems not to live his own life. As in the case of Auschwitz: something happens that he does not recognize – as if he had lived something strange to himself, without the possibility of being able to elaborate. In other words, something close to what Benjamin described about the survivors of the First World War. In Kertész and Benjamin, we could reach this conclusion following Larrosa: “[...] I do not know what is happening to me, this that is happening to me has no meaning, it has nothing to do with me, it cannot be, I cannot understand, I have no words” (Larrosa, 2014, p. 52).

Larrosa also turns to a reflection from the 1990s by Giorgio Agamben (*Childhood and History*) in which there is a radicalization of our poverty of experience, since it does not even take another event for us to realize how experience has lost its place: “All discourse on experience must now start from the realization that it is no longer something that we are given to do” (Agamben, 2005, p. 21). Contemporary man, according to Agamben, would have been expropriated of his experience.

Expropriated from having experience and from transmitting it. If Benjamin diagnosed a poverty of experience between the two World Wars, the unfolding of the century would have definitively buried our capacity to have experience. In fact, today, at the end of the 20th century, we would no longer need a catastrophe for men to have nothing left to narrate, no experiences to be transmitted or even lived: the very daily life of people in big cities would already bring us an experience without any narratable experience. “Modern man returns home in the evening exhausted by a jumble of events – fun or boring, banal or unusual, pleasant or atrocious – yet none of them has become experience” (Agamben, 2005, pp. 21-22).

Agamben shows us an inability of our daily experiences to become experience. This would make our daily existence unbearable, as if we were living in an oppression of everyday life: the banality of everyday life. Or as Larrosa says: “And this asphyxiation of experience supposes an enormous impoverishment of life, of the meaning of life, which is nothing more than a living that is lost in nothingness” (Larrosa, 2003, p. 103). There are thousands of events experienced in everyday life, but they do not touch us. On the other hand, what Benjamin's idea of experience teaches us is that it does not take something extraordinary to touch us, but rather everyday life: this would be the raw material of the experience that each generation transmitted to the next; the simplest became a communicable experience. Agamben points out this impossibility due to the decline of the concept of authority:

Because experience has its necessary correlate not in knowledge, but in authority, that is, in words and stories, and today no one seems to have sufficient authority to guarantee an experience, and if they do have it, they do not even consider the idea of basing their authority on an experience. On the contrary, what characterizes the present time is that all authority is based on the “inexperienced,” and no one would accept as valid an authority whose only title of legitimacy was an experience. (Agamben, 2005, p. 23)

However, Agamben sees a germ of future experience – it would be necessary to prepare the place for this germ to come (Agamben, 2005, p. 23). There is a possibility, for example, with the idea of childhood in man. Larrosa, in turn, seeks to think of the idea of experience in education as something possible. How could we think of this? Larrosa associates this conception of experience in Benjamin with some questions from Heidegger.

| Reclaiming experience: being touched by the world

Since the 1990s, Larrosa has insisted that information is contrary to experience – it leaves no room for it. If we live in a culture of information, in which the great value is to stay informed, we would be increasingly moving towards an impossibility of having experience in Benjamin's sense. The subject of information accumulates data, explanations about the world, but is incapable of feeling touched by it. We find ourselves within what Heidegger (2001) associates of technology with a type of world domination. In fact, in his view, technology imposes predictability on the world: “Science posits the real. And disposes it to propose itself in a set of operations and processes, that is, in a sequence of adduced causes that can be

foreseen. In this way, the real can be predictable and become pursued in its consequences” (Heidegger, 2001, p. 48). Thus, we can become informed about something, but we are not touched by it; we are not open to the world – information about something does not transform us into anything, it just accumulates. That is, nothing touches us about what we learned from the information: “[...] a society constituted under the sign of information is a society in which experience is impossible” (Larrosa, 2014, p. 20). To have experience, one needs to be open “[...] as a fundamental availability, as an essential openness” (Larrosa, 2014, p. 26). Armed with information and explanations, people put themselves in the position of giving their opinion about things. Thus, instead of being open to the world, they give their opinion about it. Larrosa associates this logic with what is called meaningful learning (Larrosa, 2014, p. 21).

The value of information and the incentive to give an opinion is followed by our lack of time. The world seems to be moving faster every day, as if we could not keep up with its pace of change. New things flood us daily, leading us to an obsession with the new: everything that is new is considered better – from a state-of-the-art household appliance to the idea of human capital, which values investment in younger people. We have become consumers of novelties and curiosities; we are always excited, waiting for something new. Faced with new things, we give our opinions and exchange information – we do not remain silent; we do not revisit the past, because our eyes are fixed only on the present. Time becomes a commodity: we cannot waste time; we cannot fall behind; we must be fast-paced, flexible in order to constantly adapt to new things, etc. “Therefore, speed and what it provokes, the lack of silence and memory, are also mortal enemies of experience” (Larrosa, 2014, p. 22).

Larrosa also differentiates experience as we learn it from Benjamin with the idea of work experience that is valued in the market. This experience that we acquire in the job market is not the one that we inherit from tradition. It should not be confused with the idea of experiment that we find in science. Heidegger, for example, states that science is experimental because it disposes nature through experiments to validate a previous theory (Heidegger, 2001, pp. 24-25). In other words, the experiment is the confirmation of a theory. On the other hand, Heidegger defines experience as something that touches us (in *The Essence of Language*):

To experience something, whether it be a thing, a human being, or a god, means that this something runs over us, comes to meet us, reaches us, subjugates us, and transforms us. “Doing” does not mean here in any way that we ourselves produce and operationalize the experience. Doing here means going through, suffering, receiving what comes to meet us, harmonizing and tuning ourselves with it. It is this something that is done, that is sent, that is articulated. (Heidegger, 2012, p. 121)

Therefore, experiencing something requires an open and receptive stance, in which we can be touched by something. That is why Larrosa states that experience is what happens to us, touches us (Larrosa, 2014, p. 18). Armed with information, on the contrary, a person seeks to impose his or her opinion on something – a stance quite different from receptiveness to something unknown. One is “exposed” to

something, making the being vulnerable to what may happen; it is a risk that a subject of knowledge is unaware of (who does not put himself or herself in a position of risk, because he or she imposes something; judges; determines; opposes, etc., but does not allow himself or herself to be touched). The game is between “exposing oneself” or “imposing”:

Therefore, he who poses, or opposes, or imposes, or proposes, but does not “expose” himself, is incapable of experience. He who has nothing happening to him, to whom nothing happens, to whom nothing happens to him, to whom nothing touches him, nothing reaches him, nothing affects him, to whom nothing threatens him, to whom nothing happens, is incapable of experience. (Larrosa, 2014, p. 26)

It therefore requires courage to allow oneself to be exposed to the unknown; there is something dangerous, indeterminate, unpredictable in this action. It is not about dealing with a self-assured, powerful, dominating subject, because it would be the world that dominates him, touches him; the subject suffers something when touched; he allows himself to be transformed, even without knowing exactly why. Heidegger writes: “To experience something means that, in order to achieve what we can achieve when we are on the way, it must reach us and move us, that it must come to meet us and take hold of us, transforming us in its direction” (Heidegger, 2012, p. 137). This is why Larrosa associates experience with passion, in which the subject assumes suffering, subjection: “[...] what makes us discover, in experience, is our own fragility, our own vulnerability, our own ignorance, our own impotence, which repeatedly escapes our knowledge, our power and our will” (Larrosa, 2014, p. 42). In line with a fundamental neoliberal value, autonomy, Larrosa states:

Passion establishes above all a dependent, determined, linked, obliged, included freedom, founded not on itself, but on a first acceptance of something that is outside of me, of something that is not me and that for this very reason is capable of making me fall in love. [...] In passion, the passionate subject does not possess the loved object, but is possessed by it. Therefore, the passionate subject is not within himself, in possession of himself, in self-control, but is outside himself, dominated by the other, captivated by the other, alienated, hallucinating. (Larrosa, 2014, p. 29)

This does not mean that the subject of experience is incapable of knowledge, of action. We are faced with another form of knowledge – not that of information; but a knowledge that involves the being itself that allows itself to be exposed to something. Through this openness to one's own being, the person is transformed, knowledge becomes part of the person's history (an experience that constitutes it, forms it, gives it shape). It is not, therefore, something impersonal, indifferent, without affection. It is necessary for the person to get involved, to get involved, to let themselves be affected. It is not by chance that Larrosa uses the pair experience and meaning to think about education: having an experience requires the elaboration of a meaning for what happens to us. “This is the knowledge of experience,” says Larrosa:

what is acquired in the way someone responds to what happens to them throughout their life and in the way we give meaning to what happens to us. In the knowledge of experience, it is not about the truth of what things are, but about the meaning or meaninglessness of what happens to us. And this

knowledge of experience has some essential characteristics that oppose it, point by point, to what we understand as knowledge. (Larrosa, 2014, p. 32)

When giving meaning to what happens to us, two people can experience the same situation in different ways, giving different meanings to what happened. That is, each person must have their own experience; one should not accept the experience of another or even the meaning that one person has created of an experience. Instead of impoverishing knowledge, because it is something singular, this possibility of giving different meanings to what we experience enriches us. It enriches us as concrete and singular people as well as a community (because we can share different experiences). The important thing is that it is knowledge that has transformed the person. On the other hand, there would be poverty in a life that does not undergo experiences – a kind of existential void. The subject of knowledge guided by a logic of imposing knowledge on the world, contrary to what is expected, would be a subject without the courage to let himself be touched; who does not put himself at risk, is not willing to “[...] open up to the unknown, to what cannot be anticipated, ‘fore-seen’ or ‘fore-say’” (Larrosa, 2014, p. 34).

Larrosa is fully aware of how counterintuitive this proposal of having an experience is in our time. We live in a world where everyone wants to be seen, where everyone wants to give an opinion on everything. The idea of having an experience puts us in the position of listening, knowing how to hear, incorporating into our lives what we have experienced. It demands of us a position of attention, openness, patience – all values contrary to a world that lives at speed, in a constant flow of information:

Experience [...] requires a gesture of interruption, a gesture that is almost impossible in these times: it requires stopping to think, stopping to look, stopping to listen, thinking more slowly, looking more slowly, and listening more slowly; stopping to feel, feeling more slowly, lingering on details, suspending opinion, suspending judgment, suspending will, suspending the automatism of action, cultivating attention and delicacy, opening our eyes and ears, talking about what happens to us, learning slowness, listening to others, cultivating the art of encounter, being very silent, having patience and give yourself time and space. (Larrosa, 2014, p. 25)

How can we think about this experience in education? One way to think about this would be to return to a theoretical debate that Larrosa brings to us about Hannah Arendt.

| Reclaiming experience: the authority of the world

It is known that Arendt diagnoses a crisis in all spheres of life in her time, but highlights how the crisis in education is the most serious (in the book “Between Past and Future” [Arendt, 1998]). This is because the essence of education is related to natality, to the beings who are born into the world. However, in the face of a crisis, Arendt states that we are faced with an opportune moment to reflect; and this, without bringing previous concepts: we need to think again.

Arendt's text focuses more specifically on the United States of America in the 1950s. This is a time when the crisis in education is linked to a political issue due to

immigration. A central issue in this society is a kind of pathos of the new: extraordinary enthusiasm for the new (Arendt, 1998, p. 225); and even an obsession. Thus, they seek to ensure that schools innovate and adapt to new developments constantly. But isn't what adults propose to young people as "new" a contradiction? After all, it is the new generation that must renew the old because

It is part of the very nature of the human condition that each generation transforms itself into an old world, so that preparing a new generation for a new world can only mean the desire to snatch from the hands of the newcomers their own opportunity in the face of the new. (Arendt, 1998, p. 226)

According to Arendt, education is also linked to the idea of responsibility. Not only our responsibility to ensure that nothing happens to the child, but a responsibility for the world. In the first case, Arendt highlights a mix between the private and the public that had already begun to appear since the 1950s. By rejecting this separation, by putting private life in public evidence, "[...] she makes things more difficult for her children, who by nature demand the security of concealment so that there are no disturbances in their maturation" (Arendt, 1998, p. 238). For Arendt, school would be the institution that should mediate the private domain from the public world. It is in this world that the world is introduced gradually and with respect for the private life of the students. Arendt here calls for the responsibility of the adult educator:

[...] the educator stands here in relation to the young person as a representative of a world for which he must assume responsibility, even though he has not done so and even though he may secretly or openly wish that the young person were different or openly wish that the young person were different from what he is. This responsibility is not arbitrarily imposed on educators; it is implicit in the fact that young people are introduced by adults to a world that is constantly changing. Anyone who refuses to assume collective responsibility for the world should not have children, and should be prohibited from taking part in their education. (Arendt, 1998, p. 239)

"Assuming collective responsibility for the world" – this is a task that Arendt entrusts to the profession of the teacher. Taking responsibility for the world requires creativity, since it is a world that seems destined for catastrophe – given that Arendt survived two disastrous World Wars and nothing pointed to a better future path. The new generation must then take charge of the world (as it is) in order to intervene, change, create something. Each new generation must act as if it were following these words of Hamlet, as Arendt states: "The time is out of joint. O cursed spite that ever I was born to set it right". These words "[...] are more or less true for each new generation, although they have perhaps acquired, since the beginning of our century, a more persuasive validity than before" (Arendt, 1998, pp. 242-243). It is as if the world grew old with a generation and it needed to be recreated again; it must be put back in order, even if that order can never be assured. How can this be done in education?

Larrosa develops a reflection that goes beyond the idea of experience. In Benjamin, experience is linked to tradition, to the idea of authority; in Heidegger, to something that touches and transforms us; in Arendt, to a responsibility to the new beings that

are born, but also to a game between the new and the old, precisely to benefit what is new in each child, as Arendt states:

It is precisely for the benefit of what is new and revolutionary in each child that education needs to be conservative; it must preserve and introduce it as something new in an old world, which, however revolutionary it may be in its actions, is always, from the point of view of the next generation, obsolete and prone to destruction. (Arendt, 1998, p. 243)

In other words, the past must be presented to children; they need to take on what past generations have experienced in order to be able to do something new. In this sense, the teacher's role is also that of a mediator between the old and the new, due to his respect for the past and due to his respect for what this generation will do with "it". In other words, Jan Masschelein and Maarten Simons (thinkers with whom Larrosa constantly dialogues), reflecting on Arendt, state:

That education is conservative means that it preserves things (words, practices) as unfinished things, that is, things that are not directly related to an end, endless means so that students can start over with these things, with the world. They can now obtain meaning again, or obtain a new meaning. (Masschelein & Simons, 2014, p. 164)

This logic of presenting the world as a legacy for new generations is directly correlated with the idea of love. Arendt sums up her idea of education in this passage:

Education is the point at which we decide whether we love the world enough to take responsibility for it and, by doing so, save it from the ruin that would be inevitable were it not for renewal and the coming of the new and the young. Education is also where we decide whether we love our children enough not to expel them from our world and abandon them to their own devices, and not to snatch from their hands the opportunity to undertake something new and unforeseen for us, preparing them instead in advance for the task of renewing a common world. (Arendt, 1998, p. 247)

It is clear then that education in Arendt has a relationship with love, whether for the world or for the new generation, just as it points to the child's entry into a kind of artificial lineage (it is not a "natural" inheritance) – a tradition that is inserted and is responsible for, but precisely because it is responsible for it, it must be reinvented. In this sense, authority must be in the world, in the subject, in the theme, in the legacy and not in the individual or in the teacher. Here is Larrosa's innovative point in giving authority to the world, to what is put on the table to become common to all:

Because only if we recognize the authority of the text can we recognize the authority of the world, that the world is what speaks to us, what makes us think, what makes us see. And that our words, our thoughts and our projects are not so much proposals for the world, but rather responses to the world. What is important (what commands, what has authority) is the text, the path, the world (and not ourselves). It is very difficult (almost impossible) to create an atmosphere in the classroom in which the protagonist is neither the student nor the teacher, but the text (and through the text, the world, the subject: what makes people talk, what makes people think, what the text indicates. (Larrosa & Rechia, 2019, p. 76)

However, Arendt highlighted a crisis of authority in her time. Not exactly because we have no inheritance, but because we leave no heirs (Arendt, 1998, p. 31). Contemporarily, Zygmunt Bauman (2001) highlights that we live in a liquid society, in which we do not inherit any “treasure” of tradition. Bauman describes how modern society is characterized by “destroying” what was built in previous generations in the name of something better. However, what has been achieved in contemporary times is a destruction of everything that was “solid” in tradition and even the very idea of solidity, making what was durable something retrograde. That is why we would be living in a “liquid” world, in a permanent and unregulated flux. It is as if there were no inheritance or legacy between one generation and the next – as if the past had to be overcome without any connection to it. In fact, it is not an overcoming with the establishment of a new solidity, but a disconnection with the past that makes values become liquid – a constant flux, in which the reference becomes the individual himself and not something common. This is a change typical of a neoliberal society that targets the individual.

In “About Education and Youth”, for example, Bauman says: “The form of life into which today’s young generation was born, so that it knows no other, is a consumer society and an ‘agorist’ culture – restless and in perpetual change – that promotes the cult of novelty and random contingency” (Bauman, 2013, p. 34). Living always in the present, it seems that we no longer have any affiliation, as if tradition did not deserve to be inherited, as it would be outdated, undesirable, etc. Thus, not only is the notion of history lost, but also the way in which we insert ourselves into tradition. This is how the crisis in education can be thought of as a crisis in the transmission/renewal/communization of the world, as Larrosa (2018a, p. 231) points out.

| Conclusion

What does the idea of experience allow us to think, say, and do in the pedagogical field?

The challenge of education in this line of thought would be to give authority to tradition, to study, to what is bequeathed to us so that there may be a renewal from a link with the past. To this end, it is essential to recover the sense of commonality. The teacher could not, therefore, simply leave the world in the hands of children. There is a role that Larrosa already highlighted in the 2000s: “What the teacher must transmit is a relationship with the text: a form of attention, an attitude of listening, a concern, an openness” (Larrosa, 2003, p. 45). This is what Masschelein and Simons (2014, p. 176) tell us, for example:

Renewing the common world is a task for both the new generation and the old. This common world is not given in advance; it is not something that the old generation and the new share (have in common in this sense), but it precisely finds (its) (common) place between them, requiring the old generation to make, so to speak, its world available. Continuing and renewing the world requires conservation, but this also means making it available (that is, exposing the world). Offering or re/presenting the world to the new generation actually

means suspending the current operations of the world (or something in the world).

We see here an idea of responsibility in sharing the common good with students – the world. This would be the pedagogical responsibility for Masschelein and Simons (and also for Larrosa): to free the child from seeking an immediate function; from seeking a utilitarian purpose; from aiming at learning with a selfish function (which aims at the self). Larrosa, for example, highlights the role of authority at this point. But it should be understood that the idea of authority is not necessarily coercive; it is an authority of tradition. In order to treat the world with respect, it is necessary to pay attention to it and be interested in it – and teachers would have the authority to bring to light what deserves attention and interest. In fact, according to Larrosa, the teacher responds to a call:

If vocation is a calling, we could say that the teacher fulfills his vocation when he responds to a call that has four components. First, he responds to the call of the world. Second, he responds to the call of the transmission of the world [...]. Third, he responds to the call of the renewal of the world [...]. Finally, he responds to the call of the communization of the world [...]. His particular response (and responsibility) with these four components is what makes him a teacher, what transforms him from a scholar into a teacher. (Larrosa, 2018a, p. 230-231)

The idea is to make the things that are presented, the subject, the theme, the concept, the theory, etc., more meaningful. becomes present (“accessible to the hands”) and common to all. Being present in a common way, what is presented as a legacy can be renewed, rethought, resumed. But it is only while presented that students see these things as things to be cared for, that accompany them, that are theirs. They begin to involve us in the world, causing our relationship with it to change; we connect with it, we worry about it; we take care of it; we feel obligated towards it. Thus,

[...] handing over the world to the new is not transforming the world, but handing it over as open, opening it to its possible renewal, to a renewal that will never be ours. Transmission is not on the side of transformation (insofar as I project the transformation, of individuals or of society), but of renewal (which, by definition, cannot be projected). That is why, for me, it is perverse, in education, to talk about results. (Larrosa & Rechia, 2019, p. 152)

As we can see, what gains importance is the world and not the subject, the individual or the student; just as it is not the teacher who is the authority, but the world presented, the subject, the topic under discussion. It is from the legacy that one can have an experience with the past so that it can be elaborated and re-signified. In this sense, contrary to adapting the school to the molds of the world of information, speed, and the ever-new, the proposal is to rethink the school according to values such as attention, study, dedication, and discipline, giving authority to tradition, shifting the importance of information and opinion to study, to a debate of a common theme – something that students must inherit if they want to transform the world. Not out of nostalgia, but by betting on the potential of the past; not to give an opinion, but to be touched by the world and allow oneself to be transformed; not to create something new supposedly out of nothing, but to inherit a

world that needs to be transformed; not aiming at a technical world, but at a school focused on life, on experience, on the elaboration of meaning to what is presented.

It is worth mentioning that the theme proposed by Larrosa about the experience in school has been considered in Latin America by several researchers. We found collections of texts such as “Experiencia y alteridad en educación” in which the idea of alterity is taken as a pair to experience (Skliar & Larrosa, 2013). In another collection of studies, “Encontrar Escola” (Finding School), we found research on how to think of research as experience (Martins et al., 2014). In Brazil, Larrosa's studies, together with the works of Masschelein and Simons, have been debated, resulting in collections such as “Elogio da Escola” (School Praise) (Larrosa, 2018b); “Elogio do professor” (Teacher's Praise) (Larrosa et al., 2021); and “Elogio do Estudo” (Praise of Study), (Bárcena et al., 2023). In other words, Larrosa's thought experience has been shared in Latin America, especially in Brazil.


It would still be necessary to think about what legacy we present to our students. Larrosa himself states that, in his thought experience, he chose a tradition – one that he says is worth belonging to; that he feels honored to be a “continuer” (Larrosa, 2018a, p. 437). In other words, it is not about defending Eurocentrism, for example, which would bring a limited and exclusionary view of knowledge. It is not by chance that Larrosa often turns to Latin American thinkers in his reflections and criticizes tendencies that devalue non-European perspectives. It is more about a requirement to choose what is “worth” thinking, talking about, assuming. In other words, if experience is valued, it would make no sense to homogenize the school with Eurocentrism. At the same time, Larrosa associates experience and otherness, indicating how experience with the other is fundamental in the formation of critical thinking. It would therefore be up to us later to undertake the difficult task of thinking about this choice of tradition.

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Resumo

Como seria pensar a educação não a partir da relação entre ciência e técnica e/ou teoria e prática, mas visando o par experiência e sentido? Tendo em vista que a análise de textos filosóficos, literários e a reflexão sobre sua própria experiência como professor são os eixos da experiência intelectual de Larrosa, encontramos uma discussão em torno dessa proposta na reflexão teórica de autores como

Benjamin e Heidegger. Posteriormente, em um diálogo com a obra de Arendt, visando uma concepção de escola que pensa o comum e a capacidade de as novas gerações renovarem o mundo, Larrosa inova nossa possibilidade de pensarmos a concepção de experiência na escola ao insistir que se deve dar autoridade ao mundo, à tradição (restaurando a ideia de autoridade – não no sujeito e nem no professor). Entretanto, o que a experiência nos permite pensar, dizer, fazer no campo pedagógico?

Palavras-chave: Experiência. Construção de sentido. Autoridade.

Resumen

¿Cómo sería pensar la educación no desde la relación entre ciencia y técnica y/o teoría y práctica, sino apuntando al par experiencia y sentido? Teniendo en cuenta que el análisis de textos filosóficos, literarios y la reflexión sobre su propia experiencia como profesor son los ejes de la experiencia intelectual de Larrosa, encontramos una discusión en torno a esta propuesta en la reflexión teórica de autores como Benjamin y Heidegger. Posteriormente, en un diálogo con la obra de Arendt, con el objetivo de una concepción de escuela que piensa en lo común y en la capacidad de las nuevas generaciones de renovar el mundo, Larrosa innova nuestra posibilidad de pensar la concepción de experiencia en la escuela al insistir en que se debe dar autoridad al mundo, a la tradición (restaurando la idea de autoridad – no en el sujeto ni en el profesor). Sin embargo, ¿qué nos permite la experiencia pensar, decir, hacer en el campo pedagógico?

Palabras clave: Experiencia. Construcción de sentido. Autoridad.

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