THEMATIC SECTION:
THE LESSONS OF THE PANDEMIC

A Meaning for School Experience in Pandemic Times

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ABSTRACT – A Meaning for School Experience in Pandemic Times. In this article, the emergence of the global pandemics is analyzed as a factor that makes the crisis in education even more visible and acute. The lack of spatial presence of students at schools is compounded by the deflation of the historical dimension of education. This deflation is then analyzed taking as its departing point the narrative of a teenager's school experience. Its interpretation and analysis point out the need for schools and teachers to provide their students with opportunities *to inhabit another world* intime and space through the access and reframing of fictional works and historiographical studies in which the experience of living in a pandemic context is reconfigured in the light of the present.
Keywords: **Pandemics. Philosophy of Education. Ricoeur. Arendt.**

RESUMO – Um Sentido para a Experiência Escolar em Tempos de Pandemia. No presente artigo a emergência da pandemia global é analisada como um fator que torna ainda mais visível e aguda a crise da educação. Isso ocorre porque à não presencialidade espacial dos alunos agrega-se o esvaziamento da dimensão temporal da educação. Esse esvaziamento é tratado a partir da narrativa da experiência escolar de uma adolescente. Sua interpretação e análise apontam para a necessidade de a experiência escolar propiciar a seus alunos a oportunidade de *habitarem um outro mundo* no tempo e no espaço por meio do acesso e da ressignificação de obras ficcionais e historiográficas nas quais a experiência de viver uma pandemia seja reconfigurada à luz do presente.
Palavras-chave: **Pandemia. Filosofia da Educação. Ricoeur. Arendt.**

> Je pensais plus modestement à mon livre, et ce serait même inexact que de dire en pensant à ceux qui le liraient, à mes lecteurs. Car ils ne seraient pas, selon moi, mes lecteurs, mais les propres lecteurs d'eux-mêmes, mon livre n'étant qu'une sorte de ces verres grossissants comme ceux que tendait à un acheteur l'opticien de Combray; mon livre, grâce auquel je leur fournirais le moyen de lire en eux-mêmes (Marcel Proust, *Le temps retrouvé*, 1927).

Setting Up the Problem

In the preface written to open her most important collection of essays – *Between the past and the future* –, Arendt assumes as a conviction that "[…] thought itself arises out of incidents of living experience and must remain bound to them as the only guideposts by which to take its bearings" (Arendt, 2006, p. 14). On one hand, by announcing this assumption she aims to elucidate a strong conviction which guided her thought and writings: the categories of political thought inherited from tradition proved to be inadequate as soon as we tried to understand the phenomena that came about with the rise of totalitarian regimes and whose elements, in spite of the collapse of fascism and Nazism, continue to threaten us, although under new formulae (such as deliberate and organized lying as a method of political action, which was created by Nazism and now persists in the form of *fake news*). Thus, in face of the inefficiency of traditional concepts and categories, all we may do is to resort to our capacity of thinking in order to face the challenge of grasping the significance of political events which have shaken our convictions and practices. But, in addition to this epistemological adage, her statement also represents a theoretical perspective regarding the nature of philosophical reflection. According to Arendt, thinking ought to take as its central object our present problems and most recent experiences, always trying to decipher their meaning or political significance (Arendt, 2011, p. 6). Thinking our present experiences implies, still according to her, an intellectual effort aimed at understanding both what we suffer - which, therefore, falls upon us, like a pandemic crisis – as well as the way by which we respond to the challenge of living together in a common world subject to continuous changes. More than a mere intellectual effort, the exercise of trying to understand political phenomena is a way of "[…] reconciling ourselves with reality and trying, despite everything, to feel at home in the world" (Arendt, 2008, p. 330).

What kind of challenges, then, does the experience of living a global pandemic crisis pose for those who embraced education – conceived in a broad sense as the intergenerational transmission of a legacy of symbolic and material experiences and achievements – as their profession and as way of inhabiting a common world? This question, which will serve as the guiding marker of this exercise of thought, will not have as its central object the radical changes imposed by the pandemic crisis upon our new teaching practices – such as remote classes – nor their supposed effects on learning processes or on the novel pedagogical

and institutional relations engendered by this mutations. I do not intend to assert that these aspects are of minor importance. They are crucial and may even represent the dissolution of the *school form* (*la forme scholaire*), as it was configured from the 16th century, conceived as a critical alternative to home education (Lahire, 2008). But, despite the recognition on the importance of these issues, we are rather interested in some specific questions linked to the very meaning of the school experience in this new context: what symbolic resources can school offer to these young people who were suddenly impelled to face a situation that neither they themselves nor those who are in charge of their education could have foreseen? How could older generations assume the responsibility of thinking the pandemic crisis and, with this gesture, invite younger people to reflect upon it in dialogue with their own experiences and expectations?

It becomes, therefore, evident that these questions assumes that it is not simply a matter of finding new ways of doing precisely the same thing that was done before the epidemic crisis imposed itself as an event that made previous forms of intra and intergenerational coexistence unfeasible. The break in educational routine forced teachers and students alike to face a situation one shall not hesitate to classify as a crisis, as long as its meaning is not reduced to the more current uses which immediately identifies it to the notions of decay, illness or decline. A crisis, Arendt reminds us, "[…] tears away façades, obliterates prejudices" and highlights the fact that "[…] we have lost the answers on which we ordinarily rely without even realizing they were answers" to basic problems of human coexistence (Arendt, 2006, p. 117). In this sense, assuming the existence of an ethical crisis, for example, does not imply assuming a decline in moral conduct standards, but simply realizing that the criteria we once resorted to in order to discern between right and wrong or noble and vile are no longer able to account for the present experiences and challenges.

Consequently, the rise of a crisis leads us back to the core questions themselves. It urges us to examine, for example, the criteria by which we judge the ethical value of deeds and words, without being able to rely on the support of a tradition, that is, of a stable reference that *selects and names* parameters of judgment and action, which, therefore, "[…] hand, preserves and indicates" where the "[…] treasures of the past" lie, what *their value* is (Arendt, 2006, p. 5), parameters which could be taken as references to understand the present. It is precisely in this sense that we could interpret René Char's aphorism, according to which, our "[…] inheritance was left to us by no testament" (Arendt, 2006, p. 9): the loss of a tradition always implies a challenge regarding the relationship we may establish between a legacy of past achievements, the horizons of expectations for the future and the action taking place in the present. A challenge that involves both risks and opportunities:

> The undeniable loss of tradition in the modern world does not at all entail a loss of the past, for tradition and past are not the same. [...] With the loss of tradition, we lose the

> thread which safely guided us through the vast realms of the past; but this thread, was also the chain fettering each successive generation to a predetermined aspect of the past. It could be that only now will the past open up to us unexpected freshness and tells us things that no one has yet had ears to hear. But it cannot be denied that, without a securely anchored tradition [...] the whole dimension of the past has also been endangered. We are in danger of forgetting, and such an oblivion would mean that, humanly speaking, we would deprive ourselves of one dimension: the dimension of depth in human existence. For memory and depth are the same, or rather, depth cannot be reached by man except through remembrance (Arendt, 2006, p. 93-94).

What could possibly mean, then, educating young people in a world deprived of tradition and uncertain about its horizons of expectations? First of all, we must recognize that present time has become problematic not only because the certainties of traditional societies are lost but also because "[…] some of the hopes that modernity had legged us seem to have vanished" (Fabre, 2011, p. 7). But, if we may have lost secured and shared references and criteria, we have also gained new opportunities for thought and action. The loss of tradition allows us to experiment new ways of inhabiting the vast realms of the past, unveiling possible new meanings to past events, or even bringing to light events and historical figures that had been condemned to the darkness of oblivion. It is because tradition has been lost and the world has become problematic that, in short, we can *brush history against the grain*, to use Benjamin's elegant image (1994, p. 225). We can, for example, bring to light, in school practices, the greatness of a figure hitherto hidden by history, as the Brazilian poet and abolitionist Luiz Gama, saving from historical disappearance not only his literary works but, above all, the political relevance of his words and deeds. In this sense, a crisis - a gap between the responses we inherited from the past and the problems and questions that emerge in the present - can be an invitation to thinking and acting. What I propose to carry on in this article is, therefore, an exercise in political and educational thought which takes as its focus the present critical circumstances taking as its triggering element the narrative of a young teenager's reaction to the way her school has dealt with the pandemic crisis.

The Narrative of the Incident and the Search for a Meaning

When one organizes a plot (*intrigue*) into a narrative, explains Ricoeur (2010a), one becomes capable of operating a synthesis which may organize and attribute meaning to the apparent chaos of random actions, chaining them not as a mere succession of events (one after the other), but as interconnected elements (one because of the other) which convey a meaning we attribute to an experience. The configuration of a narrative plot has, according to Ricoeur,

> [...] the ability to extract a story from multiple incidents or to transform multiple incidents into a story [...] the story told is always more than the enumeration, in a simply serial or successive order, of the incidents it organizes in an intelligible totality (Ricoeur, 2010b, p. 198).

As one tells a story the living experience of incidents and events to which s(h)e is subject throughout his (her) existence may be reconfigured into a plot that *makes sense*. The configuration of a narrative allows us, then, to share intersubjectively experiential knowledge from "[…] the way someone responds to what happens to him throughout life and how ones assigns meaning to the events one is subject to [...] It is not, therefore, a question of [exposing] the truth of what things are, but [of disclosing] the meaning or the lack of meaning of whatever happens to us" (Larrosa, 2002, p. 27). Thus, despite its personal and contingent nature, the experience, when objectified in a shareable narrative, acquires the potential to bring out fundamental aspects of human condition, engendering "[…] a kind of intelligence that can be called narrative intelligence, and which is much closer to practical wisdom and moral judgment than to science and to the theoretical use of reason" (Ricoeur, 2010b, p. 200). In this sense, understanding and interpreting a narrative implies capturing and translating its practical intelligibility, converting the narrative into a conceptual discursive form capable of extracting the sense of its central elements.

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Although her remote class had already ended for over half an hour, Maya remained in her room, unaware that lunchtime had come. I knocked on her door and she opened it with an expression that disclosed more boredom than annoyance. She answered my question as automatically as I had inquired her. Yes, everything had gone smoothly in class, she assured me. I broke up with the automatism of the readymade sentences and asked her about her discouragement, this time with my eyes fixed on hers, like someone who questioned her soul. It had not been a regular class, she told me, but a discussion, as it usually happens whenever they take part in the 'debating class'. The theme? How the students were feeling about the pandemic crisis they had been facing for months. As in the previous week, she added, and in those that preceded it, the teachers asked the same questions and the students repeated the same answers, reproducing mediatic clichés. I tried to clarify to her that this gesture revealed the school's sincere concern for the students' well-being; that they knew the situation was exceptional and required care. She laughed, not without sarcasm, and put an end to my pedagogical effort: "Dad, there are a lot of people dying, we keep looking at a screen, doing math exercises and English grammar. Then they ask us how we are feeling! Oh, please ... let us have lunch".

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In a brief and simple form, Maya's experience – objectified into a narrative - touches on some of the most significant challenges and dilemmas that we are forced to face in this crisis: the impotence that affects almost all of us, teachers, when trying to transpose to the two-di-

mensional plane of the screen (which significantly omits that of depth) the experience we have accumulated in dealing with the presence of our students' bodies. We can no longer, for example, resort to the ability of reading in their gestures and faces (now obliterated by a photo or a capital letter) the degree of success or failure of our teaching strategies. The isolation of each student in his private space no longer allows a classroom to be configured as a totality with its own characteristics, not reducible to the individuals who compose it. We are no longer addressing a specific class, but a sum of individuals who, from the privateness of their homes, share the same virtual space. And despite all this, a school must remain a school, teachers must teach something and believe their students will be able to learn something.

But the changes regarding absence of the presential dimension of school experiences are not limited to its spatial domain. They are also felt in a domain that condenses the very meaning of the educational process: the temporal link that is interwoven between generations. Inhabiting the present – the presential domain – always means to be situated between a space of experiences which come from the past and a horizon of expectations in relation to the future (Koselleck, 2006), the educators being responsible both for the durability of a legacy of symbolic achievements and their resignification and renewal in the present regarding their future destination. Educating implies, therefore, transmitting to the new generations symbolic experiences that came to us from the vast realms of the past and which are presented and reframed, creating the bases for their durability and renewal in the future. A philosophy teacher who shares with his students a reflection created 2,500 years ago; a literature teacher who reads a a poem or interprets a song, a literacy teacher who initiates children in the ancient practice of alphabetical writing proceed, all of them, in this sense. Through the teaching of a specific discipline, area of knowledge or social practice, the teacher updates and refreshes not only its peculiar contents, but, above all, the nature of the affective and historical links that (s)he establishes with these areas of knowledge and understanding that characterize a certain historical legacy that school culture has chosen to preserve from the ruins inflicted by the flow of the time.

Thus, the notion of an *intergenerational symbolic transmission*, evoked here as the meaning of educational action, is not to be confused with the mere capacity for synchronous communication between individuals; a faculty humans share with various other animal species and which allows them to abolish the distance in order to communicate information. Unlike this communication that operates transcending and abolishing spatial distances – like the remote class or the dance of the bees –, the temporal transmission of a culture is an eminently human phenomenon, which operates in time, linking the generations with each other and with the historical dimension of the symbolic and material world they inhabit. Thus, for example, humans transmit to their children not only a genetic load, but a name which at the same time identifies and symbolically links those who receive it to their ancestors. And the same goes for the transmission – and, of course, the reception,

as its necessary counterpart – of knowledge, practices and principles that configure the historical dimension of human existence in its complex dialectics of conservation and renewal of an intersubjective common legacy.

The very notion of *generation* (whose applicability to other species is more metaphorical than descriptive) is based precisely on this temporal link that marks both continuity and rupture. Even in cases where the generational rupture seems to be quite radical – like that of the sixties of the last century – it is only in opposition to the past, which remains and affects us, that one can speak of the emergence of something new, unprecedented and until then unpredictable concerning the relationships between different generations. It is, therefore, in this intersection between the space of symbolic experiences of the past and the horizon of expectations of the future that one may build the present formative process of those who have just arrived in a symbolic shareable world. But how could this symbolic transmission be operated in a context in which the transmissibility of experience is put in check (Benjamin, 1994, p. 114) at the same time that the horizon of expectations has been reduced to the most immediate fears, involving more uncertainties than promises?

In that sense, it is as if the punk motto spread through the walls of the eighties – *No Future!* – had abandoned its protest role against the belief in the notion of progress as the meaning of historical development in order to register itself as an expression of resignation in face of the present dark times. We live the experience of a moment that no longer believes, as Políbio did, that we educate young people so that they may be worthy of their ancestors. But neither do we believe, like the moderns did, that education would be a necessary and sufficient instrument to build up a new order in the world (be it the classless society, the scientific and technological era or any other teleological belief about the meaning of historical development).

It is true that this diagnosis precedes the rise of the pandemic crisis. But what was until then just a theoretical category mobilizing a limited number of intellectuals – such as the notion of presentism in Hartog (2013) – has now taken on a new dimension as it invaded the everyday experience of teaching. How can one educate in a society in which the yearning for the enjoyment of the present tends to conceive the symbolic legacy of the past as something obsolete and in which the horizon of expectations seems to be limited to the individual lifespan time? We are, therefore, the witnesses of a radical change in the relationship that the new generations establish with their temporal experience, whose effects reach the very meaning we attribute to educational process and not simply the means to which we resort to when aiming at its effectiveness. It is an existential experience that transcends the pandemic, but now has assumed a previously unsuspected visibility.

This is due to the fact that, in addition to requiring new means to achieve purposes historically associated with school education, the

pandemic crisis has raised a much more radical problem that, to some extent, can be witnessed in Maya's final comments. Her criticism regarding the meaninglessness of the activities which had been proposed to her, more than an individual complaint, can be interpreted as a question that condenses the perplexity of an entire generation: after all, in face of the concrete conditions that we live, can the school experience still *make any sense*?

A Meaning for School Experience in Times of Pandemic Crisis

Questioning the meaning of school experience under the conditions of present experiences requires, however, the elucidation of two implicit assumptions. The first one concerns the very nature of the initiative: searching for a meaning to the present experience should not be taken as an equivalent to seeking the truth of a fact. If the latter is the guiding idea - although never fully achieved - of scientific inquires, the search for meaning is, rather, a task for thought; a challenge directed to philosophical reflection which takes experience as its object. The second one refers to the terms or notions in which the question has been formulated, for they require a brief analytical distinction between the semantic fields of the notions involved: *meaning* and *finality*.

The notion of finality, as opposed to that of meaning, always operates within an instrumental reasoning. It is a notion derived from the human experience of manufacturing, in which something is produced as a means whose end (finality) is pre-established and external to the very process of its production. The finality of a table, for example, lies in an objective external to the object and to its manufacturing process (expressed by the answer to the question: what is its finality?): to be a base where the computer will be placed, for example. On the other hand, the use of the computer is a new mean for an end that is equally external to it, like writing an article. Thus, an infinite chain of means and ends is created, deprived of any intrinsic sense, or meaning, once the article as well will become a mean to another previously established end (Carvalho, 2018). The notion of meaning, on the contrary, refers to the intrinsic significance one attributes to a practice or even to an object. A relationship like friendship, for example, may not be guided by any extrinsic purpose or finality, but is directed to its own care and cultivation. Conceiving friendship as a mean to obtain any other purpose – the loan of a car, for example – implies ignoring or degrading the meaning of the very notion of friendship. It is evident that a friend may eventually lend us a car, but the reason for a friendship cannot be adequately understood if one resorts to pre-established instrumental finalities or purposes. Friendship does not have any instrumental purpose, nevertheless it may surely be a quite meaningful experience in our existence. And the same applies to our relationship to certain objects with which we develop attachments and links which cannot be reduced to any instrumental purpose or finality for they relate to affective and person-

al meanings we ascribe to them. We can, for example, keep and take care of an object – such as a simple candy paper – due to the affective memory we attach to it, despite the fact that it no longer has any use or exchange value.

This example, although trivial, is important because it emphasizes that both finality and meaning are not properties immanent to objects or social practices, but rather indicate different forms of relationships one may establish with them. It is also worth mentioning that these types of relationship are not mutually exclusive for they may involve different degrees and modalities of intersection. We may, for example, cultivate poetry in an instrumental perspective – when we study it for its possible effects on school examinations – and, in other occasions, experience it as an existential involvement whose significance cannot be measured by any parameter other than the aesthetic experience it provides us. Thus, it is perfectly possible that a single person alternates these two modalities of relationship with an object, or even shifts from one modality of relationship to another, as it occurs when the relationship to literature, for example, ceases to be a school requirement to become an activity that we cultivate regardless of any extrinsic finality.

This example of intersection between possible modalities of relationship with the literature is particularly important to reflect upon its potential impact in reflecting about school experience. It is evident that an educational process may have several finalities and a variety of possible meanings for the agents involved. But it is equally evident that we have experienced an apparent paradox in this ground: as the finalities attributed to the school multiply – ranging from the mastery of certain competences to the education for social entrepreneurship – its potential meaning or significance seems to fade away, making room for all sorts of nihilisms. Among the multiple reasons for this phenomenon, one seems to deserve special attention in the present context: the pedagogical belief in a student-centered approach that might lead to a conception that rejects any idea of transmission, transposing to school and students "[…] the cartesian ideal of rejecting all the knowledge transmitted by their masters in order to build their certainties out of their own 'cogito'" (Blais; Gauchet; Ottavi, 2016, p. 51). It is not a matter of postulating the existence of a Cartesian pedagogy, but just an effort to bring to light the effects of the appropriation of this image – of a sovereign and self-sufficient subjective consciousness – in contemporary pedagogical practices and discourses, as if students were cartesian subjects able to extract, from their own experience and meditation, meaningful knowledge about themselves and the world with no need of any kind of historical appropriation.

We may take as an example of this belief the activity proposed to students in their *debating class* mentioned by Maya. We can consider its objective quite commendable: to provide students with the opportunity to signify their own experience. Nevertheless, this procedure assumes that significance will be attained through self-immediate conscious-

ness examination, as if each pupil would come to assign a meaning to his experience in an process analogous to the Cartesian reasoning, in which self-awareness comes from the withdrawal of the world. Nevertheless, the intuition of this supposed sovereign reasoning - which derives the certainty of its existence from the thought itself - is a *vain* and "[…] empty truth, since reflection could only be an appropriation of our act of existing when carried out by means of a criticism which focuses on the works and acts that are signs of this very act of existing", as Ricoeur warns us (2013, p. 41). In other words, the understanding of an experience – which is always an act of self-understanding as well – occurs only through appropriation and re-signification, in the light of present context, of literary, artistic, historiographical, musical, scientific or some other sort of cultural monuments open to new interpretations:

> One's existence only comes to words, meaning and reflection as a product of a continuous exegesis of all the meanings that are manifested in the world of culture. One does not become a 'self' - human and adult - but by appropriating this sense that initially resides 'outside', in works, institutions, cultural monuments where the life of the spirit is objectified (Ricoeur, 2013, p. 46).

Thus, one does not succeed in assigning meaning to his or her lived experience through an act of isolation in a process of self-examination, but rather as a result of a cultural encounter established in the interconnections between the *world of the text* and the *world of the reader* (Ricoeur, 2010a). A text – here conceived in a large sense which may include a poem, an image, a song, a historiographical investigation ... – condenses a particular experience into a meaningful representative totality (the world of the text). But it is only through its reading, its reception, appropriation, and further effects on the reader's world that the text overcomes its formal character of an object of the past to gain life and meaning in the present (or in the *world of the reader*). It is, therefore, interpreting signs that are *outside* ourselves, reified in works that reconfigure experiences in the most diverse languages, that someone represents himself as a subject, or *accesses oneself*, in Ricoeur's (2013) words. In this sense, the educational process may be conceived as a kind of hermeneutics whose challenge is interpreting and reinterpreting symbols whose meanings are never definitively given, but constantly subject to new appropriations by those who launch a fruitful dialogue with them in in a given historical moment. It is, therefore, when we inhabit this universe of symbols of a culture that "[…] we enable ourselves to interpret the world, ourselves and others and, thus, assign meaning and significance to our experiences" (Bárcena; Mèlich, 2000, p. 104).

In this sense, more than asking students to talk about their feelings and personal experiences in the pandemic crisis, schools ought to challenge them to examine how their predecessors in history reconfigured, in different symbolical languages, their experiences in a similar situation. In Garcia Márquez's or Camus' novels; in Egon Schiele's or Munch's paintings, in the works of Shakespeare or I. Bergman we are

able to find different forms of artistic refiguration of men and women's pains, fears and isolation in face of the threats of an epidemic crisis. In reading – or seeing, listening – a to them we may also mourn death and cowardness or admire greatness and courage displayed by some men and women display in face of a tragical plague (as did the protagonist of Camus' work, Dr. Rieux). We may add to these literary, theatrical, artistic, cinematographic works the countless historiographical investigations and books which have as their object the emergence of health tragedies that costed millions of human lives as well as the ways by which different societies faced them.

Making these cultural monuments, in which the *life of the spirit is objectified*, available for the new generations means offering them a solid opportunity to elaborate what they have lived; a chance to think about the present and give it some meaning through a dialogue students launch with some cultural productions that have reified – in a fictional or historiographical work – analogous experiences. It is, therefore, with attention to our present, but in dialogue with works that come to us from the past, that we weave, here and now, certain horizons of expectations for the future. Perhaps it is not by mere chance that, over more than six months of isolation, the only homework task that Maya wanted to share with me was a documentary about the Black Plague that she had watched at the request of her history teacher. When she finished reviewing for the third time, she asked me: *Do you think we live a new middle age? Will this pandemic also last for centuries?*

As difficult as it may have been for a father to hear these questions from a teenager daughter, I finally felt that she, attentive to the present, interpreted the signs and symbols that came from the past and wove her expectations and fears about the future. And in so doing she may have assigned some meaning to her school experience.

A Brief Final Word

These reflections, provoked by a specific present event, shall not be conceived as some kind of general response to the nihilism that threatens modern world and its institutions, such as the public school. Nevertheless, I do consider that the eventual fruitfulness of some of its principles may be extended far beyond this context specificities and its immediate effects on schooling processes. Among these principles lies the belief, shared with Ricoeur, that by hearing, reading, and configuring narratives is a powerful way to "[...] make thought experiences through which we are enabled to inhabit foreign worlds" (Ricoeur, 2010a, p. 422). And the conviction, derived from this belief, that the task of education - more than conforming students to the alleged practical demands of the contemporary world - is precisely to enable them to inhabit other worlds. Therein lies, in my view, the *raison d'être* of school; its deepest significance and dignity. It is through this eminently human possibility – of inhabiting worlds that are foreign to the time and space in which we carry our existence – that human experience and imagina-

tion can update in each young student the faculty, ontologically rooted in all human beings, to break with all sorts of previous determinations and start something new. A faculty that, as Arendt reminds us, operates as an ever-present reminder that "[…] men, though they must die, were not born to die but in order to begin" (Arendt, 2005, p. 194).

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