

DANIELE BRUZZONE¹

MAX SCHELER'S CONCEPT OF *BILDUNG* AND THE AFFECTIVE CORE OF EDUCATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS: 1) *Education as Bildung and the "eternal task" of humanization*; 2) *The primacy of the emotional life: sad passions, strong emotions and sentimental illiteracy*; 3) *To make a person you need a person: the theory of exemplarity and the education of educators*.

MAX Scheler's work is not only an extraordinary milestone for philosophy and philosophical anthropology, but a meaningful contribution to pedagogy and philosophy of education too: it contains, in effect, some important insights about a number of educational questions that are still open and crucial for our time.

In this paper I will briefly outline three fundamental aims: 1) redefining the essence and the primary purpose of educational activity on the basis of Scheler's notion of *Bildung*; 2) reaffirming the key role of affective education in the light of Scheler's phenomenology of emotional life; 3) reconsidering the educators' personal and professional training, given Scheler's theory of the "exemplars of persons".

I therefore mainly refer to Scheler's writings from the period 1925 to 1928 (from *Die Formen des Wissens* [1925] to *Der Mensch im Weltalter des Augleichs* [1927] but I also draw on *Ordo amoris* [1914-1916], *Formalismus in der Ethik* [1913-1916], and *Vorbilder und Führer* [1911-1921].

1) *Education as Bildung and the "eternal task" of humanization*

*Whoever has the ordo amoris of a man has the man himself. He has for the man as moral subject what the crystallization is for the crystal. He sees through him as far as one possibly can. He sees before him the constantly simple and basic lines of his heart [...]; and heart deserves to be called the core of man as a spiritual being much more than knowing and willing do.*²

¹ Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, Milano.

² M. SCHELER, *Ordo amoris*, GW X, 348.

Scheler wrote these words in 1916. In the same essay, he defined the *ordo amoris* as «a spiritual model of the primary source which secretly nourishes everything emanating from this man; [...] in space his *moral environment*, in time his *fate*». ³ It is clear that what Scheler refers to as *ordo amoris* is not only a given personal structure (defining who a person *is*) but also the basis on which personality develops (determining in a certain sense who a person *may become*). The *ordo amoris* therefore (though it is essentially a hierarchy of preferences and aversions) is not static but dynamic in its essence. Scheler himself specified that it was not rigid, like a statue, but «a unified totality solely consisting of developments, processes and acts». ⁴ This «order of the heart» ⁵ constitutes the axiological identity, the unique “face” of an individual, which evolves over time and defines *a priori* the range of possible experience for each given set of circumstances that presents itself.

What was defined as *ordo amoris* in this early work, by 1925 had become *Bildung*. By *Bildung*, Scheler understands a personal structure, which determines a particular existential style. Like the *ordo amoris*, *Bildung* too represents «an individualized form and pattern within whose boundaries all the free spiritual acts of an individual take place, but which also directs and orients the manifestations of the psychophysical life [...], all of this individual’s behaviours». ⁶

This is a pedagogical matter *par excellence*: the issue, that is, of education as «form and process of the personal spirit». ⁷ The human being is not, in fact, a preconstituted form or essence to be realized, but is constituted in the very act of taking on a form, of «making himself into a person». ⁸

Scheler seems to be aware of the fact that just as becoming a person may be oriented in a positive and formative way, it may also take de-formative and oppressive directions. This arises when the educa-

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ M. SCHELER, *Die Formen des Wissens*, GW IX, 90.

⁵ R. DE MONTICELLI, *L'ordine del cuore. Etica e teoria del sentire*, Milano 2003.

⁶ M. SCHELER, *Die Formen des Wissens*, GW IX, 90.

⁷ M. SCHELER, *Der Formalismus in der Ethik*, GW II, 18.

⁸ D. BRUZZONE, *Farsi persona. Lo sguardo fenomenologico e l'enigma della formazione*, Milano 2012.

tional process implies constriction and dependency, lack of autonomy, or anonymous *standardization*: “shadows”⁹ which are present – more or less latently – in our educational institutions (family, school, etc.). In contrast, true education provokes authenticity and *diversification*.

There is no doubt that all individuals are influenced from birth (and perhaps even from conception) by a series of circumstances that have preceded them and that orient their desires and will. Their personal «fate» (*Schicksal*) in a certain sense predefines the limits of their experience and possible development. This is what Scheler describes as the «functionalization of primary axiological objects».¹⁰ The challenging and obstacle-ridden path begins here: with the gradual and demanding acquisition of one's own way of looking at things. And while education – it must be admitted – can play an emancipatory role, it can also be terribly inhibiting, although people are not always consciously aware of it.

The human spirit is able to free itself from this dependency, thanks to that particular «metaphysical bent» (*metaphysische Hang*) which makes it seek untiringly for that which goes beyond the “here and now” and, in the final analysis, for the Absolute. It is thanks to this insatiable thirst that individuals are able to transcend the limits that fate has mapped out for them and to become the authors of their own existences. The educational process coincides exactly with this enterprise, which in truth is never-ending, given that the human being is by definition an «uncompleted totality».¹¹

2) *The primacy of the emotional life: sad passions, strong emotions and sentimental illiteracy*

However, it is possible for this inclination to weaken and be lost. When humanity eludes itself that it has satisfied its thirst for knowledge and love via some finite good, then the quest comes to a halt and human development (at both the individual and the societal levels) is

⁹ V. IORI, D. BRUZZONE (a cura di), *Le ombre dell'educazione. Ambivalenze, impliciti, paradossi*, Milano 2015.

¹⁰ M. SCHELER, *Ordo amoris*, *GW X*, 350.

¹¹ G. CUSINATO, *La totalità incompiuta. Antropologia filosofica e ontologia della persona*, Milano, 2008.

interrupted. Scheler terms this blockage «infatuation» (*Vergaffung*).¹² Now it appears to me that in our own era we can detect signs of this dangerous phenomenon, which not only obscures the meaning of human existence, but also prevents people from developing, flourishing and – ultimately – from being happy. I will only mention some features of the emotional life of our times, with particular reference to teenagers and young people, who – as always – represent a sort of vanguard of our society, allowing us to identify in advance both society’s positive potential *and* its suffering and contradictions.

The emotional life, obscured by centuries of neglect, largely remains an unknown territory to be reclaimed and explored. For the younger generations in particular the emotional universe is top of mind but, at the same time, an inscrutable enigma. The exaltation of euphoria and the entertainment industry keep young people in a state of intermittent dis-traction that prevents them from cultivating their inner life. Movies and videogames offer “strong” emotions that help youngsters escape from the emotional desert of indifference and apathy. Substance abuse, high-risk behaviours, the stimulation of speed, extreme adventures and deafening music provide surges of adrenalin to those who, for the most part, need thrills to rouse themselves from boredom, the «formless feeling»¹³ of the absence of any feeling.

TV series and reality shows sensationalized emotions for their audiences, amplifying the “peep show” dimension of emotion. These forms of television (now practically the sole and uncontrasted “teachers” of emotion, given the absconding of both schools and families) ex-pose intimacy, trivializing it and shamelessly sacrificing modesty on the altar of audience share. However, emotionalist rhetoric and the exploitation of affect as a consumer commodity¹⁴ lead the intimate sphere to be colonized from the outside and manipulated.

In the same way, intimacy is made public in the window displays of the social networks, on which even the concept of “*friendship*” no longer necessarily corresponds to a loyal and mutual form of relationship, but rather to the randomness of “*contacts*”. This type of superficial and

¹² M. SCHELER, *Ordo amoris*, GW X, 360-361.

¹³ V. JANKÉLÉVITCH, *L'aventure, l'ennui, le sérieux*, Paris 1963, 73.

¹⁴ E. ILLOUZ, *Cold Intimacies: The Making of Emotional Capitalism*, Cambridge 2007.

«liquid bonds»¹⁵ carries through with the crisis of feeling at the social level: the new trend of emotional contagion, heightened by the sensationalism of the media, that rarely translates into true empathy; and the gregariousness and new forms of tribalism in which many fragile identities seek refuge, that are not underpinned by authentic solidarity.

Increasingly unable to recognise the subtleties of feeling and to experience the emotional qualities of unease or melancholy, young people fall ever more frequently into anxious and depressive states, which are nothing else but the pathological degeneration of restless and melancholic moods. This does not point up an unprecedented clinical phenomenon, but rather a widespread *sentimental illiteracy*. As Umberto Galimberti would put it: «the emotional world lives within them unbeknownst to them, like an unknown guest to whom they are not even able to give a name».¹⁶ Indeed, this lack of a suitable lexicon means that in posts and text messages the communication of feelings is reduced to a small number of schematic and childish “*emoticons*”.

This incapacity to express and communicate emotions sometimes finds release in forms of uncontrolled aggression (think of the growing phenomenon of the bullying of weaker subjects such as women, those with disabilities, immigrants, homosexuals, etc.). In these cases, violence manifests as a way of acting out insufficiently processed emotions such as anger, frustration, feelings of inadequacy or fear – but also as a symptom of a growing dis-connection among behaviour, reason and emotion: «the heart is not in tune with thought nor thought with action».¹⁷

The affective life of our times displays a key imbalance: between the *proliferation of emotions*, on the one hand, and the *drying up of feelings*, on the other. An acute observation of Michel Lacroix helps us to grasp the issue:

It is significant that contemporary man is more interested in emotion, which is explosive in nature, than in feeling, which tends to be more enduring. For that matter, in the field of emotions, he neglects those that could enrich his soul in favour of those that

¹⁵ Z. BAUMAN, *Liquid Love: On the Frailty of Human Bonds*, Cambridge 2003.

¹⁶ U. GALIMBERTI, *L'ospite inquietante. Il nichilismo e i giovani*, Milano 2007, 45.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 51.

are simply arousing. He prefers shocking emotions, in the order of the yell, to contemplative emotions, in the order of the sigh. He seeks out situations that generate strong sensations. He needs to be shaken by strong emotions, stunned by hysteriform activities, amazed by previously unexperienced and powerful impressions. His affective life is made up of movement rather than quiet, of action rather than contemplation.¹⁸

Ultimately, this choice is underpinned by easily identifiable criteria. For example, that of immediacy: emotions arise rapidly and demand to be expressed, feelings grow slowly and ask to be cultivated; this obviously favours one at the expense of the other, in an era in which the fast-moving is valued more highly than the long-lasting. The *excess of emotions*, therefore, serves to fill a *vacuum of feelings*. And conversely: the superficial emotionalism generally corresponds to a weakening of sensibility, and the “bulimia” of strong sensations is often associated with a lacking of deep feelings.

This «cult of the emotion» is also related to the sense of insignificance and widespread feeling of meaninglessness that characterize our society.¹⁹ This is the argument put forward in a book by Benasayag and Schmit that has enjoyed considerable success in recent years:²⁰ when humanity feels itself to be overwhelmed by dynamics outside of its control, as the victim of vertiginous and unstoppable change and as faced with a future no longer experienced as a *promise* but as a *threat*, then the «sad passions» of impotence and discouragement take over. The pursuit of strong emotions is nothing other than an attempt to escape the “vicegrip” of these deadly feelings.

There would seem to be a close, almost causal, relationship between the onset of the *sad passions* and the quest for *strong emotions*. Perhaps Nietzsche had already had this insight when he wrote: «Ours is an era of overexcitement, and for this very reason it is not an era of passion; it constantly overheats because it does not feel warm – ultimately it is

¹⁸ M. LACROIX, *Le culte de l'émotion*, Paris 2001, 8-9.

¹⁹ V.E. FRANKL, *The Feeling of Meaninglessness. A Challenge to Psychotherapy and Philosophy*, Milwaukee 2010.

²⁰ M. BENASAYAG, G. SCHMIT, *Les passions tristes. Souffrance psychique et crise sociale*, Paris 2003.

cold». ²¹ This contrast expresses the paradoxical condition of a humanity that courts extreme moods (albeit temporarily) because it is no longer moved by anything at a deep level. This frustration springing from the deeper levels of the affective life tends to be compensated – or over-compensated – for, by investment in the more superficial levels.

And in front of this scenario, what does education do? It pursues, in most cases, soulless intellectualism and technologism; and even when it addresses the emotional life, it does so by treating it as an “intervening variable” that can facilitate or hinder the learning process, but certainly not as the essential component of personal life. However, caring for the emotional life is not a secondary aspect of, or an adjunct to, education. If, like Roberta De Monticelli, we believe that «a person's maturity is ultimately the maturity of the way they feel», ²² then we can only conclude that education (in contrast with all cognitivist or behaviourist interpretations of it) is an event that is essentially *affective* in nature.

Not that educational science does not deal with emotions. But it follows mostly a psychologistic and therapeutic approach to the emotional dimension, which in recent decades has led to a greater emphasis on the subjective aspect of *wellbeing* than on the trans-subjective one of the *being good*. In other words, one thing is to care about emotions as a contingent but not a key factor in education, and quite another thing to make emotions and feelings the very object of education.

Some time ago I read that educating the capability to feel is the same thing as «educating the intellect less»: ²³ this may be true if we understand this statement not in the sense of impoverishing knowledge by detracting something from it (making education *less* intellectual), but rather in the sense of enriching it by adding something to it (making it *not only* intellectual). And in this regard our tradition, despite its exasperated intellectualism, is not lacking in key voices. Masters in this field are those whom Scheler calls «the discoverers of feeling»: ²⁴ those

²¹ F. NIETZSCHE, *Nachgelassene Fragmente 1882-1884 (Werke VII/1)*, Berlin 1988, 82-83 (Fragm. n. 248).

²² R. DE MONTICELLI, *L'ordine del cuore*, 77.

²³ P. MOTTANA, *Formare ai sentimenti*, in F. CAMBI (a cura di), *Nel conflitto delle emozioni. Prospettive pedagogiche*, Roma 1998, 123.

²⁴ M. SCHELER, *Die Idole der Selbsterkenntnis* [1912], *GW III*, 283.

who, given their in-depth knowledge of themselves, were able to give voice to and put into words the most intimate and elevated experiences of the human heart. So that others, through them, could in turn, get to know themselves better. Scheler mentions St. Francis, Rousseau and Goethe. But we could add more recent names: artists, writers – and above all poets. Hölderlin asked: «Why poets in a hollow age?».²⁵ Well: if by hollowness we mean a hollowness of feeling, then today more than ever we need poetry, music, theatre – and all that which, as Martha Nussbaum says, can help us to «cultivate humanity».²⁶

Only this knowledge of the human, which is emblematically contained in the classics of literature and art, can allow individuals to find themselves and to avoid the pervasive influence of the mass media, the dictates of fashion and the uniforming power of common sense. Every man, as Scheler says, tends

to live more in the others than in himself; more in the community than in his own individual self. [...] Only very slowly does he raise his mental head, as it were, above this stream flooding over it, and finds himself as a being who also, at times, has feelings, ideas and tendencies of his own.²⁷

3) *To make a person you need a person: the theory of exemplarity and the education of educators*

Nonetheless, the authentic educational process does not coincide with the subject's Promethean striving for self-affirmation and self-actualization. Scheler explains that the *Bildung* «is not a self-directed narcissistic intention»,²⁸ but it represents rather the opposite of any attempt of self-enjoyment. Viktor Frankl would say, in this regard, that «only in so far as one somehow transcends himself, he also actualizes himself».²⁹ That is to say: full self-actualization cannot be directly and in-

²⁵ F. HÖLDERLIN, *Brot und Wein*, in *Gedichte*, Frankfurt a. M. 1984, 118.

²⁶ M. NUSSBAUM, *Cultivating Humanity. A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education*, Cambridge 1998.

²⁷ M. SCHELER, *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie* [1923], GW VII, 241.

²⁸ M. SCHELER, *Die Formen des Wissens*, GW IX, 104.

²⁹ V.E. FRANKL, *Ärztliche Seelsorge. Grundlagen der Logotherapie und Existenzanalyse (Gesammelte Werke IV)*, Wien 2011, 471.

tentionally pursued, but may only be attained as a consequence of that self-transcendence and world-openness that is inherent to the acts of knowing and loving. The underlying principle is that, along evangelical lines, «only those who wish to *lose themselves* in a noble cause or in some form of authentic communion [...] become *themselves*».³⁰

This means that authentic self-actualization does not come about by narcissistically retreating into oneself or by solipsism, but through engagement and commitment. This is also because the *ordo amoris* is not solely an individual affective order, but also a cosmic axiological order. Thus the right way to feel is not subjectivistic and arbitrary. And a person's affective maturity will only be realized to the extent that they open up to the world and accept an order that transcends them. Subjectivism and narcissism represent, conversely, a deviance from the native self-transcendence of the spirit. They are, we might say, the symptoms of the *désordre du cœur* afflicting our times.

But *how* can this distortion be corrected? Scheler's answer is very clear: the only thing that can help *a person* to become a person is *another person*. Not any random person, obviously, but a person who can act as an «example» (*Vorbild*). Only in the encounter with an exemplary person can an individual recover the primordial «rectitude» of feeling. Encountering an exemplary model has the power to “correct” or “rectify” the *Bildung* of an individual who has lost track of the primitive directions of meaning and has solipsistically withdrawn into himself. As in the Western philosophical tradition, from Plato onwards, here too we are talking about a sort of *conversion* of the intellect and of the heart. However, this existential transformation (*Umbildung*), does not take place by virtue of abstract and universal moral principles, but only in the live presence of a *master*. By master, we do not mean one who teaches, or who simply transmits knowledge, or – even less – someone to be slavishly imitated. Masters are not conceded the status of master because they *are* perfect, but because they are *oriented* towards perfection; not because they have already reached the destination, but because they are on their way. Thus – by fulfilling it themselves – these examples reignite in their pupils a non-possessive and non-egocentric love of the world. And this “lighting up” (*Einschaltung*) from Plutarch

³⁰ M. SCHELER, *Die Formen des Wissens*, GW IX, 104.

onwards («Youths are not vessels to be filled but fires to be kindled») represents the noblest aim of educational activity.

According to Scheler, these exemplary persons «teach us to know our true *powers* and how to use them». ³¹ Therefore their task is to help us acquire the instruments that we need to become active constructors of our own existence.

However, this raises another question: can our educational systems (above all schools and universities) be the places of this kind of education? Or are they only places of learning? I am not sure of the answer. If the answer is “no” (school only teaches, it is life that educates) then nothing of what I have said so far is very meaningful. But if there is a chance for the answer to be “yes” (school is, or should be or could become, a place for education), then I believe that we should radically reconsider a number of aspects. I will only flag two of the most important of these:

- first, the structure of the curriculum: up to now, we have had a curriculum focused on *knowledge*, while we have never had a curriculum focused on *conscience*. The criterion driving the curriculum is a systematic approach to bodies of knowledge and disciplines; its focal point is the *objects* of teaching rather than the *subjects* of learning; its main aim is the appropriation of *contents*, not the self-appropriation of *processes*. Is it possible to imagine an «anthropological curriculum» ³² that truly places the person at its centre? How would the curriculum change if we seriously took this principle on board?

- second, the training of teachers: I would prefer to say the *training of educators*, because as long as those working in the educational system think of themselves as “teachers”, their primary goal is going to remain the one of transmitting knowledge, as opposed to developing conscience. But all the great educationalists (Paulo Freire, for instance) teach us that if we can make the leap from knowledge transmission to «conscientization», ³³ then education will have some chance of regenerating humanity.

Scheler emphasizes the fact that true educators are examples capable

³¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

³² L. GUASTI, *Curricolo e riforma della scuola*, Brescia 1998, 161.

³³ P. FREIRE, *Pedagogia do oprimido*, Rio de Janeiro 2006.

of leading those who follow them not to imitate them but to find themselves. Either education helps us discover our own “individual destiny” or it is not useful at all. Scheler calls this destiny «vocation» (*Berufung*).³⁴ I believe this term to be of great importance, because we have forgotten – preoccupied as we are with measuring performance and outcomes – that the essence of education consists of revealing a vocation; and that for this to be the case, education itself should not be viewed as a “job” – that is to say as a *professional performance* – but first of all as a *personal attitude*. We are not educators by gift, nor by virtue of an academic qualification, and least of all on the basis of a conferred role: we become educators to the degree that we cultivate, first and foremost in ourselves, the willingness to learn and change, the openness to experience, the search for meaning and some confidence in the future.

The professionalization and “scientification” of education has undoubtedly offered benefits, but it also bears risks: for example, that of reducing education to a *technical* task and losing sight of its *existential* roots. There are *personal* dimensions in education, that represent equally *professional* and indispensable dimensions. If educators, in both their basic and ongoing training, do not acquire the aptitude and the tools for working on themselves, they risk fostering an illusion that is naïve and even dangerous: namely, that the work of an educator can be reduced to a *doing* that can be more or less effective, without challenging his or her way of *being*. In this regard, the self-care tradition, recently revisited by Luigina Mortari,³⁵ is still extremely salient.

Educational work, in its truest essence, has nothing to do with theories, protocols, methodologies and evaluation grids, but with that mysterious power that some people have to arouse in others the desire to learn, grow and change. The quality of the educator’s personal presence, from this perspective, is crucial. In the words of Edith Stein, «it may happen that something springs from a human being [...] and enters in me».³⁶ So that if that person’s way of being is full of energy and

³⁴ F. VALBUSA, *Vocazione e Bildung: fenomenologia del “divenir se stessi”*, «Dialegesthai. Rivista telematica di filosofia», dicembre 2013 (<http://mondodomani.org/dialegesthai>).

³⁵ L. MORTARI, *Aver cura di sé*, Milano 2009.

³⁶ E. STEIN, *Der Aufbau der menschlichen Person. Vorlesung zur philosophischen An-*

freshness, it will strengthen and revitalize my spiritual activity. This interior force, this personal energy, this unique charisma that emanates from the inside of some people like a wave of confidence in and love of life or an echo of the good within, is «something similar to the light and heat that in springtime cause nature to reawaken».³⁷ Vice versa, an insignificant, inconsistent or even incoherent presence can nullify educational efforts, if it does not actually exercise a negative influence, as Roberta De Monticelli says: «the fact that educators are personally mediocre [...] along with the fact that they detain the “power of the keys” can wreak terrible harm to a sensibility that is ripe for development».³⁸

I would like to focus for a moment on this «power of the keys», because the personal dimensions (even though they often remain implicit and fail to be thematised) have immense educational power – both positive and negative. But if this is the most powerful factor in education, than we must admit that, in the education of educators, we are not doing enough. On the contrary, we are likely at risk of completely overlooking this dimension.

This is the paradox of all educational relationships: they are encounters with a significant *other* that become opportunities to develop a more intimate and authentic relationship with *oneself*. However, this paradox also holds in reverse: if an educator don't have an authentic relationship with himself, it will be very difficult for him to help others, in turn, to have a relationship with themselves. The damage caused by a lack of self-knowledge by educators is incalculable.

I would thus like to conclude with a page from *The Little Virtues* by Natalia Ginzburg. This passage is addressed to parents in particular, but I feel that all educators should read and meditate on it. It says that if we want to help someone find their vocation, we need to have first found our own:

And if we ourselves have a vocation, if we have not betrayed it, if over the years we have continued to love it, to serve it passionately, we are able to keep all sense of ownership out of our love for our children. But if on the other hand we do not have a

thropologie (Gesamtausgabe XIV), Freiburg 2004, 112.

³⁷ R. DE MONTICELLI, *L'ordine del cuore*, 170.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

vocation, or if we have abandoned it or betrayed it, [...] then we cling to our children as a shipwrecked mariner clings to a tree trunk, we eagerly demand that they give us back everything that we have given them, [...] that they get out of life everything we have missed: we want them to be entirely our creation [...] But if we have a vocation, if we have not denied or betrayed it, then we can let them develop quietly away from us, surrounded by the shadows and space that the development of a vocation, the development of an existence needs. This is perhaps the one real chance we have of giving them some kind of help in their search for a vocation: to have a vocation ourselves, to know it, to love it and serve it passionately.³⁹

ABSTRACT

In recent years, the world of education has displayed renewed interest in the theme of emotions and emotional education. The notion of “emotional intelligence” has spread to many different fields, from school to work, and this has rescued the affective sphere from its longstanding position of inferiority. However, the main focus of this interest in emotion seems to be on self-exploration and self-expression, and while this helps to develop greater self-awareness, on the other hand it reduces the emotional life to its subjective and psychological dimensions. In contrast, phenomenology takes into account the intentionality of emotions and feelings as well as their key role in constituting the world and configuring existence. Thus, by recuperating the link between emotions and values, Max Scheler’s contribution is to allow education (and the education of educators) to be firmly situated within an ethical framework, saving it from being undermined by the emotionalism and narcissism that are currently so widespread. In this way, the younger generations, who today oscillate dangerously between the quest for “strong emotions” and the syndrome of the “sad passions”, may once more find a path towards affective growth understood as a necessary condition for authentic existence.

³⁹ N. GINZBURG, *Le piccole virtù*, Torino 1993, 135-136.

