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## Ethical Interpellation to Inclusive Education

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**ABSTRACT – Ethical Interpellation to Inclusive Education.** In this article we propose to critically analyze inclusive education as an institutional device, constituted at the intersection of legal and administrative discourses in a process that gives it a normative and technical form, damaging the objectives of inclusion. An ethical interpellation – a procedure developed on the frontiers of psychoanalytic discourse and philosophical approach – allows us to interrogate the roots of this device, reopening ways of dealing with the impasses of inclusion; ways that were closed by the institutional regime. The transformation of perspective – a subjective engagement in inclusion – and the symbolic hygiene – a process of articulation of knowledge and understanding – appear as two instances of the ways reopened by an ethical interpellation.

**Keywords:** Ethics. Moral. Inclusive Education. Special Education. Exclusion.

**RESUMO – Interpelações Éticas à Educação Inclusiva.** Neste artigo propomos analisar criticamente a educação inclusiva enquanto um dispositivo institucional, constituído na intersecção dos discursos jurídico e administrativo, o que lhe confere uma forma normatizante e tecnicista, com prejuízos para os próprios objetivos da inclusão. A interpelação ética – procedimento construído nas fronteiras do discurso psicanalítico e da abordagem filosófica – nos permite interrogar as raízes desse dispositivo, reabrindo vias de tratamento dos impasses da inclusão, vias fechadas pelo regime do dispositivo. A conversão do olhar – engajamento subjetivo na inclusão – e a higiene simbólica – processo de articulação do saber e do conhecimento – aparecem como duas dessas vias reabertas pela interpelação ética. **Palavras chave:** Ética. Moral. Educação Inclusiva. Educação Especial. Exclusão.

## Introduction

Inclusive education is one of those social issues in which we can observe, according to Max Weber's distinction (1963), the predominance of an ethic of moral conviction over an ethic of responsibility. The ethic of moral conviction is private and relies on individual moral values and (good) intention, regardless of results. The ethic of responsibility, in turn, is group-related and public, and is validated by its results. Many of us, in our private life, are ready to defend the principles of inclusive education, but those ready to actually pursue this goal are fewer.

However, for those who are experiencing the deleterious effects of exclusion, it is not enough to count on the sympathy of many for their sake, or to see their rights recognized and integrated in institutional policies. It takes something more to overcome the effects of a segregation process. Legal and administrative frameworks are the foremost issues in pursuing the public ethic of responsibility, but an inclusion worthy of the name is not something that can be deduced from the simple establishment of laws and their application. Ensuring universal enrollment of all children in regular school, regardless of their particular social, economic and mental condition, does not guarantee that this child is included.

In a sense, the very need to establish inclusion policies attests to the lack of a *culture of inclusion*. Were ordinary education inclusive in itself, as it was, in fact, the spirit of its inception since the school democratization process of opening its doors to all children, it would not be necessary to create - extraordinary - policies that merely compensate for the unsatisfactory performance of this ordinary task. The main goal of inclusion policies is that they may one day cease to exist, after their practices transform into a comprehensive inclusive culture.

The establishment of an inclusive culture does not depend strictly on enacting specific laws, but it requires a kind of collective engagement and a dialectic process involving the impasses and conflicts arising from this effort to create a new kind of social bond. This engagement cannot be only moral, that is, limited to a statement supporting the cause, but it needs to also be ethical, that is, based on an examination of *our own involvement* in the segregation process.

It was as an institutional device, built at the intersection of legal and administrative discourses, that inclusive education made its appearance in contemporary Brazil. This kind of response to social problems - the juridical-administrative response - is characteristic of our time, which greatly believes in the law's ability to achieve social justice and in the power of management to ensure that all things run smoothly.

In this scenario, inclusive education risks being reduced to an institutional routine, composed of more or less standardized procedures, whose only purpose is to serve the management and to give a cynical response to inclusive social demands, without actually leading to the establishment of an inclusive culture. When speaking of inclusive culture, we speak of a dynamic related to social bonds.

What would be necessary for an inclusion project not to lose itself in administrative measures, missing its vocation of revitalizing the social bond? The question is complex, with several elements to be analyzed. First, we need to understand inclusion as a process involving change in the social bonds.

We propose in this article to approach the issue of the *disabled person*<sup>1</sup> – one of the subjects to whom inclusive education is addressed – as a case to think that relation. Choosing persons with disabilities as the focus to address this issue is not accidental, since – although inclusive policies are not limited to them – they are those labeled as *included* in schools. We hope with this analysis to obtain general elements of the relations between the inclusive project and the creation of a new social bond.

Next, we think it is important to analyze the inclusive education device, the strategy established by public inclusion policies in response to the problems of segregation. We will try to demonstrate how it responds in a moralizing way to the issue of segregation. The distinction between the terms moral and ethic, usually treated as synonyms, will serve to give substance to what we propose to call, in the title of this article, an ethical interpellation.

While the moralizing approach is concerned with conceiving how things should be, ethic, as we shall see, deals with how things came to be as they are. We consider Psychoanalysis the discourse that best allows an ethical questioning of inclusive education, since it makes it possible to examine the subjective involvement of all those who take part in the process. If we understand that the fundamental changes that the idea of inclusion aims to introduce are relative to social bonds, this subjective involvement becomes a decisive place of transformation. Finally, we will directly address the field of subjective transformations at play in the inclusive process: – the transformation of the perspective and the hygiene of the symbolic – in order to think about principles and alternatives of action.

## The Disabled Person and the Social Bond

What if instead of talking about their care, the disabled person helped us reinvent the social bond? (Kristeva, 2003, p. 38).

With this phrase, written to the president of the republic as a *Letter to the president of the republic on citizens in a situation of disability for the use of those who are [in this situation] and those who are not*<sup>2</sup>, the author not only poses a pressing issue but also proposes a program to be carried out; this issue is at the same time sensitive to the problem that everyone presents to the disabled person and to the problem that the disabled person presents to everyone. She points out at least three fundamental problems:

*The issue of the disabled person is related to conditions and not to a state of being*

If we can correctly distinguish the notion of disorder – the lack of normal functioning of physical or mental processes – of the notion of disability – effects on the *normative* social life, which postulates general social competences, that is, *abilities* that will serve as parameters for the definition of *disabilities* – it will be clear that the disability can only be defined as such under certain conditions, never being an inevitable result of the disorder. It would suffice here to evoke the eloquent example of the absence of dyslexics in illiterate societies. Although there may exist the corresponding neuropsychological disorder, the lack of written language in these peoples makes the disorder irrelevant. Or we can recall the visual deficiency of the painter Monet, which on the one hand caused him some restrictions but, on the other hand, played a significant part in his artistic style.

*These conditions underscore that at the heart of the issue of the disabled person is the social bond*

Being related to conditions, not to a state of being, the disabled person presents an issue involving at least two individuals, that is, an issue not defined by direct limitations imposed by the disorder, but by the meaning given to them by the other. Given by the *other*, but fundamentally by the *Other*, to bring to the discussion a psychoanalytic category that shows that every relationship between two persons is always referred to an instance, transcendent to them, which gives them the symbolic framework within which this relationship becomes possible. Without considering this process of signification there would be no way to identify the disabled person, that is, the issue of the *disabled person* is fundamentally related to signification, which seems to easily demonstrate the process of *labeling*, constantly present in the dynamics of inclusion and which requires, from time to time, that terminological surveillance comes into play to try to reduce the pejorative weight of terms used to designate the person with a disability.

*The issue of the disabled person should not be reduced to the sphere of the care for their supposed special needs, but, on the contrary, should be open to the sphere of human dignity*

Reinventing the social bond, as one more respectful of human dignity, brings to the scene the possibility of criticizing the dominant social bond in contemporary society, in which, to say the least, the element of ability occupies a privileged place. The same efficiency expected and demanded of machines, a fetish of our time, is also expected and demanded of individuals. It was not by chance that the issue of inclusion – and more particularly the inclusion of the disabled person – emerged in our contemporary society. Inclusion, thus, in a competitive

society in which there is only a place in the sun for some – the winners – where, therefore, there is always an imminent threat of being left out – excluded. The other being a potential rival increases the fear of perceiving oneself without a trustworthy other, that is, without an inclusive and welcoming social bond.

It was not by chance, also, that the emergence of the issue of the disabled person's inclusion occurred in the human rights movement, which, in its current form<sup>3</sup>, seems to have arisen precisely in response to this state of affairs dominated by the market logic of machine efficiency. Against mechanization, humanization. According to this discursive logic, disabled persons would be the first to be remembered for their special fragility in relation to the competitiveness emblematic of our times. They become emblematic of the vulnerability that is proper to the human.

But above all, what these three dimensions of Kristeva's letter to the president of the republic put in evidence is the ethical dimension of the issue of inclusion: *from passive recipients of entitlement to active subjects transforming society*.

We are talking about ethics rather than politics – even though the political dimension, in a certain way, as we will see throughout this text, is intrinsically linked to ethics. These two levels of the issue – ethical and political – are identified by the author's remarkable sensitivity. Disabled persons are subjects of social transformation, agents of social transformation (political sense), subjects configured as such for being capable of *action and discourse* and of participating in the issues of the polis (Arendt, 1999), but also subjects because they are an issue, *a subject*<sup>4</sup> (ethical sense), a provocation by their mere existence in the polis, interrogating the conditions of the social bond and setting in motion the process necessary for this bond's transformation. The disabled person cannot avoid being everyone's issue - nothing banal, as we shall see, but rather central to human existence and dignity.

We also say ethic rather than moral - terms usually confused as synonyms - because we are interested in explicitly demarcating the crucial difference between these concepts. It is precisely in demarcating this difference that we can observe the essential aspects of the issue of inclusion arise, at least of the inclusion worthy of the name, as well as take what emerges from this demarcation as the basis of the program for inclusion to which the ethical perspective seems to point.

For now let us highlight the ethical implications of the tension present in the author's quote when she distinguishes the dimension of subject of care – a moralizing enterprise - from that of subject of transformation – an ethical enterprise. A distinction we can observe in the dialogue below, whose eloquence leaves no doubt as to what a moralizing reductionism can do.

"What are you afraid of?"  
"Of living without being."  
"Explain it better to me."  
"It's not my need for others that puts me more to the test."  
"What is it then?"  
"It's that they may not need me."  
(Gardou, 2012, p. 85).

### **From Moralizing to the Ethical Approach to the Issue of Inclusive Education**

Would there be a place in the field of inclusive education for a question of ethical order to be placed? Or, in this field, would we all be condemned to remain, as Lévinas (1961) said, *dizzy with morality*? Morality makes us dizzy, as that author, known for his outstanding works on ethics, reminds us. It makes us dizzy, above all, because it functions as an affirmation of the obedience to the rules, drawing its power from an adjustment of attitudes – good attitudes – to these rules, whose establishment is based on good intentions.

Entangled in the compliance with the rules – in their service, therefore – we risk no longer asking ourselves what purpose do they serve. The dynamics of obedience seems to have this tendency to lead us away from the habit of interrogation. In fact, the confusion over the definitions of ethics and morals goes back to the origin and history of these concepts. It is in Aristotle (2014), in his *Nicomachean Ethics*, that they are investigated in more detail.

The first issue for this author is that of habit - *ethos*. No matter how much a stone is thrown, it cannot develop a new habit other than its tendency to fall. Man, on the contrary, is able to acquire a new habit – he was always able and always will be. This capacity – which may be termed freedom in relation to determinisms – is what distinguishes its humanity. But his degree of freedom from determinism leads him to the moral problem of good or bad habits. Since one cannot pose the problem of habit acquisition without posing another one, that of the adequacy of habits, it is customary to confuse the ethical dimension with the moral, whence their being regarded as synonyms. But let us reserve to the ethical dimension that space of freedom that allows the subject both to acquire and to transform habits, while reserving for morals the space regarding the creation of and adaptation to good habits.

Ethical reflection deals with the founding principles of a discourse – its constitution and its characteristics, with that area in which a discourse took one path when it could also have opted for another, while moral reflection deals with the values and needs that they generate – its good form. While ethics studies how a given thing takes shape, morality studies how it maintains form. Moral discourse is, by definition, *conforming*, that is, it aims at conformity, at discourse consistency, whence its imaginary character. The consistency of a discourse can only be achieved at the price of its *imagining*, that is, of the erasure, at least temporary, of the symbolic overdetermination of all discourse.

Not having to ask what *creates the discourse* allows us to *create attitudes* to be prescribed and followed. What the moral perspective wants is for things to *go well, on the path to good*.

The ethical perspective, in turn, knows that however well things may go, they cannot go well forever, even with all one's zeal and dedication. And they cannot go well forever because they are woven discursively, that is, in a territory of speech that is precisely what prevents things from having an unchangeable consistency. Being a speaker, man is never always in the same place, he is historical and history introduces a variance in his being. To inhabit language makes him, as Sartre (2012) said, a being whose existence always precedes its essence, that is, a being whose constant becoming precludes him from being complete.

Thanks to language – the progenitor of all habits and the condition of their mutability – the quest for the essence remains an endless adventure. Nothing that is of the order of being can enjoy definition: there is no end or stability for the being not subjected to a transitory condition imposed by language.

The consistency given to a discourse, therefore, will always be a bait, necessarily transient, ensuring that what works well today will inevitably fail tomorrow. That it will fail tomorrow is not something related to prediction, but to the overdeterminism proper to the structure of language that allows us to know – and not to predict – that the very functioning of the system leads to its failure. This is not a question of pessimism, which could be replaced by optimism – both, in turn, being two figures of belief, of prediction – but, rather, of acknowledging the structure of language and all that it supports.

Ethics replaces the moral perspective of a process of *developing* habits that guarantees to the Self its good behavior and conformity to the norms, from the perspective of a singular subject, speech and desire. Exactly where morality establishes links, channels, unifies, ethics disconnects, undoes habits, and aims at an *ex-sistence* outside molds and indelible marks (Imbert, 2001, p. 15).

It is this *ex-sistence*, that is, this property to escape the domain of consistency that matters to the ethical perspective. It deviates from the good form to function in the space of freedom that allowed a discourse to establish itself as such, to form its habits.

Finally, it is our own ability to pull ourselves out of things, to develop new habits, which imposes its limits to good form: we are condemned to freedom. There are several virtues in the ethical reflection: (1) while referring to freedom, it prevents us from naturalizing facts: “[...] freedom is itself the other of nature” (Ricouer, 1985, apud Imbert, 2001, p. 17). Pulling ourselves out of *determinism* - of the dead end - it shows us our *subjection*. Free from instinctive knowledge, a habit given by nature, we find ourselves trapped in the subjection proper to language. (2) It allows us to return to the basis of a discourse and possibly reach, with another value and perspective, the basis of the practices. This can be

of much help, especially in times when we seem to be too closed, suffocated in our instituted values, even when they fail us. (3) It opens the field of the uniqueness of experience, against the generalization characteristic of moral reflection. (4) It allows distinguishing between Law – which symbolically marks *something that cannot be done* – and rule – characteristically imaginary, more related to *how things should be done*.

As for the discourse of inclusive education, ethical reflection can inform us about what constitutes it. Rather than establishing the rules of its proper functioning, its good form, to which morality has reduced the issue, it can refer us to the universe constitutive of this discourse, enabling us to see there what contributes to its performance, with the advantage of showing us, at the same time, the conditions of the freedom we have in relation to it.

Situating ourselves in the *field of the impossible*, ethical reflection is able to help us in the *field of the possible* of a discourse. Moral reflection, on the other hand, is lost in relation to this difference, as well as to its interesting effects, by closing itself in the field of the *desirable*, of the *conceivable*, typical endeavors of the egoic dynamic that characterizes every institutional project.

More specifically regarding the discourse of inclusion, ethical reflection can help us avoid two characteristics proper to the constitution of this discourse: (1) That it has functioned in our times as an institutional device, that is, such as those described by Foucault (2012) and Agamben (2014) in a set of practices and kinds of knowledge that define regimes of truth and circulation of power. (2) That in its appeal to freedom in relation to a habit it can highlight negative etymological implications of the word inclusion: to include is “[...] to confine, put inside, shut in, make stop, surround, limit, enclosure” (Houaiss; Villar, 2009, p.1064). One thing included is something that, in a way, has lost its freedom.

### **The Political and Ethical Dimensions of the Issue of Inclusion: the victimized identity and the transformation of the perspective**

It is in the wake of the discussions that mark the tension proper to a democratic society, always seeking to improve itself, that the issue of inclusive education emerges. The realization that our society treats individuals unequally, restricting the circulation and the access to the city for some more than for others; such a broad realization, pertinent to the whole social fabric, could not leave education and school aside.

The expression *inclusive* education has been considered, still controversially, as a substitute for the expression *special* education. Since its conception, its range of meanings, as well as the vicissitudes of its performance, originated in a perspective critical to the model of special education - seen as an *exclusive education*, since it is substantially related to the particular difficulties of each student – there was the im-

pression that one expression would come to replace the other, following a logic of emancipation.

These expressions have coexisted, however, without being possible to properly distinguish how much of this coexistence is due to the strength of the conceptual reflection that encompasses them, or how much of it is merely due to the force of the academic and institutional inertia that preserves it regardless of any reflection. Sometimes a conciliatory solution is proposed, in which special education would be an integral part - that related to attending special educational needs - of inclusive education, which in turn would be characterized as a set of global actions, including special ones and all the others. The fact is that a tension exists between these two concepts and perhaps we can learn something from what is revealed by it.

It seems to be by addressing the importance and meaning given to the term special - which differs between the models of special education and inclusive education - that we can obtain the key to this tension. In the special education model, the notion of special serves both to mark the individual to whom it is applied and who is the reason for the creation of the model - the special individual - and to highlight the special nature of the care that should be given to him - the specialized assistance.

The model of inclusive education, in turn, criticizes the idea of special, even while recognizing the particularities of the individuals to be included, which must be taken into account in the care of these individuals. This criticism aims to recognize these individuals' exclusion, as well as to recognize the rights of those who have been excluded. While in special education deal with difference means addressing the difference with different resources, in inclusive education dealing with difference is seeking not to transform it into social inequality.

Contrasting the two models, the displacement that we want to highlight is that leading from the emphasis on the individual to the emphasis on the social: from the special individual and his specialized care to the society that needs to recognize its own mechanisms of segregation. In this sense, this displacement has the potential to *politicize* an issue that otherwise would tend to remain - not strictly, but primarily - at the *technical* level.

The idea of inclusion indicates that *the issue of the disabled persons is not theirs, but rather a social one*; the social context establishes a place to them, thus defining a type of social circulation. That an individual is only defined within the social context that conditions and configures her or him is the truth that the discourse of inclusion evidences.

Since in its origin the discourse of inclusion was strongly marked by the protection of minorities - that part of the population that could have been excluded - there were and there is the risk that this discourse will lead to the relations between the other and the self. From this restricted perspective, the discussion on inclusion seems to be lost in demanding the implementation of individual rights that may have been

disregarded. It is clear that the claim of justice in the access to goods and of compliance with rights is legitimate, but to focus the issue of inclusion on this point is to reduce it and to ignore its essence.

Besides, this right may be occasionally complied with without genuinely opposing any part of the society's segregating structure. In this case, the discourse of inclusion tends to a *reparatory* approach: to give someone that which has been suppressed. This *modus operandi* is emblematic of the second moment of the human rights movement, according to the fruitful elaboration made by Marcel Gauchet (2007) and pointed out above.

The strength of the discourse of inclusion lies in its propensity to function as a chronic reminder to society of the existence of a *negative structure* in it: *exclusion* (Douville, 2014, p. 3). From this other perspective, the discourse of inclusion becomes *emancipatory*: alerting everyone that no one – no matter their condition or difference – must be deprived or excluded. Here we would find the characteristic mark of the human rights movement's first stage, according to the same classification made by Gauchet (2007).

Thus, it is in the *subject-Other* relations that the essential part of the discourse of inclusion is played. It is important to note that the force of sociological discourse in dealing with the issue of exclusion has contributed to change its focus from the relations between *subject-Other* to the relations between *self-other*.

If the classic tendency of the sociological research of R. Linton, or even the ethno-psychoanalytic research of G. Devereux, was to analyze the contradictions of society and the structural resolutions of these social contradictions based on the systems of exclusion, the growing importance of the excluded in the Western world led us to consider this category of the excluded in itself (Douville, 2014, p. 3-4).

This kind of research, beyond the truth that they undoubtedly bear, risks an excessive sociologization of the issue. From the exclusion – a social condition, involving subject-Other relations – to the excluded – a victimized identity, attributed to someone, involving self-other relations – there is a broad and full of dangers leap.

And it was precisely this displacement, from exclusion to the excluded, which gave rise to the temptation to make a kind of psychology of the excluded, capable, supposedly, of attending in a reparatory way to the suffering caused by their exclusion.

From the perspective we are adopting, the idea of inclusion appears in its eminently political facet. But political in the sense of associating the structure of the issue of exclusion to the *polis* - among several - where the issue is constituted. In the sociological fixation, as discussed above, we see the risk that a policy of reparatory inclusion may, paradoxically, obscure what is political in inclusion in its emancipatory mode. In this case there would be an inclusion in favor of the

excluded, complying with the individual right of the excluded and not as a universal affirmation of equality.

Emphasizing that the issue of exclusion/inclusion gains is more productively approached politically, in the field of the *one among many*, does not mean that there is no personal dimension in the exclusion experience. Indeed, by definition, people that are identified as excluded at some point are subjects who, as such, cannot perceive their exclusion except within the chain of experiences that make up their existence. For the excluded, it is not their inclusion that matters, but their life; being included is a process that is never perceived in isolation, in dissonance with their other experiences.

The mistake of creating a psychology of the excluded is that the subject is always something more than her or his exclusion. Limiting the excluded to their exclusion, or approaching them based solely on it, would hinder any assistance worthy of that name given to them. Obviously, the concrete condition of exclusion causes concrete problems and corresponding suffering, but to establish among them a univocal, standard correlation is to deny the role of the phantasmic dimension of the subject that makes all suffering always singular, always experienced by a subject.

In the sociological approach, in general, the *social* is opposed to the *individual*, but with the notion of experience we want to highlight another dimension that escapes this opposition. It is the dimension of the *singular* that is not confused with the individual. Singular is the experience and the experiencing subject; the singular marks what is *unrepeatable* in each experience, since it is only defined in a framework of existence and temporality. To reintroduce the dimension of experience, and therefore of the subject, is to introduce the ethical dimension into inclusion.

In our contemporary world, the subject and the experience are easily suppressed, in practice, by adopting a managerial perspective. There seems to be an antinomy between management and subject. The reason for this is simple: to govern from the open vastness of the field of desire is more difficult – impossible according to Freud – than to govern from the tangible and controllable world of needs.

Suppressing the subject – even if the subject resists this suppression – in the name of practical interests turns politics into management. That politics has, in our time, been superseded by management is such a well-known fact that we do not need to dwell on in its discussion. The book by Michel Chauvière (2007), with its expressive title, is enough to highlight this antinomy: *Trop de gestion tue le social* (Too much management kills the social).

In the specific framework of inclusive education, this managerial tendency is no different. It was by establishing laws and managing the resources for their implementation that the issue of inclusive education was first introduced in the contemporary Western world.

Two basic beliefs, which seem to animate the contemporary spirit, as highlighted in the introduction to this article, also parade through the field of inclusive education: (1) the belief that the law is capable of promoting social justice; (2) the belief that management is capable of driving social issues. What these two beliefs ignore, or simply suppress, is the issue of the dynamics of the subject, which is always characterized by *giving a particular response to the law* and by *overcoming any attempt to be governed*. In fact, we do not need to go far to realize that the establishment of a law is not enough to create the reality that it intends to create. The Brazilian law that abolished slavery in Brazil, for example, in spite of its antiquity, decidedly did not suppress slavery in the country, nor the effects of the prejudice against black persons.

For this to happen, more than the enactment of a law is necessary. It is necessary the concurrence of another process, which we can call *subjective engagement*. One can even think of laws whose implementation's expected outcome does not depend crucially on subjective engagement. The law obligating the payment of alimony, for example, depends only on the execution of a task - that of paying the sum owed to the entitled person - without in any way requiring a change of perception. If a change of perception arises from the enforcement of this law, it will be incidental, but compliance does not depend at all on any such change.

But the law that establishes the process of inclusion is far from having this characteristic. Nevertheless, it is not uncommon to observe involved institutions regarding the legislative provision for school access and permanence of children and young people targeted by school inclusion policies as a guarantee of their actual inclusion. Of course, this is a more common understanding of those who participate in management than of those who are directly and daily working in schools, but we can still observe the persistence and strength of the management paradigm.

In the particular case of the law of inclusion, more than necessary, subjective engagement is decisive. Without the involvement of the actors in the process, this inclusion remains, as everyone knows, a bureaucratic response of the institutions to the equally bureaucratic demands of the management system.

The term exclusion itself, the conceptual defining element of public inclusion policies, induces a myopia in the perception of the problem that the ethical approach is capable of correcting. The idea of exclusion shifts the perspective to an individual being on the *outside*. But what is most intimate and decisive in the exclusion has to do exactly with a subject being put *inside* - within a discourse that in its terms and dynamics excludes the individual.

The excluded person is such only due to a discourse that places her or him in a place whose effect, or one of its effects, is exclusion. Disabled children, for example, were referred to the specialized institutions in a certain historical period due to a discourse that understood their disability as a synonym of the corresponding disorder. It will be

a change in the discourse about them that will give rise to the idea of their exclusion. The idea of exclusion has become the motto of a paradoxical situation: the *excluded* are those who are *included* as such by a discourse that takes them as subject/theme.

It is by this paradox that the ethical dimension of the issue of inclusion ceases to only point to a ignored dimension of the problem and starts to become a work program aimed at actually including, with a clear objective that we could place in two large axes: (1) the *transformation of perspective*; (2) the *hygiene of the symbolic*. The fact that everything begins with the fight against prejudice – that is, a term that indicates quite well the discursive, conceptual dimension that is at stake – should be enough to reveal the discursive character of the issue.

With the idea of *transformation of perspective* we want to underscore two things: (1) a perspective is a symbolic dimension constituted, thus, discursively and tends to stabilize itself as such, consolidating a knowledge – a pre-conception is in any case a way of knowing – which is based on something more than a simple conceptual process. What the idea of prejudice shows, mainly, is that there is a dimension prior to the concept. Pre-conception does not mean essentially a weak concept, but, on the contrary, the persistence of a knowledge whose strength remains despite enlightenment. Usually, overcoming a prejudice is not done only through enlightenment; it requires us to access another dimension, often forgotten in the process: *fantasy*<sup>5</sup>.

The formation of a concept, however objective it may be – objectivity ultimately promoted by the tendency of the adjustment of thought to the object with which it is concerned – always involves the dynamics of fantasy. In the specific case of the disabled persons this seems to be quite clear. The assumption of a deficit affecting them persists even when they are extremely efficient in their work. There seems to be operating a dynamic that Korff-Sausse (1996) delineated well in his book and that is already indicated by its title: *Le miroir brisé* (The broken mirror). The figure of the disabled person reactivates in all the non-disabled persons the typical anguish of experiencing a fragmented body, anguish that we all experienced in the beginnings of our subjective constitution.

The mirror<sup>6</sup>, an element whose function was to give us a unified image of ourselves, is broken by the fragmented image that disabled person seems to offer us, making it very difficult to perceive her or him without a deficit perspective.

A perspective is this very function that played a structural role in the constitution of the self's image. It is a function that persists in its structural effects. To transform the perspective implies, therefore, understanding that we are dealing with a structure that includes the fantasy and not just something cognitive and intellectual.

(2) To transform the perspective also means that this change depends on an elaborate process that is not reduced to *being aware*. Usually, awareness, within the process of combating prejudice, is elevated to the highest level, as the main objective of this process.

All developments of the analytic practice, from Freud to the present, contribute to show us the limits of awareness regarding a change of attitude. It is not enough to be informed about something to have a *proper perspective* of it. Knowledge and understanding are not synonyms, nor is there a synchronic relationship between them, but rather a dialectical relation. An interference relationship exists between them.

The understanding - unconscious and related to the subjective relationship with the object - intersects in a Moebian<sup>7</sup> way with knowledge - conscious and related to an objectifying relation with the object. The understanding tends to the *mythical*, while knowledge tends to be *conceptual*. To transform the perspective implies, therefore, to include in the practice the dimension of understanding.

Thus we get to our second axis: symbolic hygiene. If concepts - at least in their relation to attitudes - are not defined only epistemically, their constitution inevitably involves the plane of fantasy. The *clean* of the clear and distinct ideas is mixed with the *dirty* of the mythological field of fantasy.

The term hygiene here is not to be confused as an allusion to some kind of social hygiene movement. Since the advent of psychoanalysis, no prospect of cleansing the mythological of understanding to favor the distinctive of the epistemic is ever conceivable, nor would it be desirable. While hygiene is a process of purification of something, the establishment of a state considered pure, without detritus, what we call hygiene here, on the contrary, implies the previous observation that the human condition is itself impure - *humus*, related etymologically to the word human, means the residue of a metabolic operation, impurity and imperfection.

It would be a symbolic cleansing that, contrary to what is dominant in the process of conceptualization, implies a *deconstruction of the understanding*, which can only be done in an elaborative perspective. And this elaboration implies that it is essential to be supported by experience. Nothing is elaborated without a libidinal engagement with the situation. A formative practice based on the discussion of abstract situations, exemplarily forged to be the subject of reflection, does not constitute a good ground for such elaboration.

The customary tendency to separate the field of the human sciences - a field of knowledge production - from the field of social practices - the field of the supposed application of this knowledge - disregards the difference between reflecting within or outside actual experience.

To restore the dimension of experience, with all the subjective implication that this represents, is to introduce this axis of symbolic hygiene accordingly. This means, in practice, the establishment of places and moments in which talking about work is considered central, triggering not an outburst or an account, but a process of knowledge elaboration. Instead of a reflection that seeks to identify and then implement better ways of dealing with inclusion - a kind of methodological and institutional social hygiene - we propose another one, based on experience and with direct consequences for the one who elaborates.

Institutions usually prefer to *make a fetish of the method*, since this favors management. This is clearly and often demonstrated by the redemptive appeals to those experiences that have previously worked, so that they are exported as models to other institutional contexts.

In the study perspective that we are outlining here it would not be worth thinking about this *exportability* of knowledge. It is valid – and can only be valid – locally, situationally, since it is the result of a subject's involved knowledge. This is not to say that the knowledge that derives from this experience of singular elaboration is not transferable in any way, but simply that to believe in its objectification and generalization aprioristically is to deny the essential character of the process.

Contrary to seeking any normative procedure that responds to the vicissitudes of the inclusion process, we know that it is precisely when this normative procedure fails that the work begins. Social work truly begins when technical work guidelines – adequate to an abstract subject – fail in their execution, given the structural resistance of the subject to being governed. The governance perspective – fetishized methods, institutional resources, rights, etc. – tries to respond in a standard way to a question that is always permeated by particularities.

In doing so, governance tries to eliminate what is conflictive in social coexistence, what is tragic in human existence. No one wants or expects an institution to merely satisfy their needs. We hope to find in it *a place to live in* (Mannoni, 1988), a place where conflicts are under control and may unfold as in any other place.

Governance wants to pacify conflict by identifying and meeting needs, it wants to ensure a kind of institutional peace. “The enemy would like to be in peace with me. But he has in mind a protocol peace” (Darwich, 1997, apud Gomez, 2005, p.24). This governance perspective is dehumanizing. By promoting, for management purposes, the *standard* knowledge, that is, valid as a general strategy, it leaves aside the issue of the subject, it makes an *inclusion without subject*: “Here is the project prepared to us by the ‘galaxy of experts’, a social [existence] without faces, that is to say, ultimately, a kind of war against the human” (Gomez, 2005, p. 25).

This kind of institutional peace cannot – and would not be desirable even if it could – be achieved. It only masks the failure of all governance, even when its supposed power is proclaimed. Governance is powerful, no doubt, but there is a hole in it that marks the impossibility of its task. As usual, all governance takes this impossibility as impotence and proceeds to seek more knowledge, aiming to gain control over everything that escaped.

The ethical perspective is the one that comes to denounce that this general principle of governance functioning falters and that it is in this hesitation that the subject shows its presence. Better, then, to always take it in consideration.

An inclusion, therefore, that includes the subject does not seek peace and extinction of conflicts, whether arising from the supposed

meeting of needs, or from legal entitlements, or even from the mobilization of work resources. This inclusion discussed here is one that allows for dissent and values conflict. If morality does not make us dizzy, ethics can point us to good paths.

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## Notes

- 1 Throughout this text we preferred to use the term *disabled person* for being the current use in the literature, answering to discussions that seek an appropriate term to describe the subject in question, avoiding pejorative connotations that might be attributed to it. However, we should highlight a risk in this naming operation that consists in dislocating to the individual – and not to the context in which he inhabits – the defining element of his condition. The term *handicap* in the English language, which defines the situation of the one who has a deficiency, also frequent in the French language *handicap*, seems to take into account the contextual character – of a handicap situation – that we wish to emphasize in this text. Originally, the term *handicap* – hand in cap – came from the idea of a bet on a bad horse. In this use it holds the relational character of deficiency, idea that an initial deficiency has no intrinsic value, as it can be transformed into value thanks to the weight of the circumstances. After all, even the bad horse is worthy betting on, as it can win the race in the end.
- 2 This letter was written at a particular and decisive historical moment in France, at the time of the organization of the first national assembly of the disabled person that led to the enactment of a law – in May 2005 – that recognizes the principle of compensation, a decisive breakthrough still not fulfilled even today
- 3 Marcel Gauchet (2007) describes two stages in the formulation of human rights: the first, which he calls the *political* moment, originated in the French revolution and was characterized by the affirmation of popular legitimacy and sovereignty over any form of vertical power: the category of man in this in this case would be elevated to a dominant place in all political logic, as a sovereign value. The second stage, which the author calls the *legal* moment, would have begun with the contemporary victory of the neoliberal paradigm, making it necessary to address the recognition of human rights in a framework where the individual right is put in perspective against the society. In this way it is possible to understand why in our times human rights have become a kind of general language, giving rise to contradictory claims made in their name. The right to use the burqa, for example, is dismissed in the name of equality between men and women, while at the same time defended in the name of freedom of expression, both fundamental values related to human rights.
- 4 Let us remember that in the English and French languages the word subject – *sujet*, in French – means at the same time a conscious being subject, a grammatical category and the topic of a given discussion.
- 5 A term used by Freud and first in current use in the German language and as a concept since 1897. “Correlate of the elaboration of the notion of psychic reality and of the abandonment of the theory of the seduction, it designates the

imaginary life of the subject and the way he represents for himself his history, or the history of his origins: we thus speak of original fantasy” (Roudinesco, Plon, 1998, p. 223).

- 6 The term mirror is used here according to the meaning given to it by Lacan (1998), in the context of a logical moment in the structuring of the Self. Thus, to say that something in the mirror breaks is to highlight the occasionally and punctually destructive impact that the vision of a child not conforming to a perfect image can cause.
- 7 The Moebius strip is a topological figure used by Lacan throughout his work to address a type of articulation between instances in which the facets are intrinsically articulated in such a way that is not possible to know where one ends and the other begins. It is a figure that represents the absence of a boundary between interior and exterior.

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