


**AESTHETICS AND ETHICS AS FORMATION: THE REFUSAL OF
PHILOSOPHICAL-PEDAGOGICAL SUICIDE IN CAMUS**

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ABSTRACT

The scope of this article is to present and discuss the implicit imbrication between the aesthetic and the formative from the literary work of the Algerian Albert Camus. To this end, we dialogue with the writings and poetics of the novelist and playwright, especially those from the first phase of his production from the thirties of the twentieth century to the time of the Myth of Sisyphus and the Stranger, in the forties, a period in which absurdity and suicide are put as a reflection. Thus, within a theoretical and speculative bias, we intend to place the issue of education within the horizon of the *ethos* of the absurd, which is that of refusal to suicide and the affirmation of individuality and free thought.

Keywords: Aesthetics. Ethics. Absurd. Suicide. Training.

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INTRODUCTION

ETHICS, AESTHETICS AND TRAINING

The issue of the relationship between ethics, art and training can be seen from different perspectives. There are those who deny the imbrication between the three, since they conceive morality as established rules that restrict freedom. However, this conception (which, in general, emphasizes art in the formative processes), forgets that artistic production⁷ is linked to a conception of freedom and the creation of more authentic forms of life, which would also be an ethical construction, in the strongest and most genuine sense of the word. In the same way, the loss of authenticity of life and the mechanization of acts and thoughts can be considered suicide: aesthetic, because it hinders creativity; and pedagogical, because it closes interpretative possibilities and creates a hierarchy of intelligences.

In the artistic-philosophical work of the Algerian-French Albert Camus, we perceive an interdisciplinarity between art and philosophy and also a proposal for an ethics focused on the tragedy of life, that is, on the lucidity of how the world proceeds without appeals to transcendent false hopes and philosophical consolations. To live in spite of contradictions, adversities, sufferings, lack of ontological meaning, in short, to live and insist on continuing to live in spite of sorrows is the ethical imperative that arises from within Camusian aesthetics. For this very reason, all forms of thought that seek to mask the world and life by offering extramundane or metaphysical-existentialist consolations are considered modes of suicide in the face of this vision of the world, of art and of aesthetics.⁸

Aesthetics, on the other hand, from Camus' point of view, is far from being a philosophy or science of Beauty. In fact, it is opposed to these two meanings. It cannot be a

⁷ From a contemporary point of view, art is an affective-productive process that presupposes and is constructed in its entirety through its hermeneutic fusion between the artist and the public, in the "artistic coefficient" or in what is discovered through the active participation of the public's interpretation of the artist's work: "Consequently, when I refer to the "artistic coefficient", It should be understood that I am not referring only to great art, but that I am trying to describe the subjective mechanism that produces art in its raw state – *l'état brut* – bad, good or indifferent. In the creative act, the artist passes from intention to realization, through a chain of totally subjective reactions. Their struggle for fulfillment is a series of efforts, sufferings, satisfactions, refusals, decisions that cannot and should not be fully conscious, at least on the aesthetic level. [...] consequently, in the chain of reactions that accompanies the creative act there is a missing link [...]; this difference between what he wanted to accomplish and what he actually accomplished is the personal "artistic coefficient" contained in his work of art": DUCHAMP, Marcel. "The creative act". In: BATTCOCK, Gregory. *The new art*. Trad. Cecília Prada and Vera de Campos. 2nd ed. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 1986, p. 73.

⁸ The term *Aesthetics* was coined by BAUMGARTEN, A. G. (Aesthetics: the logic of art and the poem. São Paulo: Vozes, 1993), meaning a sensorial knowledge, through which the Beautiful is accessed and art is produced. The science that would take care of this knowledge would be precisely aesthetics. However, SUASSUNA, Ariano (*Iniciação à estética*. 11th ed. Rio de Janeiro: José Olympio, 2011, p. 22) draws attention to the fact that in modernity, especially under the influence of Kantian philosophy, beauty no longer has exclusivity in this type of reflection and other categories and other categories began to be valued and worked on, in view of the *sublime*. And even what was completely discarded, also began to appear, such as the *ugly*, etc.

simple philosophy in the classical sense of a knowledge that, by means of lucubrate and theoretical-contemplative procedures, penetrates reality, extracting from it an essence and truth. Beauty would then be a dimension of this profound reality: the dazzling and seductive glow of truth and goodness. This is how Plato's Socrates, for example, will diminish the value of the artist by conceiving that the work of sensible creation obeys empirical models, which are already distorted copies of the recondite reality of things.⁹ Hence he conceives a disastrous tutelage to the work of the artist who would need to employ his mimesis only to what could be said to be true and morally beneficial to the formation of the character of citizens.

It cannot be philosophical in this sense of prescriptive, but neither can it be just a discussion about Beauty, since, since Aristotle, the question of the ugly in art has been posed. In the emblematic film "The Name of the Rose", this question is presented when focusing on the problem of a forbidden book, whose pages were poisoned to kill those who read them. This work provoked laughter (apparently due to the effect of the poison placed on the forbidden pages) and, in line with Aristotle's poetics, the laughable was considered as the aesthetic manifestation that the ugly could indeed be produced as good art. This conception of the aesthetic was expanded with the influence of Kant, for whom Beauty is a universal without a concept, a judgment that is intended to be acceptable to all, but which cannot be verified in the same way as a statement in physics, for example. The post-Kantians, with the idea that aesthetics should constitute a science, in the sense of descriptive knowledge of everything that involves art, expanded the field of this knowledge as they began to consider the sublime, the graceful, the ugly and the tragic as areas of the same reality. Thus, the aesthetic began to bring together the most general principles, realizable by creative labor and historically situated in the poetics created.

POETICS AND ETHICS IN CAMUS' WORK

In this universe of aesthetics, there is the question of morality - or ethics as some prefer to avoid confusion with the vulgar use of prohibitions and taboos. According to Roland Barthes, Albert Camus represents a type of literary production in which writing would have reached, for the first time (!), its "zero degree". For him, language and signs are like a nature from which the artist works with form, which is his moment of solidarity with history and society. The author's moral is found in this reflection on the creative poetic form that, in the classical and romantic periods, was confused with the very spirit of bourgeois

⁹ "So this kind of imitation [art] concerns something that is the *third* from the truth [...]": Plato. *The Republic*. Trad. Edson Bini. Bauru, SP: EDIPRO, 2006, p. 430 (emphasis added).

history, but which over time (especially from the nineteenth century onwards) became an unhappy conscience and a reflection on itself and on society.

In this sense, the form becomes an object to the extent that it represents the author's ethics or productive engagement, which has become thought about himself and realized in different states. "[...] First the object of a look, then of a doing, and finally of a murder, it reaches a last avatar, absence: in the neutral scriptures here called the "zero degree of writing".¹⁰ The mention of Barthes' words here is very appropriate, because it refers to the *author's ethos* or matrix of social engagement, which is manifested here by the absence or attempt of an ideological non-direction of the reader about the world created and lived by the characters in the work.

[...] the formal identity of the writer is only really established outside the installation of the norms of grammar and the constants of style, at the point where the written continuum, gathered and enclosed at first in a perfectly innocent linguistic nature, will finally become a total sign, the choice of a human behavior, the affirmation of a certain Good, thus engaging the writer in the evidence and communication of a happiness or a malaise, and linking the form at once normal and singular of his speech to the broad History of others.¹¹

In the Speeches from Sweden, a collection of some of Camus' lectures on the occasion of receiving the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957, the novelist-philosopher argues that the artist cannot isolate himself in his production by forgetting the voice of the silenced and oppressed. Art could not be a luxury of a few who would delight in abstract and hermetic forms of sensitive understanding of reality while most of their peers would live in a situation of misery, threat and lack of freedom. However, our current times place the artist in a unique situation in history, in which he has no way to exempt himself. If he is silent, his silence is criticized and is interpreted as an endorsement or a compromise with the *status quo ante*; if he speaks and engages, it will be said that he is distorting his work.

The world in which art cannot be indifferent, to which the Discourses allude, is that of the moment after the Second World War and the constant threat of nuclear war. It is exactly a time of deep frustration and disillusionment of the people with their project of political-philosophical modernity that was for a long time optimistic about a progress of humanity based on science and human reason. Technoscience has produced a world of extraordinary possibilities for well-being, but in return it has produced a lot of inequality, misery, and threats to individual freedom. In this scenario, in which communication is already massified by *the mass media*, the artist runs the risk of no longer being known for his work, but for

¹⁰ BARTHES, Roland. *The zero degree of writing*. 2 ed. Heloysa de Lima dantas, Anne Arnichand and Álvaro Lorencini. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1972, p. 119.

¹¹ BARTHES, Roland. *On. Cit.*, p. 124.

the image that the media creates about how "[...] that great artist of our time [...] creates canaries or who never marries for more than six months".¹²

In short, this world to which Camusian aesthetics is directed is our world, to which art has the difficult commitment of "[...] refusal to lie about what one knows and resistance to oppression".¹³ At the same time, it is not configured as an art engaged in the service of a specific political ideology. The same ardor with which he criticizes the idea of "art for art's sake" as an abstract form, closed to small circles and producing a vain experience, a lying luxury,¹⁴ also turns against the idea of a realistic art. First, because it is impossible to produce an art of this kind, unless the artist was God. In fact, even if one could record a person's life with a camera 24 hours a day, it would still lack the relationship of what he is with the people who exist in his life (or cross it) and he would also lack the concomitant and integrated record of his inner world. Thus, realistic art, especially from the world of the former Soviet Union, is still an idealism, because it counts what it would like it to be. Now, if it is not disconnected from people's lives and not ideologically engaged, what would then be the character of this art advocated as the most appropriate for our times? According to the actor-philosopher, it is an "embedded art".

Today everything has changed. Silence itself takes on a fearful meaning. From the moment that abstention itself is considered as a choice, punished or praised as such, the artist, whether he wants to or not, is on board. Embarked here seems to me more fair than committed. It is not, in fact, a voluntary commitment for the artist, but rather a mandatory military service. Any artist of our days is embarked on the galley of his time. [...] The artist, like the others, has to row in turn, without dying, if he can, that is, continuing to live and create. [...] It is not, therefore, a question of knowing whether art should escape from the real or submit to it, but only of what exact dose of the real the work should ballast itself so as not to disappear into the clouds or, on the contrary, drag itself with lead soles.¹⁵

In Camus's literary writing, this aesthetic embarkation is shown from his first works. In *Inside Out and the Law*, a ¹⁶ set of short essays from the time when he still lived in Algeria colonized by the French and threatened by Hitler's Germany, presents situations and people that are part of his reality. The poor neighborhood of Belcourt, the place of workers with whom he lived, appears in the middle, for example, of the scene of the description of the rape of a character by an Arab. A scene that shows the reality of violence, to which many women of her time were subjected. The old man who tells stories, without anyone paying attention, or the superstitious old woman who lives at the bottom of a

¹² CAMUS, Albert. *Speeches from Sweden*. Trad. Sousa Victorino. Lisbon: Livros do Brasil, n.d., p. 141.

¹³ Idem, *ibidem*, p. 123.

¹⁴ Cf. Idem, *ibidem*, p. 138.

¹⁵ CAMUS, Albert. *On. Cit.*, p. 132/p. 138.

¹⁶ Cf. Idem. *The Inside Out and the right*. 7th ed. Valerie Rumjanek. São Paulo: Record, 2013.

hammock like a tolerable nuisance to the family, both facing loneliness and abandonment in the midst of other miseries. There is also the enthusiasm of the trips, such as the description of the trip to Prague, in which he concludes that those who did not get bored walking in a city, did not know it.¹⁷

Prague is a city that Camus liked and that alludes to one of his influences, Franz Kafka. Walking in a city until you are exhausted and feel enamored and bored of it is one of your habits. The rape scene is that of her mother and other Algerian women. That of the elderly, of their loneliness and the contempt on the part of young people and their families, is one of the many realities of human misery in which he and we live or witness. All these realities are like the place from which the vitality of his themes and poetics will emerge. "[For] each artist keeps within himself a unique source, which nourishes during his life what he is and what he says."¹⁸

In the case of this playwright-philosopher, his *poetic locus* is the world full of many and varied miseries, but also illuminated by an unparalleled sun and heat. "In this case, I know my source is [...] in this world of poverty and light in which I have lived for so long, and whose memory preserves me, still from the two contrary dangers that threaten every artist: resentment and satisfaction."¹⁹ The experience of the sun and the sea of the Mediterranean does not allow resentment and makes it possible to overcome prejudices. "It was not misery that put a barrier to these forces: in Africa, the sea and the sun cost nothing. The barrier is more in prejudice or stupidity."²⁰

In the Nuptials, in addition to experiencing Camus' poetic source, we also perceive his ethical embarkation. By lyrically describing the cities of Algeria that he used to visit, he shows a hedonistic naturalism, in which the experience of nature with itself and with it takes place in a kind of sensible and affective union, beyond which there would be nothing else. "We walk towards love and desire. We do not seek lessons or the bitter philosophy that is required of greatness. Apart from the sun, the kisses and the wild perfumes, everything else seems futile to us."²¹ Everything we can do to improve ourselves and become better and happy is not beyond the reach of our senses. The spiritual-sensible union with nature and the enjoyment of its beauty and strength, as much as we can, is the only rule of conduct that can really be realized. Everything else is just a postponement of pleasure in the name

¹⁷ "Every country that I don't get bored with is a country that teaches me nothing": CAMUS, Albert. *The Reverse and the Right*, p. 77.

¹⁸ Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 17.

¹⁹ Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 18.

²⁰ Idem, *Ibidem*, p. 18.

²¹ Ditto. *Wedding, The Summer*. Trad. Vera Queiroz da Costa e Silva. São Paulo: Editora Nova Fronteira, n.d., p. 8.

of a hope for a non-sensible, abstract, otherworldly and ideally and deontologically justified union.

The union desired by Plotinus, what can be strange about finding it on earth? Unity is expressed here, in terms of sun and sea. It is sensitive to the heart, through a certain carnal taste, which originates its bitterness and greatness. I discover that there is no superhuman happiness or eternity beyond the curves of days. These derisory and essential goods, these relative truths, are the only ones that move me. As for the others, the "ideals", I do not have a soul big enough to understand them.²²

Camusian's ethical-aesthetic embarkation presents itself as hedonic and naturalistic in the *Nuptials* and also in the *Happy Death*.²³ In this work from the time of Algeria in the thirties, the sun, the sea, the flesh and the carnal encounter are the only goods presentable for enjoyment and happiness. Even the idea of happy death is placed as part of the happy life, the result of a life that inverts the capitalist adage "time is money" so that all the investment of money and vital energy is to acquire time to live and die consciously and not just biologically. The character Mersault, who stars in this novel, has a spelling similar to the name of another work, namely: *The Stranger*. However, in this 1943 work, we find Camus within his same themes, but now with a new literary form.

Abroad, Mersault's character does not reveal himself in his interiority. We are not told whether it is good or bad. Your deep intentions are stored within you. What we are allowed to know is due only to the narrative of his life, which revolves around his daily life as a civil servant who, one day, is informed of his mother's death. So, he goes to the funeral and smokes at the funeral; and the next day, after the burial and back home, he meets Marie, a former employee of the same office where he worked. As he is fascinated by her, he asks her out... they bathe in the sea, in the sun and, at night, go to the cinema to watch a comedy.

Shortly after, on a walk in a beach house with Raymond, a neighbor who had a disagreement with a certain Arab, notices that his colleague carries a gun, which he asks for in order to stay in possession to prevent a murder. The problem is that, stunned by fatigue and heat, and dazzled by the reflection of the sun on the silver weapon, Mersault, seeing himself threatened by the Arab, shoots and repeats this act three more times, killing him.

After the murder, Mersault is arrested and enters a criminal process by which he wants, by all means, to prove the intent of his act to condemn him to death. The interesting thing about all this is that, at all times, we try to morally evaluate the character's life. They

²² CAMUS, Albert. *Nuptials, The Summer*, p. 34.

²³ Ditto. *A Happy death*. Trad. Valerie Rumjanek. São Paulo: 1971.

want to know if he cried, if he smoked, what movie he watched, why he put his mother in the asylum, in short, they judge him from an already pre-established moral order to which the protagonist considers himself a foreigner/stranger to her. However, to all the questions he only answers that the physical fatigue and the effects of the sun on his body confused his feelings... However, it was not certain that he wanted his mother to die, although he knew that death was inevitable, especially at her age.

In the end, he is judged for not having cried at his mother's funeral and not for having killed a man. This is what can be deduced from the lawyer's words: "After all, is he accused of having killed his mother or of killing a man? To which the prosecutor replies "- yes - he exclaimed vehemently - I accuse this man of having buried his mother with a criminal's heart"²⁴

Camus' engaged aesthetics from the *Foreigner* takes on a new scriptural form. The narrator does not reveal Mersault's morality. It does not allow us to search his intentions to know if we can judge him good or bad. The character is "beyond good and evil", Nietzsche would say, in such a way that the interpretation of the purpose of his action remains open. In effect, the writer innovates in literary form by giving up the conduction and formation of the hermeneutic conviction of the reader, who will now have to make his own readings and become responsible for them. Thus, Camus' embarkation in this phase known as "absurd" takes place negatively, that is, avoiding assuming an indoctrinating consciousness. For literary criticism, this author achieved with this poetic form, for the first time in universal literature, "the zero degree of literature".

This transparent speech, inaugurated by Camus's *The Stranger*, realizes a style of absence that is almost an ideal absence of style; writing is then reduced to a kind of negative mode in which the social or mythical characters of a language are abolished in favor of a neutral and inert state of form; thought thus retains all its responsibility, without dressing itself with an accessory engagement of form in a History that does not belong to it."²⁵

The literary-linguistic aspect of the writer's silence in relation to the ideology and morals of the character, far from being an alleged and false neutrality, is actually an engagement in education by respect for the worldview and individuality of each one. It is about not preaching the dominant ideology, even if it means not taking any side in evidence. And this is exactly the point that brings Camus closer and further away from Sartre with regard to the political reach of the literary work. Because the latter, although having made an excellent criticism of the *Foreigner* (complimentary, by the way!), sought to get closer to

²⁴ CAMUS, Albert. *The foreigner*. 37th ed. Valerie Rumjanek. São Paulo: Record, 2015, p. 100.

²⁵ BARTHES, Roland. *The Zero Degree of Writing*, p. 161.

the communism of the former Soviet Union; while our author metaphorically declared in the play "The Mistake" that whenever we kill strangers, we run the risk of killing children or siblings. Ideological and scriptural disagreements yielded the end of a friendship; However, there are important philosophical points of contact that are worth highlighting.

THE GRATUITOUSNESS OF LIFE AND PEDAGOGICAL SUICIDE

Sartre presents life as total gratuitousness. Nothing is previously defined in advance. And if it were, we could not deduce from the discourse of the world the necessity of things and of what happens. Contingency is the essential thing in reality. It is the only thing of which we can be absolutely certain, because the beings are there and we know for sure only of their continuous being and non-being. The only truth is that of consciousness as a tendency to the world, as an apprehension of the world. In fact, this phenomenological experience is very well figured in Nausea in Roquentin's experience, who when he realized - sitting on a bench and looking at a root of a chestnut tree - that it was only as consciousness of the root of that tree, that his perception and sensation were fulfilled. However, despite being a kind of immediate knowledge of that being, it also understood itself as separate from it, subjectively and individually, since it perceived it, although immersed in it.²⁶

Such a contingency that presupposes multiplicity, possibilities and existences²⁷ is based on the I Think, since otherwise it would be incoherent to speak of existence and reality; for they only exist as an active apprehension that constructs meaning. There is thus an essence to be constructed, but never given and ready, which explains Roquentin's constant feeling of nausea, who finds nothing in the world but pure gratuitousness of existence. Things and man himself are always *left over*. "I feel like leaving, going somewhere where I could really be *in my place*, where I fit in [...] But my place is nowhere; I'm left over."²⁸ Here, Sartre and the Stranger are very close in their aesthetic and ethical meanings, since the latter respects the multiplicity of individualities from his open poetics; and the former conceives man as anguish, since he has infinite freedom and responsibility for everything he does.

Once the ready-made meanings are discarded, everything takes place in the gratuitousness and equivalence of actions. Thus, from this conception, living and dying or even taking one's own life ceases to be an affront to existence, since every moral action is carried out as a work of art.

²⁶ SARTRE, Jean-Paul. *Nausea*. Trad. Rita Braga. Rio de Janeiro: Nova Fronteira, 2015, p. 149.

²⁷Cf. Ditto. *Existentialism is a humanism*. Trad. John Baptist Kreuch. Petrópolis: Vozes, 2014, p.34

²⁸ Sartre, Jean-Paul. *Nosia*, p.139.

[...] moral choice can be compared to a work of art. [...] That being clear, would anyone censor an artist who, when painting a picture, was not following rules established *a priori*? Or would someone tell him what picture he should paint? [...] What does this have to do with morality? We are in the same creative situation. [...] What is common between art and morality is that, in both cases, we have creation and invention. We cannot decide *a priori* what should be done.²⁹

Along the same line of reflection on the gratuitousness of life, Camus points out the central issue for philosophy, namely, suicide. But if there is nothing that can be deduced as necessary from existing things and their order, neither can the value of the actions perpetrated in the world be determined *a priori*. Therefore, it is the engagement in the projects we make of ourselves, the axiological producer of the motives and meanings of life. That said, it is then understood that what appears to be most relevant to human research or inquiry is what is at the basis of all other questions and problems, so that "To judge whether or not life is worth living is to answer the fundamental question of philosophy".³⁰ Everything else is nothing more than games of distraction for those who evade the ethical-fundamental responsibility of their own acts.

The gratuitousness of actions and things in Sartre is placed as the "absurd" in Camus. It is a matter of perceiving the world phenomenologically within a gnosiological dynamic in which intentional consciousness aspires to the unity of the world, whose reality integrates it. The density of the world and the strangeness of the overflow and surplus of things to our conceptions and meanings is precisely the cause of nausea in the face of the provisional and multiple character of meanings and values for the actions and events of the world. Therefore, the absurd is this awareness of/before the world that does not find the firm ground of a rational unity for what it apprehends. The only absolute is intentionality as a giver of meanings that do not exist in themselves, that is, there is no heaven of essences, nor things and values in themselves. And because there is no *scala rerum*, everything is deduced in the world without ontological necessity, hence we have no other horizon more evident than the feeling and (belief) of the absurd.

[...] A world that can be explained, even with erroneous reasoning, is a familiar world. But in a universe suddenly deprived of illusions and lights, on the contrary, man feels himself to be a *foreigner*. It is an exile without a solution, because it is deprived of the memories of a lost homeland or the hope of a promised land. This divorce between the man and his life, the actor and his scenery is properly the feeling of the absurd.³¹

²⁹ SARTRE, Jean-Paul. *Existentialism is a humanism*, p. 38.

³⁰ CAMUS, Albert. *The myth of Sisyphus*. 11th ed. Roitman and Paulina Watch. São Paulo: Record, 2014, p. 17.

³¹ CAMUS, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus*, p. 20, (emphasis added).

Faced with the world that always escapes man's inquiring apprehension (a reality that is not reduced and does not fit properly into the boxes of the empirical sciences), there is a humiliated reason, unable to find or access the much-desired unity of everything. So, what remains is the absurd and suicide. There is also hope, but this is not exactly a virtue, since it presupposes ignorance and insecurity as to the course of causes, which may also be favorable or not. The myth of Pandora itself already addressed this by placing her in the same box where all the evils of humanity were found. Thus, it seems that suicide would be the answer, if we speak hastily without understanding the term of the question.

Suicide and absurdity are thus central words/concepts in Camus. The Absurd perhaps in some way re-signified from the leap of Kierkegaardian absurdity (also understood as the leap of faith, but which for Camus is characterized as a theological suicide). Suicide, a fundamental problem of philosophy, for Camus, curiously comes from the Latin words *sui* and *caedes*, that is, to kill oneself, to slaughter. At the same time that the verb *caedere* means reduction and is a little close to *cadere*, to fall, however *suicide* is not a Latin word, because even if among the Stoics suicide was a freedom of choice, "in the ears of Cicero [the term] suicidium would have sounded like 'pig killing' (sus = pig)³². Latin did not need such a term." What there is in fact is an interpretative reading in which since Socrates, a kind of euthanasia, or a good choice of death. The question that arises here is how does the idea of absurdity (in the etymological sense of what is deaf and muffled) relate to suicide on the philosophical level?³³

Committing suicide means denying the world and the only evidence we can access about the reality of things (namely, the absurd!). So that if there is an advantage in thinking of the pure gratuitousness of actions (and, therefore, biological living and dying at first as equivalent!), it is due to the fact that with this we become aware of the "mechanical life"³⁴ in which we are inserted. However, at the same time, suicide would be to renounce one's own reality just because it is absurd, that is, because it is not as we want it to be or as we have been told in soap opera or religious dramas that everything will be fine in the end.

However, it is not biological suicide. And this, we can say, is what matters least to Camus. It is, above all, philosophical suicide, which is perpetrated by existentialist philosophies that, when faced with the "rubble of reason" reduced to the human, start to

³² HOOFF, A. From autothanasia to suicide. New York: Routledge, 1990. p. 138.

³³ The expression [...] (*exagoge eulogos*) was mainly used by ancient Stoicism, and allows in Portuguese to be translated as *rational exit* or *reasonable exit*. Among Latin writers, such as Marcus Aurelius and the *New Stoics*, some terms are recurrent: *vitam fugere*: which indicates a hasty exit; *vita exire*, found for example in Cicero's books, means to *leave (exire) this vita*." REIS, Alexandre. History of Suicide. Belo Horizonte: Páginas Editora, 2020. p. 102.

³⁴ Idem. Ibidem, p. 29.

take as a principle what they ignore, transforming it into a hope for life. Having no way of deducing the necessity of events, they "jump" from fragments of experiences and ideas, to a notion of the absolute.

I take the liberty here of calling the existential attitude philosophical suicide. But this implies a judgment. It is a convenient way of designating the movement by which a thought denies itself and tends to surpass itself with regard to its negation. Denial is the God of existentialists. This god, exactly, is only sustained by the denial of human reason. But like suicides, the gods change according to men. There are several ways to jump, but the essential thing is to jump.³⁵

Philosophical suicide can also be political. And here there is a focus of disagreement between Camus and Sartre. Resistance to oppression and the struggle for states of greater freedom cannot mean the justification of the use of violence and bloodshed by an ideology, even if it is the most accustomed to the condition of the oppressed. Our author did not understand that supporting the former Soviet Union and masking the *gulags* and state tyranny would be the emancipatory way out of the people; for, in the end, Nazi and fascist totalitarianism operated in the same way despite the deferential garb. In this case, the leap is ideological, starting from the notion of justness of a cause to the foundation of a disguised form of oppression. And renunciation, in this case, is that of freedom in the name of a hope of liberation at the end of the consummation of a revolutionary process.

In this way, suicide can be philosophical, religious, and political. Could it also be pedagogical?³⁶ Camus' philosophy does not thematize this educational issue, giving place of prominence and depth to concentrated reflections on the theme. However, it brings elements that can be very well used from an art-education perspective. I am referring to the idea of interdisciplinarity that appears indirectly when he states that "There are no boundaries between the disciplines that man employs to understand and to love. They interpenetrate each other and the same anguish confuses them."³⁷ For him, even a philosopher like Kant is an artist, since he is a creator.

If this is so, there is no reason to deny the postulation that there is a pedagogical suicide, which denies the evident of life, namely: that there are no ready-made formulas sufficiently adequate for emancipation; minds capable of illuminating the intelligence of others with their genius; institutions such as the School as saviors of society; Finally, if the

³⁵ CAMUS, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus*, p. 55.

³⁶ Epistemicide is another word that has been widely propagated by the studies of Boaventura Santos in *Pela Mão de Alice* as the destruction of local and even ancestral knowledge by the tendency of a Eurocentric ethnocentrism. Epistemology, as a judge of scientific processes and practices, ends up excluding from its field the processes and knowledge that differ from the academic institutionality of scientific rigor, which unfolds as a kind of affiliation, an egregore that cannot be refused. It is good that the disobedience of the absurd comes in a counterdirection of this tendency.

³⁷ Idem, Ibidem, p. 112.

absurd provokes a total absence of hope (in chimeras and illusions), an attitude of continuous refusal of one's own situation of meaninglessness and constant dissatisfaction, then every form of education that suppresses the creative and artistic aspect, the result of the gratuitousness of the world and of choices, constitutes a renunciation of life and the world as a field of freedom. The refusal of a reality in itself and inaccessible to "carnal reason" refers to the field of descriptions, interpretations and an ethics of quantity, which is constructed as a work of art. It is also a refusal of pedagogical explanation.

The explanation is useless, but the sensation endures, and with it the incessant calls for a universe inexhaustible in quantity. Now we understand the place that the work of art occupies. It marks at the same time the death of an experience and its multiplication. It is like the monotonous and passionate repetition of the themes already orchestrated by the world: the body, the inexhaustible image of the pediment of the temple, the shapes and colors, the world or despair.³⁸

Camus's absurd philosophy and art - in opposition to literary forms closed to the single interpretation of the writer or playwright and to philosophies of renunciation of the world - offer a strong conceptual apparatus to deal with Education as a formation that is both ethical and artistic. The creative character and its openness to the potentiality of individuals to appropriate them aesthetically and rationally constitute the field in which the explanatory-pedagogical and institutional-school character become a barrier to the free self-construction of the individualities involved in the teaching-learning processes.

The educational character of the principle of the absurd as phenomenological evidence is to refuse the world in the sense of always being dissatisfied and, therefore, willing to recreate it artistically. But it is also that of not renouncing it, of not clinging to philosophical doctrines of hope or alienating our carnal intelligence to that of others or to an institution, which would constitute pedagogical suicide. Moreover, when we take this question from Camusian's aesthetic horizon to the discussion of education, we can find excellent interlocutors who follow very similar lines of denial of the need for pedagogical explanation and the renunciation of individuality. Just to conclude, we cite, as an example, Jacques Rancière (2002), Paulo Freire (2011) and Sponville (2014) who in our view present a horizon of philosophical-pedagogical understanding similar to what we have been arguing with Camus. However, this virtual dialogue exceeds our purposes in this brief article.

³⁸ CAMUS, Albert. *The Myth of Sisyphus*, p. 111.

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