



Letting Nietzsche inside schools? Educational potential and an acknowledgement of the optimism of his philosophy

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Received: 23 December 2020 / Accepted: 5 May 2021
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Abstract

The aim of this article is to identify the educational interest of Nietzsche's fundamental philosophical principles. To this end, Nietzsche's work "The Gay Science" and corresponding references from other fragments of his corpus have been aggregated for the needs of this goal. An analysis of the book's major propositions indicates an epistemological approach to educational matters, based on knowledge's refutability and its validation through experimentation. Other parts of this work, stress out the incompatibility of Nietzsche's philosophy with a democratic education. His philosophical concepts of social order and destiny's accomplishment are presented in favour of this claim. Finally, the most unique propositions in The Gay Science are unveiled and their potential incorporation into the educational process is proposed. In particular, the values of appearance and fallacy emerge, illuminating the optimistic side of his philosophy. From an educational perspective, these values recommend limiting excess rationalism in classrooms and maintaining students' learning interest by focusing on their emotional needs.

Keywords Philosophy of Education · Nietzsche · The Gay Science · School education · Epistemology · Teaching strategies

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Introduction

How much optimism can be tolerated in Nietzsche's philosophical thought? Some claim that, the preacher of philosophical pessimism would fiercely condemn an optimistic confrontation of life's agony. In fact, Nietzsche would deride any modern interpretation of his work (Ridley 1998) or anything "modern" in general, like the genuine cynic that he was. Recently, a study by Bojesen (2018) has indicated that an optimistic view on life matters could be suggested by his later works and notebooks. An optimism which is not founded on the expectation of future happiness, but on one's reaction against the unpleasing conditions of the present. Accordingly, a positive attitude towards the adversities of life is suggested in Nietzsche's original work "The Gay Science" (cited in this paper as GS). A state of merriness, which similarly emerges from the struggle of life, but is also established on the appreciation of the superficiality of our existence. In this value of superficiality, in addition to Bojesen's view, we believe that a kind of optimism could be formulated in relation to Nietzsche's philosophy. This will be revealed by the content analysis of The Gay Science, which we are presenting in this paper.

Yet, with respect to education, how much schooling can be found in the content of The Gay Science? Typically, studies regarding the educational side of Nietzsche's philosophy are referred—or partially referred—to in the more relevant content texts "Schopenhauer as Educator" and "On the future of our Educational Institutions" (Babich 2019; Jonas 2018; Allen 2017; Stolz 2017; Golomb 1985). Furthermore, the concept of Superhuman in his original work "Thus Spoke Zarathustra" (will also be cited as TSZ) and its potential incorporation in the educational process has been fascinating educators for a long time now (Rosenow 1973; Sassone 1996; Fitzsimons 2007). This potential incorporation has also raised a well-known dispute, regarding the incompatibility of Nietzsche's elitist propositions on human capabilities with a democratic education (Johnston 1998; Fitzsimons 2007, pp. 55–70).¹ Gradually, it appears that this named "Journal debate", has turned out to a selective reading of Nietzsche's work, which draws from his philosophy, what is most important and useful, for the optimization of the educational process. Besides, many scholars now agree that Nietzsche's work and his contradictory idiom should be regarded as outside of formal interpretation (see Allen 2018, p. 51; Babich 2019). Additionally, the study of his work has been turned towards more specific inquiries, as for example the importance of struggle in learning (Yacek 2019; Kameas and Almpandis 2014; Jonas 2010), self-cultivation and aesthetics (Stolz 2017), the significance of disciplined schooling (Mintz 2004), the development of perception through perspectives (Ramaekers 2001) or the cultivation of intuitive knowledge (Gregory 2001).

Accordingly, a content analysis of The Gay Science will respond to several previous educational inquires, providing further documentation to support validation of their conclusions. In spite of its general philosophical content, a careful study of

¹ This dispute seems to correspond with the supposed association of his philosophy with Nazi ideology (Gadamer et al. 2003) or its theoretical struggle against socialism (Johnson 1996, p. 24), as they both emerged after World War II.

the work will result to almost the same questions or suggestions about education, as above. Besides, studying a script comprising various philosophical contemplations may shed further light on the significance of philosophy within the educational process, which has been consistently disputed (Reboul 2002; Petrou 2011; Matsagouras 2003, pp. 77–109). Furthermore, this implicated optimism of Nietzsche's work that we propose, will offer a new perspective on the adaptation of his work on education, and perhaps, on the understanding of his philosophy in general. In particular, this analysis will illuminate a well-known concept in his philosophy that appears to be less highlighted, if not underestimated, among educational bibliographies. The metaphoric value of appearance comes to mind here, similarly to the Apollonian expression of art from his original work, "The Birth of Tragedy" (will also be cited as BT). This concept highlights the life-affirming side of his work, which appears to be suitable for incorporation, especially in the education of young students. In comparison to other more popular principles of his philosophy, like the idea of self-overcoming, Nietzsche proves to be more practical and well matched to the needs of this age. In addition, several propositions of his philosophy, such as his social theory, appear to be clearly incompatible with a democratically established education. That should not be disregarded when we utilize them to the educational process and we will attempt to point out this inconsistency, by a thorough examination of *The Gay Science's* content.

To summarize, in this essay we will initially attempt to uncover the notional path that Nietzsche follows in his original work "The Gay Science". It appears that certain integral meanings are being continuously repeated across the entire content of the book. We have classified these propositions by their semantic content and we will present them into four major conceptual categories: 1) Theory of Knowledge, 2) The ideal of the Philosopher, 3) Social Order–Destiny's accomplishment and 4) Will to superficiality. In this way, we believe that Nietzsche's communication priorities and principal beliefs will be exposed.² Besides, at the end of this presentation, the meaning of his philosophical optimism that we suggest, will have been adequately explained. In continuation, at a separate second part of this paper, we will attempt to evaluate the educational significance of each category. Valuable results arise from Nietzsche's theory of knowledge such as his criteria for the validation of knowledge. In particular, the criterion of refutability of knowledge and other notes on methodology of research will turn out to be essential for the theoretical instruction of educators. Furthermore, a hypothetical adaptation of *The Gay Science's* philosophical optimism to education will reveal directions such as insisting on children's sentimental needs and preparing their learning readiness. In addition, the incompatibility of destiny's accomplishment and theory of social order with a democratic education will be thoroughly explained. Concludingly, the first part of our essay will demonstrate a documented analysis of the content of *The Gay Science* and its major philosophical propositions. In the second part, we will attempt to specify, in which way

² According to the principle of the content analysis methodology, every script conveys its author's intentions and principal beliefs (Vamvoukas 2011).

the analysed content of the book could be potentially utilized—or not—to the educational process.

Content of The Gay Science

Originally published in 1882 under the title “Die fröhliche Wissenschaft”, the first version of The Gay Science consisted of a poem collection, titled “Joke, Cunning and Revenge” (in this paper cited as JCR) and 342 integral texts (cited as §) comprising various contemplations. In 1887, the book was published again under the subtitle “la gaya scienza”, updated with a prologue (hereafter, PR), some additional texts—aphorisms—and another poem collection, named “Songs of a renounced Prince”. The title of the book stands for a “noble” poet society in Medieval Provence named “Consistory del Gai Saber” (Nietzsche, 2007, chapter Joyful Wisdom; see also Farré 2014). From this perspective, The Gay Science introduces its readers to the true virtues of chivalry. To this end, Nietzsche compiled his theoretical assumptions of humans’ instinctive behaviour and his epistemological demands for valid knowledge. Upon these foundations, he portrays his *noble ideal*, which includes unexpectedly, both heroism and mockery, both the passion for research and the love for disguise. Furthermore, he examines the potential effects of individual morality on the progress of society. From this contemplative path, Nietzsche derives the significance of the preservation of social order along with the imperative of destiny’s accomplishment.

The content of the book will be presented summarized in the following semantic categories: (1) *Theory of Knowledge*, (2) *The ideal of the Philosopher*, (3) *Social Order–Destiny’s accomplishment* and (4) *Will to superficiality*. Each unit of analysis is encountered across the entire content of the book and is highly interactive with the other. Although some spare texts and poems of the book cannot be classified in any semantic category, we believe that the current conceptual arrangement of the content adequately represents the evident, as much as the implicated meanings of the book.

Theory of knowledge

A significant part of the content of The Gay Science refers to the limits of human perception and to the history of the human struggle to understand the world and to obtain wisdom.³ All these texts appear to lead to the following query: How can one pursue the truth in a firm way? Nietzsche responded to that, by establishing his epistemological principles and his criteria for the validity of knowledge. These assumptions are essential to our interest, since theory of knowledge and its derivative research methodologies shape the theoretical fundaments of every scientific field; that is also, the field of Sciences of Education (Matsagouras 2003). Therefore,

³ GS, §: 11, 57, 109, 112, 121, 166, 196, 242, 249, 286, 301, 333, 374.

what kind of epistemological demands are encountered in *The Gay Science*? At first, the elementary and prerequisite feature of any scientific proposition is to be refutable.⁴ The methodology for verifying or rejecting a hypothesis is also mentioned in the content (§41, 344). Apparently, any scientific proposition is to be verified by experimental challenge. Hence, the more an assertion is testified, the more its certainty is consolidated (§46). Finally, and despite Nietzsche's aversion to any conclusive formulation of knowledge, the necessity of positivism in science is acknowledged (GS, §246).

In science, convictions have no right to citizenship, as one says with good reason: only when they decide to step down to the modesty of a hypothesis, a tentative experimental standpoint, a regulative fiction, may they be granted admission and even a certain value in the realm of knowledge - though always with the restriction that they remain under police supervision, under the police of mistrust.

§344, In what way we, too, are still pious.

The ideal of the philosopher

The "police of mistrust" in the above passage refers to one of the primary objectives of philosophy, that is to constantly dispute and review the validity of every knowledge. Consequently, since morality constitutes a predominant field of interest for philosophy, moral values are to be examined as well. Hence, in which way moral values are evaluated and what alternatives are proposed in *The Gay Science*? It is well known that Nietzsche denounced Christian morality or socialism and this view is also attested by the content of this work. Instead, he proclaimed a contrastive ideology, which is personified by the figure of the philosopher, the man of knowledge, who seeks what is truly beneficial for an individual. The philosopher is a person who constantly questions the existing values and is seeking for new ways of living. To this end, one has to follow his/her inherent passion for discovery and abandon his/her innate will for assuredness.⁵ Consequently, one must defy the "risks" of constant experimentation, since the subject of the survey is his/her own life. Therefore, and since the consequence of any potential failure of this research is naturally pain, the philosopher is often resembled with a hero (PR 3, §268, 283, 309, 318, 377, 382). Furthermore, the philosopher must successfully liberate his/her personal will, innate desire of possession and sense of superiority over others.⁶ These instincts are variations of Nietzsche's most noted concept of "will to power", which is identified as the original expression of the reviving instinct of life (§349). Therefore, its

⁴ GS, PR 3, §25, 33, 51, 265, 351.

⁵ GS, JCR: 1, 3, 7, 8, 12, 14, 21, 23, 28, 32, 40, 43, 49, 60, §: 18, 28, 29, 99, 113, 120, 124, 128, 185, 195, 285, 289, 303, 308, 314, 328, 329, 338, 343, 347, 375, 377.

⁶ GS, §: 4, 13, 14, 21, 118, 136, 143, 149, 195, 252, 283, 296, 328, 347, 349. It is probably well known that Nietzsche disdains woman nature and exclusively addresses his philosophy to men (GS, §: 66, 68, 70, 72, 119, 325), but we will not become further involved either in the sexism of his philosophy or his debatable antisemitism (§135, §135, §137).

delivery is a necessary precondition for achieving personal satisfaction and completeness. On occasion, Nietzsche also likens the will to possession with the same process of learning (GS, §14, 83, 283).

Build your cities on the slopes of Vesuvius! Send your ships into uncharted seas! Live in war with your peers and yourself!

§283, Preparatory human beings

So, could these features of the philosopher adequately replace the existed values of that time? Nietzsche explicitly refused to form any superior moral value and especially any categorical imperative. Instead, it appears that his optimal morality is defined *beyond* pure reason, similar to a constant inquiry and more accurately expressed by human art. For instance, his idea of Dionysian pessimism refers to any art that derives from the abundance of ferocious human impulses.⁷ In general, Nietzsche's philosophical pessimism aims to acknowledge humans' fruitless struggle to reach happiness and completeness. This "human inadequacy" is repeatedly reminded across the content of *The Gay Science* and constitutes a fundamental philosophical inquiry of this work.⁸ Therefore, we believe that any moral commandment that is encountered across its content should be regarded as inconclusive. Even so, in the following chapters, we will present some of the remaining and most distinguishing propositions of the book. There, apart from Nietzsche's best known quote "amor fati" and his theory of social order, the need for illusion and the ideal figure of the artist will unfold.

The ideal of a human, superhuman well-being and benevolence that will often enough appear inhuman [...] it is perhaps only with it that the great seriousness really emerges; that the real question mark is posed for the first time; that the destiny of soul changes; the hand of the clock moves forward; the tragedy begins.

§382, The great health

Social order and destiny's accomplishment

In *The Gay Science*, the imaginary personality of the philosopher is also delineated within its social context. In this way, its virtues are examined with respect to their contribution to the community. Nietzsche classifies the individuals of society according to the quality of their mental attributes, into *noble* people or people of the *mass* (GS, § 3, 10, 20, 31, 39, 40, 149, 186). Similarly to his past work "On the future of our educational institutes" (Nietzsche 2006, pp. 101, 189), this classification is justified as a natural law of society. This unchanging order should not be considered as the pre-decided future of an individual, but mostly as a kind of social determinism or an a priori existence of roles in a social group (GS, §3, 20, 31, 39,

⁷ GS, JCR 10, 47, §89, 93, 105, 342, 370; TBT, An Attempt at Self Criticism.

⁸ §98, 124, 335, 342, 344, 346, 356, 366 382. Similar to Nehamas's interpretation on Nietzsche's objection to the absolutism of morality (Johnson 1996, p. 29).

40, 356). The heroic man of knowledge is destined to serve the minority of noble people. However, what is ultimately highlighted is the preservation of social order for the “survival” of the community. Hence, noble people must acknowledge the importance of the mass and compromise on their role, as the exceptional minority of the society (GS, §1, 4, 55, 76). In this way, they can contribute to the continuity of their community or in more general view, to the survival of humanity. Therefore, according to our analysis so far, the title of the book and its reference to “nobility”, this sociological approach should be considered as one of The Gay Science’s principal propositions.

Moreover, this social theory appears to correlate with the moral commandment of destiny’s accomplishment. In particular, similar to noble people, Nietzsche invoked every unique person to fulfil his or her destiny, in order to contribute to the prosperity of its society. In other words, if everyone completed his/her *ontological purpose*,—in an Aristotelian way⁹—then society would consequently fulfil its potential (§ 23, 99, 279, 335). In this meaning, Pindar’s proverb “to become who you are”, was familiarized by Nietzsche (§270) and, less closely, the principle of “amor fati” was stated (§276). Therefore, and regarding our argumentation so far, we believe destiny’s accomplishment comprises another principal philosophical proposition of The Gay Science. Under this perspective, noble people and the mass coexist; bravery, hesitation, will to power and all the mental attributes, that were presented in the previous unity, are justified.

For the poet and the wise all things are loved and saint, all experiences useful,
all days sacred, all human divine!
Title’s epigram, 1882

Will to superficiality

While the origin of the title of The Gay Science unveils one of its major communication priorities, another principal proposition, a literally joyful ideal, equally explains the “joy of the science”. Sometimes described as a necessity and sometimes as an inherent feature of human behaviour, *playacting* and, generally, *art* have been revised through their correspondences with intellectual life. In particular, music is occasionally referred to as a learning memory trick (§84, 106), theatre, a way of self-comprehension (§78) and both of them, as a necessary relief from emotional tension (§84, 368). Most commonly though, art is appreciated for its contribution to the apprehension of our human existence. This view is relevant to the concept of humans’ inadequacy to understand the world, solely by pure reason (see The ideal of the philosopher). In this way, the value of superficiality is justified for its significance in life and accordingly, a necessary detachment from life’s philosophical examination is being proposed in The Gay Science.¹⁰ This distancing from the rationalization of life prevents ‘the philosopher’ from being deterred by the inconclusiveness of

⁹ As Aristotle defines “entelechy” (On the soul, 412a). Maybe in this meaning, Zarathustra’s final words could be explained: “Do I strive after happiness? I strive after my work!” (TSZ, Fourth part, the sign).

¹⁰ GS, JCR 2, 4, PR 4, §: 59, 60, 77, 79, 80, 107, 158, 256, 284, 299, 383.

human's existential queries. In this way, the appreciation of superficiality eventually helps with the preservation of the passion for questing the truth.¹¹ Thus, if the heroic 'ideal of the philosopher' conveys the spirit of pessimism, it is upon this concept of 'will to superficiality' that *Nietzsche's philosophical optimism* lies, in our opinion.

To stop bravely at the surface, the fold, the skin; to worship appearance, to believe in shapes, tones, words – in the whole Olympus of appearance! Those Greeks were superficial – out of profundity!
Prologue 4

As it appears from the above, the concept of will to superficiality is equivalent to the Apollonian expression of art, which was originally presented in *The Birth of Tragedy* (Prologue, chapters 3, 5, 25). However, *The Gay Science* is distinguished by its acknowledgement of joy and laughter, which mainly stands for a conventional expression of personal will and a diminution of morality's rigorousness¹² (§ 16, 92, 153, 200, 335, 338). Therefore, if the unification of Dionysus and Apollo gives birth to tragedy in his preceding work, in *The Gay Science* it generates the art of comedy. Respectively, if tragedy praises and deifies humans' existential struggle, then comedy mocks in a sense and nullifies this dramatic agony. Thus, regarding the title, the concluding text of the book and the epigram of the title of the second edition, we could assume that this 'will to superficiality' concept is justifiably one of *The Gay Science's* major propositions.

However, as I finally slowly, slowly paint this gloomy question mark¹³ and I am still willing to remind my readers of the virtues of reading in the right way – oh, what forgotten and unknown virtues - It strikes me that I hear all around myself most malicious, cheerful, hobgoblin – like laughter : “We can't stand it anymore! Stop, stop this raven – black music [...] Let us rather strike up more pleasant, more joyous tones!” Does it please you now my impatient friends? Well then, who wouldn't like to please you?
§383, Epilogue

The educational interest of *The Gay Science*

Presenting *The Gay Science's* major philosophical propositions allows us to further examine their educational interest. To summarize, Nietzsche's theory on knowledge and his assumptions on human's instinctive, behavioural characteristics, define the moral and ontological edges of his philosophical principles. The inconclusiveness of human optimal morality in respect to humans' incapability to fully understand their existence, is denoted. Following the example of the ideal of the philosopher,

¹¹ “We need to discover the fool as much as the hero, in order to preserve our passion for knowledge” (§107, Our ultimate gratitude to art).

¹² This devaluation is consistent to the inconclusiveness of knowledge, which was explained previously.

¹³ In response to §346, Our question mark and §382, The great health.

preserving social order, accomplishing one's destiny and loving the superficial are the most distinguishing moral suggestions of the content of *The Gay Science*. Therefore, and in line with our original enquiry, is there any educational significance in these propositions and how can they be embodied into the educational process?

Theory of knowledge and epistemological awareness

Nietzsche's theory of knowledge and his epistemology are essential to the purpose of this paper, even if they are less highlighted among the studies of his philosophy. In fact, his epistemological reference seems to merge philosophy with the scientific field of education, in this way responding to one of the paper's principal inquiries. In particular, as far as the methodology of research and knowledge-certifying criteria concern both philosophy and education, it is on this ground that these two fields coincide (Matsagouras 2003; Reboul 2002). Without doubt, human morals are typically the predominant field of study of both philosophy and education. However, society's right to self-define the moral objectives of its education, should be equally regarded as undeniable. Therefore, epistemology constitutes a unique, common field of study of both philosophy and Sciences of Education. Consequently, epistemological awareness and methodology of research should be regarded as prerequisite features of teachers' education. Considering also the significance of critical thought and the ability to "learn how to learn" for children's mental development, epistemology and methodology of research should be considered as an essential objective of their education too. Besides, this purpose is widely introduced in the curricula of modern schools. Thus, in which way could the education of students or teachers benefit from the epistemological principles of *The Gay Science*?

In the first unit of our analysis, *refutability* and the experimental *validation* of knowledge have been identified as the most significant epistemological demands of the content of *The Gay Science*. Additionally, the principle of the predefined hypothesis in research methodology is also suggested by the book. In these terms, we would propose the introduction of an epistemological paradigm, similar to the theory of *Critical Rationalism* (Thornton 2021) on educational practice. Indeed, is it not fundamental for any student, with respect to his/her age, to be familiarized with this methodology—aside from any kind of methodology—for validating his propositions? This objective has been partially marked by Gregory (2001) too and we believe our study further consolidates its significance. Gregory suggests that a Nietzschean approach on education would emphasize on the preparation of children's ability to dispute knowledge. Additionally, his study proposes the cultivation of intuitive knowledge and the utilization of paradox concepts, as means of succeeding this aim. In summary, a rudimentary introduction of *Critical Rationalism* into the objectives of elementary schools would be advised by the content of *The Gay Science*. This would emphasize though, the importance of training teachers in this particular domain of philosophy.

Therefore, for teachers, how much advantageous would it be to incorporate the preceding epistemological suggestions? In resultant, a teacher would pursue to

challenge the validity of every knowledge by assessing the sufficiency of the empirical data that support it; and verifying its refutability too.¹⁴ This would consequently result to the development of a scientific cautiousness upon educational matters. Moreover, educators would adapt a constant reserve upon their everyday assessments in school life. Truly, children's way of thinking, behaviour and all the factors that affect the progress of a school lesson, constitute a very unstable totality of high complexity. The acknowledgement of its *precariousness* would be at least a small but firm step towards our awareness as educators. Hence, the precautious teaching profile, which suits to this awareness, could be ultimately protective for children and convenient for the stability of their learning environment.

Finally, it would be inexcusable to omit a notice on religious education, from the book where "God's death" was originally announced. So, how can we utilize the theoretical approach of Nietzsche on knowledge in the classroom, when religious faith is included in the discourse? In fact, when the typical question "*Does God exist?*" is posed, Nietzsche's dialectic on knowledge—combined with his inquiry on the inconclusiveness of humans' morality—could be unexpectedly supportive of the existence of the supernatural being! In particular, epistemology could help teachers to distinguish scientific knowledge from metaphysical wondering, at the same time justifying the value of the latter. This is especially true when they have to manage children's primitive logical queries, which in their majority appear to be explicitly deniable to any transcendental supposition! Therefore, the theory of knowledge could support the development of a self-consciousness of the finite nature of human perception and the limits of valid knowledge, but also of the need to go beyond the rational thinking approach to life's matters. In our opinion, the feeling of being able or to be able to understand the world and manage our existence constitutes a principal human question, upon which one's dignity and well-being significantly depends. This personal comment is one of the most essential of our inspirations from Nietzsche's philosophy.

The ideal of the philosopher and respect for individuality

The review of the theory of knowledge offers significant pedagogic conclusions, despite being less highlighted, among the studies of the educational value of Nietzsche's philosophy. By contrast, numerous studies have already proposed introducing Nietzsche's philosopher's ideal in education (Irwin 2003; Mintz 2004; Fitzsimons 2007, pp. 55–70; Jonas 2010; Yacek 2014). Therefore, it has been extensively analysed and we will provide a short summary of its potential applications on the educational process. In particular, the value of self-integrity has been related to the educational demands of respecting *student's individuality* and developing critical thought. Learning through personal experience (as in Small 2016)

¹⁴ In respect to this view, shouldn't our universities strive for the systematic evaluation and organization of our vast research data in the field of Sciences of Education? Certainly, we do not intend to propose a prevalence of Positivism in our universities, but the need to maintain a balance among all the epistemological examples in the field of science.

and the significance of struggle in learning (Jonas 2010; Kameas and Almpanidis 2014; Yacek 2019) are obviously implied as well. Additionally, we could suggest that Nietzsche's assumptions about the inherent types of human's mental behaviour could be valuable to be examined further. Especially, his theory of the will to power could be fairly significant for educators' knowledge about human psychology; that is both adult and children psychology. The will of possession, the desire of dominance or the need of feeling superior are expressed frequently in classes. Their potential relevance to aggressiveness could be vital for our educational interest, considering the recognized violent incidents that occur within schools and other social environments.

To conclude, Nietzsche's insightful observations on human behaviour and his concept of the ideal philosopher could be fairly interesting in further examination. However, his radical anti-conformism ultimately leaves us with the following doubt. In total, does not this ideal overestimate the value of personal will and possessive instincts for human mental health and happiness? Instead, we believe it disregards the significance of tenderness, communication and a sense of belonging. At least, when we are addressed to the students in the early stages of education.

Social order–destiny's accomplishment and antidemocratic education

The features of the philosopher represent a fairly liberal ideal for education. Its sociological approach, however, has been loudly disputed by most of Nietzsche's scholars. His view of a predefined social minority that is capable of achieving the virtues of the philosopher has been criticized as antidemocratic and incompatible with modern education (Fitzsimons 2007, pp. 55–70). Obviously, the supposed inequality among the learning capabilities of students should not be misinterpreted as antidemocratic. This is a fact and it vindicates Nietzsche's defendants against criticism his antidemocratic views (Rosenow 1973; Yacek 2014; Jonas 2018). However, the equal right to be educated, as in a democratically established education, would be totally ignored in a hypothetical incorporation of Nietzschean philosophy; this should not be disregarded when evaluating the educational significance of his philosophy. In parallel, the concept of the accomplishment of destiny sheds more light upon this social view of Nietzsche's educational perspectives.

The accomplishment of destiny could be defined as *entelechy* or fulfilment of one's ontological purpose. This could be considered to be identical to education's fundamental objective, that is to develop all possible human capabilities of a child¹⁵ (Debesse and Mialaret 1980). However, the simultaneously antidemocratic and anti-pedagogical feature of this philosophical proposition lies with the unrestricted way of expressing human nature. In our view, Nietzsche's concept is fallible in that it underrates the influence of *human's reason* on a person's defining his/her own nature, as it is referred to among sociobiological bibliography (Dawkins 2008, Chap. 11; Maturana and Varela 1992, Chap. 10; Tzani 2006, p. 57). In other words,

¹⁵ As in one of education's etymological origin, from the Latin *educere*, that is, "to extract" (Koumanoudis 1972).

an imperative of destiny's accomplishment can be interpreted as a *degradation of reason*, implying a human's submission to his/her fate. This submission to fate may not lead to a withdrawal from life, as Stolz (2017) accurately mentions, yet still, in our opinion, it translates to a devaluation of human volition. Certainly, fate is superior to reason, if they are considered to be a law of nature and human suppositions of reality, respectively; that is, any human supposition of reality. However, any social structure is to be established on these suppositions of human reason or, more likely "the vowed just of gods to be co-weaved by the laws of state" (Kechagias 2009, p. 656; also see: Kechagias and Antoniou 2019). For these reasons, we believe that the adaptation of this part of Nietzsche's philosophy on education should be strongly questioned when attempted.

Will to superficiality and sentimental needs

In this final category of analysis, a highly representative concept of the content of *The Gay Science* will be revised. As has been foretold, its educational potential could be more advantageous and more suitable to adopt in a school environment. So, what kind of educational conclusions could be deducted from the referenced "love for the untrue" and the needed detachment from the knowledge quest? The will to superficiality appears to demonstrate the necessity of *aesthetic cultivation* in education (as in Stolz 2017; Malafanti 2005). This necessity is equivalent to one of education's principal objectives, that is the *pluralistic development of students' inner capabilities*¹⁶ (Hellenic Republic 1985, p. 167). In addition, it is in agreement with the principal argument of the STEAM movement that arts in education eventually enhance the engagement of students with all school activities (Allina 2018). In a more general view, the will to superficiality concept could be translated as an alert against every educational attempt that is strictly orientated towards reason development, disregarding its receivers' sentimental needs. Therefore, and as far as sentimental development matters in education equally as the growth of sensibility (as in Piaget and Inhelder 1990; Pestalozzi 1900), this direction should be regarded as essential for our educational systems.

Furthermore, this needed detachment from the rationalization of education could be potentially incorporated in more different ways. In particular, apart from an indispensable purpose of fully developing children, it could be utilized as a *communication strategy* for educators. In our analysis, this concept represented a diminution of morality's rigorosity, a conventional expression of personal will, and in total, an indispensable retention of merriness in life. Accordingly, a temporary detachment from seriousness, an appealing metaphor, a joyful attitude or diversification could be for example some of the proposed teaching features for a successful beginning

¹⁶ Stolz (2017) also demonstrates the necessity of art for the educational process, in a hypothetical adaptation of Nietzsche philosophy to education, in the terms that culture can potential provoke an existential revelation to an educated person.

in the classroom.¹⁷ In addition, any teaching plan that would operate as a *sentimental deposit* against the frustration of learning could be deducted. Even a promising reward could be ironically tolerated by this interpretation of Nietzsche's work. In general, a communication strategy that conventionally provokes excitement and is addressed to the sentimental context of the classroom would be advised here. These teaching features could be essential for attracting students' attention and preparing their readiness for learning. That is the necessary condition for the success of any teaching endeavour. Moreover, this way of communication encourages volitional participation, in a non-competitive way and is in agreement then with the cultivation of a cooperative learning environment in schools. In our opinion, this should be regarded as an essential aspiration for educators, to which, this kind of Nietzsche's incorporation in schools is mostly suitable.

It should be noted that this kind of adaptation of Nietzsche's philosophy is partially opposed to what is named across the bibliography as the "escapism of struggle" (Yacek 2019, p. 82) or the "value of suffering" (Jonas 2010). To respond to this, we should mention that "learning struggle" is also affirmed by our current analysis. The concept of the will to superficiality has been described as supplementary to the ideal of the philosopher and accordingly to the acceptance of adversities in the experimentation with knowledge. Thus, it does not refute the adversities in the "construction" of knowledge. In addition, Yacek's study is solely focussed on the review of *The Birth of Tragedy*. Some contradictions then could be explained by the difference in the bibliographical references of our essays. Correspondingly to this discourse, Bojesen (2018) justifies the optimism of Nietzsche's philosophy. In particular, Bojesen argues that Nietzsche's optimism lies on the acceptance of unpleasing conditions of in life and on the overcoming of the frustration they cause. The ability of responding to these adversities of life is the fundament of happiness; Therefore, even if Bojesen emphasizes more on the value of life's adversities in compare to our analysis,¹⁸ we believe his view is in agreement with the perspective of Nietzsche's philosophy that we suggest. Nevertheless, this philosophical concept could be disputed, in its implied derivation of immoralism. This could potentially occur, if happiness and well-being are overvalued. This should be marked as a warning limit of its utilization.

To conclude, the concept of will to superficiality could be perceived in general, as a recommendation for preventing learning's discouragement and avoiding the one-sided, reason-developing orientation of education. The main teaching strategies that should be incorporated are to preserve learners' sentimental stability and to activate their learning readiness by instilling happiness in their learning environment.

¹⁷ As in Aristotle's: "for the young in age, nothing unpleasant is volitionally tolerable" (Politics, 1964).

¹⁸ Bojesen (2018) is mostly referred to Nietzsche's late notebooks in order to justify his optimism. In *The Gay Science*, "happiness and pleasure" are valued equally with struggle and endangerment.

Concluding remarks

This analysis of the content of *The Gay Science* brought out its most favourable propositions to incorporate into the educational process. To our view, Nietzsche's thoughts for valid knowledge and the value of superficiality constitute the most interesting parts of the content. In search of their educational significance, we have reached to the following major conclusions: (1) a suggestion for *teachers' education*, (2) an *educational objective* for schools and (3) a proposing *teaching strategy*. We have also expressed our concerns about Nietzsche's social theory and we have marked his psychological assumptions for further examination.

- (1) We proposed the introduction of Nietzsche's epistemological principles into teachers' education. Rejecting or verifying a hypothesis by experimental research composes the suggested researching methodology for incorporation. The feature of refutability and the quality of empirical data constitute the scientific criteria for the validation of knowledge. We believe that the comprehension of this epistemological paradigm could optimize teachers' ability to assess both scientific knowledge and school reality.
- (2) In the first part of our study, we proposed an implicated optimism of Nietzsche's philosophy, in relation to his philosophical concept of will to superficiality. The incorporation of this concept in education highlights the significance of aesthetic cultivation in children education. In general, this concept stands for an arguable warning against the one-sided, reason-developing orientation of education. Instead, it is supportive of the pluralistic development of children.
- (3) We have also concluded to a teaching strategy for educators with respect to will to superficiality concept. In particular, we proposed a strategy that aims to prepare students' learning readiness and to prevent their potential learning discouragement. The main techniques to this end would be to provoke students' emotional involvement and to instil happiness on their learning environment.

Apart from the suggested incorporation of *The Gay Science* in education, we have also marked Nietzsche's insightful observations on human psychology for further examination. In particular, his theory of will to power would be fairly interesting to be examined further, in respect to its psychological significance; even if it conveys an excess anti-conformism, in our opinion. Ultimately, we attempted to reveal that Nietzsche's theory of social order and society's destiny could be partially inconsistent with a modern, democratically established education. A hypothetical adaptation of these propositions could implicate an indifference to learning inequalities or a devaluation of society's political right of self-establishment. Nietzsche's thought appears to balance between the edges of human Reason and Fate. Nevertheless, we believe that this essay clearly marks the permitted edges of *The Gay Science*'s adaptation to education and highlights its most applicable suggestions as well.

To conclude with, we believe that this paper proposes an incorporation of Nietzsche's philosophy in education, that is consistent to the educational standards of our modern society. An approach on educational matters, that is focussed on the

multisided development of children and it experiments with knowledge in a both meaningful and playful manner. Perhaps, in the same way that Nietzsche intelligently likened the learning process, with a trick of deceit. An approach that is both playful “an X out of a double V”, and scientific “a real, proper X”, so that it encourages children to formulate their own hypothetical suggestions of reality.

“[...] the great teacher of suspicion that turns a U into an X, a real, proper X, that is the penultimate letter, before the final one...”

Prologue 3

Funding No funding support has been granted for this research.

Data availability The datasets analysed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declarations

Conflict of interest On behalf of all authors, the corresponding author declares that there is no conflict or competing interest in this research.

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