

## Editorial

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The present 13<sup>th</sup> issue of the *Multidisciplinary Journal of School Education* is the first one to be co-edited by the Jesuit University Ignatianum in Krakow and the Abat Oliba CEU University in Barcelona. It was prepared by an enlarged Editorial Board in collaboration with a large international team of authors and reviewers, to whom we are greatly indebted. One readjustment we have made with an eye to the Spanish and Latin American educational researchers and practitioners is including occasional texts in Spanish, while maintaining English – the most widespread medium of international communication – as the main language of the journal. We are continuing the journal's tradition of publishing thematic issues, featuring original research articles related to school education. However, we have also added a new section which contains miscellaneous articles in the field of school education, which do not fall within the scope of the current thematic section but are nonetheless timely and worth publishing. The last section, Reviews and Reports, includes book reviews and conference reports. We are also going to develop this section by soliciting teachers' reports and reflections on their pedagogical practices. The next issue will hopefully inaugurate the publication of such texts.

The main theme of the current issue is 'The Central Role of Narration in Education'. As a subject of discussion it dates back to antiquity. One of the earliest formulations of what we might call the epistemological potential of a fictitious tale was Aristotle's idea of mimesis. Understood as an imitation of reality in general, and human reality in particular, mimesis provides us with a basic explanation of why and how a set of invented events and acts carried out by invented characters may nevertheless efficiently convey some nonfictional truths concerning human behavior and human nature, moral nature included. Artistic and, particularly, literary illustrations of basic truths concerning the individual and social development of a person do not only supply valid and penetrating insights into

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moral reality, but also deeply touch the affective and motivational dimension of the recipient. Powerful artistic works do this in a distinct though mysterious way, called *catharsis* by Aristotle. In his view, the identification of the recipient with the character (compassion) would entail a fear of the consequences of the protagonist's tragic error and thus generate in a reader a desire to avoid such a mistake in his or her own life. Is this not what one is invited to feel when seeing the consequences of the lazy and short-sighted behavior of the grasshopper in Aesop's fable *The Ant and the Grasshopper*? Or when contemplating the terrible consequences of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth's disordered ambition for power and honor? Or, yet more recently, the definitive collapse and eventual self-destruction of Dorian Gray as a consequence of his adoption of a neo-hedonistic, socially insouciant and unscrupulous lifestyle? Examples could be multiplied nearly *ad infinitum* and they, certainly, would not exhaust all the possibilities of grasping the pedagogical potential of fictitious narrative work. For example, surprisingly enough, in his *Poetics*, Aristotle does not even mention the possibility of educating moral character through a positive example, i.e. obtaining in the reader the effect of desiring to imitate a virtuous character rather than avoiding the negative consequences of a vicious one, which seems to be an evident possibility too.

The vindication of the abovementioned educational potential of art and literature was heavily questioned and resolutely refuted by most of the twentieth century schools of literary theory and analysis, such as diverse formalism, structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstructivism, etc. Nonetheless, some authors like Paul Ricoeur, even in those times that were unfavorable for such types of theoretical approach, patiently developed a neo-Aristotelian theory, including the concept of triple mimesis (cf. Ricoeur, *Time and Narration*). More recently, some influential Anglo-Saxon theorists, such as Alasdair MacIntyre, Kristján Kristjánsson or David Carr (whose paper 'Narrative, Knowledge and Moral Character in Art and Literature' we are proud to present in this issue of our journal), have made outstanding contributions to upholding and refreshing the proposition of the central role of narration in the development of moral character, and, in a broader sense, in most aspects and at all stages of the

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education process in general. This has been established both theoretically and practically (cf. The Knightly Virtues Project of the Jubilee Centre for Character and Virtue).

The reading of this issue of the *Multidisciplinary Journal of School Education* will, therefore, provide the reader with intellectually inspiring material for reflection and further development of both theoretical and practical inquiries into this ancient and, at the same time, incredibly current challenge of recognizing, understanding and using the breathtaking educational potential of literary narrations.

Paweł Kaźmierczak  
Marcin Kaźmierczak