

Autobiographical Methodologies

The autobiography as self-care

By Andrea Ciantar

- The autobiographical methodologies are, since many years, a very important teaching method in non-formal and informal adult education

The story of the social and cultural aspects of autobiography:

- technologies of the self (Foucault);
- technology of writing;
- paradigms of identity.

Technologies of the self (Foucault);

- All those actions that “*permit individuals to effect by their own means, or with the help of others, a certain number of operations on their own bodies and souls, thoughts, conduct, and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom, perfection, or immortality.*”

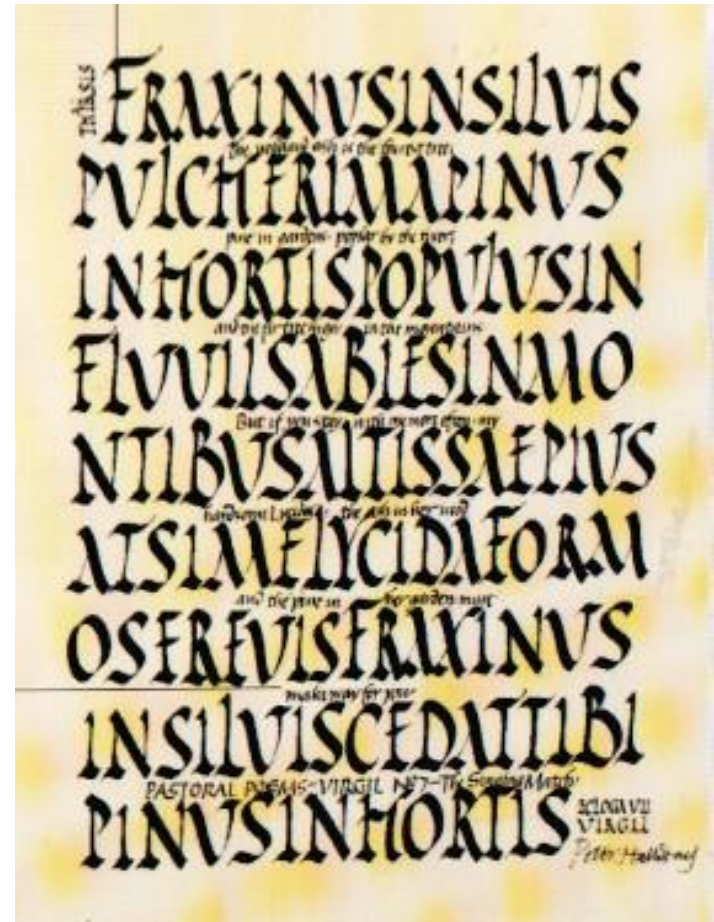
- write letters and the diary in greek Roman culture, as a form of self-knowledge...
- Write the story as self-examination, to search for the divine (St. Augustine)...
- Write as a research of an individual meaning of life (Proust)...

The individual find, more and more is in itself,
the reasons for being...

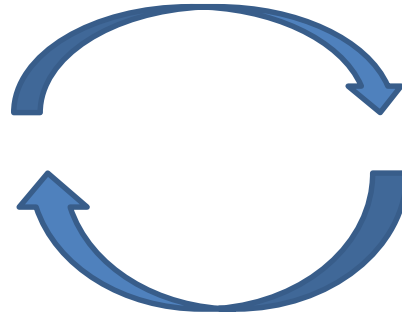
Technology of writing

- The writing technologies become, through the centuries, a common heritage (from the Scriba, to the scriptura continua, to the use of punctuation, in the twelfth century...)

(A. Smorti, 1998)



- The act of write the autobiography has had different meaning depending of the cultural paradigm...

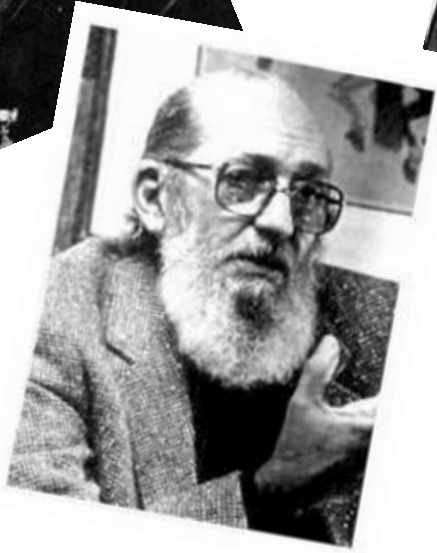


- But it has also influenced the culture itself

In modern adult education:

Autobiographical approach and importance of
the experience of the person...

Learning throughout life...



- *“I saw life, real human life, as it is lived in this world, and saw at once that to be enlightened, to live a useful and enjoyable human life, most people did not need books at all, but only a genuinely kind heart, sound common sense, a kind good ear, a kind good mouth, and then liveliness to talk with really enlightened people, who would be able to arouse their interest and show them how human life appears when the light shines upon it.”*

(Nicolai Frederik Grundtvig, 1856)

The autobiography as self-care

I remember...

- The mere fact of beginning to remember and talk about one's recollections is the first step towards valorizing the person
- It means discovering that one's possesses a unique living legacy

- *“The author of an autobiography gives himself the job of narrating his own history; what he sets out to do is to reassemble the scattered elements of his individual life and to regroup them in a comprehensive sketch”*

(Gusdorf, 1980)

Variety of Autobiographical narrative forms

Greater forms

- autobiography, memoirs
- epistolary
- journal, diary

Lesser forms

- personal notes, blogs, letters and e-mails, etc. when stating private feelings and thoughts about oneself.
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- “Although autobiographies and journals are at the core of writing about oneself, we trace all types of narrator-focused writing – short, epigrammatic, formal, in prose or poetic – to the “autobiographical genre”.

(Demetrio, Borgonovi, 2005)

The reasons for the autobiographical education:

- Meta-cognitive aspect
- Revitalization aspect
- Heuristic aspect
- Training aspect
- Aspect of change

(Formenti 1998)

Methods to facilitate effective autobiographical paths

- The emergence of recollection: memory list
- Towards the plot: memories of significant events; these memories can then create a sequence or a kind of order, so constructing such a possible plot of our story...

- Some examples of types of memories:

Encounters: in each life story encounters with other persons are a source of change...

Moment of life connected with the main spheres of human life: love, work, play- leisure, death...

Turning points, where there have been significant changes

...

Wounds, moments of success ...

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