Chapter 13
The Good Teacher in the Good School:
Case Studies to Improve Education and Training of Future Italian Teachers

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ABSTRACT

The two authors of this chapter work at the Department of Ancient and Modern Civilization of the University of Messina and both have been appointed by their Department to teach two modules (Fundamentals of Cultural Anthropology and Philosophical Anthropology) of 6 CFUs (European credit transfer system credits) each for the FIT program. Both gave their lectures in the second semester of 2018 to approximately 850 future teachers. Their modules are part of phase one of the three we have mentioned above, that is, preparation for the degree that allows access to teaching. This involves the collection of 24 CFUs which are to be collected in the anthropological and psycho-pedagogic disciplines. Based on fieldwork and participant observation, which lasted three months and until December 2018, this chapter suggests a view to understanding the new Italian educational system through what we have first seen from within our own classrooms, and later through what we will see following the teachers in their own classrooms in September (classrooms and teachers which we have already identified).

INTRODUCTION

In late May 2018, Mauro Geraci, a famous Sicilian *cantastorie* (storyteller) and Professor of Cultural anthropology and ethnology at the University of Messina, recorded the ballad *ApproFITtango* on the FIT (Formazione Iniziale Tirocinio, Inizial Training Internship), the new Italian training teacher system. Since 1990, Mauro Geraci has produced an intense ethnographic study on Sicilian folk and popular poetry, engaging in a critical exam of the anthropological and historic questions related to poetic and musical activities, such as the literary, performative and moral perspectives of the so-called *pueti-cantastorii* (Sicilian for story-singers). His studies resulted in the publication of the first systematic anthropological monograph dedicated to the *cantastorii* of Southern Italy (Geraci, 1997). However, such a research activity was so deep and intense for the anthropologist that, on the one hand he was slowly transformed into his own anthropological research topic, on the other hand he became the continuator and interpreter of poetry, literature, performance and philosophy of the Italian storytellers.

Geraci was not new to similar musical creations, having already denounced, through music, illegalities, youth problems, political violence, mafias and terrorism. It was indeed part of an old tradition that uses music and rhyme to talk about contemporary problems. However, Geraci had been a university teacher in a teacher training program, teaching courses in this area in the last two decades and thus encountering reforms and counter-reforms that had affected the sector. What pushed him to write a ballad about the new Italian training teacher system was his participation as a member of the examination commissions which were chaired by the two authors of this chapter. Such was his amazement at the modalities of the examination, the content of the questions and, above all, the impact that the examination would have on the career of the participants that he decided to document a number of structural problems of the teacher training system in Italy.

Hence Geraci, with his ballad that denounces the superficiality of the FIT training path, added to the vitriolic debate about the question of the *buona scuola* (good school) in Italy. His ballad used the lens of participant observation and his professional knowledge of the setbacks and misfortunes of the Italian educational system.

What follows aims to shed light on the new Italian educational system. The authors were influenced by the ballad Geraci composed as both authors viewed themselves and their students in each stanza and heard them through its. The musical writing of a ballad was utilized as a means to reflect on the contemporary conditions of the Italian school system. It was also a way to show how teachers (of every order and degree) could be involved in the formulation of a training path that aims at training teachers while responding to educational challenges. Teaching is about complex social

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