

### 3.1 People “of Passage”: An Intercultural Educator’s Interpretation of Diversity and Cultural Identity in Italy

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The invitation to contribute a chapter to the section on ethnography represents a good opportunity to reflect on my teaching and researching in the field of intercultural education that has always been characterized by considerable attention to Italian “everyday diversity.” On the one hand it has given me the chance to retrace my evolving interpretations of what I learned during fieldwork I conducted, between 1999 and 2001, among a number of families of Veneto *attrazionisti viaggianti*<sup>1</sup> (the Italian official denomination of those who are elsewhere known as *forains*, fairground; circus or show people; travellers or occupational travellers). On the other hand it demonstrates how those interpretations not only evolved but also affected what I did, how I did it, and the conclusions I drew.

The notion of interculture—and its variants, interculturalism and interculturality—originated in the 1980s from the concern of European institutions such as the Council of Europe about the climate of prejudice and even racism that a growing number of immigrants and refugees experienced after settling in various European nation states. In particular, the European legislation of the 1970s, which had acknowledged the right of migrant pupils and students to learn the language and culture of origin, was in the following decade complemented by further Council of

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<sup>1</sup>The English translation (traveling attractionist) will from now on be used throughout this chapter. Since the first presentation of fieldwork findings (Gobbo 2001a), I am aware—thanks to Michael Herzfeld’s notice—that “attractionist” is my own linguistic invention, but I intend to maintain it in order to underline the constitutive, and special, connection that this mobile occupational minority has with attractions, the “tools” of their work. This aspect is also recognized by Italian legislation (Law 337/1968) that defines the members of this occupational minority as proprietor of traveling attraction (*esercente di attrazione viaggiante*).

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Europe's recommendations that migrants be recognized as *cultural subjects* and not only as labor force, and that diversity—whether cultural, linguistic, or religious—be the focus of educational attention and the lever of a new school approach.<sup>2</sup> By inviting and supporting a reflective approach to different cultural and/or religious ways and beliefs, intercultural discourse and practice aim to contest and deconstruct stereotypes, prejudices, and racism as well as to understand and explain processes of identity construction and transformation by taking notice of the critical learning that diversity can engender, and of the cultural changes in the second generations born and growing up within the majority context.

As Italy became an immigrant-receiving nation, intercultural entered Italian educational discourse and policies from the early 1990s, characterizing both educational research at the university level and also the collaboration between the latter and teachers; it was perceived that the country and its schools were progressively changing and ready to be redefined as multicultural, while the unforeseen diversities of the new pupils and students were interpreted by educational researchers and the Ministry of Education<sup>3</sup> as an asset and an educational resource for the education of *all* learners.<sup>4</sup> Intercultural education was seen as capable of promoting processes of mutual recognition and positive interaction among culturally diverse individuals, instead of intolerance, exclusion, or racism, as well as of problematizing the meanings of diversity in the light of the Italian and European histories.

As an intercultural educator, I thought it worthwhile and relevant to connect intercultural, and its goals, to an anthropological perspective honed by the minorities' protest movements of the 1960s in the USA that I had observed as a student at the University of California, Berkeley. There, the demand for recognition of cultural and ethnic diversity and identity arose and grew among minority *citizens* and aimed to redefine the symbolic meaning and political import of cultural diversity and identity, as well as their essential connection with social and educational justice. Since then, the term "multiculturalism" (initially perceived as critical of American political and social history; see Schlesinger 1992) has become part of our everyday vocabulary. The debate on *culture* as what is taught and learned through the process of enculturation (namely, learning before, during, and even against schooling), and on *identity* (as the radical interrogation of genealogy, biology, history, and society) that in the late 1960s went on at Berkeley in and off the university campus, eventually led me first to Oakland to study a local movement for "community control" (see Gobbo 1977a) and then to the Anthropology Department where I was a student of the late John U. Ogbu and where I was encouraged to pursue my interests in Italian internal or everyday diversities (as I would later call them), by studying them through the anthropological "lens" and ethnographic fieldwork. In the USA, the protest movements of the end of the 1960s had

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<sup>2</sup>See Projet n. 7a 1981–1986; Projet n. 7b 1983; Projet n. 7c 1988; Leclercq 2002; Gobbo 2004a; Council of Europe 2008.

<sup>3</sup>See [http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/normativa/2006/allegati/cm24\\_06all.pdf](http://archivio.pubblica.istruzione.it/normativa/2006/allegati/cm24_06all.pdf), or [www.miur.it](http://www.miur.it).

<sup>4</sup>See, for example, Ongini 2011; Gobbo 2011, 2008, 2000, 1992; Gobbo and Ricucci 2011; Gobbo et al. 2011; Ongini and Nosenghi 2009; and Omodeo 2002, among others.

strengthened a line of theoretical and ethnographic research—the sector of anthropology of education—that cultural anthropologists and anthropologically oriented educators had inaugurated since the mid-1950s,<sup>5</sup> overturning, among other things, the prevailing interpretation of minorities’ inequality of opportunities and lack of educational success as due either to their social and/or cultural “disadvantage” or cultural “deprivation.”

The theory of *cultural discontinuity* was anthropologists’ early important contribution for interpreting the minorities’ failure and dis-investment in schooling, and for further acknowledging the latter as a form of resistance, in the name of a group’s cultural identity and diversity as it was noticed how, in contemporary societies, the processes of enculturation often compete or conflict with the cultural orientation of national education systems. In Italy, for instance,

The richly differentiated fabric of languages and cultural ways characterizing [the country] had been consistently ignored by educational authorities since the political unification of the country in 1861. (...) For almost a century, the pursuit of national unification and the construction of a national culture required that the regional and dialect differences be overcome. (Gobbo 2012b, p. 152)

The realization that an emphasis on cultural discontinuity could, on the one hand, represent the different cultures as more homogeneous and distinct than they usually are and, on the other, legitimize the belief that all minorities respond to schooling in the same way and that every minority culture breeds educational failure is at the origin of the theory elaborated by John U. Ogbu. His theory seemed to me especially suited for intercultural educators as it invites them to look at cultural differences as enmeshed in the web of social and political forces and historical relations, and minority groups’ members as “autonomous human beings who actively interpret and respond to their situation” (Ogbu and Simons 1998, p. 158). Cultural identity—be it minority’s or majority’s—is then conceptualized as the result of the (rarely balanced) intertwining of multiple cultural orientations. In my research, this theory was crucial for making me also notice the *intracultural* diversity of each minority group I studied, as well as the impact that majority’s representations and classifications of minority cultures and its members had for the latter’s school careers, and for the elaboration of groups’ emic theories on schooling and successful life prospects.

In this perspective, the pursuit and realization of intercultural dialogue (see Council of Europe 2008) could not but require that a policy approach be complemented by in-depth qualitative research on the many facets of diversity. More specifically, ethnographic research can represent an indispensable “source of, and a resource for, intercultural dialogue, especially when teachers themselves become ethnographers” (Gobbo 2012c, p. 232; see also Gobbo 2000a, 2004b) and suspend taking for granted the “culture(s) of the school(s)” and notions of identity that have in the meantime become convenient stereotypes. Appropriately dubbed as an intentional “experiment of experience” (Piasere 1997), ethnographic

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<sup>5</sup>See Spindler 1955, 1963, 1974; Wolcott 1967; Ogbu 1978, 1982, 1990, 1991, 1994, 1996, 2003; Ogbu and Simons 1998; Gibson 1976; Gobbo 1996; and Anderson-Levitt 2012, among others.

research challenges our (and others') cultural "provincialism," the taken-for-grantedness of habitual ways, and makes the ethnographer—as well as the teacher-turned-ethnographer (see Gobbo 2004c)—recognize that they had a point of view all along from which they may now gain a critical distance.

Owing to the prevailing and understandable attention paid by intercultural education to immigrant pupils' and students' cultural, linguistic, and religious diversity, I thus promoted an ethnographic approach among a number of young researchers.<sup>6</sup> Their findings are innovative and often unforeseen and thus of great interest for those who work in the area of intercultural, anthropology of education, and ethnography. Yet, when diversity, the right to its recognition and its contribution in problematizing a society' identity, is almost exclusively interrogated in relation to the structural effects of immigration, ethnographers—young and old—risk making their research on social and cultural complexity less comprehensive and/or relevant, since the questioning of *our* own internal, or everyday, diversity is dimmed, or overtaken, by what is perceived as the new social and educational urgency. Furthermore, it must be recognized that the shareable concern for cultural "integration" or "inclusion," with its ad hoc educational interventions, often tends to drive the issue of diversity into the background and to shy away from questioning a social order historically and politically responsible for muffling, if not silencing, minorities' voices. For these reasons, and because of my early interest in multiculturalism, I chose to focus my ethnographic and educational research on a number of Italian minorities in order to understand the meaning that the processes of enculturation and schooling had among them.

## Identifying the "Field" and Approaching It

The decision to specifically study the occupational minority of travelling attractionists, whose children's educational difficulties have often been examined together with those of other nomadic groups' children such as the Roma, the bargees, and the agricultural workers (see Schools Council Research Studies 1975; Liégeois 1992; ECOTEC 2008, among others), arose after I invited anthropologists Leonardo Piasere and Ana Maria Gomes to present their research among the Italian Roma and Sinti to students at the University of Padua, where I taught until 2001. In different ways, they interpreted the fieldwork experience not only as an instructive encounter with another worldview but also with a *new* view of *their* own worlds that they had learned from the research subjects. Ana Maria Gomes had aimed to understand the meanings that schooling had for the Sinti children and their parents, and, by making those "epistemologies" (Ogbu 2003) known to teachers, to awaken the latter's attention to the rules, expectations, social abilities, and tacit assumptions that symbolically and practically order a school's everyday organization

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<sup>6</sup>See Gobbo and Simonicca 2014; Santoro 2014; Setti 2014; Giorgis 2013; Costa 2013, 2008, 2007; Peano 2013, 2007; Gobbo 2012b; Sansoé 2012, 2007; Pescarmona 2012, 2010a, b; Galloni 2009, 2008a, b, 2007a, b, c; Rapanà 2007; and Naclerio 2007.

and activity. By “decentering” their view (as intercultural solicits, but not always successfully realizes), teachers would become aware of alternative meaningful versions of schooling and education (Gomes 1997; see also Gomes 1998). Upon reflecting on his fieldwork “immersions” among the Roma, Leonardo Piasere had come to the conclusion that the ethnographer’s distinction between a *there* (learning in the “field”) and a *here* (writing about what has been learned) did not hold: to understand the Roma and their ways, the ethnographer “must learn to categorize anew *his* own world, because that is the world that Roma inhabit” (Piasere 1997, p. 74). As he further noticed, living with the Roma, “progressively taught me that there are multiple worlds in *my* world . . . and we are not aware of them” (*ibid.*, p. 75).

The two anthropologists’ reflective accounts and radical conclusions—both from a theoretical and methodological point of view—revived my memories of the world of traveling attractions I had been “passionate” about as a toddler, according to my parents. In my role of educator, I then wondered about the children’s schooling experience and the educational provision taken to ensure that they could participate in the classroom learning *and* learn<sup>7</sup> since children attend a different school almost every week, usually for less than a week (except in winter, when families stop and park their caravans in a town for about a month and children attend the same classroom for the whole period). As an ethnographer, I was intrigued by the prospect of getting to know the cultural ways and values their mobile lives entailed (see Gobbo 2003b, 2006, 2007a, b, 2009a). What was initially a concern for educational justice developed into a set of interconnected research goals: I intended to understand the meaning and experience of schooling and education by observing what traveling attractionists did and how they did it, and listen to their narratives so as to hopefully make known their educational values, skills, and knowledge.

Notwithstanding the awareness gained from Gomes and Piasere, when I started to plan the new ethnographic research among the traveling attractionists, I seemed to expect that their world was out *there*, and such expectation was enhanced by the difficulties I encountered when I tried to figure out how to get in contact with some attractionist families. Unlike my previous research among the Arberesh and the Waldensians,<sup>8</sup> teaching duties now did not allow me to go to the “field” and live there; I was instead prepared to drive to the fairs and visit the families when it would be time to interview them, but I had almost reached the point of throwing in the towel, when I eventually met Mr. Pulliero, a knowledgeable and helpful “mediator” and mentor.

Mr. Pulliero had for years worked for a small union (*Sindacato Nazionale Attrazionisti Viaggianti*/Traveling Attractionists National Union, member of the

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<sup>7</sup>The ECOTEC study (2008) reports a very limited number of educational initiatives, but no research among Italian fairground and circus people had been carried out until 1999.

<sup>8</sup>Before doing fieldwork among the Veneto traveling attractionists, I was in Calabria, to study the Arberesh, an ethno-linguistic minority arrived in Italy in the fifteenth century from Albania fleeing from the Turks (Gobbo 1977b), then in Piedmont, for research among the Waldensians, a religious minority that joined Calvinism in 1531 and was granted civic rights only in 1848 (Gobbo 1999, 2000b, c, 2001b, 2003a).

powerful leftist union CGIL) that represented a number of Veneto traveling attractionists. In reminiscing his beginnings, he stressed how

taking care of their problems was an absolute novelty for me. I was a salaried worker all my life, and I knew nothing about this occupational sector. Unlike us salaried workers, these people are their own bosses, they have a different way of seeing things, of handling the problems.<sup>9</sup>

He did not always agree with those ways; nevertheless, he maintained that attractionists deserved to be supported. In years of dealing with them, he had come to see them as people

who must hustle and bustle because of the tight competition for the *piazze* [squares, i.e. the towns' areas assigned for attractions], because their job is not guaranteed.<sup>10</sup> (...) We like attractions and the circus, but we seldom realize the cost they levy on these people's life and time.

Though it had not been easy to metabolize such "educational" experience, he concluded that the attractionists and their culture were part of our (i.e., the settled people's) everyday culture and had to be reckoned with.

Perhaps without knowing it, Mr. Pulliero was interpreting such experience in an intercultural vein: in fact, when I first met him to explain my research project, he had agreed to help and clear up many of the stereotypes and prejudices surrounding the traveling attractionists. Not surprisingly, the issue of stereotypes and prejudice—as will be seen—is something that deeply concerns attractionists and on which many construct the presentation of themselves, even by drawing clear-cut distinctions within their occupational group. However, Mr. Pulliero preferred to underline other characteristics ("qualities," as he defined them) of this occupational minority: the attachment, even the "love" or "veneration" for the attraction, of which good care is taken during the winter stop, the generational *continuity* in the sector of attractions, the men's acknowledgement of the work contribution of women and young people, the respect for the customers, and the feeling of ownership towards "their" fairs, "their" circuit (that, after all, are their source of income and work pride). He conveyed a picture of a world that is usually portrayed as festive and anti-routine (see Pretini 1984a, b; Vita and Rossati 1997; Zaghini 2001), but that is also framed by specific legislation (law n. 337/1968)<sup>11</sup> and a host of local and national regulations concerning taxes, criteria for

<sup>9</sup>All quotations that are not referenced are from my ethnographic field notes.

<sup>10</sup>Unfortunately, today this applies to many young people in more stable jobs as well.

<sup>11</sup>With regard to this law, it is worth recalling some of its qualifying points: it officially defines this occupational minority as *esercenti di attrazioni viaggianti* (proprietors of traveling attractions), recognizes the "social function" of circuses and traveling shows, and indicates the consolidation and development of the sector as social and political goals. A national committee with consulting tasks was then set up to support the foreseen improvements, and a list of all the attractions – distinguished according to size – was prepared that is periodically updated. In fact, the registered size and technical characteristics of attractions provide the official basis on which the Minister of Tourism and the local administrations decide on taxes and space allocation. Local administrators, in particular, are responsible for locating and approving areas suitable as fairgrounds and for annually renewing or withdrawing approval according to suitability evaluations based on the fairs' economic returns and the residents' appreciation. The law also requires annual safety checks (see footnote 12) that have to be passed satisfactorily for approval to be granted.

attractions’ space assignment, safety rules,<sup>12</sup> and compliance with compulsory education rules, all of which attractionists have to follow and implement.

Furthermore, while it is true that attractionists’ everyday life and work are tightly intertwined, and that their home (a caravan or a trailer) moves with them from one “square” to another along a well-established “circuit” (*giro*), the latter might change when a local town administration agrees to support its citizens’ demand that the space allotted to the fair be instead maintained for the weekly market or as a parking area. The cancelation of a fair means not only a loss of income for the attractionists, but it also upset the parallel “school circuit” that children travel, regularly attending the same schools for a short and predictable number of days and meeting the same classmates and teachers, year after year, until they complete compulsory education. Such arrangement is intended to formally realize the right to education of the attractionists’ children,<sup>13</sup> however it raises relevant questions regarding how and what the latter can learn, and how and what teachers can teach. Participant observation in the diverse classrooms attended by the attractionists’ children seemed a rather difficult enterprise. So I decided to focus on the teaching/learning process taking place in the family and in relation to the family’s work, on the one hand, and, on the other, to later contact teachers from the “school circuit” and learn how they responded to that regular sequence of arrivals and departures that tested both their professional competence and creativity as well as the children’s and the families’ educational expectations.

## Background Research Literature

The introductory words of Mr. Pulliero had concisely illustrated the complexity of the attractionists’ life and work in Veneto, helping me to sketch a tentative road map that would be further problematized by observations and narratives gathered during fieldwork, as well as by the international research literature on the topic. As the latter uses the criterion of nomadism to explore and interpret the educational experience and provisions for the children of mobile minorities in Europe and in other continents, Gypsies, Travellers, bargees, pastoralists, fairground, and circus people are often grouped together in many studies. Yet, if the way of life of all these nomadic minorities continues to impact on children’s regular school attendance (see Danaher et al. 2009), the view of, and the relation to, schooling place

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<sup>12</sup>Since the school year 2003–2004, a project titled *Seguendo fiere e sagre* (Following fairs and countryside festivals), devised by Elisa Marini and supported by the intercultural network *Rete senza confini* (Network No Borders), has been disseminated among various schools of the Padua province. It included a course on work safety rules that was highly appreciated by attractionist families and youth. See “Storia di un progetto” in [www.seguendofieresagre.it](http://www.seguendofieresagre.it).

<sup>13</sup>Attendance is always duly recorded in an official notebook (the *quadernino*) that every pupil has with him or her, in which to let teachers and principals know that he or she had complied with the rules.

fairground and circus families and children as different from the rest. Fairground and circus families—at least when interviewed or involved in special projects—seem to consider schooling positively, even though the mismatch between school and work calendars remains a problem and a source of frustration, as parents realize that their children can only learn very little and in a disorderly manner.

Within the literature, such persisting difficulties were interpreted through the theory of cultural discontinuity in turn tempered by the recognition of the fairground and circus people's contribution to European culture. Thus, on the one hand, Jean-Pierre Liégeois could remark that

It is difficult, when one is entrenched in a given pattern of thought and a given educational system, to see one's foundations as relative. (...) Thus, in regard to Gypsies and Traveller communities, with the weight of history so heavily disfavoring them, how is a dominant majority to question its own attitudes and actions towards such a dispersed minority? Until the present, no urgent need to do so was felt on the part of the majority. (1992, p. 8)

On the other hand, the 1994 European Commission Report underlined how:

While the reasons which make them [fairground and circus people] opt for a nomadic style of life are different, they also hold on to a lifestyle which is no less part of the European heritage. Whilst they tend to live on the fringes of society, the traveling professions represent an important element in the socio-cultural fabric of Europe, as is demonstrated by their contribution to the functioning of the economies and the cultural role they play during the festive days of the people of Europe. (1994, p. 16)

However, cultural discontinuity was again stressed some years later, when Kiddle noticed that

For some groups of Traveller children it must seem as if school and home are two totally separate and different cultures and the fact of traveling itself only exacerbates the sense of distance. (...) The lives led by children from the fairground community illustrate clearly the conflicting demands made by home and school (...) making school attendance problematic. (Kiddle 1999, p. 96)

This is so since parents need to transmit their skills “to their children, to educate them for life in the fairground business” so that they can take on “increasing responsibility” as they are considered ready for it (*ibid.*, pp. 102–103).<sup>14</sup> Kiddle argued that discontinuity does not only refer to the Travellers' different lifeways and specific work calendars but also to the problematic relation with sedentary cultures, because

we – the sedentary society – have never quite coped with having a nomadic element in our society ... we have never accepted or accommodated ... mobility. (*ibid.*, p. 154)

The great difficulties families encounter in ensuring *educational continuity* for their children were poignantly interpreted as one of “interrupted learning” and of “interrupted learners,” as collateral effects of the European school systems, whose lack of recognition for fairground and circus families' cultural diversity nourished

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<sup>14</sup>A 1975 study pointed out that schooling “complements the training [Travellers' children] receive in fairground operation with the family” (Schools Council Research Studies 1975, p. 13).



stereotyping and prejudice among teachers and sedentary co-citizens (Jordan 1997, 2000, 2001a, b). The internal heterogeneity of fairground and circus people—owing to difference in financial and cultural capital, and in the members’ agency to find solutions for their children’s future (Danaher 2000; Danaher and Danaher 2000)—was underlined in the Australian case. Furthermore, authors disclaimed that itinerancy per se (just like minority condition per se) was the unifying factor behind various nomadic groups, though they had to acknowledge that settled Australians perceived nomadic groups as “deviating” from the “norm” of fixed residence, even if a sizable portion of Australian population is relatively mobile.

As a consequence,

travellers are stereotypically assumed not to have the financial and emotional investment in a single community . . . [while] the general incapacity of schooling institutions to ‘cope’ with itinerant students . . . renders the travellers marginalized from conventional sources of power, status and wealth. (Danaher 1999, p. 26)

By failing “to fit” the conventional categories of students familiar to educational providers, “educational systems tend to ignore itinerant people as being ‘too difficult’ to accommodate” (*ibid.*, p. 28) to the schooling process (see also Danaher et al. 1999, 2000). More recent research cannot but point out how ensuring *educational continuity* for the children of fairground and circus families remains a considerable problem for them (see ECOTEC 2008; Padfield and Cameron 2009; Kiddle 2009; Moriarty 2009). The ECOTEC study confirms the fairground and circus families’ and children’s positive attitude towards schooling as well as their *agency*, when it is necessary to find alternative (but not always successful) solutions. Interestingly, in this study the cultural discontinuity interpretation is proposed as moderated by the families’ and children’s strategy of *accommodation* to sedentary life that shades their visibility—for instance, in classrooms—and allows teachers to overlook the cultural and work reasons at the root of the children’s fragmentary attendance. It follows that ECOTEC educational indications are towards

Customization and experimentation, as well as flexibility in provision. A move towards individual, tailored learning pathways, with a focus on ‘learning outcomes’ rather than attendance at school, seems to present the most suitable approach towards developing provision for occupational traveller children. (2008, p. vii)

This is especially the case since institutional policies such as “Traveller education” might engender differential integration and educational marginalization (Kiddle 2009; Danaher and Danaher 2009).

Before going into the “field,” I had also hypothesized a certain degree of cultural discontinuity—between learning from the family members and from other attractionists, and learning in school—that could explain the schooling difficulties of attractionists’ children. In education, ethnography has a major role to play, not so much in terms of applied anthropology but rather as a way to problematize the meanings of diversity and identity within minorities and majorities; in the “field” it allows or compels the researcher to critically reflect on his or her initial assumptions and research questions and to learn a different, perhaps unforeseen, perspective. However, as I wrote, the fieldwork experience:

Indicated that the process of enculturation could explain only partly the relatively gratifying schooling experience among children of attractionist families. A nuanced interpretation was needed that would take into account the traveling families' sophisticated knowledge of the sedentary population's habits and values, and the schools' inability to acknowledge the attractionist cultural experience in any fashion. (Gobbo 2009a, p. 14)

Attractionists' way of life and work might not fit the social order, so that they are *marginalized* rather than marginal to sedentary society (see Gobbo 2006), but as *marginalized pedagogues* they do teach their children and do so through educational manners that emphasize self-reliance, responsibility, independence, ingenuity, and family cooperation. The "separate participation in ongoing sedentary life" (Gobbo 2009a)—be it in a school or in a town—is well represented by their *cyclical presence* that comes strongly to the attention of their co-citizens for some of the reasons that will be illustrated in the next paragraph, but also because it provides them with the occasion for imagining other ways of living and working.

## In the "Field"

Initially, fieldwork<sup>15</sup> consisted in going to the fairs almost always accompanied and introduced by Mr. Pulliero, presenting the reasons why I was there, asking for permission to watch the task of pulling up (*tirar su*) an attraction and starting informal conversations with those who had the time to do so. Even before interviewing began towards the end of fieldwork, the narratives I listened to were alternatively focused on the changes affecting the world of attractionists and the decrease of group's solidarity, the pride and satisfaction deriving from their occupation, and the care for the attractions, the relations with the local people and attractionists' children's upsetting experience of being "mistaken" as Gypsies. The relevance of exploring the school issue against the background of the families' work patterns and concerns was provisionally confirmed.

According to Mr. Pulliero, traveling attractionists "sell a moment of fleeting enjoyment, just a ride on the merry-go-round"<sup>16</sup> or the roller coaster. If they are a familiar, eagerly awaited, presence in urban and countryside environments, their mobile lives cannot but make them (and their children) only a recurrent, or seasonal presence. Thus they are aware of both the appreciation they raise and of the caution and sense of cultural distance with which their sedentary co-citizens, and customers, receive, and interact with, them. It is a deeply felt and somewhat contradictory life experience that is well illustrated by two different narratives collected during fieldwork: on the one hand, there was the surprise of a woman

<sup>15</sup>Fieldwork was carried out between fall of 1999 and the end of 2001 among a group of 25 families whose annual fairs' circuits call at many towns and villages in the Veneto provinces of Padua, Venice, Treviso, and Vicenza.

<sup>16</sup>Immediately after this remark, Mr Pulliero hastened to remind me the economic and technological importance of the attraction industry sector. About it, and specifically about the town of Bergantino and its post-World War II manufacturing "tradition," see Silvestrini 2000.

attractionist—Ms. Forani<sup>17</sup>—when she drove through a town that at first looked foreign, even inhospitable. Almost immediately, however, she realized that the unfamiliar looking town was one of her circuit’s regular stops, where she had “pulled up” the attraction two weeks earlier. She had not recognized the quiet, somber, and empty urban center because, during the fair, the place was filled with lights, music, noise, the children’s delighted cries, and the young people’s excited shouts, and she had concluded that “we bring life to towns, we make them change, and when we leave, everything disappears” (Gobbo 2007a, b, p. 481).

It was a proud awareness that I had heard from her brother too, when he recollected the magic of the summer fairs, created by the music he always chose with great attention. In the 1970s, and even in the 1980s, fairs were a big social event: he would invariably play the same records for the young women whom he had seen enjoying his attraction, and its music, the year before. It was a *present* to them because, in those years, “as a *giostrai*<sup>18</sup> you were someone . . . you felt [great], and every night was a big night, no dead nights back then.”

Young man Tassi revealed that while his mother pressed him to find a salaried, i.e., secure, work position, his father thought that “without the attractions one cannot live well.” Agreeing with him, he stressed that

At the fair there is music, people, it is not like factory work! I did not go on with school, I love this work. With my younger sister, we always talk of music, trucks, fairs, attractions. Instead, those of our age talk of school, computers, cell phones. We are really different. . .

However, there also was the disenchanting picture of traveling attractionism drawn by Mr. Casati: for whom it was crucial to draw (and to make *me* understand) the symbolic boundary that keeps the “law-abiding” attractionists apart from the “others,” the “criminals,” whose bad actions strengthen the sedentary hosts’ prejudicial wariness towards the whole occupational minority.<sup>19</sup> He seemed to share such an attitude, since he described those “others” in negative stereotypical terms, pointing out how “those people don’t care for honest work,” and disclaimed any relationship between them and the “law-abiding” attractionists such as himself. The distinction between the two “groups” thus results from the interpretation of how the respective members *relate* to their co-citizens and define themselves: the “law-abiding” ones claim that, unlike the “others,” they respect their hosts and the rules that concern them all as responsible citizens,<sup>20</sup> namely, that they are not, nor intend to be, outside civil society.

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<sup>17</sup>This name, as all the others, is a pseudonym to protect the privacy of my interlocutors. The exception is the name of the leftist union secretary, Mr Pulliero, who gave me permission to mention his real name.

<sup>18</sup>*Giostrai* (sing. m., *giostraia*, sing. f.) is the word with which attractionists nominate themselves, especially when there is familiarity with the interlocutor. It denotes the relationship between a person and the attraction, that is, the *giostra*. However *giostrai* (pl. *giostrai*) often has a negative connotation, and when newspapers report crimes attributed to, or done by attractionists, the word used is usually *giostrai/giostrai*. In Medieval times, *giostra* was the joust or tournament of knights.

<sup>19</sup>For further elaboration of this point by attractionists, see Gobbo 2007b.

<sup>20</sup>It is quite possible that this point was emphasized in relation to me and to maintain a dignified image of attractionists.

Other attractionists shared Mr. Casati's black-and-white perspective and the complaints about the multifaceted (and questionable) character of attractionists' lifestyles. For instance, Mr. Torrasi—a keen observer of his own world and somewhat disenchanted about it like Mr. Casati—argued that the work and generational continuity was nourished by the belief (that I repeatedly heard during fieldwork) that owning and managing an attraction meant to be “an independent, autonomous person,” “who is *sul suo*,”<sup>21</sup> and to escape working *sotto padrone* (under the boss), as a salaried worker who “has to punch the clock” every day. Thus, being the proprietor of a traveling attraction<sup>22</sup> entails some hard work, yet, after “pulling up” the attraction, “he can sit at the cashier desk and lean back more or less in peace.” Nevertheless Mr. Torrasi was critical of any interpretation of fairs and attractionists that underestimated the decrease in earnings brought about by the growing number of attractions, the tight competition for the “squares,” and customers with less money to spend or attracted by “too many other places of entertainment, besides fairs.” Unfortunately—he complained—the prevailing, contemporary trend among attractionists was “to live from one day to the next,” disregarding, even belittling, any effort to take a collective political stance against some of the rules unfair to these people's working interests. These bitter remarks should not be overlooked, as they highlight some of the social changes that had already taken place: Mr. Forani had switched to a well-lighted videogame installation remarking how, thanks to the sexual “revolution” (*sic*) of the 1970s, young lovers no longer needed the relative darkness of a circus tent or the confusion of a fair to display their affection. To stay successfully in business, circuses might have to host popular TV personalities during the show or cancel “animal shows” because of animal rights activists' opposition (see Gobbo 2006). Additional, and negative, changes were related to local administrations' decisions regarding space allocation or entitlement, as already mentioned.

For my interlocutors, being or becoming an attractionist meant not only (relative) economic and work independence,<sup>23</sup> but especially being able to use all their transmitted and acquired skills at work. Thus, parents taught their children that this mobile occupation required everyone to have (and to have learned) as many competences as possible:

To be flexible and double up as truck drivers when it's time to move from one place to the other, as labourers when the attraction must be put up and taken down, as secretaries when forms are to be filled in and paperwork taken care of and as ‘public relations experts’ . . . when they must bid for a *piazza* and deal with local administrators. (Gobbo 2006, p. 795)

<sup>21</sup>The expression is difficult to translate, but it is exemplary of a certain cultural attitude that some define typical of the Veneto region: *essere* [to be] *sul suo* alludes to property rights, but also to the value of “being one's own master” and “being able to keep one's own ground.”

<sup>22</sup>It must be noticed that many *fermi e ferme* (“still,” i.e., settled men and women) have become part of traveling attractionist families, often (but not exclusively) through marriage.

<sup>23</sup>Because traveling attractionists must arrive to the fairground within a certain time and leave it within a given time to avoid a ticket, it could be said that they also have “to punch the clock,” at least twice, at the beginning and at the end of a fair.

An interesting example is provided by Mr. Gappi, a “still” man by birth who had turned attractionist in his youth (see Gobbo 2009a). He was the son of a farm tenant who gave hospitality to an attractionist family in his backyard during the winter stop. After his father’s death during World War II, he chose “to move his life” instead of staying in the small village and grow vegetables and fruits to be sold on the market. His wife shared his “still” origin. He underlined how, as a young attraction laborer, he had learned that the important values in this occupation were thrift, hard work, and self-control, and had passed them on to younger laborers when he eventually bought his own attraction. When his older son told him that he would drop out of higher secondary school in view of joining the family enterprise, Mr. Gappi was very happy to teach him all there was to know about the family business and took him along when he went to local administrators’ offices, because “practical training would teach his son how to handle negotiations to secure a *piazza* for his own attraction” (Gobbo 2009a, p. 19). His two granddaughters had also learned many of the attractionists’ skills, even though, in order to attend school until the high school diploma, they had to go and live with their father’s parents in Bergantino, the “capital of the attractions,” as the sign at the entrance of that small town claims proudly. The two girls would join their parents during weekends, and by watching and listening to them, they learned how important it was to sharpen their communicative skills, to speak nicely to customers and engage people passing by the attraction by having them, or their child, talk into a microphone. They emphasized that no other attractionist had ever used a microphone to attract and entertain customers, adding that it was a bonus for the family enterprise. Mrs. Capari, the girls’ mother (and daughter of Mr. Gappi), paid special attention to the linguistic proficiency of her customers<sup>24</sup> and would switch from Italian to dialect if she felt that they would be more comfortable with the latter. It was a kind gesture that certainly gained her the customers’ affection (and make them return to her attraction), while it indicates how social knowledge is indispensable for running a successfully mobile enterprise.

Success, among traveling attractionists, is not exclusively measured by income but also by what they can “save” when the attraction or the trucks need to be repaired. It was pointed out that this could be achieved through learning by watching and listening. The older Bertini son explained to me that whenever he had to seek the help of an electrician or a mechanic, he would also respectfully ask how he went about solving it, because “if you do it kindly and without hassling the man, he’ll tell you what you need to know.” For him, and other attractionists, the goal was being able to tackle a future problem by himself, thanks to what he could learn from an expert well-disposed to give a hand: “to know what works,” to get

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<sup>24</sup>In Veneto, the local dialect (that I speak fluently) is widely used in social interaction. From the early contacts on, I always interpreted my interlocutors’ use of dialect as a specific choice meant to establish a climate of intimacy during the interviews, on the one hand, but on the other as a way to signal that I was expected to adapt to the language “rules” of the exchange, as was clear the time I greeted a family in dialect only to be answered in a neat Italian that was then used by my hosts for the whole interview, obviously obliging me to do the same.

“into the ‘mechanics’ of a problem,” and to solve it independently were the young man’s goals and a good example of agency, self-reliance, and disposition to learn that were repeatedly presented as values and indicators of attractionists.

## Attractionists as Teachers and Learners

My emphasis on attractionists’ *disposition to learn* ensues certainly from an anthropological formation that oriented me towards interpreting education as not limited to schooling but as inclusive of the teaching and learning processes taking place in the family, the cultural group, the peers, and, today, in the “electronic” youth community (see Setti 2014). Along the process of enculturation, cultural beliefs, habits, and values are consciously or unconsciously transmitted that are considered of crucial relevance for the continuity of a way of life, on the one hand, and on the other, different or new ones may be actively sought and learned by children and young people who thus set in motion a process of cultural transformation and/or change that, particularly, but not exclusively, in this research, concerns those who became attractionists from a farming or a factory background.

The decision to learn a new way of life, or “to move my life” as Mr. Gappi did (Gobbo 2009a, p. 18), was often explained by the older men as related to the difficult work and economic conditions of postwar Italy and of the Veneto region in particular. A few tenant farmers realized that, while they had to wait a whole year before being paid, they could instead raise some money—albeit little—on the spot, if they had an attraction. The best known attractionists from Bergantino—among the “founders” of the local occupational and industrial enterprise—left the fields or a bicycle workshop to realize their creative innovations (often constructed with parts of planes that had been shot down during the war and laid scattered around in the countryside) and take them to the fairs (see Silvestrini 2000). One of the Gioietti brothers recalled how, during the war, his father (another man of “still” origin) had built a small horse-drawn trailer by using parts of trucks left behind after the war, and only after a while he had been able to buy a motor truck, also left behind by the Allied troops, but evidently still running. Several of the stories I collected bear witness to the difficult conditions, if not poverty, of many in Veneto who originally were craftsmen, factory workers, or tenant farmers, but also to the possibility of eking a more decent life by choosing the road and providing other countryside people and workers with some affordable entertainment.

Those men had to learn how to be, and work as, an attractionist: then, they undertook teaching the indispensable “love” and “veneration,” if not even “passion” (according to Mr. Forani), for the “craft” (*mestiere*, as the attraction is colloquially called) to their children, just like the families who had been mobile for generations. Furthermore, they taught that “this is a kind of work—Mr. Forani pointed out—that one learns *by living it*, by being on the ‘square,’” or “by intently watching,” according to Mr. Gappi. It thus was understandable that the former claimed how “the most important thing in my life is learning”: learning coincided

with his life on the road and on the “square.” I may add how, from the educator’s point of view, the confident expectation that children will learn (as in fact they do) by watching and listening is a meaningful lesson, since it tells us that attractionists’ children were seen, and dealt with as reliable, trustworthy persons, whose responsible, and affective, investment in the enterprise could be counted on.

The attractionists’ life and work not only demand physical exertion when “pulling up” (*tirar su*) and “pulling down” (*tirar giù*) the craft, as well as financial risk when a very expensive one is bought, but also an intense, emotional investment in the enterprise. Mr. Forani reminisced how

Our parents taught us to care for the attraction . . . We chose fashionable colors and painted it with great accuracy . . . [After all] an attraction is not just a working tool, it is rather an image [of one’s care for it].

On its part, the younger generation recognized that their fathers were knowledgeable and had passed their knowledge on to the children who learned to have “ambition” for, to be proud of the family attraction, as Mrs. Capari’s daughters testified. The importance of keeping attractions and fairgrounds clean and in order so as to please and reassure the customers was infallibly mentioned, while some stressed that attractionists (or, perhaps, the “good” attractionists) had “a different way to make and keep order.”

The knowledge taught and learn centered on *how* things are done—be they the attraction, the customers’ interaction, the sedentary co-citizens’ relations, and the respect of regulations. The educational relevance of “knowing how” over “knowing that” was not only interesting for the intercultural educator but also visible to the ethnographer during observations at fairgrounds. There, I was repeatedly impressed by the quiet, competent professionalism with which attractionists performed tasks: when, in one case, the adults were busy placing the attraction floor level with the pavement, the young ones collaborated firstly gauging the results by sight and then with a bubble level in order to give appropriate indications. Since trucks have to be precisely parked within the space allotted by the administration, it was possible to see a boy at its wheel who steered it according to the directions his father gave him from the street, while his mother and the little sister held a measuring tape to make sure that no mistakes were made. Or, when it was time to “pull down” an attraction, a little, dignified girl followed her mother closely holding a little beach bucket where the nuts and bolts the former was releasing were collected. One of the Gioietti teenagers, who was in charge of “pulling up” the family’s roller coaster together with a laborer’s help, went swiftly up the steel structure, keeping his balance and deftly moving from one beam to the next—under the admiring eyes of the local children. Later on, when the fair was fully under way, he beckoned me to stand by him, at the cashier desk, to appreciate how through jokes, loud music, even a raffle he enticed potential customers to come and test their driving (and bumping) ability.

Through the fieldwork and narratives’ collection, my early research questions came out somewhat modified: now, I would rather ask—with respect to the manners of teaching and learning I had observed and listened to, and to the attractionists’ awareness that it was the most effective way to pursue cultural and occupational

continuity—how relevant was the overall schooling experience for these children and their families, how meaningful was their classroom participation, and if their cultural and educational ways had ever been taken into consideration.

The older daughter of Mr. Casati was the first with whom I had a conversation<sup>25</sup> about her school experience: she had mixed feelings about it, because she remembered how in primary school some of her classmates did not associate with her, believing she was a “Gypsy,” while relations were so much more satisfactory in lower secondary school that, at the time of our conversation, she still exchanged visits and phone calls with some of those classmates. She recalled how the first grade had been the most difficult school year, because, owing to the family’s fair circuit, she met new children every week. During the years, classmates could “adore” her or keep cautiously to themselves, and she soon realized that she either had already learned what the class was being taught or, on the contrary, she didn’t have a clue about what the teacher was saying (a point made by almost every other attractionist). Thus, in one school she could have “top grades” and even be able to help her classmates in a difficult math exercise, while in the next one she could find herself “down to zero” and aware that there were things she would “never have a chance to learn.” Nevertheless, she was a good student and her arts teacher suggested that she could enroll in the university. However, as other young people narrated, she never enrolled in higher secondary school: it would have meant moving in with her grandparents, and her father could not imagine her leaving the family.<sup>26</sup> Meanwhile, her younger brother had stayed in school longer because he had been enrolled in a boarding school (that had been closed at the time of my research), a decision that had been difficult to make for his family. The younger daughter of Mr. Casati remembered how she would hit those classmates who treated her with hostility and, just like her sister, how she would either be “ahead of her class” since she had learned a specific curricular topic in another school, or “behind,” actually “discombobulated” by the disconnected learning path she and her sister had to trudge.

The narratives of the Casati sisters well illustrate the schooling experience attractionists’ children usually underwent and the “ahead/behind” curricular alternation they had encountered. The parents’ available alternatives were to leave the children with grandparents or relatives and reunite with them during weekends and vacations<sup>27</sup>; to have children attend fewer schools which entailed long driving trips between the fairground and the school, four times a day, every day, until a next fair’s location made this impracticable; to enroll them in a boarding school—an option no longer possible in 1999; and to settle down and have the family man

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<sup>25</sup>It took place on December 26, 1999.

<sup>26</sup>Her mother instead remembered that “the family needed [her] help.”

<sup>27</sup>The mixed marriages between “still” young women or young men and traveling attractionists bring some practical advantages (a “still” relative caring for the children’s school education, fewer intragroup conflicts, and less revengeful competition, just to remember the positive consequences most often mentioned by the interviewees).



either bear total responsibility for taking the attraction along the “fairs’ circuit” (as Mr. Torrasi did) or for managing one at the town park, like Mr. Gappi (see Gobbo 2009a). His daughter had attended schools in the provincial town where the Gappi family had taken residence and had a very positive memory of those years; however, eager to follow on his father’s steps, she had her two daughters stay with her husband’s parents so she could work as a *traveling* attractionist while they studied to achieve the high school diploma.

Parents in their 40s were aware that the occupational sector no longer gave those economic and relational gratifications they, and their parents before them, had been used to; so they all expressed concern for the difficulties their children encountered, demonstrating their awareness that education was going to be more than necessary with the new century. As the younger Gioietti brother said:

This is the year 2000, it’s high time that the traveling attractionist be educated, so that he will know what to say to a person he must talk to.

He regretted that he had not completed compulsory education, and regardless of his success, he worried that lack of education could make an attractionists dependent on his interlocutor and less able to get along with his sedentary co-citizens.

As for the children who were still in school, they were open and proud of the little help they could give the family, because of their age, while they shied away from talking about their classmates, teachers, and school tasks, as if those were painful or embarrassing topics for discussion, and made me imagine that they had met prejudices or indifference their teachers had not been able to fend off.

## Interpreting Diversity: The Teachers’ View

As mentioned earlier, at the end of fieldwork I contacted two primary schools and a lower secondary one<sup>28</sup> that had attractionists’ children among their pupils and students: my aim was to understand how teachers perceived their educational engagement with the attractionists’ children<sup>29</sup> and how familiar they were with their culture. In previous articles (Gobbo 2007a, b), I pointed out how in both schools<sup>30</sup> the teachers’ narratives developed through some relevant categories of the school culture that had characteristically shaped their perception of the “parceled school attendance” of attractionists’ children. The latter were firstly narrated as *pupils*, whose positive social attitude and good school behavior teachers praised, underlining how much more self-confident they were in comparison to their

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<sup>28</sup>On this occasion, only the focus groups organized in the primary schools will be taken into account.

<sup>29</sup>My questions were as unstructured as possible so as to let teachers guide the conversation and put forward the themes, or the difficulties, that they saw as most relevant to their work.

<sup>30</sup>The two primary schools were in two different Veneto provinces and the teachers did not know each other.

classmates (“they turn the page of the reading book without asking me first!” sighed one of the teachers), who usually welcomed them warmly when they arrived, “unlike [what happens with] Sinti or Roma children.” Possibly, what made the attractionists’ children appreciated as *pupils* and classmates was that they were in fact eager to be treated as such and participate in the class work: the teachers noticed that most of them showed an interest in what was being taught, even though they could not always follow the lessons or complete the assignments. In fact, the teachers’ narratives about the strategies enacted in class by those pupils made me hypothesize that

These children’s eagerness for school tasks is not only evidence of their goodwill, but also of knowing that if they cannot do as the other pupils do, without any problem, at least they can *try to show that they also share such an expectation*. (Gobbo 2007b, p. 495)

Still, those good pupils were “interrupted *learners*,” notwithstanding their socio-educational know-how. The teachers stated that the attractionists’ children could certainly learn but that they had considerable learning “gaps” (*buchi*), which impaired both their working with the rest of the class and their ability to follow what the teacher was doing—as the young attractionists had already admitted to me. The teachers’ narratives, and educational expectations, made clear that involvement with and success in learning required *continuity* in school attendance in order for all *learners* to proceed together, at more or less the same pace, through the curriculum. Teachers felt frustrated by their own inability to make such well-disposed pupils (*bravi alunni*, as they were unanimously represented) into *learners*, but they complained that their stay was too brief to give teachers enough time to prepare ad hoc assignments or pay a greater attention to what the “interrupted *learners*” already knew or needed to know. Then, when those pupils, and interrupted learners, went home for the day, they returned to be the attractionists’ *children* in the perception of teachers. The latter recognized that they knew very little of those families’ life and work, but they imagined the *children* confronted by “hardships everyday” since a life on the road could not provide the same comforts of a sedentary one. In the narratives, the school threshold those *children* crossed everyday became the metaphorical *limen* between a culture of freedom and daring actions and that of school life and sedentary society. Attractionists’ *children* were thus depicted by emphasizing the latter’s cultural diversity and interpreting it as resulting from a nomadic life and an occupation that set traveling families and children sharply apart from their “still” co-citizens. On the contrary, fieldwork findings encouraged an interpretation of traveling attractionists, and their children, as people who have developed a complex cultural framework able to accommodate the features and meanings of mobile as well as of sedentary lives.

## Conclusions and a Proposal

On this occasion, after looking back at the fieldwork experience, and reading anew my published and unpublished material on the cultural and educational aspects of this occupational mobile minority, I chose to qualify the title of the chapter with a

metaphor that, some years ago, closed a text of mine devoted to the teachers’ narratives (Gobbo 2007a). In listening to them describing how they had to grapple with those pupils’ arrivals, departures, and returns taking place every year until completion of compulsory education, and firmly regulated by the fairs’ calendar, I was reminded of birds’ cyclical migration. Could the metaphor<sup>31</sup> of people and children “of passage” suggest not only a problematizing interpretation of the minority’s occupation and social participation but also a different, more positive, educational attitude?

The metaphor did not intend to minimize the hardships the traveling attractionists go through which were too often compounded by the stereotypical and prejudicial perceptions and interactions on the part of their sedentary co-citizens. However, another facet of the metaphor stresses the expectation of a cyclical renewal that in nature is, for instance, announced by the spring return of the swallows, and highlights the positive meaning our culture assigns to an awaited *discontinuity*. The teachers testified that the arrival of the attractionists’ children does in fact announce an intermission in the daily and weekly routines of a town, to which both their classroom peers and the adults look forward to.

Obviously, the metaphor can neither quell teachers’ feelings of uneasiness, nor make the attractionists’ children learn more or better: however, it points to the complexity of cultural diversity and gives us all (and not just the teachers) the opportunity to place *our* own cultural identity and continuity—in everyday life and in school—into a critical perspective that valorizes creativity. Consider, for instance, the invention of innovative attractions by some of the Bergantino inhabitants at the end of World War II or the decision of other countrymen and women to move their lives and take the road (see Silvestrini 2000). In either case, cultural discontinuity was chosen as a positive step, so that building attractions from remnants of the war can be imagined as a way to signal the awaited overcoming of fear, famine, and death and announce peace. Italian writer Luigi Meneghello (and a member of the Resistance) is aware of this in remembering (1988) that when peace was at last attained, the “crafts” had not by chance returned to the main Padua square. Back then, the discontinuity of attractionists’ life at the same time warranted continuity in everyday life and hope for its renewal.

Looking at attractionists’ ways and work from this perspective suggests that their diverse identity has continually intertwined and enriched another diverse identity—the “still” one we call ours. Again consider, for instance, how the lives and performances of the “people of passage” (and especially those of the circus—the acrobats and the clowns) fire the imagination of artists and allow them to play with identity and representation by either highlighting those people’s discontinuity with everyday reality or ironically presenting themselves as critical both of bourgeois honorability and of the artistic call, while claiming their own freedom in the celebration of levity and challenge of gravity (Starobinski 1984; di Genova 2008). Thus, if with the circus “the noble steeds become riding horses” (Starobinski 1984,

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<sup>31</sup>For the relevance of metaphors in education, see Gobbo 2009b.

p. 43) that mock the military parades, the same arena, by being circular, “offers multiple points of view [to the audience]” (di Genova 2008, p. 19) and to Alexander Calder the joy of playing with different roles and identifications (Painlevé 1955). Travelling attractions, circuses, and circus characters have appealed to an array of culturally and temporally diverse writers and artists.<sup>32</sup> Their works indicate—as I propose—that cultural discontinuity is (t)here to be interpreted and make us see the world from other vantage points, rather than subscribed as a self-sufficient, “scripted,” and neatly bounded reality. To this end, the exercise of interpretation through social imagination (Greene 1978, 1995; Hanson 1988; Appiah 1996; Nussbaum 1997; Griffiths et al. 2007) is as indispensable as ethnographic findings and interpretations for promoting a reflective and critical view of cultural differences among teachers and intercultural educators.

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<sup>32</sup>Examples include Hector Malot, Heinrich Böll, Dario Fo, John Irving, Jáchym Topol, and Norman Manea; movie directors as Charlie Chaplin, Federico Fellini, Bo Widerberg, and Cecil B. DeMille; choreographer George Balanchine (Schubert 2006); and painters as Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, Pablo Picasso, Georges Seurat, Ernst Kirchner, Fernand Léger, Paul Klee, Marc Chagall, Georges Rouault, René Magritte, and the Italian Antonio Donghi.

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