The recent publication of the Italian edition of *Pluralism and American Public Education: No One Way to School* (Studium, 2018, trans. Francesco Magni) raises several questions and re-opens fundamental issues in the debate about the public education system.

Why publish a book on educational pluralism today? And why, moreover, publish in Italy a book on American pluralism? At first glance this may seem untimely. A theme like this can appear to be relevant only to long-ago debates or could become overshadowed, surpassed by far more pressing emergencies of our time. On reflection, several reasons support the book’s publication in Italy.

The first is purely cognitive. The text by Ashley Berner allows us to retrace the history of the evolution of the American educational system, pointing out the major political, juridical, philosophical, and pedagogical turning points. Berner’s reflection allows, and to some extent compels, the Italian reader to compare America’s historical and current educational system with our own.
A second reason concerns the actuality and centrality in the American public debate on the theme of freedom of education (school choice). This is also confirmed by important political initiatives recently undertaken by the US federal government, as well as numerous publications on national and international issues. In addition, we note the flourishing in recent years of considerable scientific research on educational choices made at the level of the American school districts.

But there is also a third reason - and this is perhaps the most interesting here - concerning aspects of a strictly pedagogical nature: the work by Ashley Berner represents, in fact, above all an intellectual challenge to overcome the boundaries of our common way of thinking, calling into question paradigms such as that of the privileged place of Statism - a prestige little justified by not only empirical, but also political and cultural, evidence.

The book deals with radical questions, in the sense of "foundational," and calls us to think again about education, as prompted by the questions that the author proposes in the course of the text to the reader: "Who is in charge of education: the individual, the state or civil society? What relationship should exist between them? And why? " (chapter 2, page 68). Or, "Should the state fully manage education or, rather, share the provision of this public service with the third sector and reality of the private social sector?" (chapter 2, page 69). Questions such as these are not only the starting point of the essay’s itinerary, but are in some way the real thread that runs through the entire course.

The author then, recording the decadence and inefficiency of the current American educational system, identifies three main underlying causes: the erroneous belief that "only state schools can form good citizens;" that "only state schools can offer equal opportunities for all children;" and, finally, that "any order that differs from the uniformity of the state school" is to be looked at with suspicion (introduction, pp. 25-26).

The aim of the text is therefore to question each of these three points, in order to resist "a political-institutional structure that favors the State over civil society and a tenaciously entrenched pedagogical approach that - even involuntarily - reinforces the class divisions and disadvantages of the neediest children" (introduction, p.25).

Beyond the territorial contexts and the individual solutions proposed, the book provides a framework through which to view educational realities with new eyes, allowing the reader to begin to conceive of, to imagine, and to rebuild from the foundations, the whole structure – even the idea - of the Italian educational system, questioning the cultural, operational, and pedagogical paradigms that have supported it so far.