

Philosophy of Education, the Production of the Presence and the Poetic Distance

Filosofía de la educación, producción de la presencia y distancia poética

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Recibido: 22/09/2010
Aprobado: 23/09/2010

The history of philosophy of education is like a *Bildungsroman*, and that could perhaps explain why questions such as “*What is the philosophy of education?*” assume an ontological dimension that isn’t suited to the experience, specific to it, of *becoming*. The subject would not improve by adding to this question a hermeneutic one: *what does it mean?*, which would bind it to a matter of mere production of interpretations. If the first question is dominated by an *essentialist* invocation, the second one connects the discipline to the universalist pretension of interpretation. What it’s gained in “meaning” is lost in “sense”, and the relationship with the world based on the *production of presence* is eventually forgotten. The term presence here means a spatio-temporal relationship with the world: what becomes “present” is a kind of *poetic production* (*poïesis*) with which we become present, tangible, in what we think and what we do.

I interrogate philosophy of education as something that has to do, not with essence or logical meaning, but with the “experience-sense”. And this implies a poetic question (neither ontological nor hermeneutic): *How do I make myself present to what I do and what I think?* Just as in literature it is possible to tell stories constituted of mere coincidences and

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unintended effects, without incurring the absent vulgarity of a guiding narrative idea, it could also be possible in the field of philosophy of education to produce thoughts not from a reason detached from the “events” (*événements*), that make us think, but from concrete experiences that reflect the changes in which we are immersed. Then the purpose of philosophizing about education would not be the pretension to *change* what is there, but to learn to look at what we already see *without really realizing*: paying attention by becoming present to reality. This assumption may require a writing style that considers the event not just as another *case*, but as a unique opportunity to think *singularly* about what in the given field escapes the established frameworks of explanation. I speak of the *essay*, and the essayist vocation of philosophy of education also affecting thinking. I refer to those Arendtian *exercises of thinking* which search for a benefit in *how* to think in the open breach between the past and the future. These exercises do not come from a resigned weakness, but from an effort to enable an *intermediate space* between human finitude and its endless thirst for knowledge. The essay is set in a way that seeks to do justice to *the complexity of reality*, articulating speculation and everyday experience. It is from ordinary places that the demanding task that is assigned to a philosophy of education begins: the development of concepts. As Deleuze said, the concept does not tell the essence, but the event. Thinking would be an opening up to what makes us think, to everything that reveals itself discontinuous in the educational experience. Such a philosophizing would not establish a protective distance before reality –which we think at the cost of staying away from–, but a *poetic distance*, which is always a corporal relation: *embodied knowledge*. It is the distance that we always take to see what is there. A chosen distance. Because nor from the *too-near* neither from the *too-far*, do we see or know anything