

Monolingualism of Other as a Limit of a Narrative Identity. Retelling the University Today

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Abstract

In the middle of the student movement of 1968 in France, Paul Ricoeur raised a reform and a revolution perspective about the University centered on two nuclear aspects: a) the reformulation of the functional structure of the University; and b) the transformation of the University from the relationship between teachers and students. Ricoeur affirmed that the crisis of civilization that inhabits the society, prevents to transform the University, and that it is only from the own language of this institution this transformation could be accomplished. Ricoeur evidences the rhetoric and discourse of capitalist production that is invading the University and changing its nature. The richness of his narrative work and action settings included in Mimesis I-III is of what hinted at in the center of the teacher-student relationship that can provide us valuable interpretative trails to understand and propose alternative solutions to the contemporary University crisis. This communication shows how the contamination of academic capitalism distorts the narrative processes all together: to say, tell, recognize others, promise, attesting and remember, to the point that members of the educational community are unable to build a narrative identity, to recognize themselves in their socio-academic trajectories, to recognize the institution and finally, to be recognized by the institution. The distortion allows the extension of a capitalist hegemonic discourse throughout the individuals' socio-educational experiences and contaminates their life trajectories. Finally, this paper suggests some alternatives to re-think the crisis of the University through the link between a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention.

Key words: University, crisis, narrative identity, monolingualism, academic capitalism.

1. Introduction

The University as a living organism in constant evolution represents a socio-political environment where converges, as Paul Ricoeur (1996) affirms, the constant presence of conflict, the struggle for freedom and autonomy. Jacques Derrida (2001), confirms that by declaring the University as an institution without condition, projected to a whole freedom by its own force of nature of pointing errors of society, regardless of creed or distinction, and assuming a constant defense facing the threat to be muted for being political incorrectly. From its origins, the University has struggled for the right of autonomy, diversity and participation, but at the same time, it has become one mirror of the construction and de-construction of society. However, this institution is today in the middle of a dizzying transformation and renovation, but as well within a greater crisis, due to the new hegemony of *Knowledge-base Economy*, a term closely tied to *Academic Capitalism*. Knowledge-base Economy is a term legitimated by the Lisbon summit (2010), and the Bologna process, which includes educational services and its academic products as a fundamental asset within the international market values in order to produce institutional prestige and the so call "Quality of education". As for Academic Capitalism, it emerges as a critical analysis inside of some scientific communities (Slaughter and Leslie, 1999; Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004), as a response to the practice of commercialization of the fundamental academic activities in higher education in United States. These two different but complementary terms focus the analysis in this work to: a) the inclusion of capitalist rhetoric to educational logic; (b) Ricoeur's educational contribution regarding the crisis of the University; (c) from a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention; and (d) new ways of narrating the contemporary University.

2. The inclusion of capitalist rhetoric to educational logic

Reforms in higher education are the common condition of contemporary University worldwide. Daily, all mass media worldwide broadcast the university global reforms: significant increase of university fees and tuition all over; students loans interest rate to rise accompany with a gradual withdrawal of State aid to public universities in the United States; the debate on the reformulation of the National Education law 30 in Colombia; the law of freedom and responsibilities of

universities in France; the *Printemps érable* in Quebec; the high privatization process of higher education in Chile; the lack of positions for new teachers in public universities in Spain; the scarcity academic freedom at universities in United Arab Emirates; the enrollment crisis at the universities in China; the incursion of US curriculum system in higher education in Singapore; the erosion of working conditions of university teachers in England, etc.

The University reforms responds mainly to two aspects: first, the inclusion of *Knowledge-base Economy* (*Économie de la Connaissance*) and second, the *Academic Capitalism*. The Knowledge-base Economy stands as the bedrock of the European Union's (EU) logic concerning higher education, adopted at the Bologna Process (1999), and Lisbon Strategy (2000). The Bologna Process intends to harmonize EU's different educational systems and restructure higher education, while the Lisbon Strategy emerges as a part of the Union's wider economic platform that extends beyond higher education, restructuring institutions of all public sector. In the Knowledge-base Economy prevails the investment of resources in the production, distribution and use of knowledge and information based on technological innovation, the creation of patents and the dissemination of science through national and international indexed publications, the system and innovation and the information infrastructure. In such conditions, teaching and research are evaluated through indicators of performance, referring to an academic/economical regime within the university. However, educational, social and financial impacts remain unknown by the general public, representing a big challenge to democratic and just educational institutions.

Inspired by the theory of human capital, Knowledge-base Economy is grounded on a technical rationality that evaluates (measures) individuals' performance and turns individuals to treasure diverse capitals in order to find a place in the global market of educational prestige and excellence. These capitals are not only economic, but political, social, academic, cultural, etc., In fact, the way individuals gain, lose and exchange these capitals is transforming the nature and practices of individuals at institutions of higher education worldwide. Thus we can affirm that educational services considered as public resources and a social good has become an asset with great value that must be integrated to the dynamics of the global economy.

In this logic evaluation is focused on the verification of teachers' competences, generating programs of accreditation, and evaluation of general and specific competencies of students, substantially transforming the pedagogical and didactics nature of the evaluative process, from a means to an end. Certification of teaching and students' competences, and the fulfillment of institutional standards will result as the assessment of Quality of Education. So, it is easy to understand that Quality of Education is expressed mostly on quantitative data to validate performance, success and excellence, and more dangerous, that this so called "Quality of Education" stands today as the central and most powerful educational policy governing education systems and educational communities worldwide (Crozier, 2006; Correa, 2011). The statistics that come from these education quality standards are presented to the whole society as scientific and democratizing elements shaping the basis of the educational systems' logic and praxis. As scientific, supposedly based in a positivist approach, normally took for granted as valid and true, and so, democratizers apparently because the might encourage practices of State transparency and accountability before the entire society. However, what is relevant along the educational reforms is the constant presence of a social asymmetry within the institutions of higher education. Of what this seemingly scientific and democratic movement promulgates, is the implementation of a grammar and rhetoric of the educational activities. Terms such as *assessment*, *terminal efficiency*, *performance*, *success*, *academic excellence* and *quality of education* have emerged from the educational discourses. Lack of epistemic contents they effectively represent guides for actions before academic consideration and debate. These educational quality standards are not tributary elements of the Knowledge-base Economy, but, rather, they represent, in fact, the bedrock of this economy.

Academic Capitalism, as a new educational grammar and rhetoric, allows some members of the educational community (*best players*) to participate all along the global markets of knowledge replacing the concept of education from a knowledge/learning regime as a public good, to a knowledge/learning academic capitalism regime (Slaughter and Rhoades, 2004). Repercussions of the Knowledge-base Economy and the Academic Capitalism are still insufficiently explored. However, one of these effects are particularly identified as a *New Public Management* (Ferlie, Ashburner, Fitzgerald, & Pettigrew, 1996), based on the government of institutions of higher education according to their performance. It represents a new circle of *pouvoir et savoir*, not only in the limits of the institutional control but to a production market control, by offering the future of the university to the anonymous hands of the global market. As a result of this, the allocation of budgets for the operation of public and private universities, responds to an equation of academic productivity: The more the universities produce the better quality and the more money they will get. This equation is usually associated to the rate of employability of alumnae, the percentage of success and the performance of researchers production, quality of teaching and student performance.

The combination of a Knowledge-base Economy and the Academic Capitalism produces an arbitrary grammar and rhetoric for a unique higher education discourse. It refers to a monolinguisism that replaces conflict and freedom at university, for the totalitarianism of an exclusive logic and discourse oriented to fulfill the expectations of the global markets of knowledge. This monolinguisism generates distortions of social interactions within the educational community, between scholars and their academic work, since teachers and researchers will be tied to a neurotic system of academic re-production legitimized by a system of evaluation of their activities based in evidences in order to build their individual economy and public prestige (*Best players*). Among students and teachers due to a distance between students and their socio-cognitive processes through a system of evidences of learning, instead of the acknowledgment (recognition) of their curricular experiences. Finally, between academic, administrative and students because in the foundation of this new economy, it will not be present the educational project. The emergence of an ethical problem in creating a system of institutional recognition based on treasuring economical, academic, cultural and political capitals oriented towards individual success, and excellence constitutes the first consequence of the junction of Knowledge-base Economy and the Academic Capitalism. Here individuals are facing an ideological recognition in terms of Honneth's theory (1992, 2007), meaning that at one hand, those who produces with the rules of the market of knowledge, could be recognized for their academic productivity by the educational institution, but at the same time, this institution will not longer supported them by a continuous institutional behavior; and by the other hand, those who do not play with the rules of the global market, - especially, in the role of teaching and research at the University-, will be displaced to the periphery of the academic activity with no capitals to participate. This Knowledge-base Economy and the Academic Capitalism embodies a single logic, a monolinguisism that attempts to homogenize policy and educational practice in a single *ethos* and *habitus*, under the slogan of academic productivity. In fostering the ritualization of treasuring these capitals, universities equate institutional recognition with academic production.

3. Paul Ricoeur's contribution to the crisis of the University

Ricoeur critical thinking about the University can be described in three particular axes: 1) a political philosophy in response to a capitalism that invades the University discourse and educational practices, changing the nature of the University; 2) a pedagogy of action among the relationship teacher/student; 3) a link between a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention, from the reconfiguration educational trajectories (*parcours de formation*) to "live a good life with and for others in just institutions"(Ricoeur, 169, 1992). It is in these first two axes that Ricoeur (1970), defends the university's own political construction and discourse and affirms the necessary inclusion of a *new pedagogy* (*Le Monde*, 1969). However, this pedagogy cannot be completely understood at that time, but from a second phase of Ricoeur's theoretical work, particularly within his *hermeneutic phenomenology*. A path, according to Vergara (2006), from *The Rule of Metaphor* (1975), to *The course of Recognition* (2004). It is precisely inside Ricoeur's reconfiguration of action through a narrative path extended to the limits of social recognition where the third axe can be understand, and where it lies the meaningful equation of his new pedagogy (Ricoeur, 1969), from a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention in the perspective of just institutions. Ricoeur's political philosophy of 68 affirms the emergence of a new revolution of the West civilization, which criticized the view of the world and the conception of life that call into question the economics, politics and human endeavor.

"It is a cultural revolution because it questions the world-vision, the conception of life, that underlie the economic and political structures and the totality of human relations. This revolution attacks capitalism not only because it fails to bring about social justice but also because it succeeds too well in deluding men by its own inhuman commitment to quantitative well being. It attacks bureaucracy not only because it is burdensome and ineffectual, but also because it places men in the role of slaves in relation to the totality of powers, of structures and hierarchical relations from which they have become estranged. Finally, it attacks the nihilism of a society, which, like a cancerous tissue, has no purpose beyond its own growth. Confronted with a senseless society, this cultural revolution tries to find the way to the creation of goods, of ideas, of values, in relation to their ends."(*Le Monde*, Jun, 9th-10th, 1968).

Ricoeur focuses on the relations of capacity/willingness and freedom under a socio-pedagogical contract between students and teachers that affirm the need for autonomy within allowing the construction of a just and democratic University. Aware of Rousseau's criticism about an education that is mistaken in trying to find a small adult in the child, Ricoeur warning the dangers of trying to find the young capitalist among the students at the university. He relies on a double needed action: a reform and a revolution of the University that confront the reformers with the revolutionaries, "this controversy should lead us to the reform of the University keeping us revolutionaries" (Ricoeur, 1968). Ricoeur

presented this reform as an internal review process, and an external contestation action. In the one hand, the review internal process is a participative action where all education community is needed to take part in the construction of a discourse and an own political thinking.

In the other hand, the contestation external process is developed by the reorganization of the University through a decentralized and participative method described in four main points: a) The intergenerational issue: a University for whom? The University not only should concentrate in the preparation of young people but also give space to return to the University of other generations, through a lifelong education, which could remove all kinds of social and cultural segregation; b) The goals of the University. What to do in and about the University? Ricoeur sees the need for a critical pact between the educational community and society to defends the University triple purpose: a freedom in research, professional education and the promotion of the general culture; c) The Government of the University. Who govern and with whom? The decisions of the University are today taken more by a powerful minority and less by a participative and democratic majority. Ricoeur affirms the capacity to say "I" at the University as a main requirement of just educational institutions. Here perhaps one can see the initial construction of his small ethics; d) Politics at the University. Ricoeur describes a scenario of exclusion from a lack of participation and involvement of teachers and students within the Administration of the University.

It is necessary to abandon the neutrality/politicization equation and build a way to make the own University politics. It means, a critical and creative pedagogical pact, "that must be taken to the level of fundamental and profound questions of social dynamics and not only in the horizon of simple political alternatives in the strict sense of the parties" (Ricoeur, 1970: 76-77). Ricoeur's contestation of the University can only happened through a cultural inner revolution. This is a historical and mandatory role of the University in front of the paralysis of other social institutions.

5. From a pedagogical intention to the ethical intention

While Ricoeur initial educational analysis in 1968 was referred to a political philosophy focus in a student-teacher relationship, a more lately Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology approach will not restrict this political transformation to this relationship, but rather to an entire narrative transformation in his Philosophy of action, where Ricoeur confirms a turn to a pedagogical intention through a narrative reconfiguration of action making possible a political construction/action within human institutions.

We learn to *explain more to better understand* because, in part, the presence of a pedagogical intention. The relationship between students and teachers is legitimated by the connection between each other through a narrative process in order to refigure an educational trajectory (*parcours de formation*). Such pedagogical intention starts with a narrative construction that according to Ricoeur goes through a process of tripe mimesis. Here the *Mimetic* function of the narration - *Mimesis I* or pre-figuration, *Mimesis II* or configuration and *Mimesis III* or re-figuration- it is basically a particular application of the metaphorical and textual reference to the domain of human action. In this sense, it is in the action and the social dimension of language that unification of the triple mimesis can be founded. The process of mimesis orients the comprehension to a temporary process of continuity and discontinuity and an identity process of concordance and discordance. Narrate acts generate a dialectic between the characters of the story and the plot, producing an identity in sameness (*idem*) and difference (*ipseity*), involving the educational plot, must be in correspondence with the identity of the author and the educational action that reveals the story.

"The decisive step in the direction of a narrative conception of personal identity is taken when one passes from the action to the character. A character is the one who performs the action in the narrative. The category of the character is therefore a narrative category as well, and its role in the narrative involves the same narrative understanding as the plot itself. The question is then to determine what the narrative category of character contributes to the discussion of personal identity" (Ricoeur 1996a:146).

As a narrative model of identity, the symbiotic movement of concordance and discordance within this pedagogical intention make possible the continuous back and forth movement from a narrative identity -rooted in the educational trajectory- to an ethical subjectivity -being myself because and for the others-, making possible the construction of an educational project. The ethical intention reinforces through social recognition this duplicity of the social identity, being recognized because of my uniqueness, but as well recognize others and to be recognized by others because our sameness and differences. Thus, a significant process of educational improvement starts by the presence of a pedagogical intention that lies in the comprehension and refiguration of an educational trajectory, but as well, that has a clear teleology, *to live significant and good lives in order to build just institutions*. In this sense, we can affirm, that in

linking a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention, narrative acts educate. Therefore, students will not succeed just because they did not get good grades, neither, an educational institution cannot consider its work done because it was ranking well; a true quality of education is built because the institution will understand, esteem and recognize the students' educational trajectories (*trajets de formation*) and because it will continuously help students to recognize their educational trajectories and to be recognized by the institution. That could be another quality of education we can consider, out of the logic of Knowledge-base Economy and the Academic Capitalism.

Educational institutions may become truly just, not only through a cognitive development, neither by institutional controls regarding the individuals behavior or academic production, and not only because an institutional behavior that promotes justice. They become just, in part, because institutions understand, esteem and recognize the individuals' trajectories build as particular human beings and as members of an educational community.

These itineraries are regulated by the individuals interpretation and understanding of the nature and content of curricular experiences, in which they participate or are exposed to. It is within the curricular experiences where educational trajectories evolves and make sense for an educational community. "Curricular experiences represent a socio-cognitive narrative process that fosters the re-figuration of individuals' acts of learning and being through a pedagogical intention. Their nature is defined by the pedagogical conditions where they occurred" (Correa, 2011:3). The consciousness in linking a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention through meaningful curricular experiences could remember Ricoeur's 1968 idea of a new pedagogy that a more mature Ricoeur can be confirmed as Critical Pedagogy. Therefore, in retelling an educational trajectory -now an educational story (*histoire de formation*)- within Ricoeur's critical pedagogy, it represents the individuals' capacity to recognize themselves in their stories (narrative identity), and to be recognized by educational institutions.

But the link of the pedagogical intention towards a ethical intention in the *parcours de formation* could be clearer in the early 1980s, when Gaston Pineau orients his educational work using in part, Ricoeur's narrative theory. Pineau defines narrative identity in terms of authenticity of individuals -as Taylor (1994) does-. It means as an internal condition of the individual and the only element of a truth ethical condition. It's a completely subjective truth. While "being authentic is to agree with oneself, it is to be oneself, or becoming or find oneself in our story." The language of authenticity is therefore, ties to the *histoire de formation*" (Fabre, 2000, 13). Pineau's concept of call (*vocation*) helps us to build the concept of pedagogical intention. *La vocation* is defined, as a call, but it can also be interpreted from its etymological origin as a *project, a thelos*. Derrida (1996), Foucault (1972), y Castoriadis (1975), point out that it orients towards the action of seek, explore and create. The call could be ways of projecting itself, forge a "project of life" that it is built by individuals on the basis of their multiple experiences and in confrontation with a system of values that give sense and direction to their lives. Pineau's autobiographical approach understands *vocation* as project built from the temporalities of the educational story and he interprets educational trajectories such *guardians of the authenticity* in the perspective of the meaning and fullness. Pineau recovers the heideggerian *Dasein* to show the nature of a thrown humanity, projected towards the world of life.

"Being while thrown into the world, being there (*Dasein*) it is thrown there according to the mode of being of the project... the project (*Entwurf*) always concerns and according to its full extent to the revelation of the self in the world" (Heidegger, Being and Time).

For Pineau (1996), life stories are modeled by a project; it means that the story has an pedagogical intention that seeks finality in the limits of temporalities ranging from conservation to the development of the existence and death. But in this project there is a character immerse in a plot with a responsibility not only to the past, but also the present and future.

The project marks precisely with respect to stimulation, this capacity to get back to anticipate; but with the project, it is not about any anticipation. It is an anticipation that one desires to make oneself. The project involves an actor considered as the author of what he/she commits to perform. Beyond the biological purpose we will discuss here, from the psychological point of view, of final cause through raised intended to reach such a goal, to such realization. By giving the individual the feeling of *being the author of*, narration gives authority, offers a project as a powerful factor to build a personal identity" (Pineau, 1986:157).

Pineau's pedagogical intention refers to the process of Ricoeur's reconfiguration of the narrative action. In this sense, the project -as a refiguration of the individual education story- represents a pedagogical intention of a possible future, that is not limited to the understanding of the educational trajectory, but also an attestation and co-responsibility with the educational projects of others in searching sense, meaning and life fulfillment. For Pineau, to be aware of the capacity to start a personal project is to reinforce a triple consciousness that is at the basis of all identity:

"A sense of distinctiveness in the process of building a personal project in locating better of what it constitutes the individual singularity in relationship to the particularities of the context; A sense of personal ownership in the way in which the project, as a phase of the individual existence, it is connected to a kind of continuity or partial rupture of his/her story and plot; A sense of gaining, -beyond of the natural inevitable controversies in doing a project-, a social recognition, even, a simple social existence, in the strict sense that there is not such a thing as an individual project, that all project is or nature, relational"(Pineau, 1986:163).

Pineau affirms a narrative intelligence within the process of refiguration of action capable to reveal the possible places of re-appropriation of the story, which is very close to Ricoeur's narrative identity. It means that the construction of the story has a pedagogical intention to teach us of what had happened, but also, of what it could be happened if we appeal to the Ricoeur's mentioned capacities. Therefore educational trajectories have within a pedagogical intention, they are guided by a sense and by a project (Pineau, 1986). To be recognized oneself in these trajectories it requires that one can explain and understand the projects that these trajectories integrate within and the motivation that make them possible or not. Thus, the reflective process is connected to a personal and collective experience that will influence the individual's life and the life of others. Since a project involve processes of thinking, education and socialization, an educational trajectory leaves always something to tell about.

6. Retelling the university today

Regarding the analysis of the resulting educational monolinguisism in the junction between Knowledge-base Economy and the Academic Capitalism rhetoric and grammar, focus particularly how educational policies are affecting teachers and researchers at the university, we can affirm that at first place, that there is a contamination of the personal story and in the interpretation of it during a narrative process, fragmenting the narrative identity and making the individual's own story, strange and foreigner. It appears as a parallel story with a pre-established plot and the absence of the individuals of the enunciation. At this point, the members of an educational community are not capable to recognize themselves as characters of their own story. Secondly, perhaps the evolution of the academic capitalism goes not only to a dynamic of consummation and commerce of different capitals treasured as the exercise of a productive paradigm (measurement of educational performance, educational efficiency and excellence.), but also, the idea of becoming consummators of an imaginary and in complicity by reproducing an ideology. Been wealthy, ever young, competent, male, white, entrepreneur, and with all social connections appears as one of the paramount imaginaries the universities may have to support. Third, by reproducing this imaginary, the Aristotle's idea of good life (*bonne vie*) is deeply transformed and the connection between a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention is broken.

In narratives terms, and as a methodological approach, Ricoeur's philosophy of action offers possible answers to the actual crisis of the university, in building educational policies from the own voice of the members of the educational communities: a) an autonomous sense in relation to the author intentions; b) a polyphony of senses in the construction of the text; c) a reader who has the responsibility to finish the composition of the text; d) a reinterpretation as a process of reconfiguration of the text and self-understanding of the author, a conquest of the interpreter; e) an ethical intention that emerges from the individual bonding with the text, the engagement with other individuals to recognize each other on the horizon of a common and collective project in the construction of just institutions, and a social justice. The link between a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention appears in the exercise of a Critical Pedagogy, at the moment the institution places the education project at the center of their activities. Through Critical Pedagogy it is possible to see the intelligibility of curricular experiences, and within them, the capacities to tell, promise through an educational project, recognize others and oneself and to attest these educational trajectories before the needs of society, such as a commitment to social justice. The project as a pedagogical intention appears as a space of comprehension and explanation about these education trajectories, and to confront the hegemonic ideologies that distant the individuals to their life stories and break their narrative identity. The pedagogical intention within the University should reject -as an act of emancipation-, the hegemony of an educational monolinguisism based in the junction of the Known-base Economy and the Academic Capitalism by a critical educational process. A University without condition cannot accept a unique and thoughtless institutional discourse.

"This university without condition does not exist in fact, as we well know. But, first and according to the declared calling and essence, the university should be the last place of critical resistance -and more than critic- against all powers of dogmatic and unfair appropriation" (Derrida, 1998:9).

By the re-institutionalization of personal and collective educational trajectories through a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention we struggle, as members of the educational community, against a whispering university, paralyze before a system of production, prestige, individualism and the subordination of individuals to a system of social fragmentation and exclusion. To retell an educational story through curricular experiences, to be heard and recognized within and by the university represents a possibility to rescind the grammar and rhetoric of the Known-base Economy and Academic Capitalism and to clearly exercise Ricoeur's capacities of telling, promise, recognized others and to be truly recognized by others, to attest and to remember. Retelling the university linking a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention is to learn to retell the university in a different way. The exercise of an autonomous educational project, detached from the mentioned educational monolinguisism, allow us to include the desire and action for social justice and the good life, as it is clearly described in Ricoeur's *small ethics*. In this sense the *collation* will represent a truly institutional and societal commitment to *the economy of the give* as a true semantic transformation in the process of narration. Perhaps Ricoeur answer of an educational monolinguisism is the economy of the give that makes possible to link a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention and reestablish a narration identity. In this case, the *collation* represents a responsibility of the university to grant and confer a degree to individuals, but also to promote autonomous and critical thinking in building and living with others in just institutions and democratically societies.

Before the homogenization of society, the university should use the autonomy and singularity of every individual's educational story; before a whispering University, the pedagogical intention will explore new ways of enunciation and participation of all members; before the individualism and fragmentation of the educational community, the university will remember the link between a pedagogical intention to an ethical intention as the basis of its educational project towards social recognition and justice.

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