

Philosophy, Education and Human Formation: An Analysis of the Dialectic Relation of *Politics as Pedagogy* or of *Pedagogy as Politics*

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Abstract: The present article focuses on a philosophical approach of pedagogy as a political phenomenon. Moreover, it is our intention to use the *Pedagogics/Politics* categories to fight the epistemological murders committed by Western Christian philosophy. We refute the separation between Philosophy and Education because philosophy has always had a pedagogical dimension, just as education has always had a philosophical dimension, and in the same vein, we refuse to consider education and politics separately. They are both indeed intertwined in a thread of personal significance that will allow us to overcome the pedagogical Oedipus. The paragraphs that follow therefore represent a provocative reconsideration of political symbolism as a major driving force for human formation and development in its pedagogical dimension. For the objective purpose of this article, politics is hereby understood as the constant struggle to gain and maintain power and force capital amongst all related social agents. The pedagogical dimension, as accordingly depicted here, will therefore represent an endless driving forces in a fragile equilibrium between education, transformation and empowerment. These forces will also serve as a maneuvering to obtain well established values and objectives. There is no neutrality in pedagogy and in politics, as we perceive. Our conclusions are open-ended and can be foreseen as a work in process. Such concluding remarks, moreover, need further collaborative cooperation between all of the above-mentioned stakeholders.

Keywords: Pedagogy as Politics, Educational Framework, Dialectic Relationship, Political Symbolism, Human Formation and Development

1. Introduction

When we look upon philosophy-making and philosophizing and their consequent exchanges with education, we do so choosing to root our enterprise in the ground of our existence. For that reason, our philosophical attempts come from an Iberian-Latin-American perspective, with its history and people.

To us, choosing to think in the context of the enormous continent that is Latin America means not only signaling the *locus enunciationis* of our philosophical activity, but also marking our solidarity and belonging to a people robbed by Eurocentric Philosophy. We posit that if a person participates

in the Brazilian nation, if they are committed to fighting for justice and acknowledgment, then they can never forget that their historical roots include the ethnicities that were denied and exploited by the European colonizers who came here to pursue various ends. Our historical and philosophical horizon consists of those who are the “other face” in a history of concealment. Dussel explains that “the invasion and subsequent colonization gradually excluded from the community of hegemonic communication many faces and historical subjects – the oppressed” [11].

The goal of our present contribution to the ongoing debate is to postulate relationships between philosophy and education in a critique of the human development project imposed upon

the world by Eurocentric interests, exploring the possibilities of examining the subject from an oppressed standpoint. Therefore, it is our intention to use the *Pedagogics/Politics* categories to fight the epistemological murders committed by Western Christian philosophy. We refute the separation between Philosophy and Education on the grounds that philosophy has always had a pedagogical dimension, just as education has always had a philosophical dimension, and in the same vein we also refuse to regard education and politics separately.

Highlighting the thematic unity of our text is of the utmost importance at present, when philosophies are persecuted under the accusation of being ideological – while the persecutory efforts themselves are paradoxically considered non-ideological. We do not grasp human life outside the political universe, nor any knowledge not informed by the political dimension inherent to humans, the specificities of different knowledge areas notwithstanding.

Our text is structured as follows: first, we examine the matter of human formation based on epistemologies that misappropriate one's identity – totalitarianisms and their constitutions, cultural simulacra, and their expressions in the world of life, plural institutions and their supposed epistemic unity have not simply produced the (abhorrent) complete negation of the Other, but they have also laid the foundations of an ongoing concealment of the many, legitimate ethnic-racial faces. Next, we offer a series of pedagogical notes in view of proposing a pedagogics/politics articulated to a formative State constitution that will allow us to overcome the pedagogical Oedipus.

Human Formation as Negation of the Other: Politics, Pedagogics and Totality.

The concept of human is based on assumptions about the wholeness of the subject, which does not preclude the singularity in which this subject *exists*, nor their transformative potential. Endowed with the ability to actualize reality as proposed by Dussel's Politics of liberation, an instrument for the liberation of Latin America, we turn our attention to the exteriorities of "non-subjects" as exteriority. "We must re-situate our Latin-American existence in a different exteriority" (DUSSEL, 1995, p. 33).

Our analysis is based on the Dusselian prerogative as we identify the negation of the Latin American other, as well as the dehumanization perpetrated against an entire collective whose members were relegated to the status of things, or objects. "A thinking enterprise that critically assumes our present, based on a method that implies not only *seeing* history but also being an *active factor*, by virtue of its interpretative model". Dussel (1986, p. 215). A critical analysis of the dehumanization of the Other.

There is, however, a predominant and original mode of philosophical production, a dominant manner to grasp worldly reality. This makes Greek philosophy that which has difficulties conceiving multiplicity [16]. Greek mentality conceives of and names as 'barbarian' all that differs from it [12]. The core issue, according to Zimmermann, is that Hellenic thought disrespects *multiplicity* by not being able to

conceive anything other than the *one*.

If Greek philosophy is but one possible mode of philosophy-making [16] and dialectic is a way of articulating the philosophical journey over time (DUSSEL, 1986), then a new philosophy requires a new method, an alternative that will take new steps, contemplate new horizons among the innumerable possibilities of philosophy-making. Thus, the analectical method was developed: to overcome the negation of Latin America in dialogue with the philosophical North, without subjugating the new philosophy.

Dialectics is based on daily existence (*tà éndoxa*), existential understanding or historical appearance. Daily existence consists of the usual fact of being Latin-American, Argentinian, from Mendoza, says Dussel (1986, p. 26). Thus, the analectical method is an active factor seen as how it is an internal operation linked to externality as a founding category. Hence the importance of incorporating daily existence – in this case, Latin America – to thinking.

The Latin subject, in their historically negated transformative potential, is currently situated in complete negativity. The Greek outlook on reality contributes to this by establishing the foundations of a totalizing and unbalanced view. It is propelled by *war* and *oneness*, as stated by Dussel (1977c) himself, and consumes its opponents by negating them; its foundations are philosophers of the likes of Heraclitus and Parmenides. According to Roque Zimmermann's (1987) take on the Mendoza philosopher's words: "War is a requisite stage of this totality; it underlies its logic, a logic that cannot be overcome if 'all is one'". The high theoretical sophistication of Greek thought inflicted long-lasting wounds to peripheral peoples. This means regarding philosophy as a highly damaging steamroller, the consequences of which still cannot be determined. This war has many facets, theoretical and non-theoretical.

The totality underlying the philosophical approach makes Totality the ontological basis of the very notion of traditional philosophy-making. However, as cast and forged iron, as hard metal molded into soft aesthetics, this ontology determines the supposedly soft shapes of a rather harsh effect. As a mode of grasping reality, this ontology was the justification of an *Absolute Self* that knows no restrictions [16].

However, the inconsistency of Absolute Totality was exposed by the Metaphysics of Alterity. Dussel (1977c) deconstructs the tragic domination modes with his Metaphysics of Alterity, initially drawing from Lévinas. It is an encounter with the Latin American Other as the different one, an experience whose key feature is face-to-face. This New Metaphysics of Latin-American making works with the following categories: *Erotics* (1977a), *Pedagogics* (1977b), *Politics* (1977c), and *Archeology* (1980).

If the role of philosophy consists of producing discursive elaborations by which to grasp reality, then its role in Latin America, given our limitations in philosophical tradition, must be to build tools to understand the issue of human formation. For that end, Pedagogics and Politics are considered as interpretative categories.

2. Politics, Sovereignty and Servitude: A Totalitarian Constitution of the Subject

“We regard politics initially as a brother-brother relationship; [...]” [16]. Enrique Dussel’s politics is effectuated in face-to-face. In other words, he believes that *Politics* set an imbalance between peers as they encounter each other’s faces. The totalizing rationality that excludes all that is different has ingrained a hierarchic logic to the process, of which negating the Other has subsequently become a cornerstone. The not-being effectuated by master-slave dialectics, genially presented by Hegel, does denounce Totality but only in part, for as the master becomes absolute, the slave becomes the remnants of his singularity. This implies a direct relationship between subjects, and therefore the relationship with the other can be mediated by the face. Dussel builds on Hegel’s work by expanding this relationship to encompass the State.

One of the key claims in Dussel’s political philosophy is the fact that politics can unfold into various types of relationships, and thus is not limited to the encounter with the other’s face, but instead also encompasses an infinity of other relationships at the same level [16]. The encounter of self and other presents us with the unraveling of several consolidated things, ranging from brother-brother to State-State, all of which work towards a totalizing affirmation that conceals the other.

The domination of the Other is a mixture of subtle shadows of political relationships and the negation of the different. In the philosopher’s words,

The absolute criterion to determine the ethics of a project can be defined as follows: a project is “perverse” when it totalizes a system by denying the Other as a nation, as a class or as an oppressed person within the current political totality. A project is ethically “fair” when it opens up the understanding of a new future order in which the political Other, the dependent nation, the oppressed class or person is a free moment in the solidarity of the new politics to come. [3].

Insofar as it is a category of inserting the other as a negated brother, the *politics* level robs the other of their human wholeness. The European enterprise of man as capitalist and imperial, of determination as State, lays its foundations as a totality with a project of dominating the *Other*. Thus, the domination of the Latin peoples is based upon the political effectuation of the European project of subject. According to Dussel (1977, p. 123), that is a veritable “existential project of the bourgeois man”.

The colonization of Latin America is a domination enterprise whose goal becomes explicit in its vocabulary. One example is the term ‘*Civilization*’. Another is the role of justice as a tool to regulate the colonial “coexistence”, which supposedly would not bear the notion of *Justice*. To modern logics, colonialism is neither legal nor illegal, but simply lawless [15].

In the political objectification that defines the strategic horizons of Latin America, such disharmony has long been and continues to be normative and normal. The political negation of the Latin-American continent is at the core of a

different negation whose Totality, at the *Politics* level, establishes itself as generation of wealth and profit at the expense of an exploited people.

The negation dialectic understands the Other at a political level; it is present in the bilateral relationship between the negation of a people and the affirmation of certain interests. As Dussel (1997c) clarifies, the established order, the system, the *status quo*, are imposed by the dominant ones as a natural state of being in which notions such as “usual” and “the way it has always been” are part of an ideology that conceals reality.

From Dussel’s work, we can infer that the negation of the Other that informs the domination project works against a politics of prudent ethics, which consists of prudent manifestations of innovation. Conversely, negation politics consists of “more of the same” and its obscure moral rules are founded on the negation of the Other. In negation politics, the chief of State puts on a mantle of subservient domination while also being an oppressor, on account of being an extension of domination politics.

By nature and professionally a practical politician [3], the *sovereign* is he who strives to participate in power or to influence the power distribution (the relationship between States and between people and their State). Even though he is an integral part of the system, the sovereign presents himself as an “anti-systemic” balm to the wounds of a necrophiliac system, an alleged solution to people’s lives that, in truth, is deeply rooted in the system and serves its purposes. His blind commitment to the status quo undermines his commitment to the life of his people, and therefore to ethics itself.

How does such decadence seek to justify itself? The answer to that question can be found in Dussel’s (2007) book *20 theses on politics*, specifically in his *Thesis no. 5* on Fetishism, where the Mendocan philosopher defines the concept and presents its consequences. He writes that “fetishism”, a type of spell, consists of that which is man-made and offered to idols; thus, in this case, fetishism and idolatry are similar [3], inasmuch as they refer to the same sort of relationship. In contrast, fetishism in Politics has a different meaning: the absolutization of the representative’s will.

In fetishist politics, the representative’s will receives the status of an absolute cornerstone of rationality (DUSSEL, p. 2007). This implies an understanding that the will expressed by the “representative” (the sovereign) acts as a spell insofar as it is not an authentic representation of reality but rather the mere will of a leader.

Thus, what is fetishized is the access to and permanence on a position of power, which is presented as a necessity even when it is not in line with the will of the majority: if the sovereign’s voice is the cornerstone of reason, disposition, and Absolute truth, what he says must come to pass. Fetishism begins with the representative as a singular being, as someone who experiences delight, pleasure, desire, and a sadistic drive upon exercising fetishized power over disciplined citizens ([3], 1977c).

Fetishized rationality is presented as a rich and nutritious

broth and rebuilds political relationships between subjects as it becomes the oppressive reconfiguration of politics as relationship with the other; in Zimmermann's words, a justification in which some are born as masters and others as slaves. Aligning oneself to fetishized rationality disfigures reality to the point of making *politics* into a distortion of the other, all while this catastrophic rationality, acting as a spell, is the justification of the system in place. In this justification there is no longer a place for reality, as it ascends into fantasy.

If every manifestation of a Politics of Absolute Totality is oppressive and, as Enrique [3] (1977c) claims, the human being is he/she who makes themselves by encountering the other, then those things are in a singular and unbalanced relationship, they exist on the same level. In other words, the encounter of the other as politics is regulated by the perverse metrics of oppressed-oppressor. From this springs the totalitarian genealogy whose totality negates the other as materiality, as that which is different.

In consequence, the sadistic feeling inherent to fetishized relationships resonates with the sort of subject molded by Absolute Totality: the *one* that not only fails to grasp *multiplicity* but also embodies the effort to annihilate it. This is how fetishized rationality paves the way for the negation of face-to-face: by justifying brother x brother as master x slave. In mainstream logic, the absurd seems to make sense: one keeps slaves in order to have the right to be enslaved.

In *Discourse on Voluntary Servitude*, Boétie (2017) warned us about how oppressive power and the need to serve constitute the foundations of slavery. Rather than being a spontaneous feeling, the desire to serve is driven, it is rooted on another's servitude, in becoming an oppressor. The fantasy of provisioning burns within the act of imprisonment [1]. In Dussel's (1986) words, this sordid politics manifests savagery, Hobbes' "*homo homini lupus*". *Politics* as death is essentially anti-politics.

The cartography of proximity to the other is announced by the philosopher of servitude in a distant story whose geography is nevertheless so close to us – the servant's logic, where people do not just obey a tyrant but follow him blindly, submitting to looting, truculence, and giving up their possessions, parents, children, and even their own lives [1]. Fetishism and the will to power dehydrate both reality and the subject, forcing him/her into self-deception. However, if the other's death is my own and the will of the sovereign is to annihilate what is other, then my alignment to his extermination project is my own death. This is the face-to-face politics of self-annihilation.

Educational Notes on the Political Horizon: A Formative State Constitution for Overcoming the Pedagogical Oedipus.

Enrique Dussel's *pedagogics* must not be confused with *pedagogy*. His use of the term does not refer to the theoretical-technical-productive activities of the Sciences of Education, but instead to a philosophical approach that encompasses both a grasp of reality and the formation of beings able to achieve their full potential as individuals. Dusselian *pedagogics* is mediated by face-to-face, taken here

as ethical exteriority and therefore as the philosophical essence of human formation as an exteriority that owns its Latin bodylines.

Moreover, *pedagogics* is the effective-constitutive objectification via an encounter with the Other. Relationships such as father-son, master-disciple, doctor-psychologist-patient, philosopher-nonphilosopher, politician-citizen, etc. ([3], 1977b) are all of the formative level. It is the condition of alternative openness of the one who does not constitute themselves by drawing from themselves, from the Same, but instead from another's exteriority.

Pedagogics relates to Dussel's other categories; it converges with *Politics*. The alienation to which the son-disciple is subjected in the shape of a sealed destiny – a project determined by the father-master – is rooted in the Totality that makes him the Same as his father; this relationship hurts the descendant's wholeness by draining his essential potential and letting it go to waste, molding it into an oppressed carnality by using face-to-face as absolute domination, *ego magisterial*.

Dussel's (1977c) pedagogical drive can be understood as preservation of the other in face of evading erotic phallocracy, death of the son, anti-pedagogics. The Mendocan philosopher approaches the issue considering human beings in the formative organicity they display as children, whose psychology is formed by the imbalances left by an oppressive relationship. Many are the consequences of dealing with the *father* as a fracture of *psychoanalysis* itself. The psychoanalytical relationship has several configurations throughout a subject's life, from birth to adulthood and also as a part of ideology and culture [3] (1977c).

When we regard the father-son relationship as *Pedagogics*, that relationship is relocated to the political level and assumes new configurations. It unfolds upon being objectified, all while remaining true to its essence. In this context, father-son can take on new meanings, even that of son-State. What once was a father-son relationship in the molds of oppressor-oppressed now has new possibilities. The ballast is no longer held by the subjugating father, but rather by the subject and the subjugating State.

As a formative condition, the death of the young captive happens in the name of the victory of the father's project. The child brought up in annihilation understands themselves as totality based on the shadows of their own father, master, doctor, professional, philosopher, culture, etc. To the mother, the *pater poder* is a symbol of uxoricide, a phallic violence against the woman that dissolves all that emanates from her. The destruction of the feminine figure is the ruin of what derives from her: her son. As an extension of the mother, the son must also be sacrificed. It is phallic domination and matricide [3] (1977c). However, son-State reshapes the domination logic and therefore father-totality x mother-son becomes State-totality x culture-son.

Dussel's pedagogical project is based on a Metaphysics of Alterity, in which the other – son, master, and disciple – is regarded as an autonomous architecture. The father figure, Totality face-to-face and reconfiguring itself to assume

various shapes, is constitutive not only of the domination relationship between father and son, but also between son and State and the bourgeois father-State. The hatred from the original project – the relationship with the father – is also present in the relationship's new configuration, in which that role falls to the State. Acting as a connection between the maternal and the phallographic, the son is constituted by a negative impulse that not only fails to preserve him but also has aftereffects. The son suffers filicide as a consequence of coming between father and mother, and this awakens his oedipal hatred for the father [3] (1977c). A hatred for the State.

This leads us to the pedagogic condition of the State. This succinct overview is based on Dussel's analysis, even though he does not go into much detail about this topic. If pedagogics objectives itself as ego magisterial, so does the State in its pedagogizing condition. In other words, as a formative determination of the subject, this role can be assumed not just by father, philosopher, master, and doctor, but also by the State, as written by Dussel.

It follows that the State is now ego magisterial as well, and as such a formative determination: it defines public policy, what can and cannot be regarded as health, public safety, professional relationships, education, communications, and so forth. It is the regulator of the capitalist horizon, the light guiding a people through a dark tunnel. The State pedagogizes the notions of State, duty, economical relationships, communications, culture, truth, deception, and even who lives or dies, thus establishing a *necropolitics*.

Dussel (1977) offers the following analysis of the roles played by the culture and the State: within the oppressed people's logic, culture and State have their roles defined by the oedipal relationship. It is in the culture-as-mother that the son nurtures his dreams, attraction, needs, etc. Meanwhile, the State (the father) is coldness, detachment, domination. In this dichotomy, the oppressed people hate the State and desire/love culture.

For Latins colonized by the phallographic logic of the concentration of capital, the State as *ego magisterial* takes on a formative condition; as the owner of an oppressive formative *praxis*, as Absolute Totality, the father-State strategically pedagogizes illusion as part of his role of *ego magisterial*, a manipulator [3] (1977, p. 168). The masterful State fully steps into his manipulative role. It manipulates the hatred for his *persona*, turning it into dream, attraction, need, fantasy.

Latin American figures such as Getúlio Vargas kick off "Latin American populism" [3] (2016), built around centralizing chiefs of State who present themselves as able to secure social pacts. This is a manipulation of reality insofar as it conceals social contradictions. In truth, "developmentalism" has failed because it was just a "mask" for the expansion of the capital of central nations, [...]" (p. 204), and it has dragged along the tragic need for new mass-producing strategies. 20th-century populism is not the same as 21st-century populism (DUSSEL, 2017).

Although at present populism no longer speaks of social pacts, it is still centered on the strategic figure of the sovereign;

however, coalition politics has now become dissolution politics – or, to be accurate, annihilation politics. This is clearly spelled in a sentence proffered by a famous imbecile: "The dictatorship's mistake was to torture but not to kill." Its echoes notwithstanding, this declaration has a formative condition owed to how the father-State now has a pedagogic role. By virtue of being a pedagogics of hatred, it becomes an *anti-pedagogics*. This reorganization frames reality based on a Totality that annihilates the son as that which is different.

We have sought to examine human formation based on Dusselian pedagogics. When father-son becomes State-son, this pedagogics functions as education; it conceals the State's calling to be a totality by concealing oppressive servitude. Our analysis highlighted politics as an oppressive formative element, as *anti-pedagogics* that promotes a certain worldview.

3. Conclusions

We began this study by stressing how oppressive politics is *anti-politics* that by becoming *pedagogics* takes on a formative role, leading to *anti-pedagogics* in Latin America. We have demonstrated that the subject's constitution functions as formative integration in the political sphere. Based on the social pillar, the human being is constituted as formation.

Throughout this study, we have used the intersection between politics and pedagogics to show the corruption of humanity that takes place when subjects are immersed in a political system capable of molding them as predetermined architecture. In addition to an analysis of the colonial State as the matrix for the Latin political profile, we also tried to outline the constitutive elements that denote the human in such a structure. We highlighted how the State can function as a mold for subjects, thus reducing them to objects. When all social tensions are managed in the political sphere, that comes to be where human projects are designed. Such projects are far from the real needs of a people and instead work to perpetuate the current politics, which acts as pedagogical when it leads interests.

In consequence, *pedagogics politics* determine even politics itself. In that capacity, it regulates what is considered as matters of health, culture, education, public safety, etc. This points to the existence of hidden goals underlying notions such as Justice and Good. Such goals are defined from a unilateral standpoint, that is, an Absolute Totality in which even a politics of hatred becomes something pedagogized. Because its own morals are the only admissible ones, they become limitless immorality and profit from politics-as-hatred, normalizing and pedagogizing immorality.

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