

Educate and Philosophize at Yearbooks of EPENN'S Working Group 17 (WG17)

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Abstract This work originated from a literature review focused on research questions regarding philosophy of education in the Working Group 17 (WG17) annual report of the Educational Researchers Meeting of North and Northeast in Brazil (EPENN) held every two years at the universities of the North and Northeast of Brazil. Firstly, it will make an outline of themes to present an image of philosophy that relates more to education than an imposition to substantiate or think over education. Hence, philosophies appear connected to problems that came from education, schools or pedagogical situations. Afterwards, it will discuss two papers in which the authors present a philosophical rest on cultural experiences such as Brazilian afro-descendent and Amazon *cabobla* culture which attempts to create an alternative image of philosophy to discuss educational experiences beyond the wall of schools. Finally, it introduces the argument in favor to consider the WG17 as 'events' between education and philosophies, and suggest hypothetical paths to continue studies on philosophy of education.

Keywords: *philosophize, educate, EPENN*

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1. Introduction

This paper comes from a literature review whose objective was investigations on philosophy of education from the WG17 annual report. WG17 is a working group of philosophy of education at EPENN, a meeting held every two years at universities of the North and Northeast of Brazil. In this paper, I will present an outline of educational themes and their philosophical contributions over the last years, taking as reference my first participation at one of these meetings in 1997 held at Natal city in Rio Grande do Norte state.

Although researches in education and philosophy of education have been part of the history of the EPENN's annual meetings, this text will not be memorial or autobiographical. Similar to Pierre Bourdieu [6] in his book epigraph this is not an autobiography (*ceci n'est pas une autobiographie*).

Based on the Walter Benjamin's [4] critical comprehension of history, it emphasizes a vision whose accent is on a particular theme, considering it one of the histories and avoiding at same time generalizations and the fragmentation of reality. Therefore, on Benjamin's sense the paper is a particular accent of the history and the WG17 annual report offer in the same way an opportunity for an interpretative perspective.

Moreover, Benjamin's comprehension advises that the method must "brush history against the grain" in order to review the text and to find other untold stories. In the same way, this text did not intend to make the possible

answers the only way to tell the stories of these yearbooks. However, it aims to provide provocations and evidences to keep studying the philosophy of education through this important place to share knowledge that is the EPENN's WG17.

The approach between education and philosophy has been a common way in philosophy of education. Generally, authors study a specific philosophy and they present a comprehension of education. As an example, they study philosophers like Plato, Saint Augustin, Kant, Hegel and point out concepts to make a proposal about human formation or to study a specific domain in education or in pedagogy.

The intention to apply philosophical assumptions in education is doing without discussing the limits of these for the educational field. Consequently, education is more a field to apply philosophies than a specific domain of knowledge in dialogue or relation to philosophies. At least, two predominant ideas ("images") have been arisen to represent the imposition of philosophies on education: "substantiate" or "think over" education [18].

This paper takes into account the conception of image on Deleuze's sense, i.e. the historical constituents form like blocks on peoples thought, like those images on philosophy of education, for instance. However, it still arguments in favor to a new way ("image") of thinking, as a creation: the act to think is not a natural possibility but it is a creation (*...Et l'acte de penser n'est pas une « possibilité naturelle », mais une « création ».*) [15].

At the first image, the philosophy came to substantiate the education and its objective is to provide a substance to educate people. For example, it can analyze Plato's

thought and point out that the substance of his philosophy is the innate ideas. On the sense of Plato's ideas, the task of education would be completed if it can perform an educational practice to put people on situations nearest to the perfect ideas of things.

In the second image, philosophy appears as a place to think over education. In this sense, philosophy is a kind of knowledge that is in relation to others knowledge and it would be imposed itself as an activity that should think over about the reasons of any others, like psychology, sociology, education etc. Thus, the philosophy appears as a "science of sciences" and it aims to think over about others knowledge at the limit of the own philosophical reflection. In relation to education, for instance, the philosophy has presented the problem of the aims of education and about what is education or formation, but it will present no more than a reflection on education.

In this philosophical perspective, the philosophy will impose itself as a kind of knowledge higher than other knowledges and, in this way, it will accept more its philosophical demands than the problems of the educational field, school practices or pedagogy. Many studies on philosophy of education have been doing a deep debate on philosophical assumptions and attempt to substantiate educational practices or even to justify the advantages for choosing one philosophical assumption.

The literature review will present the predominant forms of philosophy of education whose papers intend to substantiate or think over education but it will present an outline in a domain where philosophies appears connected to problems that came from education, schools or pedagogy situations, understanding philosophy in relation or in dialogue to education, although an European and western philosophy will be predominant.

Moreover, it will discuss two papers in which the authors intend to present a philosophical rest on cultural experiences such as the Brazilian afro-descendent and Amazon cabobla culture, which open opportunities to create alternative images of philosophy and discuss educational experiences beyond the wall of schools, as a line of flight (*ligne de fuite*, [14]) in the great water flow of the predominant philosophical perspectives of the history of the EPENN's WG17.

Overall, it introduces the WG17 as a place of 'events'[17] between education and philosophies, which shows that the philosophy of education is in dialogue with problems of Brazilian education, as well as to propose new forms to philosophize education in Brazil.

2. Outlining Themes at the EPENN'S WG17

This outline will divide the research papers of EPENN13 [8], EPENN14 [9] and EPENN15 yearbooks [10] in a specific classification named "axes of problems" in order to show the context of the problems in these three meetings.

Moreover, the analysis of these periods will complement previous literature review made by Albuquerque and Barbosa [3] on philosophy of education and will provide an approach to help understanding what types of researches on philosophy of education are in the EPENN's WG17. In addition, it will give attention to

emerging themes, research problems and their highlights, e.g. if it was in a philosopher, a concept, a pedagogy or an educational or formative approach.

Four axes of problems have been identified according to the themes placed in question, and how they attempt to give an answer to a philosophical problem.

Firstly, one of the axes talks about researches that demand a more complete concept of subjectivity to reconstruct its meanings based on one dimension of subjectivity. In this axe, it will be pointed out different and particular papers in which the subjectivity is more complex, integral, holistic, polilogic; and that have an intuition, a body, a sensible reason or that are back to states of awareness. In this way, the problems came from an evaluation of the lack of subjectivity in order to give a philosophical answer that could fill it.

In this case, the educational and philosophical reflection has as reference the dialogue with an inter- or trans-disciplinary knowledge, and a pluri- or multi-dimensional reality. In a specific way, the dialogue with a philosopher goes beyond a philosophical perspective and aims to know how the educational practice will become fuller.

The second axe has the same classification like Albuquerque and Barbosa [3] named "Thinkers of Philosophy". There are several studies extensively about philosophers, however I will focus here on three specific types: the first type, and perhaps the predominant form, study a concept from a philosopher and debate these contributions to a formative and pedagogic process. The second include those studies which has an intention to study a concept in a pedagogic thought and identify its philosophical meanings. The third type includes those studies that attempt to accomplish philosophical reflections on educational practice and its steps of formative process, such as the role of schools and their levels: child education, elementary and high school; university and its dimensions: teaching, research and community service; as well as the moments of formative process like stages or even teachers' unit of oral expression; they are all subjects to philosophical questions.

The third axe of problems focuses on the great numbers of papers that have been discussed about the scientific status of education. Many philosophers of education have studied the thinking of Brazilian educational researchers with great numbers of published papers in the educational field to indicate the scientific meaning of educational practices. Among them, it could be highlighted Demerval Saviani, Antonio Munis Resende, Antonio Carlos Libâneo etc.

On philosophy of education, this debate has a particular concern that cannot be disregarded. It acknowledges that philosophy is historically a type of knowledge and thus denies the possibility to become a science or even to provide a scientific ground to education because the idea to make philosophy a science is somewhat not accepted among philosophers. Thus, Röhr [23] presents a paper whose objective was thinking over the possibility of education becoming a science as an own epistemic subject in which he pointed out: "the impossibility to found a science of education must take us to reflect about the historical process to outline and found the areas of knowledge" [23].

Hence, the dialogue between education and philosophy on this debate about education as a own epistemic subject

puts to the philosophy of education a problem to construct a science of education by a knowledge (philosophy) that has historically denied the possibility to be a science. In this case, perhaps an alternative for philosophy of education is to acknowledge that there is no one unique definition of science and it will not be an exception for education neither for philosophy to take this role.

The last axe of problems is a philosophical question which discusses a contemporary historical problem. In this case, the papers debate the role of education as an expression of capitalism interest; more specifically, the actions to educate people to put them in the market.

Those researches discuss neoliberal proposals about the role of technologies on education and the critical position to accept those proposals; as well as about the appropriation of ideas in favor to the market, such as the total quality, the human capital theory, and those researches that will criticize these pedagogical approaches to understand schools as place of entertainment.

Generally, those texts have analyzed the role of culture as an expression of the market in a contemporary capitalist society. In these analyses, the critical theory of society comes from Frankfurt School and is the main approach, following authors like T.W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse, Jürgen Habermas and others.

In summary, it should be said that this classification has no intention to present a whole image of themes on these yearbooks. Nevertheless, it is not possible to provide a comprehensive image of these themes and research results because there is only one possible image, i.e. it must consider others multiple forms to study educational and philosophical relationships on those yearbooks.

Hence, if this outlining works in a domain that is a synthesis of an approach between education and philosophy, it ought to consider expressing appropriately the philosophical research problems to approximate the educational task and the philosophical task. Moreover, in attempt to express an image of the philosophy of education in Brazilian north and northeast, this outlining is more useful by the gaps than the synthesis that it will try to do. Consequently, the next section I will explore these gaps to construct new forms of problems and hypothetically to present an understanding of this domain named philosophy of education.

3. Toward the “events”: between Educate and Philosophize

Initially, I would like to discuss again the literature review made by Albuquerque and Barbosa (2013). Specifically, I will focus on one of their provocations that pointed out a strong influence of European philosophers on researches of philosophy of education and, in addition, on few texts written by Latin American or Brazilian philosophers. Why does it happen? Why do we need the European traditional philosophy to construct a Brazilian educational philosophy? Why do not make a Brazilian philosophy of education?

One way to debate these questions is by first understanding that the European philosophers and the emergency of the western philosophy are part of a historical, social and geographical context. These philosophers historically exerted a strong influence on

academic researchers in Brazil, a place where their philosophical culture spreads.

The conceptions of emergency of an idea, a paradigm and or a perspective refer to a context in which the Brazilian or Latin American researchers had not included in their perceptions. In studies aimed to understand the emergency of knowledge like in Tomas Kuhn, Pierre Bourdieu and Michel Foucault, there is what the authors want to name in their particular vision as emergency of a paradigm [11], context of origin [5] and episteme [12].

Moreover, I would like to add what Gilles Deleuze and Guatarri [13] had named *plan of immanence*, i.e. the ground where the knowledge will sprout from the historic time, emphasizing what Silvio Gallo's highlighted in his text, i.e. that it could have multiple plans of immanence on Deleuze's sense [17].

Previously, this literature review had also pointed out a historical difficulty of Brazilian researchers in being impartial from the European plan of immanence. They recognize the importance of European philosophers, mainly those from modern times and their contributions to the history of philosophy. Brazilian philosophers, for instance, often study the history of Brazilian philosophy taking as a reference the history of modern and contemporary philosophy, and the teaching of philosophy in schools and universities also taking in consideration the history of philosophy as an approach to write didactic books, however this approach results in a predominant influence of a western and European philosophy.

Thus, some questions arise from this situation, especially for those whom wants to philosophize independently from the European philosophy influence. Does it want to break up with the European Philosophy? Does it want to redefine the relationship between the European and the Latin American/Brazilian philosophy? Does it want to establish a more profound relationship, giving attention to aspects on European Philosophy that is less known or less explored in Brazil?

It is necessary to answer these questions to construct a philosophy of education appropriate to Brazil. This text does not have any intention to take a specific position or to recommend a specific answer over others possible solutions. Likewise, I retake the coexistence of multiple plans of immanence on Deleuze's sense [13], and his critical appropriation of philosophy.

I should take in account that Deleuze did not think about Brazilian philosophy of education, and I would not be the first to say that Deleuze does not take the Educational field as a domain of philosophical questions in the same way that he did, for instance, in the fields of literature or cinema. In this sense, it could be affirmed that a research on literature or cinema has more theoretical situations to appropriate Deleuze's thinking than on education or philosophy of education.

However, there are some situations in which we can use Deleuze's philosophy and one of them has been indicated by Gallo's reading [17]. Using the concept of “displacements”, he does not propose Deleuze's truths about problems of education but how his thoughts could be fruitful in education.

It has been argued against the philosophy as an act to substantiate and to think over education because on these senses the philosophy would be a kind of knowledge higher than other. Deleuze and Guatarri affirm at the start

of the book “What philosophy is it” and answer: “... we can see at least what philosophy is not. It is not contemplation, a reflection or a communication” [13]

Deleuze takes a stand against either hierarchy, mainly when it refers to the relationship between philosophy and sciences, in which the philosophy has been called by the “science of sciences”. This stand beside to accept the same positivist argument that put the mathematic on the higher place, and thus it eliminates the investigation on possible conditions that has made the philosophy an act “to think over” or an specific knowledge from where comes a “substance” to educate people. Generally, these positions accept the superiority of philosophy in relation to education.

Therefore, it is better suited to present the relationship between education and philosophy, as “events”, and Gallo will make me express it better: “the philosophical act is necessarily alone, but it is a loneliness that will provide meetings of ideas, philosophical schools, philosophers, i.e., ‘events’ to share the means to construct concepts. In other words, the concepts have only been constructed during a loneliness of interiority; it cannot construct anything in empty. A construction depends on the events, events are robberies, and robbing are creativities. Hence, robbing is the construction of a new concept” [17].

This text is a way to show the ‘events’ on the philosophical reading of educational problems and exemplifies that the philosophy of education is in dialogue with problems of Brazilian education to construct ways to philosophize about education in Brazil.

This outlining above is an example of the multiple ways in which the philosophy has communicated with education and how it has connected with the attempt to understand educational problems.

Thus, despite the strong influence of philosophers from European context used as a reference in researches of Brazilian education, their appropriation to the contexts of problems in Brazilian education also indicate many alternatives to philosophy of education such as the image of philosophy of education as an act to “think over” and/or to “substantiate” the education because the philosophy of education in EPENN’S WG17 has become increasingly educational.

In addition, it is visible that it happens in radical ways in WG17 in the history of philosophy of education in north and northeast of Brazil. I will discuss two related papers as an example.

In the first, Oliveira [21,22] discuss in a research about afro-descendent people the absence of a Brazilian philosophy of education on the influence of African culture in Brazil. In this text, he emphasizes the debate between ancestry and interculturality in order to support a Latin American philosophy of education, and arguments that it is a gap that should occupy the Brazilian educational thought. A philosophy of ancestry demands an African tradition taking as singular elements “...the myth, the rictus and the body” to present it as a challenge to construct a new world of meanings. In this way, starting from the context of a Brazilian Afro-descendent culture, it produces an enchantment but essentially accepts paradoxes rather than solves them.

A philosophy of ancestry understand the philosophical doing based on a dynamic tradition of African people - *nagô, jêje e banto* as a cultural synthesis (Brazilian afro-

descendent) that are ethnic groups of Africa and consist of three main groupings of migrants which had been brought to Brazil during the colonization to work as slaves. Oliveira [21,22] supports a philosophical approach in which the expression of African cultures are recreated in Brazilian ground. He also understands it as an ethic because it offers attitudes, i.e. a way to *say-act* that belong the African cultures in Brazil.

In addition, ancestry is a relational category because the otherness is on the center of this philosophy, and it is the way in which the partners change experiences; using symbols, materials, language that makes part of the cultural form of African practices such as capoeira Angola, the traditional Candomblé, as well as experiences from a solidary economy of Brazilian favelas.

In the second example, Albuquerque [1,2] will focus on problems of indigenous culture and education of Saint Daime’s religion, giving attention to human formation by educational experiences out of schools. She talks specifically about knowledges in indigenous practices of brew, named by *ayahuasca*, which is a drew from indigenous culture, also popularly known as: *yagé, kahi, caapi, kamarampi, cipó*; as well as *vegetable, daime* or other names used by indigenous or mixed race people (cabocla culture) from Amazon State in Brazil. There, the most predominant mixed race people (mestiza) is named “cabocla” or “cabocla culture”, that express a cultural synthesis rather than a mixed ethnical/race among blacks, non-blacks and indigenous people.

Albuquerque [1,2] affirms that the practices of brew came from indigenous that had lived between Brazil and Bolivia border. This practice had as precursor **Raimundo Irineu** who had received spiritual revelations about healing powers of drew, and their teachings had made him a healer or a master of spiritual missions.

Knowledge from *ayahuasca* has two objectives. One is to show the diversity of Amazon culture and to affirm how this diversity is unknown or even silenced. Other is to encourage writing an epistemology that originated out of schools, discussing a conception of knowledge on these terms.

Albuquerque points out three grounds to base education in Saint Daime’s religion: a) being structured as an *entheogen* spirituality, which is any chemical substance used in a religious, shamanic, or spiritual context that often induces psychological changes; b) being based on a conception of forest as a *locus* of life; c) being characterized as intercultural practice with a strong aesthetic dimension.

Moreover, she accomplishes her research using bibliographies about *ayahuasca*, books of songs and interviews with ‘*daimist*’ people (persons who had practiced the brew).

There are some reasons to present those researches on philosophy of education as a line of flight (*ligne de fuites*, [15]) because those authors (Oliveira and Albuquerque) needs an approach based on a non-common background in philosophy of education in Brazil, i.e. those originated from experiences of *Brazilian afro-descendent culture*, and the other of *Amazon cabocla culture*.

The first reason is that the authors (Oliveira and Albuquerque) take a position against an epistemology of modern philosophy, specifically they raise concerns about the European western philosophy and, on the other hand,

their positions are also open to the incompleteness of knowledge to understand that the scientific knowledge can communicate with non-scientific knowledge. Secondly, they also affirm the importance of the historic, social and geographic context of Brazil and Latin America to start constructing a philosophy with roots in the South, as the same way it have been supported by authors' postcolonial theory.

Another reason is that they accept a specific cultural experience as educational experience, dealing with meanings that came from afro-descendent culture or cabocla culture to deliver discourses on education. Although they (Oliveira and Albuquerque) are professors at universities and are members of research groups and associations in the academic world, their experiences with those communities (afro-descendent culture or cabocla culture) are indispensable to approximate knowledges from different contexts. Then, their conceptions on education are not only rest on studies in traditional and philosophical discusses, but also they try to ground their practical experience on a philosophy that will debate the colonialism and the eurocentrism: a tendency to interpret the world in terms of European or Anglo-American values and experiences.

It is also possible to find in both researchers the dialogue with theories of knowledge that support those positions. Based in philosophers like Enrique Dussel [16], Gilles Deleuze and Guatarri [13,14], Emanuel Levinas [19] and others, Oliveira intends to practice a philosophy that is at same time an ethic because the philosophy cannot only be only an act to think over but also an act to construct a new meaning, new relations (the otherness) and a new way to say-act on education.

Similarly, Albuquerque debates "the ecology of knowledge" from Santos [24], the complexity of knowledge in Morin [20], and an understanding of education as a culture experience, finding base in authors like Brandão [7].

4. Conclusion

During a long time, Brazilian philosophy of education has been strongly influenced by history of western philosophy to accomplish researches on education and to teach philosophy at universities or in basic education schools. Specifically in the Educational field, the philosophy had been traditionally established by two images -"substantiate" or "think over" education - in which philosophies tend to impose its arguments on education.

Nevertheless, these images of philosophy on education have been relativized because the philosophy presented in EPENN'S WG17 has been traced in discussions of problems from schools and educational reality. Therefore, the attitude to accept a WG17 as an "event" came to support it as a place of dialogue between education and philosophies according to previous literature reviews. However, it is still a philosophy of education based on a European western philosophy.

Differently, Oliveira and Albuquerque's contributions had taken expressions from Brazilian cultures to construct a philosophy of education. These papers introduced an attempt to create a philosophical image of education that

make part of another *plan of immanence* [13] in which they have required additional conceptions of philosophy and education, hence displacing at same time both (traditional and new) philosophical images.

It seems justifiable making a contextual philosophy of education using cultural experiences of Brazilian cultural formation (afro-descendent and cabocla cultures). Firstly, it takes into account the necessity to create a way to think considering and connecting people's immanence of life. Secondly, it is indeed more reasonable when adding to the situation of decontextualized teaching of philosophy in schools and universities in Brazil, in which students often question why they need to study philosophy and what is its use in the daily life.

Moreover, there is a diversified public to teach philosophy in Brazil, especially when taking into account that there are students excluded from schools during the appropriate life learning period, or in contrast there are also students in the job market that needs a professional formation, finally there is also a need for a philosophy that is able to dialogue with the problems of the daily life.

Therefore, I propose that the dialogue with cultural and formative experiences out of schools could be a contribution to present alternative images of philosophy and education. Moreover, philosophy and the educational field could also interact to produce a creative philosophy that would be educational and a creative education that would be philosophical.

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