

Life-world and education. A Ricoeurian perspective¹

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Resumo: Nosso objetivo neste ensaio é reenquadrar o importante conceito husserliano de mundo vivido ou mundo-da-vida (*Lebenswelt*) retirando o seu aspecto fundacional e transcendental que tem em Husserl para torna-lo mais produtivo para as ciências humanas, em especial para a educação. Através da contribuição de Paul Ricoeur em termos de uma nova concepção do tempo apropriado através da formação de narrativas, o mundo vivido é visto no modo pelo qual ele vem à linguagem: chegamos assim à concepção de um mundo vivido narrativo que serve de pano de fundo para a ação educativa. Os vários estilos narrativos que conhecemos formam um rico acervo para uma aproximação concreta do processo educativo.

Palavras Chave: Mundo vivido (*Lebenswelt*), mundo vivido narrativo, educação, Husserl, Ricoeur.

Abstract: Our objective in this essay is to reframe the significant Husserlian concept of Life-world (*Lebenswelt*) by removing its foundational and transcendental characteristic in view of making it more productive than it is in Husserl, by focusing on the human sciences, especially the education field. Through the contribution of Paul Ricoeur that proposes a new conception of time and its mode of appropriation (that is, including it in the self activity) through narratives. Life-world is seen in proper way it comes to language: we arrive at the conception of a *narrative Life-world* that serves as a background for educational action. The various narrative styles we know constitute a collection for a concrete approximation of the educational process.

Keywords: Life-world (*Lebenswelt*), narrative Life-world, education, Husserl, Ricoeur.

The origins of subjectivity as an a priori ego is placed usually as a mark of modernity and Descartes is typically signaled as an epistemological point of depart. A different approach was raised during the Nineteenth Century with a new conception regarding human subjectivity. Novel developments in the theory of knowledge opened an epochal time to grasp the hermeneutical centrality of the human presence. The works of Schleiermacher, Schelling, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Bergson, authors of books that appeared in the Nineteenth Century, created the atmosphere for seminal publications at the dawn of the Twentieth Century, works like Freud's *The Interpretation of Dreams* and Husserl's *Logical Investigations*. The new trends in philosophy at the beginning of the last century had in common the emergence of the human being having a central ego but mediated by a variety of signs. A new appeal came from phenomenological studies on human subjectivity tackling man's historical condition at the forefront. The living human structure was considered an essential component for the understanding of the meaning and knowledge. Human subjectivity

¹ This text was read at the celebrative Conference of the 100 years of Husserl's *Logical Investigation* at the Cracow University, in Poland, in 2001. The section on "Life-world and the realm of the other" was removed and the section on education was enlarged.

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became a productive aspect in relation to meaning (Romero, 1986, p 199; Jonas, H, 1993, p. 9-10). Subjectivity implied the ultimate question about *the human mode of being in the world* and created the conditions for the emergence of the concept of *Life-world* or the everyday life of human association from which emerges all new possibilities for living together.

The permanent question was how subjectivity is related to the historical and temporal conditions of the human being. Phenomenology offered a radical new approach with the extension of Brentanian intentional acts to the extra mental and universal theory of essences. But new tensions, paradoxes and enigmas aroused. How can we relate temporal and historical realities with a-temporal essences? Husserl faced the question grounding it in a transcendental supra-temporal conscience. At the same time, paradoxically, he was progressively pressed to extend the phenomenological method and philosophy to a genetic analysis (and generative comprehension of life, living body, generations, community life, phases of life, historicity, etc., introducing some phenomenological concepts for incarnated life like "*Leib*" "*Lebenswelt*", "*fungierende Intentionalität*", etc.). Does this inflection of Husserlian philosophy in its last phase require a new frame and finally a renouncement of the transcendental ego? Is it still possible to think transcendental subjectivity and maintain genetic and historical formations of meanings? How do we properly interpret the husserlian "crisis of humanity": from the transcendental or from the historical point of view?

Despite of the inflection of Husserl's last phase for a genetic and generative phenomenology the husserlian view of transcendental ego stayed immovable. This is clear from his conference of 1931 on "Phenomenology and Anthropology" (published in McCormick, 1981). In this text is affirmed that anthropology without the transcendental subjectivity and consciousness falls short in the comprehension of the human essence. Any good anthropology must have a transcendental point o view and a universal a priori ego constitution. Philosophical anthropology does not ask about human nature as an empirical segment, but it asks about the essence and universal meaning of being human. In the aforementioned conference Husserl wrote:

Philosophy needs its own method of grounding its statements; this method must be implicit in the essence of philosophy and in the fundamental meaning of its task. If this meaning is necessarily subjective, the specific meaning of this subjectivity must be also determined a priori. (McCormick, 1981, p.315s)³

Reaffirming the procedures and consequences of a radical phenomenological reduction Husserl goes further writing: "The *epoché*, however, makes it clear that the apperception 'human being', receives existential meaning within the universal apperception 'world', only in the life of the ego." (McCormick, 1981, p.319) And the life of the ego is lifted as the transcendental condition for all possible anthropologies that describes the essential mode human being, its categories and correlations in the world. Husserl maintains the transcendental frame of meaning for our "being in the world". Philosophical anthropology is possible if grounded by "apodictic essential laws", thinks Husserl. (McCormick, 1981, p. 321) The scope of Husserlian anthropology is thus delineated:

³ For those who could think in a possible historical turn in Husserl John Scanlon in his introduction to this Husserl's conference "A Transcendentalist Manifesto", in McCormick, 1951.

Starting out from myself as ego constituting existential meaning, I reach the transcendental others who are my peers, and at the same time the entire open infinite transcendental intersubjective realm. In this transcendental community the world as 'objective' and the same for everybody, is constituted. (McCormick, 1981, p. 323)

In his entire work it sounds as if Husserl appears confronted with the "enigma of subjectivity": "They all [world enigmas] lead back to the *enigma of subjectivity (die Rätzel der Subjectivität)* and are thus inseparably bound to the enigma of *the psychological subject matter and method*" (Husserl, 1970, p. 5) by which reason becomes more and more enigmatic – life meaning correlated to the world and, paradoxically, the world having its being through conscience. The extreme poles of transcendental phenomenology, pure subjectivity and pure objectivity, are united in the living world; in Merleau-Ponty words:

Probably the chief gain from phenomenology is to have united extreme subjectivism and extreme objectivism in its notion of the world or of rationality... But it should not be set in a realm apart, transposed into absolute Spirit, or into a world in the realist sense. The phenomenological world is not pure being, but the sense which is revealed where the paths of my various experiences intersect, and also where my own and other people's intersect and engage each other like gears. (Merleau-Ponty, M., 1945, p. XV)

The enigma of all enigmas is the theme of the *Crisis of European Sciences and the Transcendental Phenomenology*:

Reason itself and its [object,] "that which is," become more and more enigmatic—reason as giving, of itself, meaning to the existing world and, correlatively, the world as existing through reason—until finally the *consciously* recognized world-problem of the deepest essential interrelation between reason and what is in general, the *enigma of all enigmas*, has to become the actual theme of inquiry. (Husserl, 1970, p. 13)

The word 'enigma' (*Rätzel*) seems to be used here by Husserl to connote something that can be solved only by the transcendental point of view.

The focus in the last work of Husserl written in view to publication "The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology" makes the moving from a transcendental phenomenology to history, to the incarnate subjectivity, and the Life-world (for Husserl the ultimate basis for transcendental phenomenology). The "new Husserl" (Donn Welton, 2003) opened new and concrete investigations of history, body, our being in the world, but not changed the Husserlian transcendental foundations. Ricoeur preserves the enigma, but understood it as a productive *aporia* (Ricoeur, 1986, p. 75). It is important to understand how Ricoeur faced this problem in two frontiers: a) the insertion of hermeneutics in phenomenology with a historical approach on the ego, subjectivity and time perspectives, preserves the eidetic phenomenology (but not dependent on the transcendental ego); b) the relation between temporality and narrative emerges as the key contribution of Ricoeur for the understanding of the Life-world concept and the human sciences in general. This is a

turning point in the Ricoeur's philosophy and it becomes more and more evident that there are implied in his works an important philosophy of education.

The publication of *Time and Narrative* (three volumes, 1984; 1985; 1988; French, 1983-1984) manifests how Ricoeur's philosophy became, above all, concerned with the human experience of time in terms of narratives. Narrative is inherent to human nature and support the important concept of narrative identities. Narrative identity is an outcome with meaningful projections concerning education. Human existence is a sort of narration, an existential frame and intrigue (plot), by which identities are created from its sediments (personal and institutional). Narrative has an epistemological and existential configuration: "narration" is a type of knowledge that flows from the living-experience and the existential modes of the human being; (the word comes from the Greek *noein* and *gnose*; the Latin word *ignarus*, ignorant, is the opposite of *gnarus*, origin of the word *narratio*, with the suppression of the letter "g"). Human existence in time receives concrete configurations only from the narrative plots of timing occurrences.

1. Husserl and subjectivity: the Life-world as our primordial home in transcendental perspective

Subjectivity related to the world is the core of Husserl's philosophy. Everything that is established and known is founded in this intentional relation. Husserl refers to Descartes, but with a complete new conception of ego and its relations with intelligible realities. The new conception is revealed by the intentional relations and the *epoché* (the intentional relations gives to the ego its cognitive structures and point the *epoché* as the way for the intentional capacities for *cogitata*). These intentional capacities include perceptions, memory, imagination, phantasy, expressions, and sedimented layers of passive synthesis. Husserl thinks that the transcendental consciousness is the unique source for temporal meaning constitutions. Subjectivity is a transcendental unity for complex result of numerous syntheses. Objectivity as primordial experience is given by an original interweaving of things with subjective intentional acts in correlation with a *subjective transcendental sphere*:

the greatest of all revolutions must be characterized by the transformation of scientific objectivism – not only modern objectivism, but also that of the earlier philosophies of the millennia – into a transcendental subjectivism... Past philosophy had not even the slightest conception of a subjectivism in this transcendental style. (Husserl, E., 1970, p. 68)

This "revolution" means that we know objective, a priori valid truths through our transcendental life, by which "...the knower's reflecting upon himself and his knowing life can purposefully attains scientific structures valid for him and store up as acquisitions, that maintains the outcomes freely available". (Husserl, 1970, p.98)

Husserl's first philosophical project was a collective work to cover the entire ontological realm. But, it is significant that he reserved for himself the phenomenological task of facing the constitutional analysis of the consciousness from the transcendental point of view. This duty occupied him for most of his time and his published writings and manuscripts reveal a tremendous effort to accomplish it. All the themes, even those concerning the other, the living body, history, culture,

language, meaning, logic, etc. are viewed from the transcendental ego perspective. The philosopher's job as "a humankind employee" is said to be the "auto-reflection of humanity", only possible because the individual functions are at the same time viewed as a servant of the transcendental ego.

The transcendental sphere can be illustrated by what he called the bilateral (*Doppelseitig*) character of intentionality. Consciousness has a polar relationship with the intended reality, i. e., and the subjective life realizing thus a double movement. Husserl used the paradoxical designations "transcendence" and "transcendental immanence" to express it. We live between transcendent things (in Husserlian sense the self, the body, the world, all things, are *ab initio* extra conscious realities faced by consciousness) and the transcendental immanence of these same things. The transcendent and the transcendental are correlated as founded (transcendence) and founding (transcendental) reality. Our intentional activity moves between them. The gap between them is overcome by intentional acts double directed to a transcendent thing (as *Gegenstand*) that is appropriated as "intentional object" (as *immanent Objekt*). Meaning and reason are conscious *determinations* included in the primary circle of transcendental possibilities. We can, by an internal act of conscience, discard all existential qualities of things and retain only its meanings; the transcendental ego remains an unsurpassable frontier as the source of all imaginable possible meanings. For Husserl this difference is an indicative of the founding condition of the transcendental ego.⁴ is that an enlightenment residue that cannot be eradicated from Husserl's philosophy?

According to the mentioned bilateral character of consciousness we have a divergent movement of consciousness (*Gegenstand /Objekt*): a centrifugal one, where the transcendent object plays a central role; and a centripetal movement where the central role is played by the immanent object. In both cases the meaning is a subjective transcendental outcome. All meanings from nature, body or culture, even the content of our historical consciousness, are interpreted as expansion of transcendental a priori conditions of the Life-world (*Lebenswelt*). Husserl seems to have issues to relate historical life with transcendental subjectivity: the Life-world with all its richness is put under a transcendental collection of a priori to hold all of its manifestations as an unfolding process (Landgrebe, 1975, p. 18). Husserl conceived this relation through a rich genetic phenomenology (with an inflection to generative phenomenology), recurring to the passive synthesis and the Life-world concept, which opens a way to a more concrete consideration of the living body, inter-subjectivity and historical events. The concept presents a non-negligible richness for all human sciences. At the same time he suspended all these richness under a hypothetical transcendental ego.

Notwithstanding of the idealistic background the concept of Life-world proved to be tremendously fruitful without the transcendental hypothesis. The sediment of the Life-world became an universal key for the understanding the first ground of a passive-active world as the basis for all others possible worlds. The impact in social sciences is undeniable. The world of our living experiences (Life-worldly experiences) makes clear our existential structures. Our body as a sensor of the world and its flavor express it with temporal language expressions. The connection

⁴ This is, as well known, the cause of the split between Husserl and most of his disciples. The conflict with Heidegger, for example, blows up with the discussion about the redaction of the Husserl's article for the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Conscience, for Heidegger, can be only the movement and dissemination of meaning as direct self-transcending in the world. For Heidegger there is no presumptive priority for conscience and no transcendental ego. We are connected directly with meaning, language, and the unfolding meaning of being. The ontological possibilities of meaning are not centered in consciousness. (Cf. Bernet, R., , 1994, pp. 63s).

between concrete living situations and significations is a permanent link that we can re-activate. The connection between life and meaning mediated by language offers a bunch of possible articulations; this is the essential component of the interpretative character of human life. The Life-world concept functions as an alternative horizon for the positive sciences and as the soil for an original interpretation of the real world. The given Life-world presents the real possibility of meaning and interpretation, protesting against the exaggerated claim of sciences “asking for the meaning of *the facticity* of facts. All science is in crisis, precisely for this reason; they cannot give meaning to the scientific accomplishments.” (Landgrebe, 1975, p. 171)

One important result of the Life-world concept is the possibility for phenomenological research to investigate the common structures of life in its various levels of consciousness and in its passive configurations. The proto-evidences of the pre-reflexive world provide the common horizon for arguing, questioning, and learn. Life-world is the basic reference for the recurring world with heterogeneous components, a universal world horizon where many particular worlds are possible (J. Benoist, 1998, p. 210 s). The common structures of life and the different cultural worlds constitute the basis for a phenomenology of the human edification in time. Human edification in time calls attention for our historical condition and all that of passive synthesis, and the permanent “*fungierende Intentionalität*” (passive functioning intentionality) gives a concretion to the husserlian phenomenology. If it seems to me reasonable that the majority of Husserl’s disciples restricted his idealistic transcendental inclination, from de other side, after the breakthrough of the Life-world concept a hermeneutical phenomenology became a projective contribution for the works of Heideger, Gadamer and Ricoeur. The revelation of the world and of the human being in time is a historical commitment and implies a synthesis of the essential with the historical. As Merleau-Ponty wrote in the dense preface of the *Phenomenology of Perception*, “phenomenology is also a philosophy which puts essences back into existence, and does not expect to arrive at an understanding of man and the world from any starting point other than that of their ‘facticity’.” (Merleau-Ponty, 1945, p. I). The hermeneutical phenomenology, focused in this essay, proved to be fruitful for the constitution of human life in time as exemplified by the phenomenological approach to education inspired by Paul Ricoeur. Phenomenology is concentrated in an eidetic methodology and it is fused with narrative interpretation. For Ricoeur hermeneutical phenomenology can be resumed as a special way of interpreting the world and the edification of the human being in time through language and narrative.

2. Educational structures of the Life-world in Ricoeurian perspective

We tried to make obvious that the progressive questioning of subjectivity in recent decades raised new possibilities concerning the ego as the center active of knowledge without any reference of a hypothetical transcendental ego. The concept of Life-world became a key to understand these developments. Many contemporary philosophers think that the subjective processes need some previous living-experiences of the world as preconditions for the intentional movement that gives meaning to life. But the self is in no way preformed. Self is not natural or unnatural. Self is formed by relations of one to another, and through relations with culture. Self-formation is possible only by these indirect relationships. Language and culture are surely preconditions in its relational forms. These relational pre-given forms are the structures of the Life-world. From this support on the Life-world we have the first real

ground for a phenomenological philosophy on education: education can be said to be the recognition and realization of the possibilities of human life in profound relationship with the process of becoming oneself in the world. The human's living-world experience precedes all other forms of sophistications of human life as by scientific progress. Our world is initially the human world of contacts and conversations where many worlds arises.

Ricoeur thinks that the transcendental is not a foundation, but an ontological condition viewed not from above, but from below (concrete conditions). The subjective and objective poles are obviously related one to another; they are interweaved ("*intentionales Ineinander*" or an interwoven of both), and a phenomenological approach of the object follows a historical mode of signifying it. In between the exalted ego and the suppression of it, Ricoeur proposes a third way. The ego historically formed (the self) is a *task* for all persons, it is not a foundation, or a 'point de depart' for our knowledge; the self is a progressive "appropriation" (in the sense of including the other, language, and any of the world's manifestations in the active sphere of the self).

The effective source of meanings for the human existence is possible only in relation with social and cultural developments of the living world. The "transcendental source" is not an ego, but the conditions of the social and historical synthesis that furnishes the frame for our existential human mode of being. It means, in other words, the transcendental conditions of the Life-world itself.

The Husserl's shift in direction to the Life-world, to the living world, to the living body, to the preformed ethos and, especially, the social genesis and historical configuration of human life gave new directions for phenomenological research with a variation of the method as genetic a generative phenomenology. Generative phenomenology (a variation of genetic phenomenology) is directly concerned with the cultural processes and communitarian genesis of being human. Language (and the linguistic structure of time) is moved to the center for the understanding of the social construction of reality. Sense and signification, the core of all phenomenological reflection, have a social basis and are essential in the constitution of our inter-subjectivity.

The Life-world furnishes the dynamic frame of our social life. In this framing our educational processes in the living world (*le monde vécu*) are not inventions for the social functioning but essential component of the social constitution of human beings (generative phenomenology). Education in this structure is, primarily, not the social institutions, but the dynamics of the vivid human's relationships through the mediation of meanings and significations that forms (and are formed by) our historical and social web.

The embarrassing question is that both, Husserl e Ricoeur, despite of being profoundly concerned with education, they did not treat it as a main theme. Husserl treated it too scarcely and in marginal way. Ricoeur became involved in many educational processes at Sorbonne (as Doyen he was a victim of radical left-groups in May 1968) and on Unesco (with many contributions), but not many pages were dedicated to education. Perhaps we can speculate that the brutal events experienced by him in his educational project at Sorbonne in 1968, did inhibit him to be more engaged on other pedagogical incursions. Husserl gave his attention to education in a few courses about ethics and used the term "*Kultur*"⁵ in a sense that implies many aspects

⁵ Sometimes this word means directly the "*Bildung*", education or the task that frames the culture as educational and spiritual force. This is clear in his five essays for the Japanese periodical *Kaizo*. The title *Fünf Aufsätze über Erneuerung* (1922-1924) is a reference to the renovation of the human community and culture after the terrible war consequences. In a letter of 1920 he wrote to Wyntrop Bell: "The present

of education. This is clear when he uses the term in relation with the writings of the Life-world period.

Education is an inherent task to the genesis of human social life; education is not just a contingent occurrence in human life. Social coexistence motivates and is motivated in educational processes. The human being as a task is already present in Kant as we can see in this quote: "*Man's greatest task is to know how he fills his own place in creation and how he correctly understands himself, and how he must be to be a man.*" (Kant, I., 1873, p. 321). In his course *On Pedagogy*, Kant is more affirmative: "*Man can only become man by education. He is merely what education makes of him. It is noticeable that man is only educated by man – that is, by men who have themselves been educated.*" (Kant, I., 1906, p. 6) Ricoeur was deeply influenced by this view of Kant. According to Ricoeur, the essential incompleteness of the human being and even of the world compels us to think of them in the gerundive as "being and doing" in our life conversation. Being human and the world are tasks and propose to the pedagogue the question how to proceed unfolding of these realities.

For Ricoeur, education is an essential component of social life and a human assignment (a task) that demands capacity for fiction and imagination: educational processes of human life occur *in tension between the real world and the fictional world*. The inescapable way for a human being to hold on this task is an *appropriation* through multiple modes of conversation. The human way for self development is between the framework of culture and, at the same time, giving the self possibilities to be a transformer of culture. Ricoeur writes:

Education compensates the human being's adaptation to the finite culture with the critical human being who asks about his human condition as a whole and with the poetics innovation of life. Education, in the strong sense of the word, is perhaps the reasonable and difficult balance between the requirement of objectification, that is, of adaptation, and the demand for reflection and non adaptation; this tense balance is what keeps the human being standing. (Ricoeur, 1990, p.200)

Ricoeur's educational thinking is an effort to go beyond the attempt to answer questions like "What is education for?", question which are usually subordinate to the other question "for which world and situation we educate?" Education has a profound relation between person and world, but education is essentially creative about the existing world we live in. Social structures risks giving education a subsidiary role. The question refers to an education that covers self and social formation. Implicitly we also ask about the participants in education or how we can imagine the others involved in mutual education. Education occurs in a fusion between the natural and social world (in the sense of Kantian *Weltbildung*), and the essential growth of the self as part of humanity (in the sense of Kantian *Menschenbildung*): so when we ask "for which world?" we must be careful not to hurry and respond only with an "education for..."; education must not be headed with the view of an instrumental view. Education is, in some way, not servant of structures and systems. But, we observe progressive and constant assault of the economic mechanisms of the global market over the educational institutions. For example, indirect and virtual world can be helpful as an

war, turned into a people's war in the strictest and most horrible sense of the word, has lost all its ethical sense. Thus, for the 'ethical-political renewal of humanity', an art of the universal education of mankind is necessary, sustained by the highest ethical ideals." (Text quoted by Prof. G. Hoyos in the introduction for the Spanish version of the Kaizo essays. Husserl, E., 2002, p. VIII).

additional media, but frequently and insistently, it subverts the real conversation and thus subverts education.

The importance of imagination in life and education is reiterated on Ricoeur by a phenomenology of the imagination inspired in Kant and Husserl (as exemplified by his maxim “fiction constitutes the vital element of phenomenology as well as of any eidetic sciences”, Husserl, 1913, p. 132). Imagination and fiction are essential for the creation of worlds that motivate and create the passion for understand / learn. The synthesis of Kant's transcendental imagination reinterpreted by Ricoeur reintegrates it into the act of constitution of the world in our consciousness. The consciousness act of formation of the world (*Weltbildung*) and self-consciousness is not external to education understood as processes of education (*Bildung*).

The experience of education is a modification of self and life that involves language and imagination. These two issues are intertwined and correlated (one depends on the other). Experience is nurtured by fiction and imagination, and the contents are transmuted into words. Education, as any hermeneutical process, is dependent of language events. According to Ricoeur, only the human being is modified, in its essence, by words. Only the fiction of a world arises from the desire for meaning and it constitutes the soil for an engaging education. Fiction opens the announcement of the future of the possible happiness of being human. Every process of education is involved here in the plot that language is elaborated in terms of narrative. Man becomes himself through narratives.

This ricoeurian perspective of narratives is acknowledged by some excellent authors on education like Jerome Bruner:

The first thesis is this: We seem to have no other way of describing "lived time" save in the form of a narrative. Which is not to say that there are not other temporal forms that can be imposed on the experience of time, but none of them succeeds in capturing the sense of *lived* time: not clock or calendrical time forms, not serial or cyclical orders, not any of these. It is a thesis that will be familiar to many of you, for it has been most recently and powerfully argued by Paul Ricoeur (1984). Even if we set down *Annales* in the bare form of events (White, 1984), they *-will* be seen to be events chosen with a view to their place in an implicit narrative. (Bruner, 2004, 692)

After Ricoeur, education must be an extension of the narrative and temporal possibilities of human being (following his three volumes on *Time and Narrative*, Ricoeur, 1984-1985). The education background is, in last resort, a kind of telling time from one to another. Phenomenology in its genetic and historical concern is practiced by Ricoeur as a necessary support for the task of narrating time, the world, and himself. Life needs an intrigue, a plot, in view to gain value and plausibility. Narratives are not accidental in education. It is from the beginning the imperative form for educational processes.

The structure of the Life-world presents us a bunch of a priori contents usually listed as language, history, time, space, embodiment, selfhood and personal life, relations with others and social inter-subjectivity, projective life, moods (feeling tone of human life), etc. Following Husserl's generative phenomenology we are pressed to include culture (tradition) and educative processes in our horizon. The designation “generative phenomenology” is a reference to the relation between generations and the investigations about how these relations are formative. Ricoeur proposes that the comprehension of the essence of education is based on terms of interaction between

narrative and life, narrative and time. Education is primordially a question of how life is lived by humans. Time is lived by humans concretely as meaning plotted in narratives (that gives real contours to the lived time). What happens “before” and “after” is essential for the understanding life and education, and the configuration of lived life in concrete terms implies narrative expressions.

Human existence is intertwined with language in our world view: language and world are shaped and intertwined together (*intentionales Ineinander*) at the same time that the human selfhood is being framed by narratives. Narrative, selfhood, and world are polarities playing central roles in education. In a school or in a classroom we find the dialectical relation between one world (one world horizon) and multiple particular worlds which are characteristics of the Life-world complex. At same time we can have conflicts between the “home world” and the “alien world”. We need to be conscious of the consequences of relationship in between the different worlds we live in and its educative/formative developments.

“Telling time”, in the expression of Françoise Dastur (2000) is our mode of appropriation and incarnation of meanings. The world we live in it is neither a static representation, nor a disconnected succession of facts. The world we live in is a world framed by narratives. We are aware and situated in space and time because the events of our life are viewed from the perspective of an implied “emplotment” through a story that locates our lives in time. These observations give us a perspective for education that we can summarize in five pre-conditions for our understanding of education:

1. Life is lived as a tacit or explicit “narrative life”;
2. The Life-world is comprehensive through narratives; it comes to language through narratives lenses: Life-world is, finally, a narrative concept;
3. Every thought, fact, scientific achievement, or ethical, esthetic, or religious values, has a form of narrative “emplotment” behind it;
4. Education is a process that fit in concrete life because life is concretely a development in time throughout phases or periods that are envisaged through some story we can tell;
5. Identity, personal or collective (institutional), is much more than a natural fact; identity is foremost a historical task to develop a textual living web of a story and expand our lives from beginning to end in time.

In concluding words on this issue we can say that world comes to language through generative stories of our Life-world; in them we find our social and cultural realities that precedes and creates the possibilities for the development of our personal stories. Narrative functions as a structure that discloses our lived time and constitutes the Gestalt background for the educational possibilities. The narrative concept of Life-world opens a new horizon for the philosophy of education comprehension. Often neglected, the concealment of narratives in educational process transforms the education in an abstract form of communication that usually forgets persons as the main value in any kind of education we can imagine.

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