
HIGHER EDUCATION STRATEGIES: TOWARDS THE 21ST CENTURY INNOVATIVE SOCIETIES

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The radical changes taking place in the present world are related to a number of issues:

— An exponential growth of scientific knowledge has resulted in a widening gap between the developed and developing countries;

— Important changes in the labor migration are taking place under the influence of delocalization of enterprises, which are usually moved to the areas with cheaper labor force. It is also essential to keep in mind the world demographic asymmetries with the rapid population growth in the global South and the ageing population of the global North.

— Globalization and internationalization bring forward the critical issue of protecting the national cultural and linguistic identity.

These fundamental shifts clearly demonstrate that education is an essential tool in harmonizing the modern inter-civilization development. Education is one of the major factors in the integration process of the modern world. The main socio-economic, political, religious, and cultural factors intersect in the realm of education.

It is possible to distinguish several types of education.

The first can be described as a technological education which is based on training of particular skills. The universities' management is increasingly influenced by agendas of exact and natural sciences and highly specialized professional education.

The example of purely technological understanding of knowledge and education is the Lisbon Program «Europe of knowledge». Knowledge is understood only within the framework of exact and natural sciences and only in terms of its contribution to the economic growth, in this case, helping Europe to succeed in the global economic race. This approach can be defined as a scientific posthumanism and its obvious and dangerous flaw is a failure to conceptualize the social, ethical or existential dimensions of human evolution and a sliding into a convenient salvatory sphere of «how» and not «what for». As a result, there is a global decline in the humanities that do not bring an immediate profit.

Another type of education, which aims at balancing the overweight of technocratic training, is based on the revival and maintaining of the classical humanities. It is a reactive form of post-humanism usually coming from classical liberal and leftist conceptions which see it as a global challenge and develop various catastrophic scenarios. What they share is the anxiety on the destiny of human being as an object of manipulations in the technologically drastically changing reality, the new human as a half-stuff which may be manufactured or changed according to market needs. But along with classical humanist stance there is also a growing tendency of critical philosophical post-humanism growing

out of predominant anti-humanism of the last quarter of the 20th century that we find in postmodernism, feminism, postcolonial theory, environmentalism. Anti-humanism «is a delinking the human agent from the universalistic posture, calling him to task... on the concrete actions he is enacting» [1]. For anti-humanists subject becomes more and more complex, problematic and relational, as well as framed by sexuality, corporeality, empathy, affectivity and desire. Posthumanism in a sense alleviates the tension between humanism and anti-humanism and offers more positive alternatives instead of negative common vulnerability of human and non-human forms of life that global bio-genetic capitalism has to offer today. It is a struggle for new concrete forms of universality, which are based on the respect for all that lives. This is opposed to Western narrow humanism, rationality and secularity usually linked with science and technology.

Within this model, education turns towards a critical thinking and self-reflexivity on the part of the subjects who occupy the former humanist center and also those who dwell in one of the many scattered new centers of power in our decentered world. It focuses on a culture of dialogue, re-evaluating the importance and understanding of life in order to compensate negative effects of the currently dominating technocratic education. Central to this type of education is the idea of ethical and political responsibility for the knowledge we produce and disseminate. Ethical dimension and political needs of different countries, cultures and people should become a universal foundation for educational models in the 21st century. This type of education should employ technology not as an end in itself but according to the needs of various diverse cultural, national, ethnic, religious and other identities (both group and individual). It should be directed to the development of new subjectivities, that cannot exist outside of such important and relevant aspects of culture and education as diversity and difference. A crucial aspect of this kind of education is a move beyond anthropocentrism and expanding the notion of life towards the non-human or *zoe* — not in G. Agamben's negative sense [2] but reinterpreting *zoe* in a positive and constructive way following R. Braidotti [3], as a non-human vital force of Life, and erasing the previously stable boundary between the *bios* and the *zoe*. *Zoe*-centered egalitarianism then becomes the core of the post-anthropocentric turn. It is opposed to today's political economy of turning human and non-human matter into a commodity.

It is possible to single out three main contemporary models of education focusing around the problem of the dialogue among cultures and civilizations: multicultural, intercultural and trans-cultural.

All of them are defined in one way or another by their attitude towards the nation-state and the national culture and identity and more and more forcefully — post-national and post-continental forms of critical thinking. In the globalizing world it becomes hardly possible for the national contexts to resist the powerful unifying global trends. Yet in different parts of the world today we find various ways and strategies of glocalization and different mediating models of appropriating the neoliberal universals, the most powerful and promising of them being that of dewesternizing.

A mild form of re-structuring the previous national model of university is manifested in the so-called multicultural education, which does not undermine the idea of na-

tion-state as such. It simply accommodates the immutable nation-state model to the needs and challenges of the multicultural world, allowing minorities to practice their culture (multicultural knowledge, awareness, axiological systems), but only in limited and predictable forms. The decision making in the sphere of official educational and cultural standards and norms is reserved for the state and its bodies. Ultimately, multicultural education aims at integration and assimilation of minorities, that is, at taking difference to sameness at the expense of losing its identity. Multiculturalism retains both a patronizing attitude to the others grounded in a mixture of Orientalism and progressivism, and a solemnly observed exclusion of the other from decision-making process. The failure of most multicultural initiatives in Europe in the last decade indicates precisely the perfunctory nature of most multicultural slogans which do not attempt to change the essence of power asymmetry concentrating on the details instead.

Intercultural education is based epistemologically on philosophical disciplinary project of intercultural knowledge. According to R. Fornet-Betancourt, «intercultural philosophy is a work project that seeks to provoke a paradigm change in the doing of philosophy. It does so by breaking the barriers created by the monocultural structures of traditional philosophers or, <...> by cultivating a philosophical attitude, that starts from the recognition of the plurality of philosophies with their respective cultural matrices and their consequent ways of argumentation and grounding. Intercultural philosophy arises from a type of thinking that, aware of its own cultural limitations, not only tolerates other forms of thinking but also attains solidarity with them. And precisely because it recognizes those other forms of thinking as “worlds” in their own right does it recognize that only through those other universes can it open itself up to the universal» [4].

Therefore intercultural education claims to change not just education but philosophy, by bringing theory and practice together. It opens philosophy to other types of knowledge and attempts to go beyond the European tradition in order to dramatically change philosophy as an inquiry.

As for trans-cultural education, it is an ideal, which is hard to implement under the global rule of corporate universities. There are only few exceptions to this rule in today's world mostly linked with indigenous people's struggles for independence and autonomy.

Transcultural education attempts to shape specific subjectivities, which would not see other cultures, traditions, civilizations, individuals, philosophies and education models as obstacles that must be brought to a common denominator, but as independent subjects or phenomena with their own dispositions and characteristics, with which one needs to enter into an egalitarian intellectual and cultural interaction and dialogue.

This new trans-cultural subjectivity will inevitably go beyond the national, and will be better adapted to new global flows of information, mass media, people and capital.

Educating of such an individual will be based not on providing him/her with a sum of multicultural facts, but on cultivating his/her critical thinking, high ethical and political responsibility and respect for the history, memory, language and cosmology of those groups of people who were thrown out of modernity and from the predominant model of efficient technocratic education, which prevails today all over the world.

Trans-cultural education is based on the idea of cosmopolitanism. Its ultimate goal is to generate critical understanding simultaneously with positive knowledge, that can ba-

lance the principles of efficiency, development, democracy, freedom, etc., which have almost lost their meaning and force today after centuries of misuse.

It is the humanities, marked by a refusal to follow the model of positive and absolute knowledge accumulation that can save the university as an institution in the 21st century. But for this to become possible humanities themselves must drastically change in the direction of post-anthropocentric transdisciplinary ethically charged inquiry in which the identity of humanistic practices will be altered «by stressing heteronomy and multifaceted relationality, instead of autonomy and self-referential disciplinary purity» [5]. These new rebranded humanities still preserve a crucial aspect of humanities as such: the transformative impact of the humane dimension in increasingly inhumane contexts. But we, the humanists of the 21st century, should not stand on the defensive or be nostalgic of the classical humanities that we lost forever. Instead we should work diligently and humbly on finding new ways for the post-anthropocentric humanities to evolve, such as inter- and trans-disciplinary areas between the humanities, the social sciences and the hard and natural sciences (examples include death studies, trauma studies, peace studies, humanitarian management, ecological-cum-social sustainability studies, etc.), and also to develop ever more rigorously the epistemological self-reflexivity and extraverted disciplinary culture.

Paradoxically these ultramodern trends echo in indigenous cosmologies and philosophies of education that have existed parallel with modern Western university for centuries but remained invisible until now. In these indigenous educational models we find the principle of «learning to unlearn in order to relearn» which can save the humanities from extinction in the 21st century. In Andean cosmology it means forgetting what we have been taught to break free from the thinking programs imposed on us by previous education, culture, and social environment, always marked by the Western imperial reason. «Learning to unlearn in order to relearn» is a crucial principle aimed at the development of reflective and intuitive practices of wise people rather than Western style professionals, by organizing various learning environments where the building of knowledge is interrelated with research, dialogue and projects and services [6].

Even more paradoxically the old humanities' goal of educating people into being good humans and citizens may be reiterated today in quite unexpected forms which would not necessarily contradict the economic effectiveness requirement — provided we understand them in a more innovative and conceptually complex ways. This refers to the so called experience economy which according to B. Joseph Pine II and James H. Gilmore supplants the goods and services economies of the past and acts as a transition towards the (human) transformation economy of the future in which the customer will be the product, meaning that transformation experiences will be guided towards the perfection of the human beings. Then today's debate on the nature of education focusing on its definition either as a public good or as a service becomes meaningless. In experience and transformation economy the university will be selling not services — i.e. certain actions more or less divorced from the customer, but «the demonstrated outcome the customers achieve» [7] — in other words, what sort of human beings they become in the long run. Therefore the old mission of humanities easily finds its way into the seemingly most economized and managerial forms of imagining education of the future.

Education enriches culture, promotes mutual understanding and dialogue among civilizations at the global level, and allows to reinforce the foundations of democratic society and respect for the law.

It is important that education remains the key to development of human capital and the main driving force of economic development. Indeed, the international cooperation in training of the highly-qualified professionals and in integration of people, knowledges and technologies is necessary in responding to the global challenges of today.

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