

2.1. Education governance, autonomy and accountability

SP - (18902) - STUDENT-AS-ARTIST: NARRATIVES OF CREATIVITY AND AESTHETIC SELF-CONSTITUTION IN EDUCATIONAL DISCOURSE.

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Short Abstract

The outset for the inquiry resides in the insight that at present, the relationship between artistic *ethos* and the constitution of the self became not only an act of resistance of the intellectual elite, a privilege of the bourgeois, or a form of governance of vulnerable groups but above all, the *élan vital* of the population in general. In contradiction to the radical intent of Joseph Beuys, who stated that *every man is an artist*, calling this way for the dismantling of the repressive social systems, the language of creative self-constitution became the very paradigm for their sustenance. The artistic expression seems to be the governing principle not only in the formation of the creative class but citizens of the future in general, neutralising thus its subversive agency. In this presentation, I seek to describe and discuss a strand of inquiry within my thesis concerned with the role of the arts and artistic ideals in the shaping of the student-as-subject.

The leading question of this thesis is: how are self-referential practices modelled on the ideals of uninhibited artistic creation integrated into regulating mechanisms in educational and institutional contexts? In order to reflect on the aesthetic phenomenon in educational discourse, the purpose is to make it visible first, to make it a problem. Therefore, to render the connection between artistic *ethos* and education perceptible, this thesis aims (i) to discuss the topoi within the narratives in educational discourse that relate to the grand vision of being an artist of one's own life; and (ii) to look at moments in time when notions such as creativity, originality, self-expression and self-direction have been linked with the idea that "the arts *do*" – whether by improving individual performance or, as a general project of self-fashioning and self-enhancement (Gaztambide-Fernandez, 2013, p. 213).

Due to the discursive character of the study, a qualitative-interpretative approach is adopted wherein interpretative frameworks drawn from social sciences are mobilised. The analytical perspectives implemented in this project are built upon social theories that emphasise the role of educational policies in the constitution of personal identities, such as the theoretical reflection on discourse, governmentality, and technologies of the self began by Michel Foucault (1978; 1988) and developed by other researchers further (Miller & Rose, 1988; Ó, 2003; Paz & Ó, 2017). The study departs from the analysis of national and international educational policies in order to record the aesthetic topoi, as well as principles, values, competencies, objectives and strategies defined in those documents. It is complemented by the discussion of the broader socio-political and historical context in an effort to make sense of the ongoing (trans)formation of the educational metanarrative.

In short, this presentation aims to question the aesthetic rhetoric in educational discourse and render explicit how the artistic experience arose to the rank of consensual and unquestionable meta-value, operating implicitly as an intercessor between seemingly conflicting notions and behaviours, that is, as simultaneously emancipating and conforming principle.

References

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