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Luiz do Valle Miranda: *Unveiling Educational Potentials: On Post-Critical Affirmation, Non-Formal Practices and Online Technologies*

Doctoral Thesis – Supervisor’s Assessment

In this dissertation Luiz do Valle Miranda makes a case for truly educational potentiality of online technologies. In the face of the global proliferation of online teaching and learning practices enforced on a massive scale by the recent pandemic, he asks a valid and currently pressing question on whether it is possible to imagine online technologies framing genuine educational practices and experiences. To make his point clear he starts with the critique of the dominant way of understanding the use of digital technologies in education that boils down to – in Miranda’s terms – a double replication. Online platforms and conferencing tools are used to replicate a classroom setting as well as the hegemonic understanding of education as purely functional, productive process of achieving particular political or economic aims. He refers to the works within the current of post-critical theory of education to observe that such a narrowing and instrumentalising imaginary of the essence of education is highly problematic and dangerous for the integrity of educational practices themselves. However, since post-critical theories of education acknowledge the role of technology in enacting educational practices and experiences, and since their focus is on the affirmation of the collectively studied things (i.e. on love for the world), Miranda legitimately asks about the possibility of a post-critical relation between technology (and digital technology in particular) and education.

In order to tackle this problem Miranda gives a comprehensive reconstruction of Bernard’s Stiegler philosophy of technology linking technology as such with anthropogenesis. The clue of Miranda research lies in establishing a connection between Stiegler’s pharmacological and grammatological approach and Hannah Arendt’s inspired post-critical educational theory. He does that by focusing on non-formal educational practices, employing philosophies of (digital) technology (e.g. Lagerkvist) and empirical examples (phenomenological vignettes and Sugata Mitra’s Work), in order to find that the key issue is

the one of temporality of digital technologies and whether this temporality can engender scholē, i.e. the educational temporality of free time. He then analyses two successful examples of arranging digital technologies in a way that let the educational potentialities of these technologies emerge: bMOOC and Studio_D. In this way – Miranda claims – genuine online education is possible.

I find this argument compelling and well construed. The reconstructions are solid, and even when they are brief, they seem to grasp the entirety of the reconstructed position / argument. I also think that the discovery of the temporal dimension as the key for understanding the problem of online education is probably the most important contribution of this work – as this is not so obvious as the presence of the screen and its distractive potential or the problem Miranda departed from, i.e. the double replication ruling the current use of digital technologies in education.

The problem of this work is its brevity – the argument consist of many threads that could be elaborated to make the research more thorough and the report more comprehensive. In the similar vain, some of the reconstructions could be widened so as to give account of thorough understanding of the though/standpoint Miranda is referring to. However, I believe these would not change the course of the argument dramatically. Rather, these would add some nuances and opened new paths for possible exploration in the future. As I understand it, the brevity of this work was not a matter of choice, but a matter of Miranda's style of thinking.

Overall, I believe this research report is meeting the standards of a doctoral dissertation concerning a very timely and important matter in a very insightful way.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Nuno', with a stylized flourish at the end.