UNIVERSITY: Defending it, as questioning it

UNIVERSIDADE: Questionar para Defender

Pedro Demo

Scientifically speaking, reality needs no defending, what it does need is analysis, research, deconstruction, and reconstruction. However, humans don't usually distinguish between analysis and defense, as they aren't objective neither neutral; their political trait does not allow for such a thing. Throughout university education, if given at least some thought to epistemological quality, we are urged to distance ourselves (to "estrange", that is what would say Weber – Andrade, 2020) from the object, so we can see it better, but that is merely a tactic of goodwill, of utmost importance in and of itself. We always see only what we can, more than anything what we want to see, because "we don't see things as they are, but as we are" (Demo, 2009; 2022. Couldry & Hepp, 2016). This matter became a flaming debate topic regarding artificial intelligence when we discovered that algorithms carry ideological biases already activated in their own data, because data is not "given", it is a mental construct, active and controversially produced, contextualized, biased, too, in a political sense (Metz, 2021. Gerrish & Scott, 2018. Daub, 2020. Hong, 2020): they can inflate sexism, racism, white supremacy, elitism (Wachter-Boetcher, 2017. Jefferson, 2020. Larson, 2021. Crawford, 2021. Mattern, 2021. Lepore, 2020). What I am here for is, preliminarily, to analyze some facets of public university that I have called into question, not due to aiming for contradiction – nothing of the sort – but because I would like it to keep its promises, at least to an acceptable minimum. University is a world way too big to fit into any analysis, even more so for one such as I propose, merely suggestive and that runs into the risk of overgeneralization. Today University is one of the most outlined edges of "education industry" (Verger et alii, 2016), captured by neoliberalism, which by itself causes a tendency of considering its public counterpart as the elite's strategic reserve, even if such a scenario has recently changed. It is also my duty to recognize those who fight rightfully, in the name

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of the most noble of university causes which, along with the scientific method, is one of the most civilizing inventions that have ever been idealized and institutionalized in human history (Pinker, 2018). It bothers me that it is so conservative, as is Pinker's paper. It lost its rebelliousness (Dyson, 2006. Rasmussen, 2018). Even then, as the title states, I am inquiring with the purpose to defend, betting in self-criticism as the best defense, so that the argument is not mere self-defense.

Premisses of mMy Own Preference

I defend both public university and public education equally, as I consider education to be an integral part of the egalitarian Rule of Law: it cannot be bought nor sold. Welfare state has come as far as that, albeit in very few developed countries, with the predominant force in the world being the American neoliberal version of privatizing education. From there comes the idea that public education tends to be a poor offer to the poor, the poor's school, as the richest maintain basic private school, not subordinating themselves to an egalitarian offer. This bad habit also appears in public school: there's a private school inside what is public school, that is federal school (Demo, 2022a). As the offer of "lower ed" (lower education) (Cottom, 2017) is predominant for most groups (Delpit, 2012. Deresiewicz, 2014), some number of minor groups fit themselves in a privileged way in public space, as shows Chart 1. The profile of adequate learning has a certain outline in federal schools, meanwhile the same can't be said of state's and city municipality's schools, whose outlines are very distinct and way inferior: i) the "unlearning effect" (Demo & Silva, 2021. Demo & Shigunov Neto, 2021), defined as learning less as one progresses through the stages of education, corrodes greatly what was done in the First Years (FY), which are already very mediocre; ii) math is 10 pp below Portuguese language in FY, a non-sensical gap, as it signals a no-longer-recoverable downgrade – adequate learning of math is of mere 18% in the Last Years (LY), falling off to 6% state school's High School (HS); iii) federal schools, however, are a completely different story (a non-sense comedy novel at that!), always presenting much higher figures, which can easily have a better performance than private school, while showing a much lower "unlearning effect", even if decay does happen from stage to stage.

Chart 1. Adequate Learning in Brazil – 2019.

Schools	5th – ES – Port.	5th – ES - Math	9th – MS - Port.	9th – MS - Math	3rd – HS – Port.	3rd – HS – Math
All	57	47	36	18	34	7
Municipal	55	45	33	17	50	14
State	63	54	38	19	32	6
Federal	85	82	78	72	75	41

Source: QEdu (2019).

As the school census reveals (2021) (Chart 2), in terms of technology resources available, federal schools performs way better than private schools, although their coverage in HS is of only 2,1%. The lack of funds and other infrastructure, which suffocate municipal and state schools, don't seem to exist in federal schools.

Chart 2. Availability (%) of Technology Resources in Federal High Schools, Brazil, 2020.

Technology Resources	Federal (599 – 2.1%)	State (19.718 – 68.2%)	Municipal (183 – 0.6%)	Private (8.433 – 29.1%)
Internet	99.8	95.8	92.9	99.3
Band-width internet	98.2	80.4	78.1	92.5
Internet for Students	98.0	64.6	46.4	69.8
Internet for management purposes	98.8	94.1	90.7	96.0
Internet for teaching and learning	89.6	72.9	59.6	80.6
Digital board	50.6	29.2	22.4	27.8
Multimedia projector	97.8	80.9	79.8	85.2
Desktop computers for students	99.0	79.3	71.6	80.0
Portable computers for students	48.1	36.3	35.5	53.3
Tablets for students	27.5	13.1	4.9	31.8

Source: School census 2020 (2021:59).

It is not about proposing the extinction of federal schools, even less so of Colégio Pedro II (which exists since the founding of the empire), nor of technical schools (usually kept by federal schools), but, first and foremost, about acknowledging that all have a right to such an outstanding school considering where we now stand and, secondly, about learning from it, as that is the school which the poor need the most: the federal school. This small-bourgeoisie infection of public schools and universities worries me, as it unveils an elitist maneuver, commonplace in a pseudo-Rule of Law such as the one we find ourselves in. I have recently learned that the poor can, indeed, get into federal education (Marendino & Furtado, 2021) – about only 10% of students have an income equal to or superior to ten brazilian minimum-wages (in UFF-Niterói, Fluminense Federal University). However, the poorest – Souza's (2016; 2019) "rabble" – cannot do so, also due to not finishing HS, finishing it in a phony way, or having no socioeconomical conditions and means of access to information. The purpose of a democratic and republican institution is to offer to the poorest of the poor the same qualitative chance the richest have, so that opportunities become "equalized", so that segregationist ranking does not end up as a norm nor intensified (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1975). Such recognition is, to me, what is most fundamental about quotas, first because public university (especially federal and from São Paulo state universities) has always had a for-the-wealthy "quota" (their success is overwhelmingly facilitated) and, second, because if any barriers were to be kept, then the poorest does would not get admitted. It is a generalized rule, even more so in capitalism, that the poorest people do not have access to programs directed to poverty (O'Connor, 2001. World Bank, 2018), add to that the fact such programs have not been created to emancipate those to which it is supposedly directed, but to deceive them.

Equalizing opportunities demands explicit affirmative action, attending a university or school is not enough. There is a very common myth that enrolling a disabled person in a public institution, in and of itself, is a token of inclusivity. What matters is how said disabled is treated inside the institution. If the menu is the same for everyone, then initial disparity is kept anyway, because how well one utilizes it is never even. Let's take an example: if someone is admitted to med school in a Federal University through quotas it might occur that, formally speaking, said person is unprepared, they might not know chemistry for example, because the

subject in their public school was composed of random topics or simply memorized, and the teacher always absent. Chemistry, however, is central to medical practice, due to treatments that require medicine and their chemical traits. If the course chosen does not show any interest in catching up with the gap, it is unlikely for the student to do it, which might lead to finishing the course – as failing a subject does not happen, nor would it be the case – in precarious situation: a precarious doctor for the poor. Even then, the inclusion might have been valid, but it was also mediocre. A poor student does not need precarious mathematics; it needs the best one can possibly have, because the challenges ahead are even more brutal. Public institutions, as a rule, in absence of the egalitarian Rule of Law, do not equalize opportunities; they make disparities run ever deeper (Armstrong & Hamilton, 2013. Caplan, 2018). The most necessitated need specific and focused attention, so that they can catch up with old gaps, which are sometimes incredibly vast. Such worries have been justifying customized education styles (Zhao, 2018; 2021. Wehmeyer & Zhao 2021), avoiding collective treatment, for example, of giving the same class to 100 students or more. It has also been pushing for the acknowledgement of diversity (mixing students of diverse levels can be effective, without humping those ahead) (Byers, 2018). All I have said barely scratches the surface of those big ideological battles, because opportunities, more so could be said for high-end ones, are disputed in belligerent ways, as they are not available equally (Davidson, 2017. Means, 2018. Posecznick, 2017). In carefully crafted master's degrees or PhDs, in which custom treatment is the norm (explicit orientation), candidates facing more difficulties can, eventually, find the appropriate help they need (Minayo, 2019. Demo, 2021).

Infection of policies by the small-bourgeoisie is a persistent and distasteful issue, due to the farce that is the current Rule of Law, with special regard to small-bourgeoisie left-wing parties, starting with PT (Partido dos trabalhadores, Workers party). While the right-wing parties devour the State classically (or in a Machiavellian way), when the left-wing effectively comes to power they take advantage of it by "basking in vicious riches", as did PT. An exaggerated example: State privileged careers are invented, the minimum-wage workers are abandoned or informal to their own misfortune, to a point that integral retirement, without proper contribution to functionalism (that has already been taken down, because it

cannot be paid) gets constitutionalized. Every single public career must be egalitarian, all providing something of the same importance to the populace, who pay the bill. The small-bourgeoisie is most eager to, someday, be big (Demo, 2021a); they identify themselves with workers (Workers Party) while convenient; but, fascinated by the Big Bourgeoisie, they become turncoats, such as in the notorious case of the Legislative and Judiciary powers violating one of the most basic rules of Rule of Law: a privileged judge cannot judge (see Moro, Dalagnol et caterva...), and that includes the STF (Supremo Tribunal Federal, Supreme Federal Court, FTC): a noble-criminals specialized court, who have a privileged forum, paid by the people to make a mockery of themselves.

Although, in a sarcastic manner, the best university and high school are both public (Lubienski & Lubienski, 2013). But they have been privatized, therefore for the rabble remains the poor institution for the poor. Military School fulfills such role to a T: a privatized school inside public school, paid by means of public resources, as the military do not accept common public school; this last one is for common folk, not for those who have value! We have not yet reached a civilization level that allows us to recognize everyone as equals, while also diverse (Demo, 2022): equality is what the poor say; those who are valued have privileges (Demo, 2020). It should also be noted that recognizing this fact has nothing to do with derived Marxism, neither socialism, because they all failed. It has to do with goodwill and, even if only slightly, good scientifical diagnoses, all which recognize how important egalitarianism is for society. "Egalitarian" not only states that every person is equal; it also states they are diverse. Piketty, capitalism's biggest critic (2020; 2022), is not a Marxist, as if to think in an intelligent manner one could only do so through Marxism! Marx himself, contrary to his stereotype, valued freedom of thought, getting as far as saying to bootlickers who proclaimed themselves Marxists that he himself was not (Demo, 2020a). History goes on, and we must learn from it. Why should we rewind back to grim pasts, such as the soviet, Maoist, or even fundamentalist capitalists, all of which are abhorrent? Let's reinvent ourselves.

University – An Old Church!

Here I indicate some perspectives whose validity I question in regard to (public) university, all the while knowing many will disagree. "

1.   Universities usually say that the healthier of changes comes from education. But, while they do have many suggestions of changes, the central premise is that of complete hypocrisy: to change everything, but to change nothing of itself. They are all frozen in time since the last century, stuck in replicative fordism (see *Tempos Modernos* - **Modern Times** - one of Chaplin's works) (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XFXg7nEa7vQ). To change is, substantially, **to change oneself**. Changing is not a matter of proposal; but of coherent example. I'll give a blatant example: in the replicative Fordism model, schools were not asked to for a creative student, as the economy could maintain itself with repetitive roles, all enacted very aggressively in *Modern Times*. Times changed, deeply, also due to how capitalism suffered with devastating crisis and managed to deal with its destructions, even theorizing that's how it was supposed to change: creative destruction (Schumpeter, 2008. Harvey, 2014). Liberal expectation changed in neoliberalism, as they noticed that capital was dependent on how creative, allied to competitivity, the production system was to succeed, causing many authors, all who cheerly theorized such allegation, to appear, the most notable being Christensen (2002. Christensen et alii, 2011; 2019), who ventured through the field of education, proposing "innovative university" (Christensen & Eyring, 2011) and "disruptive classroom", aimed at changing how the world learns (Christensen et alii, 2008). He even promised the disruptive system would end poverty (Christensen et alii, 2019), the most hypocritical nod to anything that we know of capitalism (Piketty, 2022, Milanovic, 2019). We do not have any interest in destructive change, since transformative learning presupposes authorial transformations, which come from within, are *autopoietic* and solidary, but that also are not individualist, commodified, privatizing nor devastating, even more so against the environment (Misiaszek, 2018). While capitalism makes of change a destructive orgy, university makes it a farce (fake news).

Many educators still consider public education's mediocre results, mainly in elementary and high schools, as being derived from neoliberalism (Demo, 2021), mistaking it for the beginning of last century's liberalism. That class copied to then be copied again is something that also carries the neoliberal context's stain, but it is, more than anything, a pedagogical educational failure. School is no ventriloquist; even if not guilty, it still bears responsibility for what is done in class. Neoliberalism does not give an ounce of care for a student who does not know math, for the productive system's key reason for apathy is: there is no profit to be had. But, to justify education being in doldrums one appeals to althusserian (Althusser, 1980) determinism, in other words, there's no figure responsible for the school in the institution itself. Pushing the problem towards the student is easy, the old trick of blaming and making a criminal out of the victim. Coming by such an inept take on it when one is in university is harder, because to consider it a ventriloquist of capitalism gives off a bad look. Neoliberalism shows itself mainly on students' poverty, easily persisting, and greatly hindering the chance to learn, though not eliminating it, because that's the exact challenge: making the most marginalized student the most emancipated. That is what has been achieved with quotas, even in a scenario of intensive discussion.

Moreover, such institutional laziness strongly shows itself when forming basic teachers, who are still (de)formed as the same way they have been long before: a teaching professional is produced, and whose function is to pass on curricular content, to give lectures every single day, and to apply exams. Today, in light of some developments better-proven inside university, such as *post-grad stricto sensu* and Pibic in graduation, learning as an author is widely known, mainly due to the role research plays as a scientific and educational principle (Demo, 1990; 1996), making it so that more countries require of basic teachers at least a master's degree, and whose reasoning is: one who researches learns better (Sahlberg, 2010; 2017. Darling-Hammond & Lieberman, 2012). At this point in the 21st century, pedagogy and degrees courses are expected to guarantee teachers who are authors, scientists, and researchers, not only because we want students to be authors, but also on the grounds that these skills emerge in pre-school. Many educators defend this foresight, the most notable being Piaget (1990): 4-year-old children might develop an interest in research, laboratory, work hypotheses, argumentation, doubt and question, one of the reasons why there is no class, test or rigid discipline in children's education, all

the while having a collective and creative-playful work environment. When entering elementary school though, that same child gets seated in a chair, quiet and in complete silence, obliged to hear someone's speech, procedure which no sane mother approves of, because they know a 6-year-old child must move, run, play with others, build bonds, and express oneself, unless said child is grounded or sick. Therefore, it is no surprise Foucault considered school a prison (1977).

Today basic teachers need to be authors, scientists, researchers, not only because passing on content dictated in the curriculum is an auxiliary activity, but because a basic teacher must be an exemplar apprentice, a **professional in the field of learning**. University, however, doesn't even budge (BID, 2018). The same pedagogy and degrees course keep being applied, while blatantly inept. Taking a look at Enem (**Exame nacional do ensino médio**, **High school national exam**) would suffice to notice such aspect. In 2020's edition of the exam, from a pool from 3 million students only 28 scored full marks on their essays, which is, statistically speaking, *nobody* (Enem 2020. 2021). Why is it that no one writes well? Because school does not have any "learning activities" (studying, reading, research, elaborating, arguing...), only teaching ones (swallowing content in class, just so you can throw it all up in the test). It is for such a reason that postgraduate course *lato sensu* has already emptied and seems to have no impact, as it is a rehashed, copy-pasting, moronizing graduate program. Strictly speaking, it is no "postgraduate course", if we take authorship to be a founding factor, as it is in *stricto sensu*. The state with most postgraduates (considering both *lato* and *stricto sensu* – though *stricto sensu*'s share is known to be residual) is Espírito Santo, with 82%; not the worst, but certainly not a marvel either; Ceará, usually considered an important reference, more so in FY, has 38.3%! (Anuário, 2021). Its name serves more as an incentive to raising salaries by a little, which is already important, but showing it to have an impact on students is way harder. Does the university not know of such a fact? They pretend not to. An avoidance of diagnosis, just so they don't leave their comfort zone. There should be an enormous interest in knowing how education is provided to those who got a degree in education and pedagogues. If they did, would get very scared.

I'll exemplify this absurdity in Chart 3, where 4 *paranaense* (**pertaining to the state of Paraná**) municipalities and their adequate learning data in 2019 are shown, the best in the whole state, which have the most high-numbered FY in municipal

school, while state school is a complete disappointment. Janiópolis and Serranó-polis do Iguaçu appeared in the list of best Ideb (**Index of basic education development**) in the country in 2019 (8.8 e 8.5, respectively), behind the two best listed in the country, which are part of Ceará (Mucambo, 9.4; Independência, 9.1) (Demo, 2020b). Let's acknowledge the data is questionable, that the concept of adequate learning is shrouded in controversy, that Ideb is repetition based instead of autonomy based, that we only consider the pedagogical aspect (without connecting it to infrastructural aspects), that such evaluations aim only to care for students, so that nothing other than the need of retrieving students' right to studying follows, for it is a constitutional right.

Chart 3. Adequate Learning in Paraná (4 municipalities) – 2019.

CRUZMALTINA						
Schools	5th - ES - Port.	5th - ES - Math	9th - MS - Port.	9th - MS - Math	3rd - HS – Port.	3rd - HS – Math
All	100	100	46	27	16	0
Municipal	100	100	-	-	-	-
State	-	-	46	27	16	-
PITANGUEIRAS						
Schools	5th - ES - Port.	5th - ES - Math	9th - MS - Port.	9th - MS - Math	3rd - HS – Port.	3rd - HS – Math
All	100	97	10	7	22	0
Municipal	100	97	-	-	-	-
State	-	-	10	7	22	-
JANIÓPOLIS						
Schools	5th - ES - Port.	5th - ES - Math	9th - MS - Port.	9th - MS - Math	3rd - HS – Port.	3rd - HS – Math
All	99	100	40	26	0	0
Municipal	99	100	-	-	-	-
State	-	-	40	26	-	-

SERRANÓPOLIS DO IGUAÇU						
Schools	5th - ES - Port.	5th - ES - Math	9th - MS - Port.	9th - MS - Math	3rd - HS – Port.	3rd - HS – Math
All	95	98	70	58	52	35
Municipal	95	98	-	-	-	-
State	-	-	70	58	52	35

Source: QEdu (2019).

As many reservations as one may have, which I do acknowledge, data suggests how counter-productive is the State offer, in LY and in High School. The most severe case is Pitangueiras: from the FY to the LY (from pedagogue to licentiate, from municipal to state schools), almost everything gets destroyed, as if the LY's were tasked with trashing the FY. Students do not carry on the storefront that is FYs, what they do carry on is a 0% in Math when they reach HS. The fourth municipality has a more balanced profile, the only one that does not have a single 0% in HS. We can perceive stinging contradictions of a much dubious education system, sown in university, which then produces a content redistributor who does not appear to know how to learn. Does university not know of such a fact? How can we explain and accept that, in the FY, Pitangueiras has a figure of 100% portuguese language, but of only 10% in the LY, or a figure of 97% in math in the FY, but of 7% in LY? Is this all about two factions at war with each other? Are we going to keep it as it is? Of all the ways university possesses to be incompetent, the (de)formation of basic teachers in university is one of the most scandalous considering that it self-futilized over time. However, municipal school shows some potential, as municipalities are all small and poor (More so in Ceará) – if there is to be, as a "threat" to the BNCC (**National Common Curricular Bas**e**/Comp**endium), some kind of "School Re-Creation" (2018:462), a very typical Freudian slip, then it must come from them. Knowing that would be very useful to the university.

2. Here I am going to question the university's tripod – *teaching, research, extension* – due to how inappropriate the concept of extension is, which I have also called "university's wicked consciousness" (Demo, 1996) sometime ago:

when university started noticing that there was no place even slightly adequate for the social and formative role, usually focused on just passing on curricular content or doing shallow research, "extension" was invented, a very unfortunate choice of word, as it designates an eventual "lean-to", initially voluntary and accessory, so that they could allege commitment to society and student's citizen formation. Under pressure of critiques and over time, extension was made part of the curriculum, to indicate a relevant and substantial proposal, but it was never convincing, for as what is born crooked, grows and dies crooked. Due to the openly positivist environment of large-scale global universities, student's citizen formation and their institutional social role does not show up on the first page, reducing university to research and teaching. The production of knowledge is very perceivable, at least in the so-called research university, which is the dominant model when it comes to those most valued, with teaching being integral, though it can be easily placed in the background, because research is what defines an academic career. An academic career based on teaching ("hourly wage earner" is the classic condition) is seen as something done for survival, a gig, because it does not pertain neither to research, which is suppressed or squashed by institutional arrangement, nor to the barely adequate education of the student, suffocated amidst moronizing instructionism. Teaching and giving classes will persist, because pertinent classes do exist, those of people with their own authorial production or authorial acknowledgment, but it is a role of secondary importance. Dynamic learning is authorial, that is, it does not happen in class, but in the student's mind, given that the class's contents are correctly rebuilt/rearranged. That's something acknowledged even by positivists and cognitivists, and as states Dehaene (2020): passive life forms do not learn, and mere transmission of content has no transformative effect. Better than teaching and researching would be educating and researching!

Nowadays universities biggest and most central role is that of research and technology innovation in this specific context: the most pertinent reasoning turns to student authorship, with transmitting knowledge being instrumental, even more so because mere teaching is not acknowledged. Universities that only teach, reducing

themselves to a machine of curricular transmission, become part of the periphery, third-world, all-around irrelevant. Using PCCs (Preliminary Course Concept) as reference, in Inep's most recent presentation (2020:29), course distribution between its 5 intervals was (data pertaining to 2019): 0.3%, 1st; 8% fall under the 2nd; 49.3% for the 3rd; 39.8% under the 4th; and 2.6% in the 5th. Even if we push all courses upwards – courses under intervals 1 and 2 together are equal to less than 10%, while 89.1% of courses fall under intervals 3 and 4 – only 2.6% of courses are part of the 5th interval, an insignificant residue. In terms of academical organization, 5, universities appear as 1.3%; university centers as 3%; IFs (Federal Institutes) and CEFETs (Federal Centers for Technological Education) as 4%; universities as 3%. It is clear cut how any kind of bar is set under whatever expectations might be had, though IFs e CEFETs look better in the grand picture. Through the looks of management category, under interval 5 private universities for profit are 1.9%; non-profit private make up 2.3%; public federals 4.8%; publics of the state 2.3%; and public municipals 0.9%. Though Federals are the highlight, state publics have the same figure of for-profit privates (2.3%), and public municipals are under privates (for and non-profit). Regarding the studying method, only 2% of participating courses were of distance learning, a very selective sample and which causes reflects on something very uncomfortable: in interval 5, courses of distance learning make up 4% of the data, while in-person made up only 2.6%! This finding, even if taken with all caution possible, also due to the tiny sample, is of enormous importance, because many mythologies about distance learning are going to be taken down in the clash of ideologies: i) a distance learning course can have high CPC in an easier manner than an in-person course; ii) the higher relative presence of distance learning courses is less characteristic of validation of this method and more of disapproval of its counterpart: in-person courses do not inherently guarantee higher quality education. There's some logic at play in the background: since distance learning has a very high rate of evasion, the "left over" tend to be more mature (Censo da Educação Superior 2020. 2022:14) and learn better. However, unwillingness of acceptance is still persistent when it comes to distance learning (Demo, 2019a), even if its opposition is generally precarious, such as in Saviani and Galvão's recent paper (2021), where the "fallacy of 'distance learning'" is directly "put on trial" and condemned, partially with fair reasons, but the fallacy of in-person education is ignored – first, they are

both terrible methods, making it hard to define which is worse; second, both need to be reinvented.

University does recognize this challenge in Pibic (**Institutional Program for Scholarship in Scientific and Technological Initiation)**, though it is a project of CNPq (**National Council for Research**), usually perceived as successful, but it persists only as an occasional and very selective experiment. Since content is available online now, and in a myriad of distinct ways, an university whose purpose is to pass on the same old content is an archaic trinket, having no value in attending only so the same old copied class is copied once again. We still keep employing hourly wage teachers, hired only to teach in class, hurting the fundamental rule of learning as and with authorship (Demo, 2015; 2018). Instructionism devours university, public and private, from left to right, and it has been getting further aggravated with distance learning (be it remote or virtual), making it so higher education keeps its status as a rehashed basic school, rooted in memorization, retreading the same old content, tricks, enclosed correct answers, all pre-historical. Only in master's degrees or doctorates is when such a model is overcome, or circumvented, because to create the inner elite then it is clearly acknowledged that one needs to be an author, scientist, and researcher (Minayo, 2019. Demo, 2021). Even then, when a doctor, which became as much through research and not classes, acting in undergraduate courses tends to "simply and only teach", that is the same as becoming a moving contradiction. By this line of thought, university is an institution of the past century, lost in daydreams, typically taming, disciplinary, moronizing. It is a servant of the delay in education.

Regarding the subject of delay, new technologies, while also usually treated as an unneeded meddling in universities (Demo, 2020d), because such things are a disruption to the "holy class" (Demo, 2017) - an institutional darling blatantly obsolete - are faced with a backwards attitude, something immensely regrettable. In the Higher Education Census (2022), in 2020 53% of new entries in universities were of distance learning method, point being, they already are the majority. In terms of enrolment in graduate courses, in-person were, in 2010, 5.5 million, and in 2019 5.6%, meanwhile distance learning enrolments were of 930 thousand in 2010, but 3.1 million in 2017, 3.3 times more; in-person declined from 2018 to 2019 (6.1 million to 5.6 million – a decline of 9.4%). By the end of it, in 2019, distance learning

represented 35.8% of all enrolments. Focusing on enrolments for 2020 in degree courses, which are 19.2%, and technology courses 16.6%, it is stated: i) 72.8% are women; men, 27,2%; ii) 63.1% are in universities, 23,2% in university centers, 5% in IFs and CEFETs; iii) 33.6% are public, 66;4% private; iv) 40.7% are in-person, 59,3% at a distance. Meaningful changes can be perceived: enrolments in distance learning degree courses are predominant, as is private education, and, even more so, women's presence. Even in technology courses, distance learning moves forward, while in-person retrocedes in the year of 2020, around 70% courses are distance learning, which is also a global tendency (Censo da Educação Superior, 2022:27). As to course completion, also in 2020, 84% were of private institutions; in-person methodology is predominant, but: 68.7%. Distance learning finds its biggest emerging hurdle: class evasion is massive.

When an attempt to resist the technological avalanche is done in such an acritical manner, it just goes to show how far behind university really is, while said avalanche has come to stay and might cause a great deal of damage. *First*, the naming convention is questionable because defining one method as in-person and another as at a distance implies the second does not care whether the student attends (**is in**) class, when it is just a different kind of presence. Between physical and virtual (**not in-person**) there is unexchangeable difference, but both are "presence": when trying to defend a thesis in a virtual environment, every single person is, obviously, "there". Educators rightfully try to emphasize how relevant physical contact is in pedagogical relationships, as can be observed in physical reciprocity between a mother and her child: she cannot take care of her child remotely, as an example she would never be able to breastfeed remotely. Therefore, physical presence cannot be exchanged, as simply remembering, in the field of psychology, Harlow's macabre experiments with new-born monkeys removed from their mothers is enough (1958; 1965). *Second*, virtual presence can be used in a cautious and intelligent manner: attending a meeting at a distant place in-person seems more inefficient than ever, unless physical presence is essential. *Third*, reciprocity in the virtual world can be intense, which can be easily ascertained through the behavior of children and teens, always on their cellphones, without knowing how to "turn off": the very difficulty of "turning off" already indicates an unhealthy commitment to the virtual, which Rosen calls *iDisorder* (2012). In "*Alone Together*" (2011), Turkle analyzed the deep evil of virtual environments that

cause loneliness in the multitude of relationships, which led her, fond of the digital challenges in today's society, (with a well-known Freudian outlook) to "reclaim conversation" (2015), because teenagers talk less to each other, isolate themselves, create small autoprotective and enclosed groups, only listen to what they want to hear, etc. Twenge, well-known *iGen* schoolar, does not mince words in the book titled (and in the tittle itself) (2017): "Why Today's Super-Connected Kids Are Growing Up Less Rebellious, More Tolerant, Less Happy and Completely Unprepared for Adulthood...". *Fourth*, as technologies are ambiguous regarding politics and take no side, no wonder their impacts are so uneven, and some of them very worrying. Educational entities such as schools and universities need to commit to pedagogical formation of teenagers and the youth, in order to go further than mere lamenting, graffitiing, badmouthing, so "we can know how to use", but, above all, so we "are not used". *Fifth*, digital technologies are invading education, and are not going to move out (Means, 2018. Zuboff, 2019). Knowing how to use would be better, most importantly making them tools for students' authorship, while also showing understanding if teachers need to catch up with the field. Prohibiting cellphones in class is easy, but very counterproductive, not only because forbidden things entice even more, but because it is part of the students' lives, be it good or bad. The major argument is, however, that every student is going to need digital prowess for their lives and jobs, period. Wrong uses do not make every single use wrong in and of itself, massive chances of good use still exist, for authorial ends that is, also because the "historic developers" of computers were also incredible "authors" (Isaacson, 2014. Metz, 2021).

Analysts of the digital world who hold a more critical perspective acknowledge that its use is predominantly, and by a large margin, instructionist (Reich, 2020. Daub, 2020. Desmurget, 2020. Souza et alii, 2019), let alone that discussion surrounding Artificial Intelligence (AI), right after unbridled excitement with deep and machine learning (Metz, 2021. Larson, 2021. Jefferson, 2020. Hong, 2020. Mattern, 2021), ran aground on racist, misogynist and supremacist biases in neuron networks, military capture of AI directed to creating lethal automated weapons, demolition of privacy, generalized vigilance – acting in a terrorist manner so terrorism would be fought – or on fake news (Broussard, 2018. Chang, 2020. Christian, 2020. Marcus & Davis, 2019), mainly on the increasing disbelief that we will ever reach Generalized Artificial Intelligence (similar to that of the human brain) (Koch, 2019. Schneider,

2019. Sunstein, 2020). Furthermore, we must not forget the neoliberal environment all around the digital world, fact that strongly pushes for commodification of techno-logy (Isaac, 2019. Levy, 2020. McNamee, 2019. Fumagalli et alii, 2019. Challenger, 2021), to the extent that many find new technologies to be a headache (Chun, 2016. Wu, 2016). This uneasiness is similar to that of Socrates' reaction to writing, when he noticed his oral world was being left behind and threatened to disappeared (Platão, 2010): writing, in its own way, is a virtual world, made out of formal signs, contrary to raw orality woven from intersubjectivity. However, we have created a civilization base on writing, and university is included in it.

3.   Universities' reaction, mainly public ones (Federal in particular), is usually ar-rogant, self-absorbed, as if history had made them over any other being and they should, by rule, be now able to define what does or not have value. Such ridiculousness. Universities are precisely expected not to bow down to new technologies, to know how to react adequately and to prefer much rather what is most important for the university's project, but they should never present themselves as an at-will supremacist instance of decision, as if rewinding his-tory was possible. To the sometimes-untidy technological determinism (Kelly, 2016) that sees technologies as supra-historical entities that overwhelm us, whether we like it or not, universities, in a dialogue between the deaf, answer with another determinism, as if it were the helmsman of history. The problem resides, in part, in the lack of self-criticism, of skepticism, more than anything of self-diagnosis, so voids, gaps and delays are never spotted. They ignore the fact our current education system halts students' learning, only worried to the extent of redistributing curricular content, followed by irrelevant exams, all bearing questions with right or enclosed answers. That the extreme diffi-culty schools deal with to guarantee adequate learning for students is also universities' typical image of lacking adequacy to produce a basic teacher who is also an author, scientist, and researcher. That relevant knowledge is authorial, that is, it cannot be transmitted as a measurable amount, and even less as tests that test nothing, nor can it be copied or plagiarized. That the world and economy are more than visibly changing. Let us consider exclusi-ve dedication (**to the job, as in being legally unable to take any other**) in

Federal education centers. Exclusive dedication has the possibility to exist in very select circumstances (marriage, moments which require fatal attention, moments of complete focus such as driving through the streets), but, as a rule, exclusive dedication is a farse, sinecure, exploitation, used to fake securities and certainties made to accommodate people, which in turn tend to produce professional mediocrity. Life does not recommend that, as it much prefers biodiversity, the risk of creative openings, the challenge of surpassing oneself, the incomplete evolutionary condition (Deacon, 2012), rather than a safe haven that is more akin to a graveyard. "Integral" Dedication is, perhaps, a more realistic term, as in working 8 hours a day, also allowing the teacher to do more pertinent looking things, as long as they do not interfere with his job, which would otherwise start making public space private.

Privileges are hidden under every circumstance of exclusivity and are also the search of guarantees that no life project can handle, and even less so when you are inside job market. Let us take as an example all mothers, who have a tremendous compromise with their children, also being, for a brief period of time, a direct food provider. Even as the highest case of mediation in society, mothers take care of their children with more than doubled care, but never do they take it as a task exclusive to them, so much so that it is part of the feminist emancipation project freeing women from such "exclusivity" imposed by patriarchalism. While mothers stay at home with their child, not only do they do countless domestic chores, but they also want to go out, because there is no exclusive condition with their offspring. But universities think they need exclusive teachers, also full-time, usually in a bilateral collusion: one side wants teachers to be, to their entirety, a mummified labor-driven cog in the machine; the other turns them into convenient or sinecure tutelage. An exclusive role only has physical pieces *ad hoc*, similar to a nut that can only fit one type of bolt; humans have a thousand and one utilities, they reinvent, restart, and reorganize themselves. A result of exclusivity is that universities have no problems to solve when it comes to society as a whole, as they only need to tend to their alienated space where they imagine themselves to be so special that "giving the same lectures" for 30 years is somehow acceptable. A creative and open teacher lives from issue to issue, always moving unsteadily, sliding a razorblade while trying not to cut oneself.

One of the arguments is not to yield to capitalist market logic, which turns workers into commodity. University has such hopes set on it: that of creating dignified (not objectified) work environments. But no one expects it to fantasize environments full of privilege, which guarantee stability no minimum-wage worker can have, neither an infinitely generous saint-employer, as resources are public. Despite the reluctance to accept it, change is the default, and some courses might fall into disuse (many sociology courses, for example, have been abolished around the world), they might not have as many students or a lot less, but as teachers are subjected to an exclusivity contract, a course could have no students, but it would still be kept, through means of "acquired right" against society, by the teachers' union, since relevance is not defined by society anymore, but by the "exclusive owners". Meanwhile other courses come on stage, due to new times, economies, needs, technology, but history needs to ask for permission to the "exclusives" if it must take effect. Meanwhile, society awaits the untouchable ones to acquiesce and contemplate new demands. What is even more ridiculous is that exclusivity slips, by fatal sinecure, to an enclosed club, where one can only enter by ideological affiliation, not by merit. In the context of expectations regarding creative change in the scientific world, it would do well to include, when choosing a new teacher, the capacity for alternatives, for divergence from the status quo, for diversity of methods and theories, for being contemporary with society, for paradigm shifts. In practice, sameness is chosen, especially the "faithful", concurrent, so everything can stay the way it was before it. Merit does not go well with exclusivity, as by definition what is exclusive has no merit; its place is already guaranteed. Careers get guaranteed, with all its steps *pro forma*. All get to the top, because that "top" is, actually, at the lowest part of the slope! Exclusivity trashes fundamental institutions such as peer review, ascension by merit, acknowledgment for rendered services, because every single thing gets contaminated by guaranteed "exclusivized" relationships. Exclusive evaluators are no longer evaluated, breaking the basic rule of open meritocratic evaluation: the first to be evaluated is the evaluator. If said principle were to be applied, an entire, deeply fraudulent, sandcastle would collapse to the ground.

What results from such cronyism is that access to top-ranked journals, which should be evaluated by merit, is a monopoly run by internal gangs who fake evaluating fairly, without caring for who it is, in an "objective and neutral" manner, the same way a defunct body would evaluate another. This may get to the point of negating

access to those who do not use what scientific production has been put out by the evaluator, since what is evaluated is not merit, but alignment and submission. At the same time, now journals are the only thing valid. Books are of much less importance, almost a hobby of idiotic people. Some have books that marked and have been reference in their field for years on end, bearing many editions and notable public recognition. But that does not count. If someone maintains an academic blog with many relevant works for open and free of charge discussion for those interested, that also does not count, only because the evaluator is part of the university museum collection. Exclusivity does that: its actions are not in name of science; but in name of ploy – exclusivity is sheer ploy.

Further than that, exclusivity institutionalizes historical contradictions and aberrant hypocrisies, incomprehensible for the specialists in logic, method, theory. One of the most glaring is that, to train masters and doctors, each one needs to become an author, scientist, researcher, under the assumption that such qualifications are what matters when inside the institution, either also or above all due to an enlightened citizenship, legacy we have carried from Enlightenment and Scientific Revolution. At this academic stage, most applied are typically authorial learning criteria, also because evaluation focuses on the candidate's authorship, emancipation leaps, capacity for self-critique, taking or "creating" ownership of a place inside academic rings. But the same does not apply to undergraduate courses, students are treated as submissive sponges which absorb content never once built again by themselves, because being an undergraduate is still understood as attending lectures and doing well in exams. An undergraduate is no author, scientist, researcher, for a graduate is not even expected to have citizenship graced by science nor to be useful for society in technical and political fields. What one has is a formal way of training that teaches stupidity, that domesticates one for the job market. Usually seen as a good idea, the invention of Pibic (originated from CNPq) to this day has not been enough to demote the brain-grinding machine that sets up undergraduate courses while regarding research as a scientific and educational principle. Dantesque is the spectacle when a lecture is given to hundreds of students, all invited to listen to things which, most of the time, they do not understand. Lectures do have a place, but are simple info, in general copied on repeat. What leads to students learning is learning activities, as those throughout master or doctorate degrees.

However, out of nowhere, from the beyond comes a prophet's, pythoness', spirit, from an oracle that only spouts gibberish to a tendentially or completely imprisoned public, with no end in sight, a mental diarrhea, a public which would not lose their time there, had they a choice. They would all listen to some other lie or none. Teachers can use their place and knowledge over students, condition for ploy and manipulation, of a trainer who controls a ventriloquist. Taking into account Foucault's "Discourse Order" (2000), where he shows superior and ferocious shrewdness while covering the power relations in human communication, it becomes obvious that teaching may easily imply silencing students. Abominated is the inquiring, doubting, questioning, divergent student, much preferred is the spokesperson marionet. In Socratic tradition, teacher-student relationships would be marked by maieutic, directed to cultivating in the partner (student) emancipation, which comes from within, not from classes (Haber, 2020). What matters is the student's response, even if wrong, but it is also their responsibility noticing the need for a correction. In schools and universities monologues still rule, a pre-Socratic condition. Better and more creative methodologies in the scientific world have been created, but that is also ignored, because they are all *modus tollens*, not *modus ponens*: that is, inquiries – knowing how to think and question. Theories must be falsifiable, discussed, prevailing – always as a temporary measure – those that survive intersubjective critiques (Strevens, 2020). There is no possibility of any exclusivity. The same way millions of students in schools are put through infamous classes (all of which try to train students the same way an animal is), that also happens in university. Instead of going to university every single day only to watch lectures, it would be more dignified to go frequently and study, research, elaborate, work in groups, be with teachers, write individual and collective texts, advance towards open authorship of self-critic critique. Since all of lectures' contents are available in a thousand different ways, commuting for 2 hours, at night, just so one can watch a lecture, is torture akin to medieval witch hunts, whose objective was halting, primarily, divergent thinking. Students lose their time and energy commuting poorly and uselessly, while they could be studying. Between us: "student" is not that who studies; but who attends classes.

Another part of the pretense in being an exclusive teacher is the proliferation of way more teachers than needed, largely because, in a sickeningly unequal society such as ours, small-bourgeois privileges are eagerly pursued. If being equal is only

for the poor (Demo, 2020), being exclusive is a superlative attraction for a group of "distinct people" (Bourdieu, 2007). Proliferation is also turbocharged by the instructionist notion that all curricular content needs a specific (exclusive!) teacher, as though their fundamental role was to give lectures or redistribute content.

If we could accept that a teacher's role is to nurture student's authorship, with curricular content as important as it is instrumental, maybe we would not even need half the current teacher count. Also true is that a part of the teachers works extensively, because students' research and responsible technical-social formation is taken as a serious matter by those, not to mention that the academic bureaucracy is much more than simply caring for students or their research. Time lost in "retreading classes" dominate university environment, something teachers lose even more time in than students, though both suffer from it. In 2019 student/teacher ratios – a very imprecise measure, for sure – was supposedly of 11.2 in Federal Schools, while in Private Schools it spikes up to 37, both unjustifiable figures (Censo da Educação Superior 2019. 2020:9). The percentage of brazillians in the range of 25 to 34 years old who graduated from university is one of the lowest: in 2019, 21.3%, while Japan had 61.5% and South Korea 69.8% (Id.:6).

In the end, we could change this if we had, even if only fulfilling a bare minimum criterion for warranting its name, a decent diagnosis, however incomplete and tentative. If we evaluated what is learned in university classes - not by exams, but by weighing students' authorship - we would immediately perceive how useless is such a procedure. We would see that *lato sensu* postgraduate courses (that of specialization, extension, etc.) relight graduation emptiness, stretching it. Such courses add nothing but are sold as irreplaceable teaching expertise. Obvious would be the insanity of training teaching professionals for basic schools, that actually need professionals in learning. University, however, does not diagnose the school, nor the teachers, much less its courses, just so it can stay inside its comfort zone. But this does not prevent its claims of expertise in change, best conceivable change at that, via education. If university is an expert on anything, then it must be on how not to change, to run away from it and or turn their backs on it, avoid, hide, how to feign ignorance. As Foucault argues, every discourse is an apparatus of power and, as such, controls what can be said, what should be silenced or hidden, animal training masqueraded as emancipation.

In 2019, considering in-person undergraduate enrollments on average, 57.6% were studying at night; 42.4% during the day. In Federals, figures were 31% and 69%; in privates, 67% and 33% (Censo da Educação Superior 2019, 2020:48). Blatant is the social injustice implied in this ratio: as workers can only study at night, after their workhours, easier it is to enroll in private entities, in general paying for a less qualitative option. Conditions of attendance are terribly dissimilar, since one thing is studying during the day, especially in the morning, because one does not need to work; another is studying at night, after work, while tired and with no time to dedicate to the course. As naivety would have it, being poor is not worthwhile! Hypocritical is the context of claiming that courses at night and in daytime are the same, are worth the same, and result in an equal diploma, as that means leveling down, however stigmatizing workers' diploma as inferior, one obtained while surrounded by hardships, would also be very unfair. The first measure for those who study at night is not solely to take the class, which they often attend drowsily or distracted, also because it is not even worth listening to. First, if a class's purpose is to "teach content," then that can be done at home. Second, the time spent in university, usually also compressed into dubious and tortuous schedules, would be better utilized if one could have learning activities, instead of only being taught.

Take into account that doctors in public higher education were 47.6% in 2009, and 66% in 2019; in private institutions they were 44.3% in 2009 and only 22.9% in 2019, progressing inversely (Census of Higher Education 2019, 2020:71). While overvaluing academic degrees is not the intention, because class is easily the same (typically instructionist), harsh is the situation that teachers bearing only specialization in private higher education (28.9%) outnumber postgraduates. It is proof courses aim only to pass on content by those who, in general, have never produced any of it. It is also proof that we have not diagnosed university at all, even though pertinent data is available, always equally questionable. An evaluator's dread is to be evaluated. That is 100% true for university: it finds delight in evaluating everything, but hates to be evaluated. Evaluators like exclusivity, posing above good and evil, precisely to avoid being evaluated, knowing that they would not come out alive from an even barely inquisitive evaluation. University's glory would, however, be in knowing how to renew itself, to question itself, because the coherence of criticism lies in self-criticism.

Formal and Political Quality

American universities, by and large private non-profit universities such as Harvard, have as their major function training the country's ruling elite, as well as winning the Nobel Prize (to produce cutting-edge science) (Bok, 2007; 2017. Arum & Roksa, 2011; 2014). This elitist position is part of American history, society, and economy, which, although one of the most long-lived "democracies" in the world, elitist supremacism is a "stone-like" reference of a "chosen people". In no other society is the marriage between capitalism and natural selection of the fittest (including the richest, most educated, and or most powerful) more perceivable, in the neoliberal context of the market as *raison d'être* of society. There is much contestation that biological evolution is guided by prepotency (Nagel, 2012. Nowak, 2011; 2013. Wilson, 2019. Challenger, 2021. Chang, 2020. LeDoux, 2019. Lepore, 2020. Nurse, 2021. Newson & Richerson, 2021), but the neoliberal "North Americanist" way of seeing things is most predominant in university, which, moreover, has perverted the notion of merit, contested extensively nowadays (Sandel, 2020). Just as Chinese meritocracy, even after a thousand years of operation, collapsed because it had become a belligerent and corrupt battlefield, sickeningly elitist (Acemoglu & Robinson, 2019), so too has meritocracy in its Western variants become decayed by perverted elitism[1], consequence that greatly bothers a number of people in university, under the label of obsessive and tendentially empty "productivism", pushed further on by CNPq and CAPES, adrift, however, from the frankly competitive and overbearing North American context. We have long known that our scientific production is high in numbers and low in quality, since our evaluation system has gone astray, making it so that evaluating the evaluator is now more than urgent. While that is not done – they are by nature untouchable and "exclusive" – publications are made on a wholesale basis, and relevant science, something sparse, cannot come from "wholesale production". Peer review, perhaps the most dignified and republican, is a maneuver, a gimmick, with infiltrated owners in every corner considered relevant who decide

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1   The effect most aggressive is the richest's plea, that which advocates for their fortune as being meritocratic, for it was also obtained in "natural selection", therefore, they say, it is not fair their taxes are higher, or their state regulations more rigid; opposite to that, they should be revered as the most evolved humans, the best (Piketty, 2020; 2022).

the (supposedly) worthy. I would say that to be considered a 1A in research, it should be indispensable to have written one or a few books with proven and long impact in academia, not just forged articles for compulsory publication. The importance of great teacher-researchers lies in educating generations, reconstructing theories and practices recognized as relevant in various fields of academic activity, not in (***ad hoc***) piling up texts, just so they appear in Lattes. Pilling up texts might be relevant somewhere else, such as in a blog – I have one where I do as much (www.pedrode-mo.blogspot.com.br) – but that must be a free option directed to keeping discussions on the spotlight (looked down on by the academy, which walks backwards). Research groups, at first an indispensable idea, soon become what Sunstein calls an "echo chamber": only what the group defines as relevant is heard, to the point that reviewers coming from these sects disapprove of papers that do not cite them (Sunstein, 2005; 2009; 2019; 2019a). Divergence, crucial for science's self-renewal, is stifled (Firestein, 2012. Harari, 2015).

My purpose in claiming this is to argue that our university needs its own culture, to just act as a parody of American university isn't smart. I admire the American "productivity", the "biggest", especially the "best" in the world, even if blatantly positivist and neoliberal, but that model does not fit here. While it is always fundamental to learn from other universities, especially those considered to be at the forefront in the global context, Santos' caution about the "end of the cognitive empire" is pertinent. Personally, I would not use such language to describe it, due to it implying a stirred third-worldly messianism, but it does state a crucial point if we are to reimagine university. We need to reimagine it in a way that matches our scope qualitatively and quantitatively, where we can be its fundamental and founding authors, not spokespeople or ventriloquists. Above all, we need to take into account how our institutions function, in general very distinct from other cultures. For example, just as entrepreneurs do not accept state regulation, all imposing "self-regulation" (which is none), we also do not want external evaluation, rather preferring self-evaluation (which is also none). An entity such as the SBPC, with which we share memorable history, needs to be evaluated, because it holds no relevance for academia today, except for those who cling to it. We have been calling our Constitution citizen-built just because Article 5 parades dozens of rights, most of them without any functional or financial basis, such as the rights of children and teens (Art. 227). The Consti-

tution is full of privileges, it was written by privileged people after all, especially by members of the parliament who soon sanctified parliamentary immunity as impunity (Art. 53): they can speak whatever they want, with total impunity (Demo, 2019). I consider that public universities need to constitute their Rectors in a democratic and meritocratic process, also as a good example for society. Since universities are meritocratic entities, elections cannot be only "political", as is one for mayor. However, in practice, elections for Rector at universities have brought about the same noise, shouting, aggression, maneuvering as any party election, even though, also in practice, every Rector manages a bankrupt amalgamation. The reference, in the lack of merciful speeches, is power, not science nor care for the students. In the United States such maneuvers work as well, but are usually more restrained or clever. Treating all votes (that of teachers, employees, students) as equal is not congruent with meritocracy, just as it is not appropriate to defend that "any teacher" can be Rector, because that would be meritocratic. What is really hard to believe in is that "full professors" (the only ones who could be Rectors!) are "the best". The same stands for "emeritus", a very well-spread honor, but easily inflated, as processes of evaluation are even less meritocratic than solidary. To a large extent, believing in meritocracy is just part of our naivety or naughtiness, even in university. We should believe way more in maneuvers elegantly cloaked by using "objective" procedures of "impartial" evaluation! Would it therefore follow that there is no way to evaluate? No, not necessarily. But evaluation, especially considering the all the more dubious pretensions of impartiality, is an act politically tainted, in itself not as a defect (as it is intrinsic to human intersubjectivity), but which might be one when it slithers in territory of intra-wall collusion. The distinction will never be clear (Bourdieu, 2007), much less pacified. However initial expectations are of university's intrinsically-political aspect, of evaluations, merit, outputs, science itself, not of an "immaculate conception", which can only be an act of faith.

A more critical outlook, especially if self-critical, does not initially swallow "selective processes" as they are, because, by being selective, there must be some excluded, almost always many, in favor of a few selected ones. Since there is no objective nor neutral evaluator, there is a possibility of existing ones less biased, who accept to be evaluated, because they know their "authority" to evaluate can only come from being evaluated, and not from manipulation. It is hard to believe in saints,

but one of them perhaps is the evaluator that humbly accepts to be evaluated, who considers common good an acceptable rule, even if always at the risk of missteps. There is also the use of "external evaluations", an outside look which could be less biased, useful to make any institution rethink or even reinvent itself. Just between us, this practice is perverted in TCU (Court of auditors of the union), considered as external meddling, when it runs absurd risks of cronyism, at the origin of the constitution of the Ministers or the judging court itself, totally unnecessary (the institution and its civil servants are what is really necessary). It would be, however, very pertinent for Congress to accept an external evaluation from a very external entity - let us say from a top American university's law department - meaning to scrutinize the workings of Congress without any restrictions. That would never be accepted, because Congress knows it would not get out of it alive. As the House of Representatives is the country's biggest source of public corruption, its extinction would probably be proposed, leaving only the Senate, for the simple reason that there are far fewer pilferers. Abolishing privileges would be proposed because, in short, representatives of the people must be close to the people, particularly in terms of living conditions. University would also have a lot to gain, if it had the courage to external evaluation of this caliber. Just between us, institutions have an easier time self-decaying in a fast pace, forcing us to rebuild them. CNPq and CAPES would do well in recognizing their obsolescence, closing down, and starting over once more. In other words, they may be very important entities, but for sure are not "eternal" churches.

In the academy lies a petrified issue of departmental disciplinarity. Today, however, we recognize that disciplinary knowledge also has its place, because knowledge needs verticalization, especially in the linear, sequential, algorithmic dimension of reality. Space engineering - for example, going to the moon and back in relative safety - is not feasible by making use of philosophy, poetry, common sense, or ancient wisdom, for that to work what is needed is mathematics and very specialized formalisms. But life demands knowledge of its complexity because it is a phenomenon beyond physics (Kauffman, 2019. Morin, 2021), or because the observer, as quantum physics points out, is part of the observed reality (Kastrup, 2021. Hoffman, 2019), which has foreseen, in critique of positivism, so-called qualitative methodologies (Demo, 2021c). University, however, insists on resisting interdisciplinarity, because creating compartments in departments has become a dogma,

especially by creating proprietary fiefdoms, preventing intercommunication between researchers. We also know now that isolated researchers are not exactly interdisciplinary, that is only when in teams. The purpose of a team is precisely this: mixing specialists, which demands a twofold requirement - i) specialists are expected to be deeply responsible for their area, that is, they must be what we call them (specialists); ii) they are expected to know how to live with and, above all, learn from each other, because what counts is the collective result, not the individualistic one. Some very interesting experiments are already in the making, one of them being the UnB's CEAM (Center for Advanced Multidisciplinary Studies), but it would be in our best interest to keep moving forward by, for example, accepting a three-handed doctoral thesis, as long as it is produced by three very different specialists (let us say, one that comes from law school, another from biology-related areas, and the last from pedagogy). I am certain that such an idea will soon be scoffed at in our university because the temptation of creating a ploy is going to creep in, but even so, allowing for interdisciplinary research is important, for it can be much more realistic when it comes to facing life's challenges. It has already become common for scientific papers to be signed by groups, indicating a collective effort. Certainly, major problems, especially regarding society and life itself, require all our minds together, intertwined, mixed. Although not non-existent, nature itself avoids specialization, showing preference for biodiversity and organs with multiple functions.

Students who get to university should be able to build their own proposals of education and research, already taken as a given that they do not come to simply attend classes, except instrumentally and eventually, but rather to express, under faculty guidance, their authorship which, even if disciplinary, is surrounded by interdisciplinary care on all sides, majorly in team productions. Alongside someone who wants to be a classic civil engineer, another student may want to mix engineering and art, or architecture; one might want to be a sociologist of life, mixing biology in-between; another one would like to study peripheral urbanism, combining social work with mathematics/engineering. University can also interpose challenges to be overcome every year or two years, to avoid the "professional" student, but the professional profile should be an authorial construction, not a departmental alignment. Students could study wherever and whenever they want, also or preferably at university, but not in the classroom, which should be extinct, but in environments con-

ducive to individual and collective study, widely equipped with digital access of the best quality. Classes, as in the groups of people, do not need to exist, because each student follows their own rhythm: they may compress course time, if capable of meeting requirements; they may also take longer, matching their needs. I would like to defend that this kind of access should be public and free, because education is a constituent right of opportunities in society. I prefer the notion of "egalitarian society," not equal, because humans are equal and different (Demo, 2022b). Hierarchies are endemic in society - at least we do not know societies completely equal, including even our ape ancestors (Boehm, 1999; 2012) - but we can "civilize" ourselves (Elias, 2000. Pinker, 2011), turning possible evolutionary virulence of the overbearing into ethics of the common good.

A teacher's role is not that of transmitting curricular content, now widely available on the market, especially digitally - everything can be copied, starting with lectures - but of making sure the student is fully formed, with formal and political quality, rooted on scientific research. It is an irresponsible lack of seriousness that undergraduates do not become authors, scientists, researchers by the end of the course, all kept as part of a captive and passive audience (Dehaene, 2020), vilified by raw training of bodies and minds akin to those done with animals. Above all, basic teachers need to be authors, researchers-scientists, as means to the end of formal instrumentation for their political quality, in view of the egalitarian society we intend to promote. In practice, universities, like basic schools, do not "form" people, they just give a largely falsified diploma, because they fear those who know how to think (Foucault, 2000). In the lands of *forbidden knowledge*, which has always haunted humans and returns today through negationism of science (Rescher, 1987. Shattuck, 1996), emerges the rawness of science politicalness: an argument coming from an authority is not valid in itself; but in practice, it is. Just take a look at theses' defenses: the formal side counts, as it should; but approval comes from a sovereign jury (Demo, 2021). This is not something to hide; it is something to be dealt with in an open manner.

Conclusion

I acknowledge that a discussion such as this one has very limited value because it is, at its roots, "opinion-driven". I just wanted to do something about it, without holding myself back due to diatribes or small nuisances. I am from the university and cherish it as my *alma mater*, **I contest to defend**, believing that the most convenient and hopefully most lucid defense is self-critical criticism, not the arrogant, self-absorbed, self-defensiveness. It is suicide to maintain an institution dedicated to change that stubbornly refuses to change itself. Today university is a brain-grinding machine, carefully mediocre, as was Fordist so-called "factory", blatantly stereotyped by Chaplin in "Modern Times". A class copied to be copied only grinds the brains; it is of complete uselessness but also a masterful product. What is left of the class is the teacher's prepotency, of the prophet who puts God to be his spokesman. Religious hierarchy has always done this, professionally, with exceptions, of course. University has, among other pretensions, the presumptuousness of having overcome religion. But it has become just another religion. It gazes at its own navel and enjoys doing so, but not so much when it comes to society, students, the challenges of the future.

Criticism is not tolerated either, because it fantasizes to be the owner of criticism. Criticism owned by something only criticizes its opponents, just like the truth which always has an owner: others can only be wrong, they are all heretic. Yet university, a culture invented by humans, persists, is highly important and all over the world, being capable of awakening the greatest excitements, or scandals (Chevassus-au-Louis & Elliot, 2019). In most people's imagination resides a thought: being the first in your family generation with a diploma. It carries the taint of internal elitism because it cannot arrange an even barely democratic and republican meritocracy, giving in to selective supremacy. Let us say that this might even be inevitable - there is no way to get everyone to the top! - but we should fix this fragrance-less flagrance in a much more dignified way, making it so every single one, also to those who would not pass any barrier (exam), has the chance to emerge from marginalization. Getting mostly unprepared people in public universities is simply destiny, their republican *raison d'être*. The elite can take care of themselves, or at least should. Would we be leveling down then? Why, this is our level!

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