

# Transformations of figures of the self and the other in biographical mediation

Transformações das figuras de si e do outro na mediação biográfica

Transformaciones de las figuras del yo y del otro en la mediación biográfica

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## Highlights

For a theory of training: narrative reflection and transformations of the representations of the self.

Training of trainers: writings of the self in reflection groups of biographical mediation.

Follow-up stages of writings of the self as a reflexive and emancipatory practice.

## Abstract

The memorial, as a research-training device, comprises two levels of narrative reflection that take place when narrating the lived experience and when reinterpreting the narrated experience. The article focuses on passages from one level to the other, articulating the triple mimesis, conceived by Ricœur (1994), and the three dimensions of biographical mediation. The figures of the mediator and the narrator, proposed by Josso (2006, 2010a), symbolize here the changes in the representation of the self-brought about by writing, both for the person who narrates and for those who accompany them. The interest of the article is to contribute to the understanding of the accompaniment of biographical processes in the training of teachers and trainers.

[Resumo](#) | [Resumen](#)

## Keywords

Experience. Counseling. Training of trainers.

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## **| By way of introduction: from lived experience to narrated experience**

As Marie-Christine Josso (2010a) stated, life history theory highlighted the concept of life experience as foundational in the formative process, underlying its importance for reflecting on teacher and trainer education. Josso used to differentiate between lived experience and formative experience. An experience lived in the heat of emotion is clearly not that experience narrated, recalled and re-elaborated by the oral or written word. This passage is what transforms a lived experience into a formative experience. Studies and research conducted within (auto)biographical approaches<sup>1</sup> on the narratives of lived experiences, as formation-research (Dominicé, 2000) or action-formation-research (Pineau, 2005) devices, usually establish the difference between two logical levels of narrative reflection. The first level—which I will call informal—is characterized by a more immediate, spontaneous, and random narration of an experience. The second level—which I will call elaborate—differs from the first by employing a more reflective and critical reinterpretation of previously narrated events, to give a more in-depth and nuanced meaning to the experience relived and reexamined.

In fact, the field opened by educational biography helped to cement the epistemological, theoretical and conceptual importance of life experiences in education as foundational for the professional and existential formation practices of adults, aimed at self-knowledge, taking a stand on life and liberation from oppressive processes. This ethical stance was in fact inaugurated by Paulo Freire in Latin America as a culturally and politically rooted epistemology, one could say. For Freire (1987, p. 78), “to exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it.” And thus recognizing the value of reflections brought up by adults, youth and children, believing in their capacity to name and change the world, requires from those who teach, who research, who elaborate and implement educational guidelines an ethical disposition, a faith in humankind. Gaston Pineau (1980/2013), as Pierre Dominicé (2000, p. 69-70) recalls, firmly states that, aside from consciousness-raising approaches inspired by Paulo Freire, no other biographical method had previously been formalized as a research instrument in Education sciences. Freire’s pioneering spirit in the 1960s consisted of investigating the ways in which peasant men and women conceived their place in the world to, *with* them, propose ways to become involved in the struggle for autonomy and liberation.

In this perspective, we can assume that narrative inquiry offers those who narrate the keys to access their historicity, routes to reconstruct implicit knowledge and new ways of individual and collective learning and unlearning throughout life. What matters to narrators, says Gaston Pineau (2004, p. 210), “is not only their life’s narrative, but the construction of their historicity. Which requires reflection, analysis,

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<sup>1</sup> *Histoires de Vie en formation; Recherche Biographique en Éducation; Biographieforschung; Investigación biográfico-narrativa; Biographical research; Narrative inquiry; Pesquisa (auto)biográfica.*

synthesis, interpretation.” After all, it is through these multiple symbolization practices that emerge, according to Ernst Cassirer (1997, p. 48), “the varied threads which weave the symbolic net, the tangled web of human experience.”

From an ethical perspective, Educational biography proposes the model of dialogical co-investment as a formative practice, accomplished by horizontal collaboration between the narrator and the group of adult learners, opposing both the model of self-investment—in which it is up to the narrator alone to interpret and give meaning to their narrative—and that of investment in the life of another—carried out in a rupture with the person narrating.

In Brazil, the use of educational life histories in teacher education (initial and continuing), in expansion since the early 1990s, was inspired by the pioneering studies and research on educational life histories<sup>2</sup>, which offered the theoretical, deontological and practical apparatus of co-investment as a reflective tool. Despite the broad and consistent knowledge production about this practice in the country, few studies focus on teacher education based on guiding biographical self-reflection<sup>3</sup>.

Using the dialogical co-investment model as its theoretical framework, this article<sup>4</sup> discusses the passage from an informal narrative inquiry to a more elaborate and critical level, attempting to combine three perspectives. First, a theorization of self-writing monitoring as connecting figures, concept developed by Marie-Christine Josso (2006; 2010a). To symbolize the process in its totality, Josso suggests the figure of *Amateur* for the educator and the figures of *Artist* and *Researcher* for the adult learners. As the writing process evolves, the Amateur becomes the Elder, the Elder the Moderator and the Moderator the Ferryman. In turn, the Artist becomes the Hero, the Narrator, the Author and the Biographer. Similarly, the Researcher becomes the Interpreter. Second is Paul Ricœur’s (1994) philosophical exercises which articulate time and narrative into a threefold mimesis: Mimesis I, narrative prefiguration; Mimesis II, narrative configuration (emplotment); and Mimesis III, plot and narrative refiguration. Lastly, the third perspective brings results from empirical studies (Passeggi, 2000; 2006; 2010; 2011; 2012; 2016; 2020a; 2021a; 2021b) that demonstrate significant changes in the guiding process, allowing to identify three phases of biographical mediation: *initiatory mediation*, *maieutics* and *hermeneutics*, suggested by the metaphors of ‘struggle,’ ‘childbirth’ and ‘journey’ used by professors to characterize their memoir writing during biographical self-reflection (Passeggi, 2008; 2009).

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2 Gaston Pineau (2006), Marie-Christine Josso (2010a) and Pierre Dominicé (2006) stand out. On the history of this branch cf. Pineau and Breton (2021).

3 According to works resulting from the nine editions of the International Congress of (Auto)Biographical Research, the Brazilian Journal of (Auto)Biographical Research, as well as the work of research groups, and dissertations and theses.

4 Article linked to projects funded by CNPq (process no. 307063/2019-4) that seeks to pay a small tribute to Marie-Christine Josso for her valuable contributions to the (auto)biographical movement in Brazil and especially to teacher education.

Biographical mediation is therefore understood as processes of dialogical co-investment between adult learners through biographical self-reflection guiding practices. *To guide* is essentially to walk alongside the other, with the other and at the same pace. When offering guidance, educators do not accelerate or delay the learners' pace, allowing them to appropriate reflective practices that promote autonomy and liberation.

In institutional context, biographical mediation takes place primarily in *reflective groups*, which differ from focal or discussion groups due to a fundamental reason: it is formed by learners who share with the other participants a sense of belonging and engagement in a common project—to share and reimagine the lived experience to understand and be reborn *with the other* and *as another*. Hence, *biographical mediation* comprises instrumental aspects, through the use of different literacies (oral, written, gestural, visual...) within and outside the *reflective group*, and social aspects, which concern interrelationships with oneself and others as social and historical beings.

Adopting a procedural perspective, we collected sources by observing the guided writing and rewriting of narratives *in loco* over the course of a school year. Three researchers observed and participated in three reflective groups consisting of five teachers in training and one professor-educator. Interactions were audio-recorded and transcribed with participant consent. By reading the transcriptions, as well as the field notes on the guided writing of the *educational memorials* (Passeggi, 2010; 2019), we identified significant changes in the representations of the self, the other and of writing throughout the biographical self-reflection process.

This article consists of four sections. To situate the narrative as an eminently symbolic process, we first problematize the etymology of the term autobiography. Next, we clarify the notions of biographical mediation and reflective groups as pedagogical and research practices in teacher education. Notions that help, on the one hand, to understand the contributions of lived and narrated experience narratives for teacher education and professional insertion, and on the other, to discuss how they affect the process of *enculturation*, defined by Rivière (1999) as the intergenerational transmission of the culture of belonging and the way in which personal identity is constructed and reconstructed, taking on traits specific to the society and/or group of belonging. The following three sections discuss the three phases of biographical mediation, articulated to the threefold mimesis and the connection figures at play.

Our reflective intention is to focus on major stages of the biographical self-reflection to understand the co-investment and shared responsibility of “walking towards oneself,” as Josso (2010b) puts it. Christoph Wulf's (2007) notions of *social mimesis* and *verbal mimesis* will be used to highlight, within the process of enculturation, the interrelation between *writing life* and becoming aware of how *we become who we are*. Finally, this work turns to teacher education by focusing on understanding the guided self-writing as a action-formation-research device (Pineau, 2005; Passeggi, 2016) that promotes multiple learning and liberation for all subjects involved in the education process.

## | Self (Autos) written (Graphein) life (Bios)

Self writing and its complex issues can be discussed by dissecting the etymology of the word *autobiography* and playing with its terms. Georges Gusdorf (1991), Gaston Pineau (2006, p. 48-49) recalls, wished to invert these terms and opted for *Graphein-Autos-Bios* to emphasize the power of the written word (Graphein) in constituting the self (Autos) for understanding life (Bios). Pineau himself preferred *Bios-Autos-Graphein* to indicate that life (Bios) is chronologically and potentially in the foreground. A timely proposition for reflecting on the biographical paradigm in the Age of the Anthropocene—the Human Era, this new geological epoch characterized by the significant human impact on Earth’s life and life on Earth. A notion that allows us to interrogate processes of planetary life degradation and our role in them. Affording life (Bios) a leading position seems to be the great challenge for Gaston Pineau, as it demands more conscious human action in the world. The self (Autos), as a self-conscious existence, would come in second and writing (Graphein) in third place, as mediation or law.

In a recent study I resumed this discussion (Passeggi, 2020b), adopting Wilhelm Dilthey’s (2010) perspective when delimiting the Humanities from the Natural Sciences. For Dilthey, the former are distinguished from the latter by the close connection they establish between *course of life, lived experience* and knowledge production, that is, *science*. Hence, I prefer to maintain the traditional order of the terms, resuming the relations between them. If “to exist, humanly, is to name the world,” it is the self (Autos) who appropriates the word (Graphein) and is responsible for, through it, establishing personal, collective, political, scientific links between the self (Autos) and life (Bios). In my understanding, the act of appropriating language to narrate and understand life, oneself and others is becoming more and more a political act, allowing us to (re)create other forms of existence and coexistence of great interest to the Human Sciences, as Marie-Christine Josso puts it. Auto.Bio.Graphy, this complex term which we tackle in auto.bio.graphical reflection work, shows that combining it into a single word tends to make invisible the conceptual, epistemological and practical density of the issues involved in each term: “Who am I?” (Autos). “What is life?” (Bios). “What is writing?” (Graphein).

Drawing attention to these unanswered ontological questions, or the countless attempts to answer them, is to show how the narrative places life (Bios), the self (Autos) and the word (Graphein) into a dialectical relationship to (re)create symbolic worlds, both individual and collective, expanding, each time, to a global, planetary dimension. Understanding that subjectivities are created, transformed and inserted into the diversity of cultures and their rituals, (re)creating rites of passage, instead of these ontological questions, a more convincing approach would be to understand them in procedural terms and on the axis of temporalities: present, past and becoming. Regarding the self (Autos), we seek to know: “*How did I become who I am? What am I being? What can I become?*” About life (Bios), it is important to know: “*What have I made of life? What have I done in life? And what to do with what life has done to us?*” As for writing (Graphein), our interest lies in appropriating

it as an instrument of reflection, social expression, reinvention and self-expansion: *“Why write my life history? Who do I write it for? How do I write this history? What do I learn, invent, transmit, omit, silence when writing my life? What does this writing ultimately do to me? What is the weight of the words I utter? What does the act of narrating, of appropriating the word to talk about myself and the world consist of?”*

Faced with these multiple and embarrassing questions, it is not uncommon to find those who give up on moving forward, who point out a biographical illusion, its subjective nature and any deviations that may arise from it. My focus here is on writing situations in which experienced professors, with a long trajectory, or young teachers, beginning their careers, write and reflect on their intellectual, professional, existential paths. From the perspective of research ethics and education practices in reflective groups for biographical mediation, narrative reflection, by favoring the dialectical relationship between the self (Autos), life (Bios) and languages (Graphein), should first and foremost serve the learners and the person guiding them. Such an embodied knowledge can lead to a more human science (Passeggi, 2023).

Finally, the *(auto)biographical narrative paradigm* is characterized by its focus on life (Bios) and languages (Graphein) as mediators of one’s relationship with oneself (Autos) and with others (Alter) for the common good (Ethics) in the world of life<sup>5</sup>. Before these universal and timeless questions we quickly become aware that human practices have created and continue to create, with their multiple languages, spheres of knowledge and power, of understanding and misunderstanding to answer them: mythology, religion, philosophy, literature, the arts, science, ethics, bioethics and all the neologisms that have emerged in recent years with the term *bios* to investigate Earth’s life and life on Earth.

## **| Initiatory mediation and prefiguration: the Elder and the Artist-Hero**

Autobiographical writing in an institutional context, such as the educational memoir, is triggered—implicitly or explicitly—by an initial question: *What events have marked my professional, intellectual and existential life?* Memories, embedded in the complexity of what is lived, stubbornly hide or reappear in disarray, creating an existential and temporal conflict: *Do I really have a story? How do I sort the events that marked my life? Either everything matters or nothing is important!* The initiation phase, the first step on the journey, is marked by the fear of writing and the fear of being exposed to oneself and others: *Who am I in this story? Which experiences have been truly formative?*

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5 All branches of the international biographical movement, except for narrative research, associate life (bios) and language: *Biographieforschung, Biographical research, Histoires de Vie en formation, Recherche biographique en Éducation, Investigación biográfico-narrativa, pesquisa (auto)biográfica.*



The first metaphor used by the in-training teachers to symbolize the writing of the memoir is that of a “Struggle” to make sense of their difficulties in writing a hybrid genre, both personal and academic, which they allude to as a “seven-headed beast.” In this initiatory stage, the Amateur (guiding professor) assumes the figure of the Elder, who knows the dangers of the path, but also the benefits and possibilities of a well-traveled journey. In this first guiding moment, the writer—the Artist—tends to assume the figure of the Hero as a character in their story. The Elder will test the Researcher-Interpreter’s ability to make the Artist shed the skin of the Hero and awaken his capacity to hone their “being of conscious attention,” which Josso (2010a, p.74) defines as being present in the “time of what is lived,” in the here-and-now. Critical thinking and writing do not advance until the Hero frees the Artist so that they can recover the narrative thread and turn their life into a story.

This initial moment of writing corresponds to what Ricœur (1994, p. 88) calls Mimesis I—the phase of *prefiguration* of time, or of prefigured life. A moment of evocation of the lived experience in which events emerge in disarray. To tell their story, the Researcher and the Artist must work on temporality: past time (memory of lived experience), present time (current perception of events) and future time (horizon of expectations). It implies re-elaborating one’s story, organizing remembered experiences and expectations in narrated time, based on the present and the future. Aristotelian mimesis, resumed by Ricœur (1994), excludes the idea of copying, of the identical, and describes the representation of an action that becomes autonomous in relation to the model it recreates. This distance reflects the room for maneuver of the person who subjects the world by appropriating language and their formation. As Christoph Wulf (2007) suggests, this happens both through narrative—verbal mimesis—and through professional attitudes—social mimesis. In this regard, imitation recreates tradition.

When starting their academic narrative, the Researcher and the Artist interact with values attributed to self-writing and to pre-existing ways of being in the educational institution. Language (Graphein) constitutes this link between being and time, between being and space, between being and non-being, between being and the text being written. Hence, institutional writing patterns are apprehended through texts that affect the way in which we perceive the world and inhabit it. For Wulf (2007, p. 9), “we apprehend a social act by mimesis, in relation to other individuals whom we see acting and to whom we are linked by social context.” This raises ethical questions in the face of canonical models and institutional conventions that affect the dilemma of liberation and alienation. However, the story told is teleological and is built around the ending. As such, the professor, attentive to the outcome, bases their advisement on the way in which the Artist, in transforming himself into the Narrator, weaves together scattered events and outlines ways of being, not only as the Hero, but as an Author and critical Biographer who emerges in and through the autobiographical reflection. From then on, learners transition from the first to the second level of writing to give the narrated existence meaning, transforming lived experience into a formative one.

## **| Maieutic mediation and configuration: the Mediator, the Artist-Narrator-Author-Biographer and the Researcher-Interpreter**

As the Artist and the Researcher assume the writing of the memoir, an imaginary parallel is established between the progressing narrative and the one's self consciousness in the process of self-(trans)formation. The work on lived and narrated experiences turns to the explanation and analysis of events: *What did these events actually do to me? And for what reasons?* The successive versions of the story, shared in the reflective group, help to overcome initial fears, and resistance to speaking and writing about opinions and about oneself. This is a crucial stage in advisement, in which the guiding professor ensures that “naïve curiosity,” in the words of Paulo Freire (1997), is transformed into “epistemological curiosity” in and by the act of narrating and being formed through critical reflection.

It implies making implicit knowledge explicit, organizing it in a timeline, becoming aware of life experiences, their meanings, setbacks and lessons learned. A moment that would correspond to Mimesis II, stage of the configuration of time, of the configured experience, of constituting historical consciousness, studied by Ricœur (1994, p.101). *Configuration* is the operation through which the remembered and projected events are ordered on the narrated time to constitute a plot. The Artist's role is to make what seemed discordant and diffuse agree, to describe paradoxical attitudes so that they present a logic, even a tentative one, for the history of existence, of intellectual, professional and human formation. This phase of writing is profoundly heuristic, marked by discoveries and even true epiphanies.

Maieutic mediation is so called because of the discussions observed in the reflective group. In this phase of writing, the act of narrating is metaphorically symbolized by the in-training teachers with the image of ‘childbirth.’ The memoir ceases to be a ‘bogeyman’ and becomes a ‘child’ that requires care ‘to be born.’ “This memoir is like a child to me.” Which means and announces the very rebirth in the face of the narrative experience. The figure of the Elder, present in the initiatory mediation, becomes, in this second phase of writing, the Animator, whose mission is to help the “birth” of their own ideas that will propitiate to those who narrate being reborn as another and with the other (one's peers, students, professors...). The cognitive, affective and emotional efforts—made to understand oneself and what the lived and narrated experiences did to them—require the search for theoretical and conceptual references, as well as a critical and political positioning, that allow the questioning of prior knowledge, the renouncing and revalidation, or not, of beliefs, habits, the reviewing of attitudes and values, deconstructing them and reconstituting them, within a more lucid vision. In short, unlearn and relearn. It is in this sense that the Animator will accompany this rebirth that announces itself, sometimes in evolution, sometimes in regression. This ambivalence of opposing forces is also where one can speak of research-action-formation (Pineau, 2005; Passeggi, 2016), that is, the effort to transform lived experiences into formative experiences, and these into knowledge to pronounce the world and pronounce oneself in the world of life.



The figure of the Hero, constructed in the first stage of writing, then gives way to the Narrator-Author-Biographer who carefully weaves the story of their life and the art of existence. In the case of the memoir, what was perceived as an institutional injunction—to write about oneself and one's life experience—is re-signified by discoveries that give access to the historicity of the learning path: *Now I understand... Now I know...* Even if it is a provisional, incomplete understanding, it is good enough, as Delory-Momberger (2014) points out, for the current version of you. To write an auto.bio.graphy is to now and be able to conceive of oneself, to recognize oneself under various skins, to be reborn in other ways within narrative reflection.

For the person in formation, distancing oneself from the representation of the self as a Hero for a self re-examination is what matters. This symbolism is profoundly significant for understanding the dialectical relationship between saying and being. One possible deviation is to have the Artist not shed the skin of the Hero and become Narcissus, seduced by the echoes of his songs and cloistered in what he has already learned to be. One of the secrets of maieutic mediation consists of getting the Researcher-Artist to strip off the skin of the Hero and take on the figure of the critical Biographer-Author-Narrator who questions and reinterprets their own creations, becoming ethically responsible for them.

## **| Hermeneutic mediation and refiguration: the Ferryman and the Researcher-Interpreter**

In final stage of biographical mediation—hermeneutic mediation—the Researcher and the Artist ask themselves: *What do I do now with what these narrated and lived experiences have done to me?*, and requires taking distance from the text and from the self configured by the narrative. It corresponds to Mimesis III, a moment of refiguring time, of rereading the narrative written and reinterpreting the meanings attributed to the lived and narrated experiences. As Ricœur (1994) reminds us, hermeneutics is already critical due to the necessary distance from the text, time, the world and the self reinvented by language. According to Delory-Momberger (2005), the process of interpreting lived experiences corresponds to a practical hermeneutic that is continually updated throughout life.

Institutional self-writings, such as educational memoirs, only become a action-formation-research device as narrative inquiry questions the reference basis for describing, understanding and justifying the experience in the totality of the events narrated to give them meaning. Learners are the first and most important interpreters of their narrative, because the quality of their interpretation will determine their emancipatory process, a more autonomous professional insertion to live in their culture and become even more aware of their actions in the world.

In this third phase of writing, the recurring metaphor used by the reflective groups is that of a “journey” into oneself and a path that comes to an end. The Mediator then becomes the Ferryman, who takes on the delicate task of helping the writer to distance themselves from the story being told in order to inquire about the learnings

and lessons drawn from the lived and narrated experiences. At the end of the journey, the process of institutional education rises as a favorable moment for an in-depth understanding of lessons and learnings that will help us to act, make decisions and plan for the future.

In hermeneutic mediation, the role of the Ferryman consists of negotiating meanings about revisited and (re)conceptualized experiences. Although the Ferryman knows many paths, it is up to the traveler to choose the direction in which they want/can/desire to arrive. Educational memoirs allow the narrators to appropriate academic writing to understand their individual path within memorable trajectories, valued in and by the academy.

In turn, the Researcher becomes the Interpreter more decisively. As Wilhelm Dilthey (2010) suggests, human phenomena require comprehensive and interpretive procedures. For the author, the human world is not alien to our nature, because humans are constituted with it, in it and for it. We can understand it through awareness of our own historicity within our society. As Delory-Momberger (2005) states, based on Dilthey (2010), human sciences are based on biographical intelligibility and self-reflection to understand life from life and for life.

At this final moment of writing, the representation of the self finds its best definition in that of a reflected self (Ricoeur, 1994). A reflective being who knew and lived the hermeneutic constitution of historical consciousness. If hermeneutics is critical, the Interpreter is responsible for choosing the path of ethical responsibility towards themselves and others, so that together they can contribute to a better world. Autobiographical reflection, symbolized by the “journey,” signals that the Researcher-Interpreter can retrace the path taken as many times as they wish to better understand themselves in light of other refigurations.

Successive interpretations of lived experience are key activities for dialogical co-investment in all three phases of biographical mediation (initiatory, maieutic and hermeneutic). It pursues the meaning awakened by reflection on one’s historical condition, one’s existence, one’s place in the institutions and groups that act and constitute their myths and rituals of adherence, consecration or exclusion, to connect or detach oneself from the culture to which one belongs or wants to belong. Through writing and narrative reflection, the Researcher-Interpreter becomes capable of “understanding a rite and situating it in a ritual, this in a cult and, little by little, in the set of conventions, beliefs and institutions that form the symbolic fabric of culture,” according to Ricoeur (1994, p.92).

## **| To go further**

Lived experience becomes narrated experience by three moments of self-writing: the evocation of graduation; the reflection on beliefs and values; and the interpretation that allows us to draw “lessons from life” to be reborn. These three major phases can be synthesized thusly. In initiatory mediation, the narrator and their guide come across the *art of remembrance* – *What experiences have shaped my life?*, and a dialogue is established between the Elder and the Hero in the

search for significant facts in the course of life and graduation. In maieutic mediation, the Mediator, the Researcher-Interpreter and the Artist-Biographer-Narrator-Author meet before *the art of reflection* and emplotment to reelaborate the course of graduation in building a historical consciousness: *What have these experiences done to me?* In this reflection, they learn and unlearn, deconstruct and reconstruct inherited knowledge, instituted knowledge. In hermeneutic mediation, the learner and the guiding professor face the *art of interpretation: What do I do now with the lessons I have learned from the experiences I have lived and narrated?* In this last stage of writing, while the Ferryman withdraws from the scene, the Researcher-Interpreter reaching a journey's end. Once on the other side of the shore, they will be able to take on the role of the Elder, the Animator and the Ferryman for a new generation of in-training teachers and transformed together with their students and fellow educators.

Biographical work within Education brings together the two dimensions of *Bildung*<sup>6</sup>: the transformation of oneself, through reflected action, and the possibility of “negotiated insertion” into culture, as Fabre suggests (1994, p.136). Guiding these self writings is an extremely delicate role to play, which is why it needs to be addressed in educational research. This double dimension of *Bildung* is a prime example of the “biographical turn” in education over the last 40 years. For Alheit and Dausien (2006, p. 190), biographical learning, defined as a rereading of the notion of lifelong learning, allows us to understand that “all learning is always contextualized by a concrete biography.” According to Foucault (2006, p.58), the meaning of “learning,” resulting from the injunction to self-knowledge—“Know thyself”—invites us to observe “another form of culture, of *paideia* [...], which revolves around what could be called the culture of the self, formation of the self, the *Selbstbildung* as the Germans would say.” Biographical mediation (initiatory, maieutic, hermeneutic) in reflective groups does not reduce self writing to an evocation of trajectories, paths, lived experiences; rather, it considers the autobiographical work as a heuristic action, constitutive of historical consciousness, as a hermeneutic work, of continuous interpretation to give meaning to life (Bios) and of reinventing oneself (Autos) through diverse forms of language (Graphein).

Insofar as narratives of lived experience have become commonplace in Brazilian institutional contexts under multiple names—life histories, educational narratives, educational memorials, memoirs, reflective, formative, descriptive memorials, etc.it becomes necessary to investigate the educational background of those who guide this autobiographical reflection. The clues outlined here problematize, firstly, the educational background of the group's guiding professor and mediator. Secondly, they problematize the links between the figures of the self (narrator) and the other (educator) within biographical mediation (initiatory, maieutic, hermeneutic) to finally outline questions about the dialectical relationship between verbal mimesis and social mimesis in the institutional context.

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6 For Fabre (1994, p.134-135), “The German word *Bildung* refers to image (*Bild*), model (*Vorbild*), imitation (*Nachbild*). It is both a synthesis and an overcoming of *Form* (form), *Kultur* (culture) and *Aufklaerun* (Enlightenment).”

Finally, this contextualized process of biographical mediation is successful when the Ferryman leaves the scene and the Researcher-Interpreter and the Artist-Narrator-Author-Biographer take life into their own hands, understanding that they would write their history differently. This permanent reinterpretation of lived experience by narrative reflexivity, in which historical consciousness opens up to ever broader horizons, can be understood based on Ricœur's metaphor (1994, p.112) of an "endless spiral that would carry the meditation past the same point a number of times, but at different altitudes." As long as human beings can narrate their life, or fragments of it, at a different altitude, they shall expand themselves, suffering, acting and being reborn as an other in a permanent movement of hermeneutic openness.

Contrary to other types of academic advisement and orientation, such as Master's dissertations and PhD theses, in which the guiding advisor supposedly knows more than the learner, in biographical mediation the roles tend to be reversed, leaving more space for the author-narrator, as the one with the lived experience. This rupture in the relationship between knowledge and power and its pedagogical implications help us to conceive of teacher education as an emancipatory activity that takes place in one's relationship with oneself, with one's human and natural environment over the course of one's life, as Josso states (2006; 2010a). Such an understanding requires both the humility to accept each person's rhythm in the reflective biographical mediation group and to adopt an ethical and political stance regarding the intergenerational relationships established in academic education and professional insertion. This is one of the concerns that prompts us to take higher education as a privileged locus for promoting changes in teacher education. Such position requires reflective institutions that question their ways of educating, of thinking, of organizing activities so that they provide moments of initiation, of reflection, of reinterpretation that foster embodied knowledge and the reinvention of existence, in the permanent process of intergenerational action-formation-research within academia, in which professors research, act and train teachers continuously.

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## Resumo

O memorial de formação, enquanto dispositivo de pesquisa-ação-formação, compreende dois níveis de reflexão narrativa que se realizam ao narrar a



experiência vivida e ao reinterpretar a experiência narrada. O artigo focaliza passagens de um nível para outro, articulando a tríplice mimese, concebida por Ricœur (1994), e as três dimensões da mediação biográfica. As figuras do mediador e do narrador, propostas por Josso (2006; 2010a), simbolizam aqui as mudanças na representação de si, provocadas pela escrita, tanto para a pessoa que narra, quanto para quem a acompanha. O interesse do artigo é contribuir para a compreensão do acompanhamento dos processos de biografização na formação de professores e de formadores.

**Palavras-chave:** Narrativas da experiência. Acompanhamento. Formação de formadores.

## Resumen

El memorial de formación, como dispositivo de investigación-acción-formación, comprende dos niveles que tienen lugar al narrar la experiencia vivida y al reinterpretar la experiencia narrada. El artículo se centra en los pasajes de un nivel al otro, articulando la triple mimesis, concebida por Ricœur (1994), y las tres dimensiones de la mediación biográfica. Las figuras del mediador y del narrador, propuestas por Josso (2006; 2010a), simbolizan aquí los cambios en la representación del yo, provocados por la escritura, tanto para la persona que narra como para quienes la acompañan. El interés del artículo es contribuir a la comprensión del acompañamiento de los procesos biográficos en la formación de profesores y de formadores.

**Palabras clave:** Experiencia. Acompañamiento. Formación de formadores.

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