



REVISTA

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El lado oscuro en la educación: papel del símbolo en la formación de valores, espiritualidad e ideología

The dark side of education: its role in the formation of values, spirituality and ideology

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Resumen

Los procesos educativos tradicionales han centrado su atención en la adquisición de contenidos por parte de los estudiantes. Ámbitos formativos de carácter universal como la ideología, los valores y la espiritualidad son considerados como supuestos deseables en los sistemas educativos, no obstante, no es posible dejar de reflexionar sobre su importancia y trascendencia en la formación de los seres humanos en la actualidad, más aún, en el marco de la crisis de la racionalidad moderna y la emergencia de nuevas alternativas educativas que respondan a los complejos contextos actuales. Un espacio de incidencia de estos factores lo constituye, en el ámbito de las ciencias de la educación, el denominado 'currículum' oculto y, uno de los espacios por los cuales es posible la adquisición, formación y desarrollo de estos ámbitos educativos lo constituye el símbolo.

A partir de una reflexión en torno a estos de estos factores, de sus características generales y de su presencia en el contexto educativo ecuatoriano, se estudiará la importancia del *currículum* oculto, en general y, del símbolo como un ámbito de la racionalidad humana que evidencia un carácter universal en relación con el desarrollo de la humanidad,



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Este trabajo, a la vez que expositivo tiene un carácter hermenéutico, herramienta necesaria para la comprensión del símbolo como factor educativo, el mismo que se despliega a través del desarrollo discursivo de la propuesta.

Palabras clave

Currículum, cultura, espiritualidad, ideología, lado oscuro, símbolo, valores.

Abstract

Traditional educational processes have focused on the acquisition of contents by the students. Universal formative areas such as ideology, values and spirituality are considered as desirable assumptions in educational systems; however, it is not possible to stop reflecting on their importance and transcendence in the formation of human beings nowadays, joined to the crisis of modern rationality and the emergence of new educational alternatives that respond to the complex current contexts. An incidence space of these factors is constituted by the so-called "hidden curriculum", and one of the spaces by which it is possible to acquire, train and develop these educational fields is the symbol.

From a reflection on these factors, their general characteristics and their presence in the Ecuadorian educational context, the importance of the hidden curriculum will be studied as well as the symbol, as an area of human rationality that evidences a universal trait in relation to the development of humanity.

This research is expository and hermeneutic, being a necessary tool for the comprehension of the symbol as an educational factor, which presents in the discursive development of the proposal.

Keywords

Curriculum, culture, spirituality, ideology, dark side, symbol, values.

1. Introduction

Thinking about education from a different perspective involves eliminating some ideas that have sustained the usual pedagogical task. One of these theoretical foundations has been the regular formal education, which, thanks to the western modernity of analytical-deductive nature, is under a crisis. It is necessary to think of new referents and educational spaces that respond not exclusively to a scientist vision -biased and dichotomized- but to a more complex and integrative vision that would motivate and orient the individual to an authentic integral formation.

The formation of the affective and emotional dimensions of the human being has been subordinated to desirable pedagogical assumptions that have been omitted, forgotten, ignored in the daily education. Spaces like the axiological, the ideological and the spiritual respond to the universality of the human being: they surpass the temporality and all geographical space, and are ignored in the formal curricula. These areas need to be reconsidered in the human formation. The symbol constitutes a space of possible reflection that since it is present in all the times and cultures allow reflecting in another education possible.



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2. The dark side: its presence in the social aspect

In the face of traditional education that is focused on the transmission of content, there is another “hidden” area, not perceptible and yet present in the daily life of human lives. Dimensions such as emotions, affections, feelings, dreams, although they are a substantial part of the human nature, these have been forgotten, hidden and even ignored from the regular educational system.

The public imaginary accustomed to speak of the “dark side” brings to the memory the saga of the *Star Wars*. A series originating in George Lucas, which belonging to the field of science fiction collects elements of human nature with universal character. Thus, for example, the teachings of the millenary wisdom, the warlike conflicts between the various groups, the way of being, relating and proceeding against the adversaries to the friends and to their own conscience. Thus, the dark side becomes a “common place” in the series and invites to reflect on its transcendence and importance both in the tape and in the daily life of human nature.

The series, at various times, presents expressions of this type, as well as: “fear is the way to the dark side”, “fear leads to anger, anger leads to hatred, hatred leads to suffering. I see much fear in you”, “fear, anger, aggression, they are the dark side. If someday they govern your life, they will always dominate your destiny” “the strength of a Jedi flows from the force. But beware of the dark side: wrath, fear, aggression; they are from the force of the dark side. They join easily in combat. If you once take the path of the dark side, it will forever dominate your destiny. It will consume you, just as it did with Obi-Wan's Apprentice” and “fear of loss is a path to the dark side”. These, among others, are some of the moments when “dark side” appears. Terms such as “strength”, “fear”, “domain”, “care”, and “aggression” are characteristics of this dimension, which exemplified in the series of the seventh art, make evident aspects of human nature of universal characteristics.

But, what is it and what does this “dark side” relate to? This was an aspect of the force. People who used it got their power from emotions called negatives, such as anger, suffering, hatred and violence. This was also aligned with the search for supreme power: the desire to increase their capacities and their dominance over the environment. In the film *Sith* they shared this dark side and, therefore, fought the heroes, i.e., the Jedi order. For the *Sith* philosophy, this (the force) does not deny free will, but –on the contrary– encourages it by empowering those who used it, although, paradoxically, these are increasingly paranoid and are slaves of their passions.

On the contrary, from the perspective of the Jedi order, the force propelled them to the “luminous” side and directed them towards positive aspects such as heroism, bravery, selflessness and solidarity. From this vision, it was the cohesive and benevolent element for the galaxy, whose closeness made of them “mere tools in the hands of the force”.

In the understanding of the producers of the film, the dark side of the force feeds on the emotions of those who use it, therefore these can be positive or negative. The positive (euphoria, passion, joy) and the negative (frustration, anger, fear, and sadism) are part of human nature, and they emerge daily in the life of human beings and, in a particular or more characteristic way, in the “limit situations” (death, loneliness, moments of triumph, etc.). The human profile of those who have leaned on the dark side evidences traits of cynicism and pathologies tending to aggression.



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In the case of the *Sith*, their nature is aimed at the desire for personal improvement as “positive” emotion, and anger and frustration as “negative” emotions. They consider that their contact to the “dark side” is much more complete than that of their enemies, as they recognize the natural and inevitable role of emotions as a catalyst for the powers of the force, while the Jedi try to place themselves apart from them, progressing in a much slower and unsatisfactory way. But like the Jedi, they explicitly discourage love and positive emotions: they consider them conducive to mercy, self-sacrifice, and the cessation of ambitions, things that are contrary to their way of being (<http://es.starwars.wikia.com>, s.f., p. 2).

From these reflections, it is intended to analyze on some forgotten and subordinated aspects of formal education, aspects called “hidden curriculum”. Among the most significant elements are the formation of values, spirituality and ideology. These three elements, each one from its own sphere (ethical-axiological, religious-spiritual and political-social) have been a constituent part of human nature since its origins, but due to the rational formation of analytical empirical character that has characterized education in the West, these have been forgotten or relegated. Their learning has been proposed in a superficial, theoretical and have been proposed as an “extracurricular” or elective activity in the training of students.

3. The values in the school formation

The discipline that studies the values as part of the philosophy is the axiology, and its presence in the philosophical reflection is rather recent: it dates from the middle of the nineteenth century. One of the most recognized authors in the study of values, Risieri Frondizi (2010), said

Values do not exist for themselves, at least in this world: they need a depository to rest. Therefore, they appear as mere qualities of these depositories: beauty of a painting, elegance of a dress, utility of a tool (p. 16).

After an analysis of these examples, it is important to mention the role that the value has on the object: while it is different from it, it characterizes it. According to Frondizi (2010), “the values belong to the objects that Husserl calls 'non-independent', i.e., that they are not substantial. This property... is a fundamental note of values” (p. 17). By not having this independence, its formation is not generated by the will; the human being does not consciously motivate its formation. So it is not possible to say “today I will work and develop this value” or “I want to have this or that amount of this other value”. In the formation process of the moral conscience, it is the reason that chooses, freely, what to select. The chosen object will become valuable to the subject. Frondizi calls values as “parasitic”, because their existence depends on their proximity or bond with real objects.

Traditionally, the philosophical reflection of the values¹ has studied the values and their relation with the real objects. The first “are”, as they have to be and, in a different way, the values “worth” and, they do it according to the relation that they keep with the objects of which they depend or that they relate to. For Frondizi (2010), “the value of an object will be

¹ Axiology is a philosophical discipline that studies the values.



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given by a hierarchy, importance or sense that a human group, according to its needs and characteristics, has granted to a certain object” (p. 45). For example, a person is valuable, a society is hardworking, a friend is faithful, etc.

Values can be ordered hierarchically, higher values can be proposed and, according to Max Scheler's proposal, this would depend on two fundamental criteria: its polarity and its hierarchy².

For Frondizi, (2010) hierarchical ordering of values should not be confused with their classification. The first would comply with criteria of social valuation and its relation with the object; the classification would depend on the convention of a certain human group. Generally, humans prefer higher values than inferior values, varying their choice according to the needs and requirements. The acceptance of a certain value will vary according to the conditions and characteristics of the individual or the community.

4. The values in the curriculum

By characterizing the values because they are not independent and, because they show a parasitic behavior (these do not present without a real object); their presence in the training processes exposed in the different curricula is not subject to verification or testing.

For example, in the curricular reform of Elementary School (cfr. Ministry of Education and Culture, consensual proposal of the curricular reform for basic education, 1996) in Ecuador, the formation in values and the interculturality (among others) were considered “transversal axes” of the curriculum, and by not being mandatory almost no educational project showed the work in this educative dimension.

Another example is observed in the reform of the unified General Baccalaureate, in which the study of the values was limited to a unit (ethics and aesthetics) of the subject “development of the philosophical thought”. At present, it is also not incorporated in the substitute subject (philosophy). Therefore, the formation in values is in the “assumptions” that the school institution transmits and offers to the students.

Additionally, while the educational proposals that promote a “competency-based curriculum” emphasize the development of knowledge and skills, “training in values”, as it is not verifiable in a given period and being contingent on a subject real, is among the desirable assumptions in education taught by the school institution. The path presented in

² For Scheler, polarity establishes criteria from the positive to the negative, and hierarchy causes a value scale, which if it is ordered from lower to higher would be:

1. Taste values: sweet - bitter.
2. Essential values: health - sick
3. Spiritual values, which are divided in:
 - Stetical: beautiful - ugly
 - Law: Fair - unfair..
 - Intellectual: true - false.
4. Religious values: saint - sinner.



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the hegemonic education systems does not take into account the values in the formative process nor guarantee their fulfillment.

5. Ideology in the school formation

Gallegos (s.f.) supports in Laclau when trying to provide a definition of ideology:

Ideology is not only a system of ideas, without order or logic, on the contrary, is what provides an identity to the individual as a subject, but it is also a sort of behavior. Individuals do not form identities, there are no isolated individuals, it is a social subject that confers that identity to the extent that the questioning of a certain ideology is appropriate by this individual (p. 1).

There is no reason think of a human being without ideology. This is a dimension that constitutes and characterizes the human being and defines it as a social being. Like the values, their training is not done automatically or alien to a particular community or human conglomerate; on the contrary, it is evidenced and developed in an individual when it participates in a certain social group.

Gallegos (s.f.), after analyzing the contributions of Laclau and Althusser, and when discussing the ideology states that “its function is the formation of the individual through the questioning” (p. 1). Another important aspect of their approach is that there is no ideology as an abstraction, but there are ideologies instead.

From the perspective of this author, there are different types of ideologies, for example, political, religious, class, family, discriminatory, gender, which can present variants such as, for example, in the case of political ideology, which can be right, left, center; a religious ideology can be evidenced as catholic, muslim, jewish.

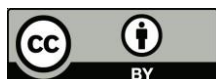
Certain ideologies will allow the human being to relate or assert in a group. This affirmation and relationship will build identity, both individual and collective.

Gallegos (s.f.) states that identity is not manifested in the ideological, but is created at this level, therefore,

If we assume that identity is manifested in the ideological aspect, we would be assuming that the objective defines our ideas, that the material conditions of existence determine us, and that is only half of the truth, falling an exclusively empiricist position (p. 2).

The identity proposed by a certain ideology emerges, for example, in the diversity of genres, ethnicities, religious practices or political tendencies in different social levels or human groups. In addition, there may be change of ideology without affecting the membership of one or the other group: there may be poor catholics or African-American groups practicing the Islam. Their identity will make them distinctive, but in no way identify them in an absolute and unchanging way.

Although the ideology and the material conditions show the identity of a human group, it will be the latter two that determine it more specifically. For Gallegos (s.f.), “There are many elements in the shaping of that identity, since the material conditions and ideologies are



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also multiple” (p. 3). The author calls culture the union of these elements. And he defines culture as “a series of identities determined by ideologies, which in turn provide an interpretation and vision of the world, as well as objects, uses and customs, becoming symbols everything that is practiced by a human conglomerate” (Gallegos, s.f., p. 4). One of the elements that will make up culture as an essentially human manifestation is ideology.

The elaboration, manifestation and consolidation of the symbols is also a way for the construction of the ideology. Their acceptance and recognition require a collective space, by fostering the identity of a group. They are representative of the cases, for example, of the symbols used by different religious ideological groups, as well as those used by Nazism, Soviet Socialism and Francoism, among others.

6. Ideology and education: the Ecuadorian case

A topic widely analyzed in Ecuador is liberalism – conservatism, especially during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with its representatives: the former Presidents Gabriel García Moreno and Eloy Alfaro Delgado, respectively. They are also distinctive intellectuals such as Juan León Mera and Juan Montalvo, as well as a long line of actors who contributed to this struggle. Among the scholars can be mentioned Osvaldo Hurtado (1997), who in his work *The political power in Ecuador* makes a detailed analysis of this phenomenon.

The two political currents influenced the Ecuadorian education profoundly. The first trend, conservatism, promoted the development of education, but particularly, of confessional. European religious orders and congregations originated in Ecuador due to the Catholic Church, which by having the advances achieved in education, had a remarkable boost to education.

Education driven by liberalism in Ecuador brought with it modernizing contributions, such as those proposed by the European “new School”, especially with the contributions of French pedagogues, who promoted public education and the renewal of education. It led to secular education through the creation of educational centers and pedagogical institutes (e.g. Colegios Mejía, Manuela Cañizares, Juan Montalvo Pedagogical Institute).

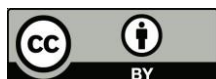
The two currents influenced the educational work of the country, favoring its development. However, it is necessary to recognize that their intentionality was due to political interests of the governments in turn and not to the educational demands of the environment; therefore, although its presence is valued and recognized, its influence nowadays is partial.

The ideological formation of a student, although it may be related to the family, school and even the recreational aspect of the student, is not due to a formal or voluntarily curricular proposal. It is assumed as a dimension of what is called hidden curriculum

7. Spirituality in the school formation

Although this has been one of the dimensions of more universality in the history of mankind –like Christian, Buddhist, Islamic (Sufi), Shinto, Ancestral spirituality, etc. – western modernity has reduced this area to religious centers and communities that practice it related to these forms of spirituality.

Piedmont (2012) defines spirituality as “an innate motivation that orients and guides human behavior in the effort to build a broader sense of personal meaning in a scatological



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context” (quoted by Sandrín, 2017, p. 345). The traits of innatism, sense construction, personal meaning and scatological context are elements that invite to reflection and particular analysis.

The innate character that characterizes the spirituality is accompanied by the universal. In the journey of human history, individuals and communities have sought ways to meet with transcendent realities in the search for meaning.

Spirituality has an area that shows the permanence of traditional religions and the flourishing of new manifestation forms, and the presence of “the sacred” that seek to offer alternatives of meaning to the human existence.

Finally, one of the characteristics of spirituality is the scatological context, the search for temporal space transcendence, the confidence in a promise and the expectation of its fulfillment are part of this way of manifesting and remaining in the nature of the human being of this dimension.

Among the spaces in which spirituality has manifested more clearly are religion and art (cfr. Mélich, 1996), having universal and transversal nature in the history of humanity and in the different civilizations. Although religion has traditionally been thought as a unique pathway to spirituality, it is necessary to recognize other paths and spaces in which this reality is manifested; therefore, Sandrín states “while spirituality represents a universal construct, religiosity can be understood as a set of systems, beliefs, practices and values explicitly patterned and immersed in certain social traditions or institutional frameworks” (Miller & Thoresen, quoted by Sandrin, 2017, p. 345). Thus, while there are now many forms of religion and various religious manifestations, the spiritual quest, and the yearning that this reality provokes in the human being is a common factor in all of humanity. The various civilizations and cultures have expressed this dimension in a particular and specific way, taking into account that it has been a reality present in humanity and in the most diverse moments of history.

The universality of human spiritual manifestations has also caused abuses, misinterpretations and deviations. Castillo (2003) warns of this reality when stating:

Speaking of "spirituality" produces different reactions. There are people who consider that spirituality is the noblest and most important thing that the human being can and must face in life. On the contrary, for others, spirituality is not interesting and it is even suspicious and unacceptable. Raising the issue of spirituality is to present debatable topics, because in dealing with spirituality, enthusiasts and opponents are found. The enthusiasts are the ones who see in the spirituality the remedy of all evils. Opponents are the ones who do not even stand what that word suggests. Because there are those who think that spirituality is the same as evasion of the world and history, renunciation and mortification of all that we like, resigned acceptance of the sorrows and miseries that carries with it the fact of living "in this valley of tears", and all that with a good dose of "spirituality" (p. 4).



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This risk of “spiritualism” that this author mentions is even more evident in this context, in which a return to a spiritual search by different human groups is observed in different religious fundamentalism in certain groups of individuals as in the search of experiences through oriental practices, such as feng shui, reiki, zen Meditation, among others.

8. Spirituality and education: some reflections about the Ecuadorian case

In general, the experience of this reality has been present in the educational institutions, according to the agreement of the *Modus Vivendi* between the Ecuadorian state and the Catholic Church, to Religious orders and congregations characterized by diverse spirituality. Thus, the Catholic Church has had hegemony in confessional education in Ecuador and the presence of orders such as the Franciscans, Dominicans, Jesuits, Mercedarians and congregations such as the Salesians, Lasallians, and the order of Sacred Heart, etc., have led to an educational practice characterized by its particular spirituality.

But, contrary to the fact that the experience of spirituality with religion has been identified, secular education promoted by the State has ignored the presence of this reality in the integral formation of children and young people. In the case of the formative practice of some non-confessional institutions, there are some experiences, such as participation in sacraments or religious liturgies, zen meditation practices, among others. Obviously, the presence in the curriculum is null, limiting the study of religion and art as part of the story.

9. Hidden curriculum

The presence of fields such as values, ideology and spirituality escape the obvious curriculum, and are part of what has been called “hidden curriculum” from different pedagogical perspectives.

For Acevedo (2010):

It can be defined as the set of norms, customs, beliefs, languages and symbols that are manifested in the structure and functioning of an institution. ... It is everything that can be seen and heard, but is transmitted and received unconsciously, at least without a recognized intentionality. It is what Stenhouse calls what is not publicly recognized, what can be found in contradiction or that reinforces the intentions of the official curriculum. The hidden curriculum is not consciously developed, either in matters of gender or in any other aspects, but it develops and, therefore, it must be taken into account... it exists so strongly that it many times it exceeds the explicit curriculum (p. 1).

This set of norms, customs, beliefs, languages and symbols that manifest in the structure and functioning of an institution are carried out in the daily practice of the school, without reflecting intentionality, determining a form of being that is characteristic of the institution. The entire educational system, in one way or another, is affected by the hidden curriculum, not just a part of it. The early years of childhood, the school education process and even higher education reflect this curriculum in their daily practice. The different factors manifested in the daily educational task find their objectivity in the community recognition of languages, symbols and norms that, while promoting socialization, foster the formation of identity and particular ideology, the experience of values and a characteristic spirituality.



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The value and scope of this curriculum, expressed in the aforementioned factors, will determine, continuously and renewed each time – without losing the essence – the identity of the institution, its particular way of being, which is not achieved the explicit curriculum, unless very rare cases.

Unlike the official curriculum, formal or explicit, hidden curriculum does not originate in the norms in force in the educative system; it is the result of certain institutional practices that, without being regulated, can become more effective in acquiring knowledge, behaviors, attitudes and values. In this way, through the social links and the scenarios to which it is related, it can promote and motivate better learning moments.

The daily bond between teachers and students constitutes an effective means of ideological transmission, in which a party assumes the power that confers its status, while the other is placed in a situation of submission. In this educational relationship, a series of rituals that characterize the pedagogical task (punctuality, active participation, disposition, etc.) appear and can constitute the hidden curriculum, through which the teacher reaffirms his/her power and control on the process, while the student can be limited to a development in the learning process, characterized by the ease and the least effort. According to Murillo, “the degree of equilibrium that can be established in these relationships will depend on the ability of the student to learn the hidden curriculum, from which the expectations associated with their role are transmitted and that may contradict the objectives of the explicit curriculum” (2012, p. 3). This would be a more real, integral and participatory role for the professor, transcending instructional spaces.

It will be the mastery of the teacher and the educational institution that determine the balance between the different latent factors in the hidden curriculum, in such a way that this harmony promotes the desired human development and the integral formation. Thus, this would be a non-explicit path in which values, ideology and spirituality develop in a social and communitarian way, but also in an individual way.

One of the elements or harmonizing agents of this process is found in the symbol, whose study and analysis corresponds to hermeneutics.

9.1 The symbol: a space for reflection and formation of values, ideology and spirituality

A symbol (from the Latin: *simbolum*, and the Greek *σύμβολον*) is the perceptible representation of an idea, with traits associated by a socially accepted convention. It is a sign without likeness or contiguity that has a conventional link between its signifier and its denoted, in addition to an intentional class for its designate. It can be a term, a name or an image that is known in everyday life, although it possesses specific connotations in addition to its current meaning. The different social groups often have symbols that represent them; there are symbols referring to different associations such as: cultural, artistic, religious, political, commercial, sports, among others.

It is characterized by being a system of indirect knowledge in which the meaning and the signifier try to annul that division between the deep and the manifest reality (Durand, 1993, p. 18). The symbol presents an evident “face” or show up as another “hidden”, unknown; the first one obeys the conventions and requires a basic and common understanding. The second motivates a deeper understanding and reflection by those who know it.



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The symbolic thought, contrary to the scientist, does not come from the reduction of the multiple to the one, but by the explosion towards the multiplicity in order to perceive better, in a second moment, the unity of the multiple. The symbol is a language originates like all language, from a set of signs, i.e. signifiers that evoke an image and refer to something. Its significance is given by over-added levels of meaning. The different languages correspond to different ways of constructing reality, to different perceptions and rationalities, and the symbol stands out among the different forms of communication. This has an original disposition, is an ontologically outstanding expression that points to the gradations of reality that are considered paramount.

Culture, through its different expressions –many of them symbolic-, overflows meanings, which are transmitted through the educational process consciously or explicitly, but, as it has been analyzed, also in unconsciously or implied. For Giménez (2005), one of the languages used is the symbol; therefore, the educational processes can be understood as hermeneutic formation processes or of preparation for the decoding of symbols.

Scholars from the different branches of the social sciences made approaches to the understanding of the symbol. Authors such as Jung, Eliae, Levi-Strauss, Cassirer, Bouchot and Melich, among others, have approximated an integral understanding of the symbol.

Although the action of educating carries with it the two visions that its etymology proposes: the educator and the *educere*, that is, to give information, knowledge, and to provoke the awakening, to arouse the learning, the encounter with the truth, in the two expressions the human being integrates, assimilates, meets a culture, either to assimilate its identity and values, or to change it, to transform it. In these two cases, the symbol is a vehicle (lat. *Vehiculum*: means of transportation) conducive to the manifestation of this relationship. Educate, from this perspective, is the process and art of forming hermeneutics, decoders, individuals who in contact with reality seek to re-signify it, performing an interpretative reading in which will influence the multiple intentionality of linguistics. Here, the context in which it was written, the motivations of the author and also of the reader will intervene.

Alvarez Colin (2013), in his work *Analogue hermeneutics, symbol and human action* quotes Paul Ricoeur (1967) who states that in the context of a culture, “the true symbols are the main part of all hermeneutics, which is directed towards the emergence of new meanings and oriented towards archaic ghosts” (p. 119). This is perhaps the greatest advantage of the symbol: being a living “archive”, inside each culture as well as cultural, social, educational keys that allow to access, save memory, recover the identity from the original moments, in which these find the reasons and the essence of a culture.

The school responds to the culture in which it develops. It shows the symbolic elements needed to address education as a way of understanding the student's context in meaningful structures such as the institution and symbolic systems within the school environment. Joan-Carles Mélich (1996) affirms that “education, then, as a social and cultural action, is always a symbolic action” (p. 133). In other words, human existence requires meaning and the symbol is perhaps the most suitable vehicle for developing this educational-cultural task. Considering the possibility of a symbolic education as an alternative to a school that often appears to be separated from the culture of the community or society from which it participates, is an authentic possibility of opening up to multiculturalism and meeting with the other, as well as a possibility to form a different, more transcendent and integrative dimension.



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10. Conclusions

The reflection on educational innovation normally debates the same topics. The contributions, criticisms and proposed advances do not meet their objective: to transform education in the interests of development and the common good.

It is urgent for the formation of teachers to propose new spaces for the reflection on the educational work to the benefit of the transformation of the human beings and the society. A space of transformation is the symbol, which, thanks to its universal character is a transversal element that is always present in the educational processes and susceptible to provoke new and different pedagogical encounters. Teacher training must transcend the formal, rational and explicit scenario to promote a much more humane and comprehensive growth.

The ethical training required by teachers, and determined by the encounter with a different *ethos*, finds in the symbol a vehicle for transmitting the culture, spirituality, values and ideology.

In a society that claims for a horizon of meaning and which every day shows in the television and images the tragedy and the human nonsense, it is necessary to propose alternative spaces so that the areas proposed in this article are conducive to the human being of the 21st century. Perhaps by returning to the original, archaic efforts of human civilization, new forms of integral human development will be reached.

In one of the episodes of the "Star Wars" the professor Yoda says: "...my ally is the force, and a powerful ally is... life creates it, makes it grow, penetrates and surrounds us... we are luminous beings! Not this raw matter!" Yoda. STAR WARS, episode V, the Empire Counterattack). The educational system must be a space for the creation and transmission of the culture, of human fulfillment. When the news that talk about the educational and social work is more encouraging and free the human being from the fears, falsehoods, superficiality and individualism that overwhelm every day, education will make sense and will really be forming human beings for a better society. It is crucial to face that "dark side" in educational contexts; it is essential that emotions, values, ideology and spirituality are part of the integral formation of the human being, surpassing the fragmentation of the knowledge that characterizes the today's world. Access to the symbol and hermeneutics as paths of knowledge are an alternative.

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