

## For a philosophy of philosophies and subjects

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### ABSTRACT

This essay discusses the importance of integrating learners' "philosophy of life" into education, arguing that ignoring it can lead to educational failure. It proposes that philosophy of education should begin with an understanding of individual worldviews, before introducing scholarly philosophy.

**Keywords:** Philosophy of life, Inclusive education, Critical reflection.

### INTRODUCTION

This text-essay aims to lead the reader to reflect on Philosophy Education as a construction of knowledge that takes into account the "philosophy of life of each student", enabling a gnosiological relationship of complementarity and not of denial and/or exclusion, which becomes a form of inclusive education.

Specifically, it seeks to show that: a) every PERSON, when arriving at school, already carries in his baggage a "spontaneous philosophy": a vision of the world, a conception of life, which he adopts for personal use, which needs to be respected by the school and valued by the educator; b) knowing and respecting this "philosophy of life of each one", the school must make it possible and the educator needs to carry out with the students a movement of construction for a Philosophy of Education that takes the philosophy of common sense as raw material and starting point for a concrete philosophy of a certain and also concrete educational community; c) before dealing with erudite Philosophy with the students, the educator needs to have previous knowledge about the "philosophy of life", as well as about the Philosophies of Education.

### OBJECTIVE

The objective is to discuss the incoherence of the Philosophy of Education by not taking into account the philosophy of life of the student in the educational-pedagogical process

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## **METHODOLOGY**

The elaboration of this text-essay results from a sense of the author's life in dialogue with experience, first as a student throughout his school and academic life, then as a teacher since 1994, seeking understanding with author-philosophers from the reading of their works and participation in congresses and lectures.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

*Any intention of educational-pedagogical action that ignores the "philosophy of life" of its subjects will result in failure (Elias de Souza).*

## **BUT WHAT IS MEANT BY PHILOSOPHY?**

A precise definition of the term "philosophy" is unknown in the literature. Trying to formulate it seems to us, in principle, to run the risk of mistakes, since this field of knowledge differs from the sciences in general "to the extent that it seeks to offer an image of human thought – or even of reality, as far as it is admitted that this can be done – as a whole" stated Ewing (1984, p. 11). Mainly because, as this author explains:

We must admit that even philosophy has not been able to realize its great pretensions. Nor has it succeeded in producing a body of consensual knowledge comparable to that elaborated by the various sciences. This is partly due, though not entirely, to the fact that when we obtain true knowledge about a given question, we situate that question as belonging to science and not to philosophy (Ewing, 1984, p. 11).

But we can say that the term "philosopher" originally meant the "lover of wisdom", attributing its emergence to the incisive response of Pythagoras to those who called him "wise". Not rebuking those who treated him in this way, but also not exalting himself, Pythagoras only said that his wisdom consisted only in recognizing his ignorance, and should not, so to be treated as "wise", but only as a "lover of wisdom", which suggests philosophy as wisdom in recognizing our ignorance and seeking to overcome it permanently, not with true answers and unquestionable, but with deep reflections on our existence in the world, with the world and for the world.

This is what authorizes us to speak of "philosophy of life" as a way of being in, with and for each person's world, resulting not from great questions, reflections and criticisms, but from our own empirical experience in, with and for the world, which needs to be seen, understood and welcomed by reflective philosophy. criticism and systematically elaborated by learned philosophers.



## BUT WHAT IS THE "PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE" OF EACH ONE?

Scholars say that in a vulgar sense and in common language, philosophy of life is a "worldview", a conception of life, which man adopts for personal use and collective coexistence.

What is intended to be shown with "each one's philosophy of life" is that, more pessimistic or more optimistic, more serious or more bohemian, everyone carries, in their luggage, a spontaneous vision of the world and a conception of life - also spontaneous - that should not be ignored by those who intend to help the person in their educational-pedagogical path.

It is a fact that since childhood each one of us already begins to build our "philosophy of life": a conception of life and the world that will guide and interfere in our attitudes and ways of being and acting in the world. Thus, every person has a philosophy underlying their attitudes towards the world and life, and it is thanks to it that we are able to better situate ourselves in the environment in which we live and delimit our existential identity.

Thus, the "philosophy of life" of each one is constituted in the spontaneous philosophy of each person and is formed from the experiences and coexistences, having no theoretical basis or systematization. It is a philosophy that does not reach the essence of things because its understanding and its representations of reality are limited to the appearance of phenomena, and appearance represents exactly the immediate and superficial knowledge about reality.

However, if this "philosophy of life" or "spontaneous philosophy" of each one is unable to reach the ideological structures that determine domination or hegemony, it constitutes an input and starting point for understanding what and how its subjects think, making it possible to offer erudite philosophy as a vision different from their own and that can lead to improve their "philosophies of life", to review concepts and values and to reconstruct their existential identities through aggregation, and not through the denial of previous identities.

On the other hand, to deny the layman of letters and together with his philosophy of life is to deny the very meaning of Philosophy in its origin, as "love of wisdom", or to deny this subject as capable of having a relationship of love with knowledge, which is at least contradictory because it is so true that we love the wisdom that we live trying to get rid of the ignorance of knowledge, whether empirically, theologically, scientifically and/or philosophically.

## AND WHAT IS MEANT BY ERUDITE PHILOSOPHY?

It is Philosophy as a systematic mental discipline, the one that presents itself as questioning about life, man, the world, things and their meanings, assuming questioning, problematization, interrogation as determinants for the elaboration of reflective and critical knowledge, different, therefore, from the



"philosophy of life" of a more experiential and spontaneous nature, in which each person attributes meaning to the experiences of daily life.

Problematizing Philosophy is constituted by organized, erudite systems, which aim to give deeper meaning to life, to the world and to the things of the world, in a critical, reflective and systematic way, while the "philosophy of life" is unsystematic and almost always devoid of reflection, it is more an answer or understanding than a question or questioning.

#### AND WHAT DOES "PHILOSOPHY AND LIFE" HAVE TO DO WITH ERUDITE PHILOSOPHY?

Things, objects and animals are part of the environment as additional elements in the set of reality. Man, a rational being, does not behave like this. To better relate to his environment, he tries to interpret it, creates an explanation that transcends direct experience with the facts. Man perceives and feels things, associating perceptions and experiences with a meaning, a general sense, an explanation.

Perceptions and experiences – inherent to spontaneous philosophy – do not provide sufficient elements for a satisfactory interpretation of the great questions of life, and this is where reflective thinking comes in as a search (systematic, organized and contextualized) driven by great questions and the search for answers to great questions of life.

In this search, man expands the perceptions and experiences he has of the environment, through rational explanations, reducing or including a particular case in a general law or associating two similar facts to draw an identical conclusion, even if provisional, so that his "philosophy of life" dialogues and is accepted by Philosophy as logical thought, reflective, critical and questioning and from this respectful and welcoming dialogue results the PHILOSOPHY *of, with and for* MAN.

#### AND WHAT DOES THIS HAVE TO DO WITH THE PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION?

In the context of the school, the conceptions of life, world and man of its actors are underlying, which are faced with the theoretical conceptions of erudite philosophy – which correspond to the various philosophical conceptions about man, life, the world and the education of man.

Both philosophy and education are to man what the white and the yolk are to the egg: if there is no man, there will be no philosophy, no education, for the same reason that if there is no white and yolk there will be no new life.

If there is no philosophy or education, one cannot expect a new life for man, which configures the denial of his existence. If his philosophy of life is not accepted, the philosophy of the philosophers remains to be imposed on him, and then he will have an identity constituted externally and not existentially, as a result of his relationship with others and with the environment that surrounds him, but as a result of the will of others in the environment that surrounds him, which often ends up removing from



coexistence what he feels his philosophy of life denied or perhaps transforming himself into an existence outwardly determined and, therefore, bitter, anguished, revolted. It is with this vision that I intend to show the importance of each person's philosophy for the construct of the Philosophy of Education.

Thus, since Philosophy cannot ignore man, under penalty of not being able to be philosophy, it cannot ignore his "philosophy of life" either, because if it does so, it cannot be qualified as philosophy either.

Man also cannot ignore the Philosophy that transcends him, otherwise he would be denying his own philosophy of life, since transcendent Philosophy has its origin in spontaneous philosophy.

### SO, WHICH PHILOSOPHY SHOULD MAKE UP THE SCHOOL'S CURRICULUM?

When thinking about the Education *of, with* and *for* man, the school should not forget that the philosophy of the learner must be added to the Philosophy of Education. Nor should the educator take the student as a mere swallower of the Philosophy chosen by the school to compose its curriculum.

It is necessary to build a curriculum that, knowing the philosophy of the students, seeks a Philosophy of Education that best answers their great questions about life, and this philosophy is not exclusively in books, it is presented as a possibility of construction.

It is suggested that the construction of a Philosophy of Education curriculum should be guided by the following principles: general and specific.

### GENERAL PRINCIPLE – MAN AS A POINT OF DEPARTURE AND ARRIVAL

Any intention of action directed towards man must take him as a starting point, as the subject of his own development, and as a point of arrival. It starts *from* and *with* man as an unfinished being who seeks to transcend this condition. Then we walk *with* man as a subject who knows and must be master of his own transformation, in order to arrive *with* and to the new man. This principle is guided by the law of man's self-transformation in his inner relationship (with himself), with his Creator, with others, and with the world.

### SPECIFIC PRINCIPLES – EXISTENCE AS DIFFERENCE

- *Principle of uniqueness* - Each person, despite having similarities with others, harbors his own and exclusive individual characters. The analysis of this principle suggests that for beings with different characters there must be a different philosophy.
- *Axiological principle* - What do people with different characters think about universal values? What about your values? What about the values of others? What about the value of things? What is the conception of value that is in each person's understanding? Do people with different characters



conceive of values in the same way? How do you establish the hierarchy of values? This principle suggests that neither the objectivity nor the subjectivity of values are the same in all people.

- *Gnosiological principle* - The forms and the relationship with knowledge assume different importance in people's lives. There are adherents for all possibilities of knowledge: a priori, empirical, scientific, philosophical, theological, among others, as there are also those who suddenly become interested in more than one of these ways of knowing, just as there are also possibilities, potentialities and different physical and cognitive conditions depending on the conditions of life and existence of each person. This principle indicates the need to respect the ways and conditions of knowledge and the importance of knowledge in the life of each person.
- *Ethical principle* - Morality is individualized in each person which, with greater or lesser intensity, guides their acts by their values, intellectual convictions and their psychic state. Ago people who act guided by an ethical reason, and have inclinations towards the good, and there are others who ignore reason and incline to the evil.

It is essential to know in order to act in a transformative way, but without oppression, denial or condemnation, going through therapeutic, welcoming and nurturing dialogue. This requires speaking and listening, making oneself understood and understanding the other, having patience and establishing trust.

This principle makes it clear that a philosophy of welcoming, listening and understanding must be built in order to then present the philosophy of questioning, reflection, constructive criticism, support, and from this write the philosophy of the subjects transformed by the sharing of the philosophies of empirical life and reflective life, not by imposition, but by the capacity for mutual conviction and respect, so that none of the thinking poles feels ignored, denied or diminished by their way of thinking, but convinced of the need to change, to overcome their condition to continue existing with dignity in complementarity with others and with the world. As Jaspers (1965, p. 52) said, "man wants to surpass himself: not advanced by the world, but by projecting himself beyond the world".

- *Theological principle* - One of the manifestations that exist exclusively in man is religion. All cultures are profoundly marked by religion. It is therefore indispensable to consider that people, in addition to their inclinations towards moral values, knowledge, and work, are bearers of spirituality, of belief in the existence of a higher, supernatural power or principle, on which the destiny of the human being depends and to which they have respect. Respect for the religious option of the PERSON is one of the most fundamental prerequisites to be ensured in the school curriculum.



- *Socio-political-cultural-historical principle*: Man's need to live together with others and communicate with them, to make them accomplices and confidants of his aspirations and desires, to share emotions and feelings with them, to intervene and construct his own history and collective history directly interferes with his conception of the world and influences his hierarchy of values.

It is in the context of interactivity that involves the multiple socio-political-cultural-historical aspect that each person responds to the challenges presented to him by nature, interferes in the natural environment, develops human activity, strives to create and recreate his own world.

In this transformative work effort, it establishes relationships of dialogue with other people, and thus formats its cultural dimension with the systematic, critical and creative acquisition of the experience of others and at the same time contributes with its experiences to the formation of others.

In these relationships with the Creator, with nature and with other people, man captures the themes of the past and the present, suggests a new formulation for the construction of the future and writes his history and the history of his time, establishing his existence in coexistence with the world and with the divine or other higher being in which he believes, imprinting their particularities and adding external particularities, in a process in which no one ignores or is ignored for what they think, but invited to review their certainties and values and to feed freely on other sources.

A philosophy for education that marginalizes or ignores these principles, that does not allow man to become a subject, to become a unique person, to participate in the transformation of the world, to socialize his culture, to make his history, this philosophy will not have been a Philosophy for Education, but a Philosophy of Education; it was not a philosophy *of the subjects, with the subjects and for the subjects*, but a philosophy of subjects for subjects, and, therefore, it will not be able to succeed, and will not achieve the main purpose of education, which is to enable and allow man to "be a man" by humanizing and humanizing himself, by existing.

There is an urgent need for a philosophy of education based on the dialogue between the "philosophies of life" and the "philosophies of philosophers". However, as Maritain (1965, p. 7) said:

They would need a sound social philosophy and a healthy philosophy of modern history. They would then work to replace the inhuman regime that is dying before our eyes with a new regime of civilization that would be characterized by an *integral humanism*, and that would represent in their eyes a new Christianity.

In the field of education, a philosophy of dialogue between philosophies is indispensable, in which there is speaking and listening, offering and receptivity, questioning and collective construction of answers, looking with the eyes and with human reason, flame and welcome, offering and nourishment, and a permanent search for shared existence. Thus, the philosophical contents to be applied in the



educational-pedagogical field need to include both general philosophy and the philosophy of life of each person, the latter as a kind of hidden curriculum in the philosophy of education.

It is not reasonable to adopt a Philosophy of Education just because it is linked to a philosophical current that in turn is linked to a pedagogical theory. A priori, any Pedagogy will present good results if it is worked with deep integral human knowledge. To this end, it is imperative to know the "philosophy of life" of each person, the concepts of man, education and society that each one has already formed at the beginning, in order to build a Philosophy of Education peculiar to each educational community.

Therefore, it is advisable to first know the "philosophy of life" of each student and then enter into erudite Philosophy, presenting its principles, premises, implications, limitations, and showing where this Philosophy dialogues and where it distances itself from the philosophy of life, looking for the best way and time to act transformatively.

We can add erudite philosophy without denying the "philosophy of life", living with both and making it our own way of existing, our indeterminate identity.

## HOW DOES THE EDUCATIONAL-PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICE IGNORE THE "PHILOSOPHY OF LIFE"?

When we ignore what the educated think or take away his possibility of thinking and expressing what he thinks, we deny his "philosophy of life." It should not be ignored that the "philosophy of life" of each individual has reasons ranging from the possibility of structuring their ideas to trying to understand and interpret the world in which we live, or criticizing the current institutions, or even injecting a certain impetus into human action.

But, as our educational-pedagogical practice is traditionally action-oriented, we find ourselves incapable of perceiving this innumerable possibilities and we only glimpse one possibility, that of which "people" do not know how to think, and thus we make them swallow the Philosophies that we have already swallowed, even if we have not learned to digest them.

When we act in this way, we clearly demonstrate that we have not yet understood the meaning of Philosophy, that we have not yet learned to stop accepting as obvious and evident the things, ideas, facts, situations, values, and behaviors of our daily existence; We demonstrate that we only accept things and facts, question their reasons and understand their plots.

And so we vomit what we swallow without digesting. And this is already manifested on the first day of classes when, when receiving students in the classroom, in the vast majority of times, the first thing a teacher does is tell them about his thoughts about life and the world, that is, he takes care to show his vision of the world to them, his ways of conceiving things and life. So far he has not made any mistakes. He then continues his presentation, telling them how they should see life and the world, things and people;





how he expects them to behave in the face of adversity, conflicts, embarrassing situations, the great problems of life and of the world. Here occurs the first among many mistakes of a teacher: pretending that students adopt a way of seeing and thinking about the world and life that has nothing to do with what they think.

Unless we do not accept the condition of man as a "thinking Being," we cannot claim that thought is the simple possession and reproduction of things knowable retained in the intellect, as if the intellect only possessed the knowledge of the things it comes into contact with and this knowledge was what it retains from everything that comes before it, in this case the intellect is conceived as a chip that stores information. And this is exactly what we do when we simply absorb the thoughts of others. Worse than this is trying to reproduce this same mechanistic behavior in our students.

When we act in this way, we are attesting to our own inability to think for ourselves, including ourselves in the group of repeaters and reproducers of external thoughts. Roughly speaking, we are ignoring rationality, the only condition that differentiates us from other animals.

## **FINAL CONSIDERATIONS**

The "philosophy of each one" or spontaneous is not self-sufficient for transformation and liberation, but constitutes raw material for the elaboration of erudite Philosophy, and from this interrelation a Philosophy for Education built along the way must emerge.

It is necessary that the philosophy of each person is not ignored by any educational-pedagogical action, but taken as a starting point for the teaching of Philosophy as a systematic mental discipline, because one does not exist without the other, both are interinfluential and complement each other. And only starting from one to build the other is it possible to establish the movement of transformation and liberation of man by man.

Thus, an educational-pedagogical practice for the liberation of man by man must pursue the unity between the "philosophy of life of each one" and erudite philosophy, and needs to be built according to the degrees of consciousness of the actors involved: educators, students, professionals, parents, etc., and the knowledge elaborated by the idealizers of erudite philosophy, having as reference the conceptions of man, education and society, which can be unique in each educational community where each school is inserted.

Therefore, the transformative-liberating educational-pedagogical action is the one that takes into account the conceptions of the world of common sense and those of erudite or systematized Philosophy, in a movement that seeks to overcome common sense, not ignoring it, but starting from it to the construction of a collective and particular Philosophy for the education of the concrete man, in a concrete community, with concrete actors.



It is not a question of a particular Philosophy, but of a philosophical thinking and acting that does not ignore the particularity of each person in his or her relationships with the Creator, with others, with the environment, and with oneself and with the world. It is a Philosophy contextualized as a dialectical movement of a broad social set in which the Philosophy of the great philosophical thinkers and the worldviews of large portions of the popular masses are interinfluenced.



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