
THE SEARCH FOR OUR OWN THINKING BASED ON GOOD LIVING AND POPULAR EDUCATION: URGENT NEEDS OF LATIN AMERICAN EDUCATION

Abstract

This text² seeks to organise some of the areas of focus of the problematisation carried out by different vice-ministries under the Ministry of Education of Bolivia (regular, alternative, and special education, university education, science, technology and innovation), as well as with the Ministry's research team. From this perspective, this document is a kind of intellectual recollection of different meetings, seminars, workshops held during that week of dialogue and appeal regarding the foundations of popular education present in the IEP and the Bolivian educational project established by Law 070, which strives, as expressed in the section Basis, Aims and Objectives, for "...the construction of a plurinational state and good living".

Key words

Good living, popular education, right to education, knowing-knowledge relationship, pedagogical research.

"I believe that the future of Paulo Freire's work is closely linked to the future of popular education as a general conception of education...Little more than twenty years after the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, popular education, marked by this seminal work, continues to constitute the greatest contribution that Latin American thought has made to universal pedagogical thought. Popular education is a theoretical framework which continues to inspire numerous experiences, not only in Latin America, but all over the world, not only in Third World countries, but in advanced industrial countries, and in very distinct realities.

"Moacir Gadotti³

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² This article has already been published in other journals and is presented here with additions and modifications. It is a speech presented at the Bolivian Education round table on the topic of Education and Buen Vivir (Good Living) in La Paz on 6 and 7 December 2012. The initial text arose from discussions held during the week of August 12-17, 2012, with the Ministry of Education of Bolivia within the framework of "Transference of the Ondas Program and its Research as Pedagogical Strategy Proposal" (IEP is the Spanish acronym).

³ GADOTTI, M., TORRES, C. A. Paulo Freire. Una bibliografía. México. Siglo XXI editorial. 2001. Pág. 92.

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This quotation is of great service to me in order to establish and make clear the position from which I shall enter into these conversations about good living, education, methodologies, research as a pedagogical strategy and the right to an education. I would like to emphasise this quotation because it marks the social position from which we have constructed educational meanings, practices, and processes in our realities, and that is why I continue to speak from what has been accumulated therein that is present in the concept of research as strategic pedagogy; a proposal that seeks to build critical pedagogies in these times and which serves as a framework to facilitate this presentation.

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In this sense, these reflections seek to learn from the dynamics of a discussion that has become visible in this proposal in the way in which popular education is enriched by the particular developments of the Bolivian political proposal, with its consequent educational aims, which are not exempt from contradictions and conflicts, as part of the multiple understandings, proposals, points of view, meanings, and conceptual frameworks toward which the process of changing and transforming our Latin American realities must be directed. The perspective of a non-Eurocentric world view is nourished from all this, which, based on these practical experiences, is giving form to and consolidating thinking from these southern latitudes as a concrete way of giving expression to our identities and dreams, in the political constructions that are being developed based on our particularities.⁵

Firstly, I will present several elements of the Good Living proposal so as to, on this basis, take up elements posed in the discussions and initiate a reflection based on the assumptions of popular education.

With this vision, there has been a deepened understanding of how the invisible boundaries of the separation between what is formal, what is not formal and what is informal in education have been erased and the processes of knowledge and of knowing that are occurring in society have become visible, leading to emerging themes.

These new elements place on the order of the day the visualisation of dualisms on which the West has been constituted and deepened in so-called capitalist modernity. Critical thinking is going to require working on them in terms of tension, which will make it possible to reflect on

⁴ "Avelino Siñani - Elizardo Pérez" Education Law No. 070, Plurinational State of Bolivia. La Paz. December 2010. P. 4. Article 3, number 1.

⁵ In this sense, this text must be read as a continuation of my published book *Educaciones y pedagogías críticas desde el Sur. Cartografías de la educación popular*. [Critical Education and Pedagogy from the South. Mapping People's Education] La Paz. Ministerio de Educación - Estado Plurinacional de Bolivia. 2011.

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the encounter between Eurocentrism and its project of control and the particularities of our realities in the world of the South.⁶

In this text I will deal with three of them, insofar as they are substantive matters and subjects for this encounter between popular education and good living, which are present in the attempt to develop IEP but which emerge with much greater clarity in the light of a discussion of the Bolivian process. They are:

- a. The relationship between the pluriversal and the universal.
- b. The relationship between knowing and knowledge.
- c. The relationship between what is human and nature.

This gives us some clues to transversally relate the tension between cosmogonies and cosmovisions. In this sense, the theses posed here, which have arisen within the framework of the discussions indicated above in the Bolivian context, seek to understand the way in which a quest is found in alternative construction projects today in our continent that makes hidden aspects visible that redefine the theory-practice relationship in the social life of our realities with discourses and dynamics born in other latitudes of the world and that tense and follow the line posed long ago by Orlando Fals-Borda⁷, of our own thought

In the case of this text, and due to the author's tradition, the situation of good living and popular education in order to continue questioning the idea of school and liberal education that our political systems have developed, demonstrates that it ended up leaving the problems of relevance concealed under the discourse of coverage and gratuity, which finishes by blindly accepting the idea of school in capitalist globalisation, far from the national and territorial contextual specificities, with a quality idea in line with the globalising project that it shapes for its competitiveness and its market⁸.

These quests continue to provide content for Latin American thought with its deepest roots in the cosmogonies of our ancestral peoples, which, in some time periods, have been channelled by mestizo thinkers who look for the stamp of our realities in that reality and who have built the links of that thought that seeks —establishing a relationship with Eurocentric thought— to rebuild and show that presence from here with other characteristics. This is visible, for example, in Indo-American Marxism, participatory research-action, the theology of liberation, the philosophy of liberation, popular education and many other varied expressions. These expressions, and others that would take forever to list, have enriched research as strategy pedagogy.

⁶ These tensions that I refer to in my paper *La sistematización - una búsqueda de la episteme de las prácticas*, are: subject-object, nature-culture, transcendence-matter, physical-metaphysical, public-private, reason-emotion, scientific knowledge-popular local wisdom, knowledge of nature-social knowledge, scientific knowledge-intervention practices, competences-capabilities, deductive knowledge-inductive knowledge, mental labour-manual labour, science-society, mind-body, cult culture-popular culture, the West-the others, universal-singularities, episteme-epistemes, cosmogonies-cosmovisions.

⁷ FALS-BORDA, O. *Ciencia propia y colonialismo intelectual*. México. Nuestro Tiempo. 1970.

⁸ To expand on this point, refer to the first chapter of my paper *Las escuelas de las globalizaciones. Entre el uso técnico instrumental y las educomunicaciones*. Bogotá. Ediciones desde abajo. 2011.

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Good living or living well, a quest from the greatest depths of our original peoples (Abya Yala)

This vision of the world has been posed as a hidden conception for a long time, which for many peoples had characteristics of resistance. Today it finds public expression through social movements, such as the Congress of Peoples in the case of Colombia, and indigenous organizations like the Indigenous Regional Council of Cauca (Consejo Regional Indígena del Cauca, CRIC), as well as in governments of popular origin, such as those of Bolivia and Ecuador.

In this sense, it appears as a questioning of the political and intellectual hegemonies of these times, from the standpoint of our cultural and territorial particularities (the South), questioning epistemic forms and forms of power from other cultural aggregates different from the Eurocentric one, from other cosmogonies and other ethical understandings.

We might say that it appears to us as a rupture with the androcentric and anthropocentric view that we have been questioning, of the dominant view of development in capitalism founded on the human being-nature separation, the basis of logical rationalist thought and of the control of capital through the market, what Vandana Shiva called "Mental monocultures".⁹

a. The good living of the original indigenous world

This living well and good living that are distinct from the "good life" of Keynesian thought.¹⁰ This takes as its foundation our ancestral cultures localized in five traditions: in the Ecuadorean Quechua world the idea of *sumak kawsay* (life in plenitude and harmony); in the *Kuna* world *balawaba* (the unity of nature); in the Aymara world *suma qamaña* (well-being of your inner force); in the Guaraní world the *ñande reko* (harmonious life); and in the Mayan peoples (Chiapas), *lekil kuxlay* and *lekilaltik*, all of them referring to a world in which a category is provided in the sphere of language that makes evident their life plans founded on the unity of the world, without separations or dichotomies.

In this sense, we find ourselves faced with a conception of life and its organization from all spheres that speaks to us of an integral character prior to the developments of this idea in the West. Therefore, it is presented as a project in the organization of their societies in *Abya Yala*, that the colonizers would later call America, which seeks to live together with a unity between

⁹ SHIVA, V., which should be considered when proposing a new order founded on earth democracy and the following basic principles:

- a) Valuing species and persons for themselves, not for their economic possibilities.
- b) Diversity of nature and culture that confronts homogenisation.
- c) A living economy built from the local area.
- d) A living democracy based on inclusion and diversity, from the local and community level.
- e) Living knowledge elaborated by communities built collectively.
- f) Replacing competition with a world based on care and compassion.
- g) Globalising peace.

¹⁰ For Keynes, the good life would be guaranteed by economic growth and the equitable distribution of wealth, which would bring, around the year 2030, a level of well-being that would allow people to enjoy a good life that would be characterized by fewer hours of work, more time with the family, more time to enjoy art, music, friends, sports, culture, and spiritual activities. But this would entail not placing the focus of the economy on ever greater accumulation.

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mother earth and human beings. The unity of the four dimensions that guide and organize life is synthesized here from a conference by Noel Aguirre¹¹ :

- Material production (having) as access, creation and enjoyment of goods.
- Spiritual production (being), affective, subjective realisation, of celebrations and leisure.
- Knowing (as knowledge), recognition that every culture has its own system of categories and languages.
- Deciding, where the community establishes its life together and it is not possible to live well without the others or if someone does not.

We find ourselves before a holistic vision that in the Andean world would be configured by:

- *Sumak kawsay* (good living).
- *Sumak allpa* (fertile soil without malady).
- *Sacha runa yachay* (all ancestral knowledge).¹²

From this perspective, we find a view that builds on language and categories that recognize how the world is organized by the principle of complementarity, which guarantees its unity based on difference and singularity. This leads this vision and its enunciations to question the Occidental forms as another way of organising life from the American peoples, emphasising among its main components that:

- Nature is understood as a subject, and therefore a living being. Therefore the rights of the *pacha mama* (Mother Earth) are spoken of, in a cyclical world ("all is life").
- The human-nature (hn) relationship is a unity and forms part of sociability between living things ("all is one and one is all").
- The constructions of knowing and knowledge are matters of any culture, but are developed from a different standpoint, where knowledge, ethics, spirituality, and production are integrated into an integral view, giving shape to an indivisible process in these matters.
- There is a profound sense of the aesthetic, given the capacity to build in harmony with nature and other human beings, and therefore the beautiful life is set forth¹³ ("we are unity").

b. Good living as a critical paradigm

We can say that a support of our own is found in this perspective, whose proposal questions the form of development and provides a meaningful and alternative project even to classic Eurocentric alternativities—(liberal) Jacobinism, critical Marxism, and North American democracy—since it breaks with many of these political postulates, by building a project centred on community, territories, autonomy, processes based on the relationship among different beings in application of the principle of complementarity.

This vision makes it possible to see that crisis is the idea of development itself and the idea of sustainable and maintainable development is questioned, since they are forms that do not touch the revalorization of capital, insofar as nature disappears and is replaced by the category of the environment, which is sold to us now with the idea of "green capital". Good Living establishes an alert for us and maintains an immense suspicion of the science and technology currently

¹¹ AGUIRRE, N. Conferencia "La educación boliviana en la búsqueda del buen vivir". Bogotá. Movilización social. September 2012. This overview is my responsibility and not that of the person giving the conference.

¹² SANTI, M. "Sacha runa yacha, sumak allpa, sumak kawsay. Una alternativa de gestión propia del desarrollo". In: *Retos del desarrollo local*. Quito. Abya Yala-Ildis. 2006.

¹³ MONTALUISA, L.

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concealed in an environmental and human discourse that continues to be based on the idea of material progress that is offered to us now in its political form as community projects.

For this appropriation from an environmental viewpoint, there arises a delegation of authority in local development, since the owners of these resources are recognized as legitimate provided that they consider them to be capital that must be put into the accumulation dynamic that is carried out, converting communities into the watchdogs of that “social capital.”

In this regard, several authors¹⁴ state that this idea launches the theories of post-development, through an individual line of thinking, demonstrating how the environmental crisis is not solvable with the market, understood as the accumulation of goods and the monetarisation of life, and give rise to the need to safeguard nature as the heritage of global unity. This is not possible without an anti-capitalist plan that tackles its individualism, its dehumanisation and its private interest and focus on profit, regulating the actions amongst humans. That is why the foundation of a new society is not possible without a sovereign and self-sufficient community.¹⁵

This criticism maintains that it is necessary to seek out alternatives that already exist in the cosmovision of our Native American groups, who have always put forward the unity of the universe and therefore the unity of human beings and nature, which provides a basis for the equality of life and therefore equality among human beings, showing us a world not based on human control of nature but rather on the integral nature of the diverse forms of life in it. For this purpose, an appeal is made to tradition, and answers that are fully applicable to the current world are found in it

Systems of sociability and education also begin to become evident that are founded on identity, research, and transformation, and are at the root of how the communities of resistance that support the continuity of Good Living have been maintained. This redefines the concept of learning, showing us that there are no processes of knowing and knowledge without processes of childrearing, which must be included.

It is maintained that by recovering these traditions we would be able to advance toward other ways of life, different from the one proposed by capitalism, new forms in which the environment is protected, solidarity is deployed, and democracy is deepened in a real way, making room for plurinationality—a real foundation for modern nations—and Good Living as the foundation of life.¹⁶

In this sense, Good Living is considered as something under permanent construction. To the degree to which people and groups begin to assume it in their lives, we will have a world without misery, without discrimination, with a minimum of necessary things and with access to goods and services, without having human beings as means to accumulate goods.

¹⁴ ESCOBAR, A. “El ‘post-desarrollo’ como concepto y práctica social”. In: Daniel Mato (Coord.). *Políticas de economía, ambiente y sociedad en tiempos de globalización*. Caracas. Facultad de Ciencias Económicas y Sociales, Universidad Central de Venezuela, pp. 17-31. Available online at: <http://www.unc.edu/~aescobar/text/esp/El%20postdesarrollo%20como%20concepto.pdf>. Consulted on December 2012.

¹⁵ ACOSTA, A. *La maldición de la abundancia*. Quito. Abya-Yala, Swissaid, Comité Ecuménico de Proyectos. 2009.

¹⁶ IBÁÑEZ, J. *Un acercamiento al buen vivir*. Presentation in the intermediate assembly of CEAAL. San Salvador. 15-19 November 2010.

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Its motto might be: starting from projects of life, we the communities will build Good Living, with territorialized communities, in relational and complementary cosmovisions, seeking that other political and epistemic order.

c. Multiple interpretations that open debate

The emergence of Good Living has provided different Latin American left groups with a social context to speak from that has arisen from their historical and contextual particularities, and they propose another way of seeing and organizing the world. In this sense, multiple interpretations have been opened, generating a new debate on our realities. One place for analysis is the discussion that has been generated in Ecuador and Bolivia, who by including this viewpoint in their Constitution open a discussion about its interpretation and meanings.

The Constitution, in the second part of the preamble, expresses the following: "We decide to build a new way for citizens to live together in diversity and harmony with nature in order to achieve Good Living, *sumak kawsay*." Similarly, Article 14, second chapter, Good Living Constitutional Rights, establishes that: "the right of the population is recognized to live in a healthy and ecologically balanced environment that guarantees sustainability and Good Living, *sumak kawsay*."¹⁷

Similarly, Alberto Acosta, President of the Constituent Assembly of that country, puts forward in these debates that: "In this sense, *sumak kawsay* calls on us to overcome an extractive orientation and consciously build a post-petroleum economy. A task that does not mean closing down the oil wells. We are obligated to optimize extraction from them without causing more environmental and social destruction, especially in Amazonia. It is necessary to obtain the greatest possible benefit for the country from each barrel extracted, refined, transported, and marketed, before maximizing the volume of extraction, but it is necessary to do so respecting Nature and the communities. It is necessary to stop the expansion of the petroleum frontier now. This task, let's say in passing, leads us to reviewing the oil contracts that harm society's interests..."¹⁸

It is interesting to see how Acosta, who ran as a presidential candidate in 2013 against President Correa in Ecuador, poses the conception of Good Living as part of his platform in these terms: "Good Living questions the Eurocentric concept of well-being and as a proposal for struggle confronts the colonialism of power. So, without minimizing this contribution from marginalized people, it is necessary to accept that the Andean vision is not the only source of inspiration for promoting Good Living. Even from among the circles of Occidental culture, many voices have been raised for a long time that could be in some way in tune with this indigenous vision and vice versa. The concept of Good Living not only has an historical anchor in the indigenous world, it can also be sustained within other philosophical principles: Aristotelian, Marxist, ecological, feminist, cooperativist, humanist, and other principles."¹⁹

As we have seen, a debate has been being opened up by voices that call for a pure reading based on the contents of a single tradition, as well as those who rework them for different contexts and those who propose an encounter with the critical Eurocentric views. In this sense, it is an open discussion and it is going to require that those who enter into it take positions in order to

¹⁷ ACOSTA, A. and MARTÍNEZ, E. (comp.). *El buen vivir, una vía para el desarrollo*. Quito. Ediciones Abya Yala. 2009. P. 170.

¹⁸ ACOSTA, A. and MARTÍNEZ, E. Op. Cit. P. 27.

¹⁹ ACOSTA, A. *Buen vivir. Sumak kawsay. Una oportunidad para imaginar otros mundos*. Quito. Ediciones Abya Yala. 2012. P. 28.

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provide content for the actions that seek to be guided by the concept of Good Living or Living Well.

Tensions in building based on one's own reality

It does not cease to be a paradox that Latin American education continues to be organized along guidelines set by multilateral organizations and the thought and organization agencies of society that have been built within capitalist modernity.²⁰

The emergence of alternative governments in Latin America has helped build a historical environment where the conception of good living –which survived in our indigenous nations and peoples under the form of life projects and resistance to the Eurocentric control in its manifold form– through its political forms has facilitated the emergence of more in-depth debates within the scope of epistemologies, of cosmogonies, know-how, spatiality, of territories shaping a new public state platform, such as in the case of the Bolivian and Ecuadorian experience.

The idea of a plurinational State emerges in contrast with a form of control based on the negation of the pluriethnic and multicultural nature with its derivatives of marginalisation and racism. This proposal also has political consequences at a theoretical-practical level, since it establishes elements for refounding the modern State, basis of modern social organization, since it proposes to leave behind the concept of a single nation and opens diverse conceptions of it for us, which also implies going beyond individual rights in order to reposition collectives and communities, giving rise to an interculturalism based on difference as constituent elements of societies that are built seeking to confront inequalities and exclusions generated in the model of development promoted by Occidental capitalism.²¹

The visibilisation of these multiple aspects that already stood as forms of resistance, as an integral part of the struggles of grassroots social groups, implies a thorough questioning of the single interpretation of the modern world revolving around the West and its counterparts of Eurocentrism, leading to the examination of the intellectual, social, political and cultural hegemony built on rational logical thought and laissez-faire policy.

It is here where education is structurally challenged by emerging realities, touching its foundations, not in order to deny them, but rather to affirm by means of their relativisation, in as much as a field of a conceptual epistemic, cosmogenic otherness emerges that challenges, demanding to be included not only because of being from here, but also because it proposes a world with its own characteristics and an attempt to build a society in a different way.

In this sense, from my vision as a popular educator, having to assume Good Living in our practices also means a deepening of its aggregate, rooting it ever deeper in our realities and, in this case, our original peoples, acquiring a much deeper support in the dialog-negotiation-confrontation of ways of knowing with the until now dominant Eurocentric forms. This is going to require giving it form and institutionality and organisational processes that must be built on the horizon of its aims constructed on this historic future.²²

²⁰ For more on this, I refer the reader to my text *Globalizaciones y educaciones. Entre el pensamiento único y la nueva crítica*. Bogotá. Ediciones Desde Abajo. 2006.

²¹ WALSH, K. *Interculturalidad, Estado, sociedad*. Quito. UASB-Ediciones Abya Yala. 2009.

²² Let's remember that the ten principles of popular education as a foundation of its aggregate are:

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Today this aggregate is challenged to be placed on the horizon of Good Living or Living Well from our ancestral cultures, our original peoples of *Abya Yala*, that today makes real that which the *Arwaco* group of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta in Colombia says about us, the mestizos and white people, that we are "the little younger brothers", and that's why we Westerners live as we do in relation to nature.

The following tensions for education, within the framework of discussions developed in Bolivia, lead us to the proposal for RPS and popular education so as to recognise the roads that open before us for theoretical-practical elaboration in order to include Good Living in educational proposals. For this reason, the following pages are a first approach to recognising the way the classical structure of the Occidental school is challenged by the elements that give shape to these visions of the world that have been built from our latitudes and singularities.

a. Between the universal and the pluriversal

The Occidental project has been built on the idea of truth, which in its development has marked a way of becoming, in as much as it constitutes its own as universal and does so not only for itself but also distributes it to others as what is true, constituted in its mechanisms of control and power that, by making it universal in its forms and building itself up as the point of view, denies the singular and particular forms that show the other side of its pretended universality.

This road can be seen in the way in which, through its constitution, its gods, its religion, its science, its institutions, its democracy, its technology, its research methods, its school have been presented at all times as the only road to understanding and orienting the world. This has ended up constituting itself in its multiple activities and commitments as the cosmivision that orients the human constitution, producing a unilateral view that denies what is singular in order to affirm itself in its universality.

In this sense, the Occidental project has constructed a vision of the world where what is human is privileged over nature, inasmuch as the human dominates it and is superior to it; the rational over the emotional, where the latter is still seen as part of "instinct"; the individual over the community, since the latter is the maximum expression of autonomy; the objective over the

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- a. Its starting point is the reality and the critical reading of it, in order to recognise the interests present in the actions and in the production of different actors.
 - b. It implies an option based on the transformation of the conditions that produce injustice, exploitation, domination, and exclusion from society.
 - c. It demands an ethical political option from and for the interests of excluded and dominated groups, for the survival of mother earth.
 - d. It builds the empowerment of the excluded and unequal, and fosters their organization in order to transform current society into a more egalitarian one that recognizes differences.
 - e. It constructs educational mediations with a pedagogical proposal based on processes of cultural negotiation, confrontation, and dialogue of ways of knowing.
 - f. It considers the culture of the participants as the stage on which the dynamics of the intraculturality, interculturality, and transculturality of different human groups occur.
 - g. It fosters processes of self-affirmation and the construction of critical subjectivities.
 - h. It is understood as a process, as practical-theoretical knowledge that is constructed from the resistances and searches for alternatives to the different dynamics of control in these societies.
 - i. It generates processes of production of knowledge, knowing, and life with meaning for human and social emancipation.
 - j. It recognizes different dimensions in the production of knowledge and knowing, in coherence with the particularities of the actors and the struggles they are involved in.

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subjective, inasmuch as knowledge is the representation of reality; science over other ways of knowing, inasmuch as it has a method that guarantees its reliability; the economic understood as growth over other dimensions of life; and as an encompassing form in the understanding of some humans, those who guide their lives with this understanding, over other humans who are seen as backward forms of the world that they represent.

On the other hand, a visible South emerges in Good Living, which shows forms of life centred on other principles and other ways of leading life, giving shape to what is different, and which in many of its characteristics manifests itself as the otherness of the universal, founded on other dimensions and on how one can be human in another way, having as a foundation the place, the territory, where one lives and an identity is built founded on community cores that live on other premises and build an immediate relational system on other bases. At the core of this is the recognition of multiple diversities as the foundation of any action that may be undertaken.

In the same way, some characteristics become visible of the relationships between the institutionality constructed in Occidental modernity and the particular forms that the pluriversal takes when it emerges from specific forms, with its own dimensions in groups that show projects of life with other characteristics who, by affirming their identity, convert what is their own into the foundation of their proposal for life.

In this emergence of what is one's own, the fissures in the universal begin to become visible, not as denying it but rather inasmuch as what is different appears and orders and organizes the world under other premises. For example, when the community is presented as the foundation for decision-making and of the meanings that orient quests, this presents a profound questioning and appeal in regard to the organisation of the world centred on the individual as separate from their community as the foundation of the modern world and liberal citizenship. There it becomes visible how that different statute allows the emergence of other worlds based on other premises and that live their daily life on another basis.

It is from here where it becomes possible to see other characteristics of a world that is not so homogeneous as it is presented to us and that is in the process of becoming every day, that is in movement, and this in spite of the view on which modernity has been built and has become hegemonic. Those other singular forms erupt not as pretensions to make themselves universal but rather to show how that singularity is also the expression of worlds not subsumed in that hegemonic logic and that are lived by human beings who give shape to social relations and social structures that show other ways of relating.

b. Between knowing and knowledge

A world has been built in modernity organised by reason, which came to replace the views constituted from sensations and appearances. That organization is founded on an order centred on the rational, which explains the world from this perspective, which makes it possible for it to realize any fact, situation, object of the world in its minutest detail and at the same time, through accumulated knowledge, allows it to predict, dominate, control each one of the elements of any reality.

With this vision, the predominance of humans over nature and all beings existing in it is established. That organizing reason allows it to control and dominate, and it is going to be from that type of organization that the individual is going to become the central actor of autonomy, as well as the orienter of the forms of knowing and organizing the phenomena that occur in nature,

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converting one of them, physics, in the queen of this view. There nature is instrumental to this form of knowledge (mechanical physics).

In this perspective the principal of objectivity is going to govern the way things are known, expelling subjectivity from it, since if it is not measurable it is a subjective construction and therefore inexistent under the criteria of scientific knowledge. This way of ordering the way of viewing things is going to make it possible to construct an order built on the idea of progress that expels everything that is not knowable through scientific processes, guaranteed by the method, which is what is going to confer objectivity on the results. For this reason, that methodological control is what is going to guarantee us truth.

Parallel to these developments, questions have been posed about whether different forms of knowledge other than scientific knowledge exist and, if they exist, what their status would be in relation to it. The idea of various ways of knowing has been emerging here, which seeks to explain these other forms of relation through codes and systems of different languages that have a real existence but that are not explained through the scientific method and knowledge, opening a field for very broad discussion. Including those who see it as a prior form of knowledge that has not acquired either rigour or systematisation.

These ways of knowing have also been rejected as forms from groups that have not entered into what is Occidental (modernity) with the characteristics of objective science and universal laws. To them, it would be a pre-scientific form that represents the past, superstition, multitemporality.

To others, these systems of knowing have their own life, since they function in singular and different worlds that are only explicable in these particularities of the world that constitute it, and this demands that it construct categories that have value, explanation, meaning in the enunciations of their culture. In many cases, it is necessary to create words to explain what is enunciated in relation to other aspects of their vision and organisation of the world.

Also, from other views on knowing, it becomes evident that knowledge is no more than one form of knowing that all cultures have and that is manifested in three forms:

- The common one, derived from practical behaviour, which sets a type of morality for the actions that people develop, since it operates from day to day and gives answers there to specific needs.
- Technical knowledge, by means of which people live and act in their daily lives and have the ability to make evident the way that they relate to everything and forge a system of values and beliefs, and this gives their system transcendence and meaning that explains that unity.
- “Cultured” knowledge in which technical knowledge has an implicit explicative framework of its reality and realizes this through cultural constructions that take form according to contextual identities and particularities. There it explains what is human through categories and their relations in an integral way and in coherence with its tradition.

In this perspective, these three ways of knowing would exist in any culture, since they are the result of multiple traditions and aggregates of the life of different human groups. In this sense, the vision of science and Occidental knowledge that we use in education would not be any more than a cultured knowledge that tradition has built.

For this reason, when today the Bolivian process establishes the question of education from plurinational identities, fundamental work is required to allow the emergence of those ways of

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knowing and how their actions must be present in a school where other cosmovisions are also present, and the question arises of what is the complementary type among them.

c. Between what is human and nature

In line with the previous point, the rejection of knowing on the basis of any understanding held of it has led to the construction of a hegemony of knowledge that, by claiming to be the "true" one, denies and disqualifies the knowing, merely shining light on the dualism whereby the other aspect that constitutes it is rejected. The latter, which rejects the unity of knowing and knowledge, shapes an epistemic view that establishes itself as universal, which supports the different practices carried out, in turn constituting the supremacy of the human that rationalises it.

The fact that this paradigm is based on human reason and on the individual, which constitute the foundation of that world, means that the individual is separated from the world so that they enunciate it and the subject-object separation is raised with the mediation of the method, which is going to guarantee objectivity and declare itself to the superior (animal kingdom), which gives it a character of domination and control over other living beings and a negation of the forms of life that are not in the systems of its rational control. This is constituted as the fundamental criterion to grant dominion over that chain of life.

This view, by denying nature rationality, inasmuch as it is the property of humans because of their rationality, converts it into a space for domination and control through reason. What the scientist extracts from nature are their truths, through which they function, which is going to allow them to make an instrumental use of it as a function of their well-being and this is going to be defined in the separation between nature and culture, inasmuch as the latter is going to be a human construction to differentiate itself from nature.

That human place is going to be given by control of that way of knowing as the true one and of the subject of it as the dominator over other forms of domination of life and the world. Consequently, it means the validity of a paradigm of an anthropocentric nature that has slogans like the "king of creation," of a religious nature, which also ends up establishing a difference among humans. Those who have learned that relationship of dominion and control are the most advanced and civilized.

On the other hand, there appear the visions that argue for the unity of nature and what is human, explaining the latter as only a step in the tree of life. We have before us an integral system of relationships that make possible the existence of the world and we participate in it equally in a time space that has a unity of everything present without dualism, where all of us are subjects in relation and in action.

That essential unity would be represented in the Andean cultures by the *pacha mama* (mother earth) as a living being of another dimension and characteristics, which in that recognition transforms the relational system of what is human. This would be part of a larger system and would be signified by the way in which its action is self-constructed and by the way it generates a relational system characterized by the unity between biology-philosophy and society, which would lead us to another representation of what is human and its multiple forms of production of life, of the material, of the real, and a questioning of the liberal individual founded on an autonomy that separates them from the community and nature, making the community a site for negotiation and continual transformation based on subjectivities and difference.

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This view allows for the emergence of territories as living places, where the universal must be redefined and must learn to take on intercultural, plurinational forms with a new construction of space that acquires characteristics of its own, which becomes specific in those ways that life takes on as unity in the local world, in what one author called: "the new geometry of power".²³

Horizons of the quest for Good Living and popular education

Popular education in its development has built a relationship among cultures that has made it possible to recognise and extend its original idea of dialogue among ways of knowing toward cultural negotiation and confrontation as ways in which intraculturality, interculturality, and transculturality are produced in educational activity.

a. Dialogue of ways of knowing to constitute our intraculture

We are social beings in a world marked by diversity, singularity, and differences, in dialogue with the other, and that is where the way emerges where we are subjects of a reality in which it is in relation to the other that I discover that I am not unique, that we are always in action scenarios where I must keep clear of who I am. Dialogue gives me the elements not only to recognize the different one but also myself, participating in a scenario in which I act and realize who I am and the meanings of my actions; that is to say, in recognizing the other I recognize myself.

In the recognition of the other I value what is my own and establish my identity (individuation), constructing with my group the references of that larger world (the system in which I am involved), by feeling myself to be part of that construction in which I have been accepted. As a member of that group of reference, I am constructing the self-reference, or "I have put down more roots going forward," an expression that I heard from a Colombian indigenous person.

b. Interculturality as confrontation of ways of knowing

The matter is not lineal, it does not mean that one comes before the other, however, in that being in the world of action, the confrontation of ways of knowing occurs, where disagreement with the different other shows me that the world is not a permanent dialogue, but rather that on occasion we find ourselves with others who represent power, who may have characteristics of control and power. They use interculturalism to negate it from forms subordinated to that control and power.

Developed interculturality leads there, indicating how those elements deny, dominate, and control it; it makes visible the differences on which interculturalism is being organized as an exercise of power that on occasion generates self-marginalization or self-rejection on the identity, but the other also relativizes me and broadens my senses and horizons. In that relationship of the confrontation of ways of knowing, I recognize what is mine and I constitute the principle of complementarity, as the axis and foundation of interculturality, and there I find the reciprocities that are to lead us to joint action.

In this sense, the confrontation of ways of knowing as an exercise of recognition of interculturality and of affirmation of interculturality, inasmuch as this becomes specific in the world where that different and dominating other operates. In this sedimentation, that which

²³ MASSEY, Doreen. *Global restructuring, local responses*. Atwood lecture. Worcester, Mass: Graduate School of Geography, Clark University. 1988.

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Albó discusses is achieved, when he says: “Interculturality refers above all to the attitudes and relationships of brother groups or persons of a culture, with reference to another cultural group, its members, its cultural products and features.”²⁴

c. Transculturality or cultural negotiation for action in the plurinational

When the confrontation of ways of knowing has constructed the capacity to relate between groups and persons of different identities and cultures, which give shape to the plurinational, visualizing those multiple and varied visions and conceptions, which makes them become and recognize one another as actors and nationals with their own identity and therefore with territories, language, cultures, justice, which forges those conditions for orienting action together with the different others.

This situation constitutes a relationship of acceptance from the standpoint of the difference of codes; it constitutes the need to forge a road beyond that encounter, and it is the possibility in difference of common action. So an exercise of cultural negotiation becomes necessary in which, with the differences established, it is necessary to constitute the groups that seek the transformation of those conditions, constructing that scenario in order to modify conditions, dynamics. Those agreements demand a negotiation from the standpoint of the affirmed differences, in order to give place to an action where the pluriversal encounters a unity, in an order of criticism of the forms of domination and control, their dichotomies, constituting in negotiation a new relationship that makes possible another representation of what is human, a territorialisation for change.

Boaventura de Sousa Santos has been talking about “an intercultural democracy” that, for him, would bring about a new generation of collective rights to water, to food sovereignty, to the earth, to the woods, to traditional wisdom, and that would only be realized if the perspective is changed, which requires extending and refounding democracy²⁵ ©

²⁴ ALBÓ, X. *Inclusión y la construcción de actitudes interculturales en tiempos de transformación*. La Paz. Ministerio de Educación, Viceministerio de Educación Alternativa y Especial. 2010. P. 7.

²⁵ SANTOS, B. Speech to members of the Ecuadorian Constituent Assembly in Manta, March 2008.