


Chapter 13

The Difference That Makes Us Similar

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ABSTRACT

Education in a child's early years is vital to establishing the basis of his personality. In an increasingly individualized world, where people are less concerned about the problems of others and the spaces of freedom are often not respected, it is important to reinforce the work of empathy from childhood. Freedom is a word that is losing its true essence, its meaning has been distorted by its semantic satiety. This word is taken by society as a right, but the obligation is forgotten, which implies respecting the rights of others. The project carried out from the subject of plastic and visual education in the third year of the degree in primary education aims to work from the essence of the human being, from the condition that makes us differentiate ourselves from the rest of the animals. Thinking globally without observing differences should be the main goal of humanity. This should start in schools, the first contact with diversity.

INTRODUCTION

This project is based on the need to acquire global intercultural knowledge, skills, and attitudes. The target participants were the teaching staff and students of the Education Faculty of Albacete as protagonists for the transformation into a more inclusive society in line with the sustainable development objectives promoted by the United Nations.

The project Aprendemos 'Enter' Culturas 2.0. Youth and Education against racism was implemented during the 2022/2023 academic year, with the collaboration of 20 research teachers from different areas of knowledge of the Albacete Faculty of Education of the University of Castilla-La Mancha (Spain). It was funded by the La Caixa Foundation. The faculty's areas of knowledge include Didactics and School

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Organisation, Music, Physical, Plastic Arts, Corporal and Musical Education, French, English, Psychology, Language and Literature.

From the area of Plastic Arts, it has been an opportunity to integrate the development of artistic activities as a didactic resource with the aim of transforming for a better society. Art, as a universal language, is a vehicle for education, a means that favours the integral development of people through its communicative function.

Humanity finds itself in an increasingly globalised and interconnected world. Technological development has reached such a point that social relations are becoming more and more extensive. Information reaches more corners of the world and contact with the environment is at our fingertips, regardless of where we are in the world. However, despite all the advantages and the accessibility of communication with our peers, society is becoming more and more solitary. A clear and increasingly widespread example is that of the *hikikomori* in Japan. In a country of technological advances, bustling streets and overpopulation, society is becoming increasingly hermetic and solitary. Since the mid-1990s, a social phenomenon has begun to develop that affects more and more young people, people who live in isolation, locked up in their rooms. In 2019, psychologist Saitō Tamaki put a possible figure of around 10 million people who had decided to isolate themselves from society (Butet-Roch, 2022).

In this sense, it can be observed that, though living in the age of communication and interrelationships, society is becoming increasingly solitary, which may be causing a kind of selfishness that develops into a lack of empathy for others.

Unlike animals, human beings have the capacity to reason and, therefore, it is conceivable that they could solve and resolve the utopian balance that differentiates one culture from another. Originally, the human being, as a unique individual, is born in a certain place as a result of chance. The essence of that person, what we might call the 'soul', lies in a container or body marked by the genetics of the parents and, very possibly, with features marked by the physiognomy of their community.

Starting from these basic principles that define the individual, one could take up again Rousseau's reflections on the development and evolution of human society and its loss of freedom, equality and the natural goodness of man (Velázquez, 1982). In this sense, the increase of private property embodies the imbalance and exploitation of individuals (Cocutz, 1953). Returning to what was said earlier about what differentiates human beings from animals, reason does not seem to be enough to differentiate us; the stronger will subjugate the weaker. The great majority of religions preach love for one's neighbour based on the principle of goodness innate in man's nature; however, the property that each one of them represents hides aspirations of domination over the rest. Finally, to sketch this context where the human being develops, today's society is in the gear that dominates it, a globalised system controlled through the media. The concept of universal love promotes fairness, whereas the belief in a single true religion intensifies prejudice between different groups, underscoring the importance of embracing tolerant religious beliefs to prevent political tensions (Hoffmann et al., 2020).

Everyday the media show social injustices based on the differences that are created by the states themselves. Problems with borders, with social and cultural differences, the despair of those unfortunate with their place of birth, their misfortune with chance on the day of their arrival in the world. A chance that could be represented with the allegory of a lottery drum, in which each person is a ball with a number and not all of them will be the ones to hit the jackpot. The vast majority will not be lucky enough to hit the jackpot. As Dorling and Shildrick (2011) mention, social inequality persists due to factors such as elitism, exclusion, prejudice, greed, and despair, which contribute to its persistence. Looking at the definition of state in the Royal Spanish Academy (RAE, 2022) it says: 'sovereign country, recognised

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