

# EDUCATION AS SOCIAL PRACTICE: THE QUESTION OF THE OTHER AND THEIR RECOGNITION

## Educación como práctica social: la cuestión del otro y su reconocimiento

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### Abstract

This article addresses the issue of education as a social practice in which it is important to consider the question of the other and their recognition. The two themes are important due to the increasing problems of bullying in schools, indicating a failure in the recognition of the other due, in large part, to the impact of the use of virtual reality, where ideas are transmitted as messages directed to a community without a face and which remains anonymous in social networks. The reflection is done in an analytical way. It is based on the ideas of Levinas and Ricoeur and is enriched by the contributions of other various authors. The text is organized around two key axes: the other and recognition, which begins with an analysis of the question of otherness, by the opposition I - other, which is resolved in a synthesis in which the I integrates aspects of other, processing that is carried out thanks to the perception and consciousness, and that is found in the primary relationship of mother with her son. Then addresses the issue of recognition from three sources: the love, the legal and social esteem; during all the work made reflections and analogies with regard to education. Finally, several conclusions regarding education, both in Colombia and in Ecuador which is more oriented towards the formal aspects rather than the more human aspects are introduced.

### Keywords

Other, recognition, Lévinas, Ricoeur.

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### Resumen

El presente artículo aborda la cuestión de la educación como práctica social en la que es importante considerar la cuestión del otro y de su reconocimiento. Los dos temas son importantes debido al aumento de problemas de acoso escolar en las instituciones educativas, que señalan una falla en el reconocimiento al otro debido, en gran parte, al impacto del uso de la realidad virtual, con la que las ideas se transmiten como mensajes dirigidos a una comunidad sin rostro y que permanece anónima en las redes sociales. La reflexión se realiza de manera analítica; se apoya en las ideas de Lévinas y Ricoeur y se enriquece con los aportes de otros autores diversos. El texto se organiza alrededor de dos ejes esenciales: el otro y el reconocimiento, para lo cual, inicia con un análisis de la cuestión de la alteridad, mediante la oposición yo-otro, que se resuelve en una síntesis en la que el yo integra aspectos del otro, proceso que se realiza gracias a la percepción y la conciencia y que se funda en la relación primaria de la madre con su hijo. Luego se aborda el tema del reconocimiento a partir de tres fuentes: el amor, el jurídico y la estima social; durante todo el trabajo se realicen reflexiones y analogías con respecto a la educación. Finalmente, se introducen varias conclusiones respecto a la educación, tanto en Colombia como en Ecuador que está más orientada hacia los aspectos formales en lugar de hacia los aspectos más humanos.

### Palabras claves

Otro, reconocimiento, Lévinas, Ricoeur.

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## Introduction

This article addresses the issue of education as a social practice but addresses the question of the other and its recognition in more detail, considering them as central elements of a relevant educational practice. In order to carry out the task, the contributions of Lévinas and Ricoeur are essentially used, which are enriched and expanded with the ideas and proposals of other authors.

The aim is to re-think the issue of the other in education and the importance of its recognition as such to favor the learning-teaching process. This issue is very important since in recent years the level of bullying situations that have generated conflict at the individual, family and social level has had a profound impact on the emotional and social development of students. A person subjected to a situation of harassment faces a total lack of recognition towards his quality of individual with its limits and its valuable resources; as a consequence, may present psychological affections such as depression, isolation and even low academic performance. In addition, it is known that the harasser has a profile, whose main characteristic is the lack of empathy and recognition to others, so it makes them victims of its power.

To the extent that this problem is more and more frequent in the school environment, it is important to reflect on the recognition of the other, whose face is frequently found in classrooms, where the capacity

to realize the conditions of each student and to accept them as they are manifested is important.

Due to these considerations, this topic is relevant since the levels of alterity are diminishing as each person is increasingly abstracted from the context in which he/she lives and is limited to having interactions through electronic means; which leads to live realities that are virtual but do not put them in front of the other with their conditions and limitations.

With this reflection it is argued and tried to sustain the idea that it requires the development of the ability to recognize the other, which passes for the clear conscience on the own identity and the perception of the other in its quality of such.

The reflection is carried out analytically by expanding the ideas and arguments from two essential axes: the other, its recognition and the implications for education, lines in which the text is organized. The article ends with certain conclusions regarding the discussed topics.



## From Self to Other: the concept of alterity and the principle of individuation

An individual materially participates of the same species that includes the other human beings but, formally, is unique, indivisible and unrepeatable; with what can be said that the possibility of speaking of a self but also of a different one formally to oneself exists per se.

From this idea, it is pertinent and appropriate to relate these elements to the term of Alterity proposed by Lévinas, understood as the presence of the other in the self: "Otherness is the idea of the Infinite in the Self, the otherness is expressed in the relation between the Infinite and the Self; this relationship is metaphysical, because it is beyond anything beyond conceptual" (Quesada, 2011, p.1).

Understanding of otherness; that is to say of the relation self-other, is related to the principle of individuation, since each "I" becomes a "self" thanks to this relation. According to Pérez-Estévez this principle is understood as "the impossibility of division into an individual; it is not possible to formally consider the repetition of the latter, since it would cease to be one and therefore individual (*Individuum materiale non potest dividi in plura eiusdem naturae*)" (Pérez-Estévez, 1996, pp. 783-784). Consequently, it can also be considered that this is where the premium is not the equality or similarity but the difference.

Thus the principle of individuation can mean, starting from Scotus, a certain personal independence, understood as that state which the individual can obtain per se, in his existential and itinerant state; it is a unique, unrepeatable, absolutely irreplaceable existence from which the dignity of the individual is derived; cannot be interpreted as autism but as a condition of the possibility of any authentic relation of equality, since: "Being an individual implies to be, as an individual, radically different, different and formally different from other individuals of the same species, although simultaneously be identical, as belonging to the same species" (Pérez-Estévez, 1996, page 784).

The Other happens per se, is shown, is visible but is not an self that is measured by means of the approach, but is absolutely different and its own happening does not depend on one; that is, the Other does not appear because an I decides or determines it; appears as individual and indivisible, as "presence in us. Presence that necessarily means to exist, and to exist separately" (Quesada, 2011, p.394). That Other is what responds to that which one is not, to that which is prior to oneself and thanks to which, a person is who he is; that is, the other constitutes it in such a way that, if its existence is denied, the existence of oneself is denied.

From these reflections, we can also consider the differences between the principle of individuation of Scotus and the concept of alterity in Lévinas, because for Scotus the Principle of Individuation is explained from an ontological origin, i.e. preexisting to any general conception with tendency towards universalism. What matters is the Self in the first instance. One could speak of other "I's" but not as a priority: "Duns Scotus is going to consider the ontological origin of individuality" (Pérez-Estévez, 1996, page 783).

This principle lies in determining why the importance of clarifying the indivisibility of the Self, while for Lévinas the importance is ethical rather than ontological. Alterity (in mutual belonging to the Self) is not of a purely ontological character but has an ethical instinctive. "The relationship between the Infinite (Other) and the Self (I) is an ethical relationship..." (Quesada, 2011, p.395). While it is clear that the two authors are in both fields (both ontological and ethical) they differ in the primacy of the same when speaking of the Self as of the Other, implicitly or explicitly.

Considering these principles of alterity and individuation, it is possible to think of some implications for education.

## The question of the other and its implications in education

The other is a concrete fact, has a specific and particular existence; is not an imaginary or abstract entity, the product of some feverish disquisition, of a sleep-walking philosopher. Lévinas recognizes that “the Cartesian ontology... conceives the Same as a totality that integrates any Other and this suppresses transcendence” (Lévinas, 2008, p.170). So it is that the self and the other constitute an indivisible unity, how is this possible?

It is not a physical unit since each person has certain biological peculiarities that are his own; if one thinks even genetically, each human being is unique, perhaps sharing a certain level of inherited traits with other humans, even with other species, but even so, there are no two equal beings in the world. Rather, it is an integration process, as explained below.

The human being “is in the world and is in the known world” (Merleau-Ponty, 1994, p.11), since “reality is a solid tissue” (Merleau-Ponty, 1994, p.10) so that the perception of oneself and of the other and of the world around is not limited to a synthesis at the level of judgments or acts; is full of changes and variations that are situated in the world and are distinguished from dreams and imagination, thanks to the activity of consciousness, necessary to perceive the other and then recognize it.

This process begins with the perception, psychological process by which each person receives the impressions of the world, of other beings and things and of himself and organizes them in his mind (Gross, 2012), for which consciousness is necessary. Following Lévinas, then, it can be affirmed that “to have consciousness is to be in relation to what is” (Lévinas 1977, 183); is to have the ability to assume (oneself) to be in the world, maintain a relationship with the other and recognize it as such.

The thinker and philosopher Merleau-Ponty (1994) starts from the idea that “All consciousness is consciousness of something” (p.17), which was already evidenced by Kant when he affirmed: “the inner perception is impossible without external perception; that the world, as a connection of phenomena, anticipates the consciousness of my unity, is for me the means of realizing myself as consciousness” (Merleau-Ponty 1994: 17).

This consciousness accedes to the other through the perception that one has of it, considers it in its facticity; however, we must consider that there are differences between the others, depending on whether they are objects or people who, in turn, also have a conscience. Thus, a relationship is established that implies a mutual awareness on two levels: of itself as an individual being, and of the other as different from oneself.



Then, between the other and oneself builds a relationship that can be maintained without there being any nexus between both (Lévinas, 2008). However, this does not happen in education, as will be seen later, since, in the educational process, teachers and students necessarily have a relationship with the people around them, from which they achieve a perception of their conditions, both personally and at the level of others.

In this way, it is possible to perceive the other and try to understand it in its particular form of existence, with its own and individual characteristics. The process of capturing these characteristics has received the name of phenomenological reduction that contributes to reach a transcendental consciousness “before which the world would unfold in an absolute transparency, moved out of a series of apperceptions that the philosopher would have as mission reconstitute from the result of the same” (Merleau-Ponty, 1994, p.11).

Therefore, to understand the dynamics between the self and the other requires the existence of a vision in three levels (Merleau-Ponty, 1994): of oneself, of the other and of the others about oneself. These three levels of experience are only possible when each person recognizes that he experiences his own existence in himself before others. Each person is another that cannot be reduced to a simple perception. Its essence is irreducible and belongs to itself, since it only captures that which is within the reach of one’s own conscience and that which the other allows to transcend, which is why “one must think of the heteronomy of the Other in the Same, where the Other does not dominate the Same but awakens and disillusioned” (Lévinas, 2008, p 171).

Thus, each person is partly defined by the other individuals around it, since both perceive the objects and the individuals around and, at the same time, each impels that the self perceives certain things and is aware of them, due to their particular characteristics of form, color, size and constitution (Morris & Maisto, 2010). This is a continuous process of interaction, which also manifests itself in education: a teacher has a certain image about his students and thereby highlights some features and discredits others; similar situation occurs with students.

Each one constructs like this, a representation that arises of the perception that one has of the other one but that is constructed by oneself. In this situation, the self is not opposed to the Other, rather it integrates it as a constituent part of itself (Lévinas, 1977); consequently, the other is not a relative otherness since it exists and has its own characteristics that are susceptible of being perceived, but rather, the self-other

counter-position is solved in a synthesis, in which the other is integrated in the yes articulated and harmonious (Guidano, 1999).

Linking this idea to education, in the process of teacher-student interaction, both integrate traits or deny others that help them to constitute their professional identity, with which the other is perceived as being-in-the-world:

... As a generator of a dimension of irreducible and unique reality, which involves accepting and questioning about the world of the other. And it is in this process of putting oneself in the place of the self of the other, by which I maintain in myself the pretensions of the other as a call of an interiority that demands to be understood, that I question myself, my ordinary order, my way of living and feeling (Ponce, 2005, psr).

This leads to the consideration proposed by Lévinas in relation to the other, whose best expression, in a way that surpasses the other in me, is called Face (Sudar, 1981) and is represented by the poor, the widow, the orphan and the foreigner, as paradigmatic examples. In all these cases, their recognition implies admitting their right to life. “It is only possible to encounter and recognize the transcendent, through and through the face of the other” (Sudar 1981, 95).

According to Navarro (2008, p. 181), only the linguistic conception of Lévinas and, in particular, the term “expression” provides the keys to approaching the “face” question, since it is thanks to the “expression” that each person presents itself; an expressionless face prevents the approach and consequently denies access to the other; an expressive face, instead facilitates rapprochement and interaction; this can already be perceived from the earliest childhood in the relationship between the baby and his mother, since it is through the face and its expressions that the child accedes to the maternal world and vice versa; without expressions, the world would be empty of meaning and emotions.

This exchange also happens in the educational meeting in which the face of teachers, as well as that of students shows much more than what words express. The educational meeting not only requires content and subjects to study, but also demands an understanding of what faces show: their yearnings and dreams as well as their anguish and fears.

All these aspects are shown in the “expression” which, according to Lévinas, allows us to conceive the “face” as a first approximation to language, since it is essentially dialogic, facilitates the exchange and communication between people, so “ it is not only that the presence of the



other guarantees the possibility of all communication, but also marks its beginning “(Navarro, 2008, 181).

The face is the first contact that one person has with another and, consequently, represents a significant pole opposite to the self. Thus, the teacher comes into contact, in the first instance with a series of faces that are gradually emerging and demarcating in their individuality and particularity.

Just as the presence of the human face contributes to the baby’s realization that there is someone beyond himself (Papalia, Wendkos, & Duskin, 2005), so the self (the baby in the example) accesses his identity when he becomes aware that he is different from that face he perceives and, at the same moment, he realizes the otherness, when he perceives a face different from his own which also has a certain degree of expressiveness; exchange that generates a new logic, completely different: “The relation of alterity starts from the capacity of the” face “; from the mere presence of the other, to question the powers and authority of the ego consciousness” (Navarro, 2008, p. 183).

The face expresses the presence of the other and is the first element through which contact with him is made. It is a Gestalt signal, consisting essentially of a triangle: forehead, eyes and nose that constitute the most primitive source of information for the newborn (Spitz, 1972). The face, initially expressive in gestures and looks, can also articulate verbal language which constitutes a second level of expression that can support or refute what was initially transmitted in the face.

According to Spitz (1972) during the first six months of life the child is in a state of kinship reception, which is affirmed as the months pass in a particular form of perception that generates profound and global responses. This is a “nonverbal, non-directed, expressive communication” (Spitz, 1972, p. 41), which is the model and basis on which future expressions and recognitions of the face and of the other are developed and constructed, including those that appear between teachers and students.

This is why the self-other relationship is considered to be asymmetrical and diachronic: asymmetric since the faces express different elements that can be harmonized but can also disturb each other; and diachronic since there is a time interval between one face and the other (Sudar, 1981, p. 99): even when the baby’s face coincides with that of his mother, at the present time; however, the her face existed previously.

In this process, time is of the utmost importance because when it is considered in the relation between one and the other “transcendence arises from responsibility towards the neighbor in the proximity of others” (Lévinas, 2008, p. 169). Consequently, the self-encounter facilitates



recognition and alterity, and at the same time the self-separation favors differentiation and transcendence, since to separate is to transcend.

Thanks to the personal awareness that each person has of himself, he can get in touch with the Other; however, the construction and consolidation of one's identity is prior to this encounter (Feldman, 2007):

We take our destiny into our hands, we become responsible for our history through reflection, but also through a decision in which we commit our life; and in both cases it is a violent act that takes place in practice (Merleau-Ponty, 1994, p.20).

However, personal identity is affected by the relationship I/other in which history is constructed, in which, every word and gesture; that is, all expressions of human faces, have a meaning and express certain position. Thus, in education, the important challenge is to assume the different perspectives proposed by human faces, to the very axis of existential meaning or what Husserl has called a "genesis of meaning": "Being in the world we are doomed to meaning; and we cannot do anything, we cannot say anything that does not take a name in history" (Merleau-Ponty 1994: 19).

In order to reach this meaning, it requires recognition of the other, as it is expressed in the face that is perceived, as well as recognition of oneself and what that face tells one's self.

The implications in education of what has been expressed in the previous paragraphs are outlined below.

### *Implications for education*

Both the teacher and the students are a concrete reality, they have their own positive characteristics and also their limitations and, during the educational process, they come into relationship, so that their presence affects and is affected by what others manifest or the form in which they behave.

Both teachers and students have diverse perceptions of themselves, of others in the interaction and of the process that has brought them together. Their particular perception is shaped by the nuances and experiences that each one has had throughout its life cycle and that are put into play during the daily encounter in the class hours.

In the same way, both teachers and students have a more or less clear, more or less developed the awareness of the implications of the process and the encounter for themselves and for others. This awareness

contributes to each person contributing a part of himself to the process, but also reserves certain aspects that he may consider personal, private or unnecessary to manifest in the encounter.

This awareness is revealed in the greater or lesser knowledge that each participant has of himself, the people around him and the process that has gathered them. All these elements will have a decisive influence on the construction of the professional identity - in the case of the students - or the reinforcement of certain features of the identity - in the case of the teacher. Reason why, you can not deny the influence that these traits and the awareness that they have of them, about the process that brings together teachers and students in classrooms.

It is a set of essences that maintain a certain degree of connection between them, but at the same time have their own characteristics that distinguish them and constitute the particular identity of each. However, it is important to note that the other is prior to any awareness, perception or representation of it; it exists even before thinking about it; however, it exists in relation to oneself, when one approaches it and tries to perceive and recognize it.

Thus, education is a possible encounter between one's own being and that of others, in which it is revealed oneself as much as the other, in what both manifest - as has been seen, essentially through the face and expression - but at the same time, each has certain ideas about others, what they think, feel or pose and that requires recognition.

## The question of recognition in relation to the other

In the search for one's identity that only ends when one recognizes the value of interaction with the other and what can contribute to the process itself, it is necessary and indispensable the recognition that can be woven into a relationship based on otherness.

Ricoeur affirms that recognition is not only obtained through conflict or struggle, but also through dialogue and consensus; part of the hypothesis that: "In mutual recognition the path of self-recognition ends" (Ricoeur, 2006, p.238); to achieve this, uses a scheme of analysis that starts from "three models of intersubjective recognition" related to love, law and social esteem, which also - following the same logic - are expanded below.

*First model of recognition: love*

In pointing out the more basic and fundamental relationship between self-other, reference has been made to the mother-child bond and its impact on the constitution of one's identity through the expression that appears in a face and the recognition of otherness in realizing that there is one different than yourself.

Thus, the first model of recognition is based on this link that has as a fundamental pillar of love and which, later, encompasses all the affective relationships that constitute the subject, beginning with the family, then the friendship to culminate with the couple, which conform the basis and source of recognition or its absence (Ricoeur, 2006).

The bond established in these relationships precedes legal recognition and its beginning is located, as mentioned, in the first relation of the subject with his mother that constitutes the basis and the model on which the future relations of beings humans are structured.

In addition, it must be taken into account that the relationship of adult love moves between two poles: that of closeness and that of distance, which is why the human being is structured in a continuum in a permanent balance between fusion and independence. The main benefit of this route is the achievement of belonging at the pole of closeness and the recovery of the capacity for independence at the pole of distance.

In addition, it has another benefit, often ignored because it is more painful, but necessary if everyone wants to be structured as a human being, such as being alone, which at the same time increases confidence in the permanence of the invisible bond that has been created and which keeps group members together despite distance and separation (Bowen, 1998).

This is the primary basis of mutual recognition as the mother and the child recognize each other (or do not) as trustworthy subjects, sufficient to maintain the bond despite separation. In the same way, the friends approve each other, they are recognized as trustworthy that maintains the union even if they do not live together or see each other every day; and, likewise, it is expected that there will be a link between the teacher and students that facilitates mutual recognition and favors the learning-teaching process.

In the first relations of the child with his family, trust and recognition appear and are maintained thanks to the genealogical inscription of the child in a specific lineage, which extends in two directions: superior that indicates his maternal and paternal filiation, lines that are they open as we progress in the generations backwards and downwards that points



out the obligations and rights that each human being has to be part of his lineage.

This location assigns a particular position to each person since it identifies it as the child of and, as such, even before being constituted as a subject, deserving of a social recognition of their rights; therefore, it forms part of a specific line of transmission since its birth determines that a transfer is carried out: of life, of the family legend, of the inheritance, of a name that, in turn, favors the recognition of the particular place that each occupies in his lineage. This allows each individual to project beyond himself, to the search for recognition in other planes, essentially, the juridical and the social (Ricoeur, 2006).

A similar scheme can be adapted to the educational situation, in which each student is enrolled in a particular lineage - that of his profession - and as a consequence, refers to the professionals who preceded him and who are now his teachers and are moving forward by pointing out the obligations arising from the particular exercise of their work and which are also transmitted by the lineage in which it is inscribed.

In this way, an interesting process occurs since the teacher recognizes the student in his or her position as such and, consequently, assumes that both of them have certain obligations to have said role; but also, the student recognizes the professional lineage of which his professor is part, both as teacher, but also as a professional. This is how the specific professional identity that each student assumes when he or she makes the decision - more or less conscious and more or less certain - to choose one or another profession.

The negative counterpart of this recognition is humiliation:

... felt as the withdrawal or rejection of this approval, reaches everyone on the pre-legal plane of their "being-with" another. The individual feels like looked from above, above the shoulder, even had for nothing. Deprived of approval, it is as non-existent (Ricoeur, 2006, p 243).

This is a situation that can become the most painful in the case of students when faced with a teacher who relates in this way. Thus, the lack of recognition leads to the feeling of nonexistence, more painful experience the more lack recognition.

### *Second model of recognition: the legal*

The first model of recognition achieved through love, is socially expressed in a legal bond, whereby a child is declared as the son of and receives the

surname and the stories that his lineage has built both the family and the child who arrives to the world.

It appears thus, in the social bond established between a man and his son (since the father's surname is first inherited), a legal recognition. For the analysis of which Ricoeur is essentially based on Hegel, who “distinguishes the first features of being-legally recognized in access to legal possession of material goods, in short, in the contractual form of exchange” (Ricoeur, 2006, p 249).

However, it is not a case of the assumption of material goods, but rather the acquisition of more intangible elements that characterize a particular lineage (in the case of professions) and, sometimes, manifest themselves in symbols such as the caduceus of doctors for example or the trident of psychologists.

When it comes to legal recognition, two levels must be considered: the other and the norm, without which it would be impossible to recognize the first; which has, in turn, the double consequence of expanding the area of the rights recognized to the people and enriching the capacities that the subjects are recognized (Ricoeur, 2006).

In the same way that the bond of love generates conflicts and difficulties associated with the absence of recognition, either of the lineage or the particular characteristics of an individual; in the legal model, the conflictual dynamics comes from the rupture of the contract and the search for recognition through legal coercion, in such a way that the crime unveils the absence of recognition and allows the offense to be evaluated as an attack against the person in its universal dimension (as a human being). Individuals can only be recognized as subjects of rights if, at the same time, they are aware of normative obligations towards the other.

A similar thing applies in education, when the lack of recognition leads to demands, the stronger the more painful the absence of recognition.

### *Third recognition model: social esteem*

Recognition does not stop only at the legal level; reaches a higher value that acquires axiological tinges when it refers to esteem: “each individual person measures the importance of his own qualities for the life of the other by the same values and the same ends” (Ricoeur, 2006, p. 256).

Therefore, social esteem is closely linked to the interpretations of social mediations (whether or not they are correct), with education being the most important of them, since it covers at least 16 years of the life of



a subject, which is why which there are many opportunities to be recognized or humiliated throughout the process and at multiple levels, what can be called recognition orders.

Following Ricoeur, several types of recognition orders are registered (Ricoeur, 2006, p.259), which have an impact on the legal statement and are summarized below:

*The socio-economic complex*, which includes the technical, monetary and fiscal system that can affect the legal link by having failures in its application or by facilitating or hindering recognition of this or that segment of the population. This complex can facilitate the conditions for the meeting between teachers and students (appropriate payment to teachers, scholarships for students for example) or may hamper them by lack or misuse.

*The sociopolitical complex*, which considers the legal system, the bureaucratic, the democratic and the parallel organization of public opinion; which can equally have an impact on the legal and loving relationship by establishing forms of punishment or recognition for various facts carried out by people. This complex has a decisive impact on the educational system by imposing conditions of work and organization of the different levels of training that can be experienced as restrictive, as it does not favor the development of a person's own abilities. However, it can also propose appropriate policies for the re-insertion of education in the case of people who have difficulties of different types: physical abilities, social status, etc.

*The sociocultural complex*, which confronts the media system and its impact on the cultural reproduction of societies with the scientific system from the point of view of its institutional organization. This confrontation has led to profound changes in the way people interact, in a way that also affects the constitution of the love bond and determines the need to construct ways to face new problems such as those caused by the mass media: social networks and other.

The educational field is not alien to the influence of this complex, especially, as regards social networks that, sometimes, generate an absence of recognition of the other as such by offensive and demeaning messages. Thus appear new categories of personal and social difficulties that education must face in creative and relevant ways.

These three orders of recognition have a diverse impact on the people and the conditions that surround them and determine, that diverse accreditations are established according to the order implied in the situation of a given person. Then, when two people enter into competi-

tion and rivalry, they manage to get their places accredited or recognized, thanks to what have been termed as economies of greatness (Ricoeur, 2006, pp. 260 et seq.), For which, we must take into account the following very important aspects:

- The evaluation of social benefits of individuals who appeal to the idea of justice. To achieve this there is a great variety of criteria by which a person may be “large” or “small” in respect of the economy of greatness, which is to a greater or lesser degree consistent with a certain type of social success.
- If protesting people want their complaint to be considered “justified”, they must comply with the standards or levels established in an evaluation that is based on a series of tests or test batteries. With this, the need arises to determine the forms of justice based on the strategies of justification used and not on the values that people share.
- When the legitimate common good is sought, agreement is impossible without a prior discussion of the implications of the various issues in dispute; this is what is termed as greatness whose allocation is closely related to the evaluation performed on the basis of the above criteria and the corresponding evidence that indicates that the person owns it.
- Finally, the most important challenge of this situation is the relation between agreement and disagreement in the assignment of greatness, but also of the criteria to determine it as such, in such a way that it acquires a tinge of legitimacy, without which, it can be easily questioned.

These principles can be easily applied in education when, in recent years, there has been a proliferation of standardized ways of measuring everything in education, from the student/teacher to the educational institution, to its performance and production. Thus, recognition has been limited to a formal aspect such as compliance with these norms, without stopping in a more human and real recognition of the true potential and capacity of individuals.

The forms of recognition are applied according to the various orders of magnitude and Ricoeur (2006) points out six, which are summarized below and which the author analyzes based on the term *cities*:

*The city of God*, linked to the principle of grace, allows us to separate inspired greatness from other more earthly forms that may have been

corrupted by “vain glory,” and to hierarchize types of goods - such as love - capable of uniting mankind.

*The city of opinion:* in which, the principle is that of recognition by others.

*The domestic city:* with its principles associated with values such as fidelity, kindness, justice, mutual assistance.

*The civic city:* with the principle of subordination to the general will as the basis of legitimation of civic greatness; citizenship relations are mediated by a second level relationship, which is based on the social contract that makes everything happen as if each citizen engaged with himself and did not think more than he himself.

*The mercantile city:* whose principle is the mercantile bond that relates the people by means of goods that all desire.

*The industrial city:* under the principle that it is the industrialists who must manage the utilities with skill.

As one can easily perceive, the first levels are more closely linked with education, concern for the values and citizenship of the individuals in formation, as well as for their recognition. The last two levels are more related to the production and economic development of a people without ruling out its decisive influence on educational processes.

Ricoeur (2006) points out that between each of these worlds there are rivalries for the tests that justify the positions of each one of them; the knowledge of the other worlds extends the disagreements of the categories to the tests themselves and even to their capacity to achieve the common good.

Hence, confrontation and disagreement can lead to recognition but also to invalidation; the latter entails a litigation that affects the evidence but much more than that, the very notion of greatness; for example: for an industrialist, what is the value of an orchestra director? In such a way that it is a venturesome enterprise to become great in another world that is not own; especially if the categories used to assess greatness are unknown.

Similar problems are faced by educational institutions and careers within the same organization; thus, there are disciplines more valued than others and, consequently, students also receive more or less recognition according to the career in which they perform.

Because of this, it is important to criticize the values that govern each of the worlds as well as the criteria that support them, with which the importance of understanding the other world first appears and then criticizing it; same situation for a person who tries to know another: you

have to understand from what world it speaks, what its frame of reference is, in order to know it.

In this way, it is possible to reach a compromise that can open the door to the common welfare, this requires that each person is in the capacity and also in the desire to submit their positions to a reflection and questioning, to consider the other's positions and to undertake together the task of finding an intermediate point.

Strange thing in the world today with so many polarities that are faced and sometimes even accused of being simple accommodation to a given situation, thus: "can be considered commitment as the form of mutual recognition in situations of conflict and of dispute derived from the plurality of the economies of greatness" (Ricoeur, 2006, p.266).

However, these considerations do not take into account the question of the vertical dimension that requires attention to the opposition between large and small and that is naturally opposed to the horizontal dimension of recognition in the level of self-esteem. It is the concept of authority that opposes two groups of people: those who rule (who are usually few) in opposition to those who obey (or are supposed to do so and who are the vast majority).

To understand this concept of authority in relation to recognition, it must be emphasized that this idea has an undeniable cultural aspect and inevitably leads to the issue of institutional authority: it is considered that taking something as true implies a "value-more" than, "more" necessarily implying that it is above and, consequently, points towards a vertical dimension. This is also very common in the institutional aspect when there are public organizations that evaluate educational institutions and establish which are more worthy or better meet the standards and which are less worthy because they have failures in compliance. There are also teacher-student relationships that establish such considerations.

However, there is the possibility of establishing a horizontal relationship, in which, instead, the concept of authority is linked to a tacit recognition of superiority from one to the other. The most appropriate model of this type of relationship is the bond between the teacher and the disciple, in which there is a recognition of the greatness of the other in a natural way: "just as a candle lit, spirit of genuine art, from heart to heart, to be enlightened" (Herrigel, 2005, pp. 22, 23).

In education also these phenomena can be perceived; there are many possibilities to recognize the other and their resources but also to fail in this recognition. From the beginning of the educational life and throughout its course, teachers can recognize the differences between

their students or try to homogenize them at any cost, especially when they themselves are subject to institutional pressures that try to order their actions but restrict them.

It should therefore be remembered that education as a social practice may be the most apparent broth in which multiple conflicts arise in various areas such as black minorities or minority cultural groups such as youth cultures. The central nucleus of these minorities is organized around the need to recognize a personal identity that refers in turn, to a collective type. This recognition is all the more preemptory when a temporary consideration is included, since they have been traditionally discriminated against over a period of years, if not centuries (as was the case of blacks as slaves) and, as a consequence, education plays a transcendental role in this process, having the door open to offer a recognition of their identity and the opportunity to exercise it in relation to others.

In these cases, the struggle for personal and legal recognition brings personal considerations into play and reminds each person (both unacknowledged and unrecognized) to confront the question of self-esteem: for example: the recognition that women could access education necessarily implied the recognition that a woman are the same as a man and, more importantly, that “he” is the same as a woman.

Consequently, the identity of the people involved in this struggle is shaped, in part, by this recognition or by its absence as well as by the perception (bad or good) one has over the other. The absence of recognition reaches the identity of the people and affects, finally, the image that they make of themselves since they perceive it as deserving of contempt and condemnation. This image is internalized and also manifests itself in the form of self-depreciation, which is the most serious effect of lack of recognition (Ricoeur, 2006).

The resolution of these conflicts opposes two different policies that affect the possible forms that recognition will take: that of difference versus that of universal equality. Both are based on the notion of dignity, which also opposes two versions (Ricoeur, 2006): the liberal, equality, that emphasizes the rational status shared by human beings and the difference that considers the affirmation of shared in general form as the expression of a totalizing hegemony that establishes as criteria of measurement and comparison: a man, white, from the city and educated. This unique definition is that which appears as discriminatory, since it is impossible for all human beings to identify themselves and construct their identity in function of it.

This is the reason, finally, for the idea of “knowing if” any policy of egalitarian dignity, based on the recognition of universal capacity, has to be equally homogenizing (Ricoeur, 2006: 273). This implies that there is a refusal to recognize that there is legitimacy in the idea of a particular construction of individual projects within a collective.

This problem requires the definition of a global and particular situation at the same time. The recognition of the common aspects shared by human beings and at the same time, the acceptance of the various elements that make us different, in a game in which the totality and unity are perceived while recognizing their particularities.

This situation reveals its urgency as societies increasingly face problems of minorities that demand recognition; which necessarily implies the recognition of society as such, in its capacity to attend to the various groups that live in it and affirm their rights.

In this way, one wonders how the recognition in this global/local tension can arise. Ricoeur indicates that Hegel offers “a powerful speculative instrument” (Ricoeur, 2006, p.274) by using the resources of the negative as generators of normativity, so that crime and contempt become the sources from which it may arise the recognition of the other and related concepts such as self-confidence, respect, self-esteem.

This recognition cannot be extended infinitely since there are limits and situations that require particular attention, so it is also possible to ask when a subject is considered truly recognized? (Ricoeur, 2006, page 274), to answer this question, it is worth mentioning what the author points out:

The experiences of pacified recognition cannot serve as a solution to the perplexities aroused by the very concept of struggle, let alone the resolution of the conflicts in question. The certainty that accompanies states of peace offers rather a confirmation that the moral motivation of the struggles for recognition is not illusory. For this reason, it can only be a truce, of clearings; it would be called ‘calveros’, in which the sense of action emerges from the mists of doubt with the seal of action that is appropriate (Ricoeur, 2006, p. 276).

Thus, action as such is not enough to offer a recognition that starts from one to the other. It is necessary to think about the appropriateness of this action, which raises many more questions than answers, since this convenience, in turn, must be recognized by the people who pose the action at once, who is understood, accepted - in consequence - recognized by the people who will experience it in themselves.



With this, it is possible to realize that Lévinas is located in the pole of understanding of the relation self-other from an ethical and anti-ontological foundation, where the struggle against the conception of being as assimilation is seen; he takes distance from ontology after considering that it establishes a discourse in which the Other is reduced to the same. The author's aim is to seek and account for a crucial question: "how the philosophy of the original asymmetry between the self and the other, asymmetry taken from the ethical primacy of the other, can explain the reciprocity between unequal members" (Ricoeur, 2006, p 204).

In the self-other relationship, being becomes overwhelming to the point of assimilating to itself all possible differences. Lévinas does not conform to this finding and advocates a different path to the primacy and domination of being, guaranteed by the ontological path. Consequently, the other should not be clothed with social, cultural, political, etc.

Ethics is no longer founded on the self but on the other, but taking into account that there is no face of the other without a self that captures it, which would ultimately be the human requirement of responsibility that underlies the author's ethical proposal. From the above, it can be said that the other reveals itself, but how does the self does to know the revelation of the other? From the Levinasian point of view this assertion has a reciprocal role-sharing character and one should not think that "the same" is the other, of the "other".

The other cannot be filled with characteristics because in the ethical relationship there are none, because the other cannot be "dressed in...". If this is done, it would be possible to propose metaphysics of subjectivity, that is, a metaphysical foundation of "otherness" that arises because the subject is the determiner of the presence of the other and the metaphysics of subjectivity; on the contrary, from the metaphysics of the Lithuanian thinker, the other becomes a "*subjectum*" pure subjectivity. The other is the one who imposes, the other is the one who founds.

In Ricoeur, instead, an ethic of reciprocity is expressed in terms of "I" - "You", because there is a dialogue, there is reciprocity, that is, the other is an "I" that is not me. This relationship allows the possibility of dialogue, while in Lévinas this possibility is not found. What is found in his ethics is an imposition of the other towards "I" (me). The other is a self that is not me. In Lévinas the other is sacred. In the other there is a revelation of something sacred. The other is much more than me.

In Ricoeur, if the "you" is sacred it could be said that a dialogue with that sacred cannot be sustained. There is a total imposition of the other towards an "I" (me). The "you" usually has certain characteristics

and features and in Lévinas it is not possible to find these characteristics. The other cannot be dressed, so in the field of ethics it is not about representing the other but rather about “receiving the revelation of the other.” In this sense the presence of the other, which is “face”, does not pass through representation nor pass through knowledge; if passed through the knowledge “the face” of the other would stop being “face” to become category.

## Conclusions

Both phenomena: consciousness and perception are essential to enter into relationship with the other, which is captured in its facticity and organicity. The other is so revealed to the personal conscience, in a relationship of mutual influence, since only certain characteristics are perceived and not the whole since the other is much more than that which can be perceived.

The best way the other expresses itself is with the face and expression. It seems that both are the synthesis of the self and the different, the alien, that being, which is only accessed through the logic built in oneself, during the development itself, since you only look at the other, from oneself.

The other requires recognition in its very constitution: its identity. However, in order to achieve this, it is necessary for one to recognize the impact that the identity and constitution of the other has upon itself.

The recognition is made from three extremely important instances: love that refers the individual to a particular lineage; the legal that inscribes it as a subject of rights in a specific social environment and that of social esteem that makes it a subject of rights in relation to other people that affect its own construction.

This process is not done without conflicts and struggles since recognition constitutes the basis of the construction of the self in the group in which each person feels to belong.

In the national plans of Education, both in Colombia and in Ecuador, it is considered a great initiative regarding the way to be educated in the classrooms; all under a objective “progressive” criterion which, in many cases, is exclusive because they are not considered training and development plans such as the context, the educational media, teachers and, above all, the voice of the student. Education is called “integral” but what is prolonged is exclusivity and conformity.



The students are considered as a single group, as a single achievement to be achieved without taking into account that the contexts of life in some places more than others are precarious and insufficient. Everything is thought from a general conception with a tendency towards universalism. It is even more evident in the famous state tests, where it is assumed that there were sufficient guarantees to obtain answers to these tests and to this is added the desire to think education in the same way for a diverse context.

If teachers or educational agents succeed in approaching one of the many paths of integral education; in this case in particular, taking the Scotus perspective as an educative and individual (non-individualistic) and integrative view, it may be possible for each student to see a similarity and sameness among the others; but also to identify and integrate their differences with those of others, thus enabling them to listen and be heard at the time of the learning-teaching process.

If it were possible to form individual people capable of working out of differences and similarities before others, it would be possible to have not only simple operators of a political system where the interest is to produce and exploit the human, but that individual characteristic would allow the presence of really human people concerned with other people as such and not as objects of exploitation.

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