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Artículos

**PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION IN SPINOZA: ABOUT VOLUNTARY SUBMISSION
AND RATIONAL BECOMING**

**FILOSOFÍA DE LA EDUCACIÓN EN SPINOZA: ACERCA DE LA SUMISIÓN
VOLUNTARIA O EL DEVENIR RACIONAL¹**

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Resumen

Este artículo propone lo siguiente acerca de la filosofía de la educación Spinozista: 1) la educación debe ser comprendida como una tendencia en dos direcciones opuestas, porque el pensamiento de Spinoza puede entenderse como una filosofía de la tendencia a partir de dos polos diferenciales; 2) las direcciones de esa tendencia son la reproducción y la libertad (creación de nuevas subjetividades); 3) los afectos tienen el rol de sumirnos en las ideas generales de la imaginación colectiva o generar ideas que propicien la diferencia como horizonte colectivo; 4) la filosofía de la educación Spinozista nos muestra *in situ* cómo devenir ser racional.

Palabras Clave: educación, reproducción, libertad, imaginación, razón.

Abstract

This article proposes the following about Spinoza Philosophy of Education: 1) Education must be understood as a tendency in two opposite directions, due to Spinoza's thought can be understood as a philosophy of the tendency from two differential poles; 2) this tendency directions are reproduction and freedom (creation of new subjectivities); 3) the affections have the role of immersing us in the general ideas of collective imagination or generating ideas that motivate the difference as a collective horizon; 4) Spinoza philosophy of education shows us how to become *in situ* rational being.

Keywords: Education, reproduction, freedom, imagination, reason.

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1. INTRODUCTION

William Rabenort, in his work *Spinoza as educator*, proposes the following task: "*and since Spinoza gives no systematic or explicit treatment of education, our task involves the construction of the theory of education which is implied in philosophy*"². Apparently, there is no other way for those who intend to formulate a philosophy of education from an ontological and conceptual Spinozist foundation. The Dutch philosopher devoted few lines to the problem of education in his work, at least in an explicit sense. But we must remember, as a powerful gesture against the educational institution, that Spinoza did reject a teaching chair at the University of Heidelberg³. It is undeniable that a theory of education can be reconstructed from its doctrines. Ethics, his great intellectual treatise⁴ is the most recurrent place of appearance of the word education⁵ and an essential source: in it, the process of formation of the human being always appears related to the affections and the liberating or enslaving character that they forge in our own ontological constitution.

This writing is far from being the first attempt to state a philosophy of education based on Spinozist guidelines. We can instance some contemporary studies that go in the same direction, for example, Johan Dahlbeck⁶, in *Spinoza and education*, tries to show us that between critical theory and the central place of *Ethics* in the Spinozist corpus, there is a space to think of education as an ethical project that dislocates the concept of the student as a consumer. German Bula⁷, in *Spinoza: education for change*, proposes that to elaborate a Spinozist education it is necessary to think about the formative institutional framework, in a novel way: control must be ceded to teachers, students and institutions where education is experienced. This means to reject the objectives of ranking based on standardized tests, subject to verticalized, transnational and authoritarian policies; in other words, to banish the reproductive model of education. Finally, Nimrod Aloni, in *Spinoza as Educator*⁸ relates Spinoza to Aristotle and, through such analogy, describes his philosophy as a eudemonistic theory and a liberating pedagogy. Spinozism would then promote an education identified with the image of a free man, which would be the common denominator of any interpretation that is inspired by his ideas.

This text does not depart from this tradition but relieves certain distinctive elements. It starts from one basic idea that gives a problematic *status* to Spinozist philosophy: 1st) Spinoza's thinking must be understood as a philosophy of tendency. This statement is explained from the ontological foundations of his doctrine and by the interpretations that highlight the dynamic character of his philosophy. This, in turn, would imply, 2nd) the Spinozist philosophy of Spinozist tendency follows

² William Rabenort, *Spinoza as educator* (New York: AMS Press, 1972), 6.

³ Frederick Pollock, *Spinoza. His life and philosophy* (London: Elibron Classics, 2005).

⁴ Steven Nadler, *Spinoza* (Madrid: Acento Editorial, 2004); Pilar Benito, *Baruch Spinoza. Una nueva ética para la liberación humana* (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2015).

⁵ Emilia Giancotti. *Lexicon spinozanum*, V.1, A-K. (La Haye: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970).

⁶ Johan Dahlbeck, *Spinoza and education. Freedom, understanding and empowerment* (London: Routledge, 2016).

⁷ German Bula, *Spinoza: educación para el cambio* (Bogotá: Ediciones Unisalle, 2017).

⁸ Nimrod Aloni, "Spinoza as Educator: From eudaimonistic ethics to an empowering and liberating pedagogy", *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, vol. 40 n 4 (2008), 531-544.

two directions in the educational dimension: the reproduction of certain values, and the tendency towards freedom. We should not fall into the error of understanding freedom and reproduction as two irreconcilable poles, but as a process of ontological constitution of subjectivity mediated by affections. 3rd) The affections start from general ideas typical of the collective imagination. From there, the slow process of arriving at difference as a collective and individual horizon (freedom) begins. Every subject starts from a state of ignorance and dependence on the adventitious (the established values). Finally, 4th) the philosophy of Spinozist education shows us the process to become rational beings, or the circumstances by which we remain subject to the general ideas of the imagination. For the same reason, there is a tendency towards voluntary submission, and a tendency to break with the previously established values of a given dominant culture. Both options are possible. 5) The last part of this article presents an analysis of the Chilean institution based on the theoretical premises of Spinozism.

2. SPINOZA: A PHILOSOPHY OF TENDENCY

In a 1976 paper, before the appearance of *Spinoza or Hegel*, Pierre Macherey held the following thesis: the history of philosophy is a struggle of tendencies. In his own words: "For Marxism, the history of philosophy is an objective history: a process, a struggle, a struggle of tendencies, precisely, a struggle between two tendencies, said Engels, and then Lenin"⁹. While Macherey's writing has almost no allusions to Spinoza, we know that the French materialist tradition of the second half of the twentieth century returns to him to refine certain Marxist theses. Althusser points out that Spinoza introduced an unprecedented theoretical revolution, which can be considered the only philosophical antecedent of Marx¹⁰. This writing by Macherey, more attached to the Marxist tradition, concludes that the struggle of tendencies in philosophy is universal, and that it determines the existence of philosophical systems¹¹.

In *Spinoza or Hegel*, Macherey delves in detail into Spinoza's analysis in light of the weight of the Hegelian interpretive tradition. In general, he concludes that many of Hegel's theses distort Spinozist thinking. But more interesting is the importance that the term tendency acquires as it improves in its argumentation. Macherey points out: "because Hegel rebukes Spinoza for having banished all movement from his philosophy [...] we should be surprised to see him ignore, or falsify, an essential tendency in Spinozism"¹². Hegel points out that the absolute unity of the Spinozist substance "has the form of an unmoved unity"¹³, immota. Thus, it subtracts all dynamism from the Spinozist thinking system. And Macherey, at the end of the text makes the following observation: "if we eliminate Hegelian teleology [...] this evolutionary conception of the history of philosophy disappears as well", we find in Spinoza a "the struggle of tendencies that do not carry within themselves the promise of their resolution"¹⁴.

⁹ Pierre Macherey, "La historia de la filosofía considerada como lucha de tendencias", from *Filosofía y cambio social*, Louis Althusser *et al.* (Argentina: Ediciones Metropolitanas, 1984), 43.

¹⁰ Louis Althusser *et al.*, *Reading capital: the complete edition*. (London-New York: Verso: 2016).

¹¹ Pierre Macherey, "La historia de la filosofía considerada como lucha de tendencias", from *Filosofía y cambio social*, Louis Althusser *et al.* (Argentina: Ediciones Metropolitanas, 1984).

¹² Pierre Macherey, *Spinoza or Hegel*. (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 50.

¹³ Friedrich Hegel, *The Science of logic*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 212.

¹⁴ Pierre Macherey, *Spinoza or Hegel*, (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 212.

Macherey, then, proposes that Spinoza's political ontology is inscribed within a philosophy of tendency (but no longer universal). The justification is internal and follows from the same system: if a tendency reached its highest degree, it would be impossible to think of it as a definitive (formed) product. The internal dynamism of Spinozist theory forbids us to think about the assumption of any kind of teleology, that is, the determination of transcendent ends or adventitious (formed) values. "Now all the prejudices which I intend to mention here turn on this on point, the widespread belief among men that all things in Nature are like themselves in acting with an end in view"¹⁵. In that sense, a tendency expresses a tension in continuous motion: the unfolding of the power proper to things (modes) of nature. Spinozist theory expresses tendencies that are not exhausted in representation: there is a set that is not summable¹⁶ and that differs internally. If power qualifies all of nature¹⁷, then neither totalization nor representation nor a form nor an end are determinants of the things produced; but the production and deployment of such power define them. A philosophy of tendency is characterized by the continuity, tension, and proper movement of things in a perpetual state of change, composing and decomposing *ad infinitum*. For this reason, we turn to Henri Bergson, to define the concept of tendency:

There is nothing already finished, but only things that are evolving; there are no motionless states, but only states that change, endlessly. Resting is simply apparent, or rather relative. The awareness we have of our own person, in its continuous flow, introduces us into the interior of a reality according to the model of which we must represent the others. All reality is therefore a tendency, if one accepts to call a tendency to a change of direction in a nascent state¹⁸.

Reality, being a tendency and not a thing, is defined more by its movement than by its properties. In this sense, a philosophy of tendency aims to capture the complex directions in which reality is expressed: resting is apparent and only movement expresses the evolution of things under its immanent, dynamic, and complex character. Numbers, classes, species, and genera are not methods of capturing the direction of things¹⁹, because they petrify movement. Spinoza affirms the same when he points out that "no definition involves or expresses a fixed number of individuals"²⁰; or Bergson postulating that "there is no means of reconstituting, with the fixity of concepts, the mobility of the real"²¹ since our mind represents states and things and not their activity. We recognize, thus, in Spinoza at least three ontological dimensions in which the tendency would be expressed as a form of constitution of the modes.

¹⁵ Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. I, ap., 239.

¹⁶ Pierre Macherey, Spinoza or Hegel (Minneapolis-London: University of Minnesota Press, 2011).

¹⁷ Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. I, prop. XXXIV).

¹⁸ Henri Bergson. El pensamiento y lo moviente (Buenos Aires: Editorial Cactus, 2013), 211.

¹⁹ Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza: practical philosophy (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988).

²⁰ Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley. (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. I, prop. VIII, schol. II, 64.

²¹ Henri Bergson. El pensamiento y lo moviente (Buenos Aires: Editorial Cactus, 2013), 212.

a) The tendency of bodies to composition and decomposition. To the prop. XIII of the second book *Ethics*, followed by a series of axioms, definitions, slogans, and postulates that in its entirety assemble the theory of the composition of Spinozist bodies. For Spinoza, there are only simple and complex bodies, but they are not at all defined by their hierarchy or by serving as the first foundation. The important matter is that "*La seule chose qu'on peut savoir, c'est que certains corps sont plus complexes que d'autres et ont plus de relations que d'autres avec l'extérieur. Donc, une pure différence de degré*"²². Spinoza from the beginning makes it clear that bodies are distinguished by their movement (Lem. I) and that they agree according to a certain "relation of movement"²³. Just as bodies can be divided *ad infinitum*, they can also agree and compose with others forming more powerful and complex bodies. There is, then, a tendency to the composition or decomposition of bodies that is explained by the shared movement, convenience, or tension that many bodies execute²⁴ (the individual is nothing more than the composition of parts²⁵). In conclusion, "*il n'y a de mode existant que composé, toute existence est par définition composée*"²⁶. and that movement of composition or collective decomposition determines the tendency of any type of body (not human, only).

b) Affections as a transition to greater or lesser perfection. Affections cannot be explained without going into the specificity of the composition of the human body. The human body is characterized by being very complex, capable of being affected and to affect the external bodies, because it needs them to be able to be preserved²⁷. The more complex the body, the more it can affect and be affected, and so, the greater the soul's ability to perceive a larger number of things²⁸. That relationship established between the power of the soul and the body is mediated by affections. For Spinoza the individual is "*é una relazione tra un esteriore ed un interiore che si costituiscono nella relazione*"²⁹ and affections, by definition, are a step (*transitio*) towards a greater or lesser degree of power or perfection of the individual³⁰. Therefore, the greater or lesser the power of the body, the greater or lesser our cognitive power will be. Unlike Cartesian dualism, where the

²² "The only thing we know is that certain bodies are more complex than others, and that some of them have a stronger relationship with the outside than others. Thus, it is just a difference in degree". Pierre-François Moreau, *Spinoza et le spinozisme* (Paris, Presses Universitaires de France, 2009), 75.

²³ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley. (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. II, ap., prop. XIII, def., 253.

²⁴ For example, the bird is composed of organs, wings, beak and feathers. However, it flies by establishing a relationship with the surrounding air. Its flight power is defined by the shared movement that each of its parts executes when gliding, which distinguishes it from other animals; even from other birds that do not possess this ability. So, the sum of organs, wings, beak and feathers does not result in the ability to fly.

²⁵ Charles Ramond, *Le Vocabulaire de Spinoza* (Paris: Ellipses, 1999).

²⁶ "There is no existing mode that is not composite. All existence is composite, by definition". Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* (Paris, Les éditions du Minuit, 1968), 189.

²⁷ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley. (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. II, prop. XIII, post. I, III, IV and VI.

²⁸ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley. (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. II, prop. XIV.

²⁹ "A relationship between an exterior and an interior that are constituted in the relationship". Vittorio Morfino, *Il tempo de la moltitudine. Materialism e politica prima e dopo Spinoza* (Roma: Manifestolibri, 2005), 73.

³⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. III, aff. def. II and III.

principle of action points out that when the body suffers the soul acts – there is hierarchy – the Spinozist theory postulates that "*ce qui est passion dans l'âme est aussi passion dans le corps, ce qui est action dans l'âme est aussi action dans le corps*"³¹. If we are individuals composed of soul and body³², passions cannot be explained only as the inner product of a psychological consciousness closed in on itself. "*il luogo originario sui cui agiscono le passioni non è l'interiorità, ma lo spazio tra gli individui di cui l'interiorità stessa è un effetto storico*"³³. Thus, the human soul will be more capable of perceiving a larger number of things, the more joyful encounters is able to compose through its encounter with the outside. We must not confuse perfection with the fullness of all divine properties: for Spinoza its definition is nothing else but our state of constitution at the present time³⁴. Joy is the direction of the tendency that makes us move to a greater power of our body and our understanding (ontological and epistemological parallelism). On the contrary, sadness leads us to a lesser power to act and understand. The tension in which this theory of affections immerses us ultimately shows us that the human being is not defined as a rational being -possessor of a property-, but as a desiring being³⁵. The tendency towards greater or lesser perfection makes it fluctuate between a pole of positive and negative encounters. To learn to compose positive encounters and increase our joyful potency, we must face the "*complessa trama di relazioni*"³⁶ that is the social field, and overcome the servitude to which we are subjected by the general ideas of the imagination.

c) The political-social bodies as a tendency towards enlargement or towards the concentration of power. Finally, in the political-social sphere, the tendency is expressed in a process of enlargement of power or concentration of power. Châtelet points out that political theories that are concerned with "discussions concerning good and bad regimes are abstract"³⁷. If we accept that Spinozist theory is strictly immanent³⁸, it is impossible to raise the existence of a privileged form of government. One can make the description of the types of governments existing *de facto*, as analyzed in the *Political Treatise*; but as effects of nature, there is no form of

³¹ "What is passion in the soul is also passion in the body; what is action in the soul is also action in the body". Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza et le problème de l'expression (Paris: Les éditions du minuit, 1968), 235.

³² Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley. (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. II, prop. XIII, coroll.

³³ "Passions do not act on interiority, but on the space between individuals of which interiority itself is a historical effect". Vittorio Morfino, Il tempo de la moltitudine. Materialism e politica prima e dopo Spinoza (Roma: Manifestolibri, 2005), 73.

³⁴ Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. II, def. VI.

³⁵ Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. III, aff. def. I.

³⁶ "Complex web of relationships". Vittorio Morfino, Il tempo de la moltitudine. Materialism e politica prima e dopo Spinoza (Roma: Manifestolibri, 2005).

³⁷ François Châtelet *et al.* Historia del pensamiento político (Madrid: Tecnos, 1987), 63.

³⁸ Martial Gueroult. Spinoza, Dieu (Ethique, 1) (Paris, Editions Aubier-Montaigne, 1968), Yirmiyahu Yovel, Spinoza and others heretics. The marrano of reason (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1989); Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza et le problème de l'expression (Paris, Les éditions du minuit, 1968); Isabel Balza. "Los feminismos de Spinoza", *Daimon. Revista Internacional de Filosofía*, n 63 (2014), 13-26. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6018/daimon/199491>; Cristian Tejeda, "La importancia de la causa inmanente en la Ética de Spinoza", *Revista de filosofía*, n 71 (2015), 163-175. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4067/S0718-43602015000100013>

government that is superior to another. "The originality of the analysis consists of presenting a physics of political society. This physics, freed from moral perspectives, and excluding all finalism and anthropomorphism, considers society as a body made up of a set of individual bodies"³⁹. The determinant of Spinoza's political theory, then, are its two constituent tendencies: the expansion of power, and the concentration of power⁴⁰. The forms of government are determined by that power (*potentia*), and the result is a singular political organization (*potestas*). Étienne Balibar confirms this interpretation: "the notion of 'right' has not *priority*, for that priority belongs to the notion of 'power'. One might say that the word *right* (*Jus*) is used to express the originary reality of power (*potentia*) in the language of politics"⁴¹. It follows that the forms of government are neither set in first place nor put before the productive tension of the power. For the same reason, the political is defined more clearly if it is understood as a tendency:

That is why we can affirm that the political in Spinoza is a tendency in two opposite directions: "expansion of power" (*potentia*), and "concentration of power" (*potentia*). Spinoza's philosophy is animated by movement, by an intrinsic dynamism, by the idea that what we are is a construction and a process where there nothing is prefixed⁴².

3. REPRODUCTION AND FREEDOM AS TENDENCIES IN THE EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION

If we conceive of Spinozist thinking as a philosophy of tendency, we can understand the educational field as a tendency in two opposite directions: reproduction and freedom. These two concepts are not extreme poles, but processes that differ from each other, in an internal tension. When we refer to reproduction we do not refer "to the models that establish the concept of 'social or cultural reproduction'", since they are objected to "that the very logic of their construction prevents them from accounting for the 'historical change'"⁴³. We define reproduction simply as reproduction, that is, the production of the same. Freedom, in turn, can be understood as an immanent tendency towards the production of the different. Both, however, are part of the nature of the production of the social subject and should never be understood as one as the truth and the other as an anomaly of the process. This would go against the very definition of immanence that "it views this-worldly existence as all there is, as the only actual being and the sole source of ethical value"⁴⁴. Affections are not just vices of the human condition⁴⁵; the superstitions of consciousness belong to our faculty of creating illusions⁴⁶; and, therefore, reproduction is part of human nature and must be explained in its immanent production process.

³⁹ François Châtelet *et al.* Historia del pensamiento político (Madrid: Tecnos, 1987), 63-64.

⁴⁰ Cristian Tejeda, Spinoza, una política del cuerpo social (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2020).

⁴¹ Étienne Balibar, Spinoza and politics (London-NewYork: Verso, 2008), 59.

⁴² Cristian Tejeda, Spinoza, una política del cuerpo social (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2020), 114-115.

⁴³ Jean-Claude Passeron, "La teoría de la reproducción social como una teoría del cambio: una evaluación crítica del concepto de contradicción interna", *Estudios Sociológicos de El Colegio de México* vol. I n 3 (1983), 417-442.

⁴⁴ Yirmiyahu Yovel, Spinoza and others heretics. The marrano of reason (Princeton-Oxford: Princeton University Press, 1989), preface, ix.

⁴⁵ Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley. (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), TP, I, §1.

⁴⁶ Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza: practical philosophy (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988).

Education, thus, begins in the inevitable heteronomous relationship between the subject and the society: a body unfit to act *in situ*, an understanding unsuitable for conceiving ideas *in situ*. Childhood is also not a negative moment of our constitution, but the dependence in which we live in this period must be recognized. To preserve ourselves and be able to modify things on the outside, we need the assistance of others (parents, uncles, educators). We insist that these processes of ontological constitution always involve a collective, or as Spinoza says, a multitude (or multitudes). The educational institution is also a body of bodies that affects our subjectivities by opting for certain approaches or tendencies. Thus, our encounters and effective relationships, the presuppositions of an educational institution and the assumptions of our own culture direct us towards voluntary submission and rational becoming, either we accept the values established as unquestionable, transcendental truths or we immanently examine their presuppositions and understand them as forms constituted in a historical process.

Becoming rational implies the understanding of the singularities and differences that culture veils when postulating eternal truths. We are referring, by the way, to the presuppositions of Western culture. "Only a careful consideration of human nature [...] it will allow us to truly educate her to be free"⁴⁷. If in the process of becoming rational some subjects become capable of analyzing such elements in depth, we will say that their capacity to act have increased, because they have discovered the historical causes of their constitution.

In *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, one of the first glimpses of the importance of education for Spinoza appears. To achieve the great happiness, we must understand the connection that all things of nature have, and so, we need both a mechanic, and a clinic or therapeutic medicine. "Furthermore, attention must be paid to moral philosophy and likewise the theory of the education of children"⁴⁸. Although some of Spinoza's observations about children seem to give them a lower status just because they are infants – for example, that they have a body suitable for very few things – nothing is understood without alluding to the unfolding of the child's body in its becoming.

What are we to say about babies? A man of advanced years believes their nature to be so different from his own that he could not be persuaded that he had ever been a baby if he did not draw a parallel from other cases. But, I prefer to leave these matters unresolved, so as not to afford material for the superstitious to raise new problems⁴⁹.

This statement rests on the ignorance that we have about childhood as a positive place of our becoming. "If most people were born adults and only a few were born babies, then everybody would feel sorry for babies because they would then look on infancy not as a natural and necessary thing but as a fault or flaw in Nature.

⁴⁷ Nicola Abbagnano and Aldo Visalberghi, *Historia de la pedagogía* (Ciudad de México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1964), 332.

⁴⁸ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), TI, §15, 6.

⁴⁹ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. IV, prop. XXXIX, schol., 342.

There are many others examples of this kind that we might note⁵⁰. However, these Spinozist annotations on childhood, -which are not abundant- connect with the historical phenomenon of invisibilization of childhood. "When children acquire autonomy, they belong to the world of adults, and only when you access this world, you begin to be part of history; consequently, by refusing with all its characteristics, there have also not been [the child] in history"⁵¹. Precisely, the adult-centric perspective⁵² is the predominant one when thinking about childhood and even the traces of this record are historical. The adult-centric perspective behaves like a reproductive cloak that hides the positive characters of childhood: the infant is not a miniature adult; the infant is not a project for adulthood.

While Spinoza does not think of educational institutions as we know them today, he acknowledges the role that such institutions, the family or religion, have in the transference a certain approach to understanding the world. Parents can get children to associate feelings of joy or sadness by approving or disapproving them. In the same way: "For not all people have the same custom and religion. What some hold as sacred, other regard as profane; what some hold as honorable, others regard as disgraceful. So each individual repents of a deed or exults in it according to his upbringing"⁵³. From this moral relativism, necessary questions are drawn: whether parents, institutions or the State dictate the guidelines of education, always under a certain tendency, in what cases do they not reproduce a pattern, under which they will report a biased experience of reality? In what ways, then, can we create new subjectivities –or only reproduce cultural patterns? Is not reproduction, then, as the conveyor of a power, always negative? If institutions have the role of empowering all the collectives of the social body, is it bad to reproduce power so that it extends to each of its parts? Or, in other words: Is an educational policy, that can reproduce an action that empowers the whole collective, negative?

All these questions are necessary, but the latter expresses an apparent paradox. Its resolution will allow us to move away from the perspective of the cultural reproductionist school. The answer is the following: reproduction is not necessarily negative, because the empowerment of each of the human spheres requires a certain tendency. Another very different thing is to fall into the trap that surrounds the concept of reproduction: it suggests the idea of a unidirectional process in which one element is followed in need by another, where one link in the chain is followed by the next and so on, to infinity. There is a process of cause and effect that is defined by an antecedent that gives meaning to the consequence. Thus, how to escape from the effect of that cause which precedes it in order? The Italian philosopher Vittorio Morfino says that Spinoza redefines the concept of cause and "*sviluppa nell'Etica una concezione di causalità come intreccio complesso: la metafora tessile evoca infatti tutto meno che la linea retta della serie causa-effetto*"⁵⁴.

⁵⁰ Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. V, prop. VI, schol, 426.

⁵¹ María Alzate, La infancia: concepciones y perspectivas (Pereira: Editorial Papiro, 2003), 21.

⁵² Unicef, Superando el adultocentrismo (Chile: Manual de Trabajo, 2013).

⁵³ Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. III, aff, def., XXVII, exp., 315.

⁵⁴ "Develops, in *Ethics*, a conception of causality as a complex link: the textile metaphor evokes, in fact, anything but the straight line of the cause-effect series". Vittorio Morfino, Il tempo de la moltitudine. Materialism e politica prima e dopo Spinoza (Roma: Manifestolibri, 2005), 29.

In this way, two, three or more elements could be chained to a single link. For this reason, the concept of reproduction inserted in the complex educational process prevents thinking about reproduction or freedom without mutual involvement. The educational dimension is a tendency between two opposite directions that belong to the nature of the subject: freedom understood as the production of difference and reproduction understood as the production of the same.

At this point, it is necessary to ask the following: can the difference be reproduced? The question has a similar status to the one that questioned whether all reproduction is negative. The answer dismantles the apparent paradox and makes the solution coherent: the term reproduction and its consequent associated image (the straight line in only one direction) generates the superstitious position of being determined from the beginning by an impossible to challenge force. The same thing is always reproduced because the cause is always linear and fixed. However, reproducing the difference is nothing but to articulate relationships with the different. In that sense, reproducing the difference will never be the production of the same. Reproducing the difference is a contradiction in terms, because the production of the different always refers to the heterogeneity and positive composition of the parts; and change is always possible because the social field is made up of diverse multitudes. On the contrary, reproduction homogenizes from the standard of a unique rationality and tries to direct life from totalizing parameters. But caution is necessary: the simple conceptual resolution of the terms does not bring the promise of the material transformation of social conditions with it. Perhaps, that is the fascination of Spinoza's philosophy: conceptual clarity does not exempt us from the process that gradually leads us to the understanding of the plurality of causes that determines us. That slow and arduous effort is what defines a Philosophy of Spinozist education: we are not immediately free, nor we are determined by an original cause, for the eternity. Generating the conditions of freedom is a practical act, and producing the difference involves the slow articulation with other bodies and understandings, to empower us together with them. Thus, the criticism erected towards reproduction under the cultural or social model⁵⁵ is not applicable to the Spinozist educational paradigm. The danger of education always lies in its attachment to the values of a dominant culture that tries to present itself (re-present) as a unique model of practice and understanding.

The primacy of identity, however conceived, defines the world of representation. But modern thought is born of the failure of representation, of the loss of identities, and of the discovery of all the forces that act under the representation of the identical [...] The task of life is to make all these repetitions coexist in a space in which difference is distributed⁵⁶

4. REASON AND IMAGINATION: THE ROLE OF AFFECTIONS IN THE EDUCATIONAL DIMENSION

Spinoza points out that "there is no individual thing in universe more advantageous to man than a man who lives by the guidance of reason"⁵⁷.

⁵⁵ Jean-Claude Passeron, "La teoría de la reproducción social como una teoría del cambio: una evaluación crítica del concepto de contradicción interna". *Estudios Sociológicos de El Colegio de México*. I (3) (1983), 417-442.

⁵⁶ Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and repetition* (London and New York: Continuum, 2001), preface, xix.

⁵⁷ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley. (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. IV, prop. XXXV, coroll. I, 337.

One would be tempted to interpret that the most useful (*utilis*) is one's like and, for the same reason, that reason must be one for all. However, this is only sustainable to the extent that we ignore other propositions of Spinozist thinking. Such discussion is found in an article by Germán Bula⁵⁸ in which he rejects an interpretation by Alexandre Matheron⁵⁹. Does Spinoza exalt the value of the same or the different? Matheron's thesis is that the similar is beneficial but concealing such statement with some statements in *Ethics* becomes too complex: "the human mind is capable to perceiving a great many things, and this capacity will vary in proportion to the variety of states which its body can assume"⁶⁰. At this point, what is at stake is the value of experience: it is, in the first instance, heterogeneous, singular, and irreducible to the identical; it is not subject to representation and reproduction. However, the systematic regularity of an experience could lead us to an absolute judgment about the reality. It happens that the things we like the most are the ones we can imagine more easily⁶¹ and quick judgment is useful to satisfy the desire for explanation: if a stone falls on a man's head it has fallen for a predefined reason. "If it had not fallen for this purpose by the will of God wanting it, how could so many circumstances (and there are often many coinciding circumstances) have chanced to concur?"⁶².

It is understood, then, that imagination facilitates the understanding of processes by homogenizing similar experiences. In the same tune, Henri Bergson gives us an illuminating example: "The lambs of a flock will undoubtedly be counted, and it will be said that there are fifty of them, even if they are distinguished from each other and although the shepherd recognizes them easily; however, their individual differences have been ignored so as not to be taken into account, except for their feature in common"⁶³. Although imagination's function is relevant, in Spinoza's thinking, when the image –which is generated by the constant affectation of an external body– becomes stable and solidifies⁶⁴ it becomes considered "the" universal explanation of the phenomenon. We are here before the production of the same thing: re-production. Historian Fernand Braudel says that human matter is in "*perpétuel mouvement [...] sans que les individus en prennent conscience*"⁶⁵. The lack of awareness is due to the absence of distinction between short, medium, and long terms⁶⁶. Short term is immediate and can be identified with the development of an individual life. On the other hand, medium and long terms position us before structural modifications (institutional, cultural, or civilizational changes) impossible to cover in the development of a human life.

⁵⁸ Germán Bula, "El valor de lo diferente: sobre la interpretación de Matheron de la Ética de Spinoza", *Ingenium. Revista Electrónica del Pensamiento Moderno*, n 8 (2014), 51-71. https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_INGE.2014.v8.47755.

⁵⁹ Alexandre Matheron, *Individu et communauté chez Spinoza* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, 1988).

⁶⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley. (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. II, prop. XIV, 255.

⁶¹ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. I, ap.

⁶² Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. I, ap., 241.

⁶³ Henri Bergson, *Ensayo sobre los datos inmediatos de la memoria* (Salamanca: Ediciones Sígueme, 2006), 62.

⁶⁴ Henri Bergson, *El pensamiento y lo moviente* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Cactus, 2013), 211.

⁶⁵ "Perpetual motion [...] and individuals are not aware of it". Fernand Braudel, *La dynamique du capitalisme* (Paris: Les Éditions Arthaud, 1985), 15.

⁶⁶ Fernand Braudel, *El Mediterráneo y el mundo mediterráneo en la época de Felipe II* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2005).

The material task is to discover the constituent elements that determine the components of these bodies and ideas, since, according to Spinoza, the imagination homogenizes and naturalizes events. It is concluded, then, that the imagination, in negative terms, homogenizes to the extent of turning into common sense, which is only explained as the product of a material history of constitution.

But how to escape from the force of reproductive power? The process of becoming rational puts us on another route. "That which so disposes the human body that it can be affected in more ways, or which renders it capable of affecting external bodies in more ways, is advantageous to man, and proportionately more advantageous as the body is thereby rendered more capable of being affected in more ways and of affecting other bodies in more ways"⁶⁷. This means that the body is composed of a multiplicity of parts and must be considered as a very complex one: it can be affected, it needs other bodies to be preserved, and it can use of them in many ways. The more capable the body is the greater its potency to be affected by external experiences and so turn them into a higher skill to act and think. In other words, freedom is the act of producing difference or composing relationships between heterogeneous elements: the consequence is a greater degree of power to act and understand. Education, then, is a tendency between two opposite directions: reproduction and freedom; and "if what the cultivation of reason does is to homogenize people"⁶⁸, it would not make sense to conceive education as a space for encounters with new experiences and new ways of thinking about the different. Education must tend to the empowerment of the body and the understanding, and the institutions of the social field must focus on the accomplishment of such goal.

If education can be regarded as a tendency between freedom and reproduction, then reason and imagination do not express a dichotomous choice. They express an ever-present tension in the process of acquiring knowledge, where affections play a fundamental role. Spinoza says: "By emotions [*affectus*] I understand the affections of the body by which the body's power of activity is increased or diminished, assisted or checked, together the ideas of these affections"⁶⁹. In fact, by affections we mean the affections of the body that lead us to increase or decrease our power to act. In this way, the psychological product in our consciousness can never be determinant of our actions but is determined by the random encounters between the body and the other elements in environment. It is the exterior that offers us the opportunity to move towards a state of greater perfection if we interact adequately. At this point, the distinction between affections and passions is necessary to be set:

It is necessary to distinguish not only between actions and passions but also between two sorts of passions. The nature of the passions, in any case, is to fill our capacity for being affected while separating us from our power of acting, keeping us separated from that

⁶⁷ Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley. (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. IV, prop. XXXVIII, 341.

⁶⁸ Germán Bula, "El valor de lo diferente: sobre la interpretación de Matheron de la Ética de Spinoza", *Ingenium. Revista Electrónica del Pensamiento Moderno*, n 8 (2014), 51-71. https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_INGE.2014.v8.47755

⁶⁹ Baruch Spinoza, Complete Works. Translations by Samuel Sherley. (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. III, def. III, 278.

power. But when we encounter an external body that does not agree with our own (ie., whose relation does not enter into composition with ours), it is as if the power of that body opposed our power, bringing about a subtraction or a fixation; when this occurs, it may be said that our power of acting is diminished or blocked, and that the corresponding passions are those of sadness. In the contrary case, when we encounter a body that agrees with our nature, one whose relation compounds with ours, we may say that its power is added to ours; the passions that affect us are those of joy, and our power of acting is increased or enhanced. This joy is still a passion, since it has an external cause; we still remain separated from our power of acting, possessing it only in a formal sense. This power of acting is nonetheless increased proportionally; we "approach" the point of conversion, the point of transmutation that will establish our dominion, that will make us worthy of action, of active joys⁷⁰.

Sadness (*tristitia*) and joy (*laetitia*) are defined as steps or transits to a state of lesser or greater perfection (potency). *Tristitia* is what keeps us away from our power to act and understand and binds us to imaginative knowledge. Spinoza will call it the first genre of knowledge. On the contrary, everything that enhances our capacity to act and understand will be understood as rational knowledge. *Laetitia* is identified with the second gender of knowledge or common notions and the third gender of knowledge or the apprehension of our convenience with another singular body. If the constitution of the subjects is expressed as a transit mediated by the affections and bodies of the outside, rationality will be an effect of the social field in which individuals interact. In the same way, imagination and reason are part of the nature of the human subject.

Imagination is not just the negative side or a vice of the cognitive process. We, for example, by burning our hand do not conceive of adequate knowledge about what the flame is; however, we do obtain "*une connaissance vive et forte du monde extérieur, mais non une connaissance adéquate, celle de la structure interne des choses*"⁷¹. A basic rule of thumb will be not to bring our tissues closer to the flame, because it breaks them down (decreases our potency). This is already a positive feature of the imagination, without which we could not move to the knowledge of the inner structure of the flame. The imagination shows us two routes: 1) the first indicates the negative condition of the flame: we move away and qualify it permanently as something 'negative', not in a moral sense, but in a medical sense that distinguishes what harms us from what favors our health; 2) on the other hand, we seek through experimentation, the way to compose ourselves with the flame and make the most of its potential qualities: to take advantage, for example, of its caloric properties, which are those that certainly benefit us. In such way, through the affectation of the external body we have achieved an adequate knowledge of the world, we are more powerful, and we evolve in our process of rational constitution.

The following is concluded: 1) to be educated, a body willing to have multiple experiences is necessary. The more willing for experience is the body, the more production of new subjectivities; 2) a true education of the senses is needed that "consists precisely in the set of

⁷⁰ Gilles Deleuze, Spinoza: practical philosophy (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 27-28.

⁷¹ "A living and strong knowledge of the outside world," but not "of the inner structure of things". Pierre-François Moreau, Spinoza et le spinozisme (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 2009), 77.

connections established between sensory impression and the movement that uses it"⁷². To move to the development of greater rationality, it is necessary to discriminate the way of composing the encounters and their affections; 3) what is useful to educable reason will not be the similar, because in this way we would arrive at the idea of the existence of a single reason and an ideal scheme of educable life: experience is based on the real and singular cause that explains it. In fact, just as "all bodies agree in certain respects"⁷³, one man is useful to another insofar as both agree in certain things. That does not mean a complete concordance or an identity of reason: the thinking of the indigenous from Latin America, Europe or Asia differs to the extent that their internal characteristics and the environment that affects them are heterogeneous. "Our intellect would be less if the mind were in solitude and understood nothing beyond itself"⁷⁴. Reason, therefore, is not a property, but a process that accounts for the immanent potency of our understanding through the interaction with external things. 4) If rationality is achieved through external trade, then both imagination and rationality are part of a collective process of construction. The path to Spinozist rationality⁷⁵ could be labeled as elitist if one thought that only some are to stand out from the rest; however, Spinoza only points out that the task is difficult. Within his theory there is no subject that separates himself from the rest, nor an individual who can ignore the power of the imagination: we are always collective beings, at the same time imaginative. Here is an example of a building team: "If Peter and Paul have the same knowledge and skills (e.g., making walls, making roofs, and installing doors), the building team will have no new skills under the covenant"⁷⁶. But if the difference were anchored in the distinctive quality of the subjects, for example, if "Pablo knew how to make electrical installations, plumbing and window installation, the Construction Team would be *much more than* twice powerful"⁷⁷. What it means to agree on reason, according to Spinoza, is expressed in a very simple rule: "men who are governed by reason, that is, who seek their usefulness under the guidance of common notions and particular or singular essences, do not desire for themselves anything that they do not desire for other men"⁷⁸. That rule is to enhance his ability to act and understand according to the scheme of increased power and the affinity that man possesses in relation to others. It is desirable to extend collective power as a man whose potency is limited, considering it in himself, is more powerful when he manages to compose a relationship with other men. In other words, education will always have an ethical-political character. Yes, it can be said that there are more powerful institutions, it is insofar as they feed on difference and extend the effective ties for the creation of new subjectivities. The crux of the Spinozist political perspective is precisely that the *multitude* embodies the space and the social body where human beings tend to expand their degree of power.

⁷² Henri Bergson, *Materia y memoria* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Cactus, 2006), 113.

⁷³ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. II, prop. XIII, Lem. II, 252.

⁷⁴ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. IV, prop. XVIII, schol., 331.

⁷⁵ María José Villaverde, "Spinoza: homo homini Deus", *Co-Herencia*, vol. 15 n 28 (2017), 299-320. <https://doi.org/10.17230/co-herencia.15.28.13>

⁷⁶ Germán Bula, "El valor de lo diferente: sobre la interpretación de Matheron de la Ética de Spinoza", *Ingenium. Revista Electrónica del Pensamiento Moderno*, n 8 (2014), 51-71. https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_INGE.2014.v8.47755

⁷⁷ Germán Bula, "El valor de lo diferente: sobre la interpretación de Matheron de la Ética de Spinoza", *Ingenium. Revista Electrónica del Pensamiento Moderno*, n 8 (2014), 51-71. https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_INGE.2014.v8.47755

⁷⁸ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. IV, Prop. XVIII, schol., 332.

5. THE PHILOSOPHY OF SPINOZIST EDUCATION AND BECOMING RATIONAL *IN SITU*.

The rational evolution of men would be the center of a philosophy of education from a Spinozist perspective. However, this path is difficult. In the final slogan of the *Ethics* Spinoza states that "all things excellent are as difficult as they are rare"⁷⁹. In fact, defining education as a tendency in two opposite directions means that both reproduction and freedom are involved in the existential thinking and practice of the subjects. On the other hand, when Spinoza points out that "there is in Nature no individual thing that is not surpassed in strength and power by some other thing"⁸⁰, what it does is to warn us that, always, the outside has more potentia than in one individual alone, although, there is a possibility of transit.

Aspiring to the development of more rational subjects means composing ourselves with the different. So, the question is what kind of educational institutions or policies are necessary to become rational beings, in situ. We agree with Bula's statement, who claims that "new ways of being are found through assimilation and accommodation. This process involves at the same time the different dimensions of the human being"⁸¹. Any institution able to convey the different, the diverse, and the singular will be able to deliver new experiences to those who are affected (the learners). However, we find several institutions that discursively declare their acceptance of certain values, neither focusing nor providing singular experiences. We would like to be able to analyze some elements related to Chilean education as an institution (*potestas*) given in a territory. This exercise will serve to reveal the critical contribution that the Spinozist conceptual apparatus gives us.

The curricular bases of Chilean education build the guidelines and principles from "the Political Constitution and the anthropological and ethical conception that guides the Universal Declaration of Human Rights present in the great traditions of the country". In addition, it is stated that: "the right to education and freedom of education are essential rights"⁸². However, the constitution clearly states that "parents have the preferential right and duty to educate their children"⁸³. The duty to educate, therefore, is unloaded on the parents and the State will correspond only to "grant special protection to the exercise of that right"⁸⁴. Above this obvious contradiction between the spirit of the curricular bases and the Constitution, we should delve into the ideological-philosophical sources that give meaning to our fundamental charter and specifically to the type of educational functioning that emerges from such orientations.

⁷⁹ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. V, prop. XLII, schol., 382.

⁸⁰ Baruch Spinoza, *Complete Works*. Translations by Samuel Sherley (Indianapolis-Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 2011), E, p. IV, ax., 323.

⁸¹ German Bula, *Spinoza: educación para el cambio* (Bogotá: Ediciones Unisalle, 2017), 300.

⁸² Mineduc, *Bases Curriculares Primero a Sexto Básico* (Santiago: Ministerio de Educación, 2018).

⁸³ Constitución, 1980. Constitución Política de la República de Chile. From: <http://www.leychile.cl/Navegar?idNorma=17039>

⁸⁴ Constitución, 1980. Constitución Política de la República de Chile. From: <http://www.leychile.cl/Navegar?idNorma=17039>

Eduardo Devés says that the principle of subsidiarity, as well as the liberal principle of *laissez faire* are elements that have worked together, in Chilean educational and economic institutions since the dictatorship: "Both elements were combined to justify the extreme privatization of the economy of which the State should not take over, by virtue of these principles, precisely"⁸⁵. In fact, the subsidized state limits its intervention to areas that the intermediate groups cannot solve by themselves: it focuses only on activities that the market is not able to carry out ("letting go" is an orientation that is understood to be exclusive to market agents). Thus, emerges the image of a minimal state⁸⁶ where social protection systems, the education system, health care, and pensions are privatized⁸⁷. In Chile, *de facto*, this has happened: all dimensions of life care and security have been delivered to market orientations⁸⁸. However, it is also not an exclusively Chilean phenomenon. The consequences of neoliberalization in Asia, Europe and other Latin American countries are highly documented⁸⁹. What makes the analysis of the Chilean case attractive is that it is the first country where neoliberal guidelines are incorporated, accompanied by a military dictatorship that facilitated a process of destruction of the social fabric⁹⁰. Naomi Klein states that Chile is the first place where the strategy of disaster capitalism is incorporated⁹¹.

Consequently, it is natural to enquire about the role that both, the Constitution of Chile, and the Chilean educational institutions have played in this context, by minimizing its public character based on the idea of a subsidiary state. In 1978 the process of turning the Chilean education towards a process of commodification, to turning it into a consumer good began. Proof of this statement is that tax investment in education was much higher before the Pinochet dictatorship, which was reduced considerably in years after he took over the power⁹². The military dictatorship redirects this budget and replaces it with a coverage of supply and demand from the irruption of new supplier agents. Teachers and educational institutions thus become sellers of a product, and the population in general, in its consumers. Chilean philosopher Carlos Ruíz points out: "In general, we could say that privatization of educational policies in Chile [...] not only has endured, moreover, inequality among students has also increased"⁹³. The gap in inequality is clear and evident when the percentage of the best results in the exams to enter the University, which depends on the type of educational establishment students attend (public, subsidized and private) is compared. In public schools (which are free and are tax funded) the percentage of national results is around 5% out of

⁸⁵ Eduardo Devés y Ricardo Salas. "La filosofía en Chile (1973-1990)" from *El pensamiento chileno en el siglo XX* Eduardo Devés *et al.* (Ciudad de México, Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1999), 201.

⁸⁶ Juan Ramón Capella, *Entrada a la Barbarie* (Madrid: Editorial Trotta, 2007).

⁸⁷ David Harvey, *A brief history of neoliberalism* (London, Oxford University Press, 2007).

⁸⁸ Cristian Tejeda, Claudio Merino, Cristian Ojeda y Andrea Santana. "La seguridad como dispositivo: lógicas para potenciar o despotenciar la vida". *Revista Utopía y Praxis Latinoamericana* n 23(83) (2018) 97-109, DOI: <http://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.1411944>; Cristian Tejeda, Spinoza, una política del cuerpo social. (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2020).

⁸⁹ Naomi Klein, *The shock doctrine: the rise of disaster capitalism*. (New York: Metropolitan Books-Henry Holt, 2007).

⁹⁰ Gabriel Salazar, *Movimientos Sociales en Chile. Trayectoria Histórica y Proyección Política* (Santiago, Uqbar Editores, 2012).

⁹¹ Naomi Klein, *The shock doctrine: the rise of disaster capitalism* (New York: Metropolitan Books-Henry Holt, 2007).

⁹² Natalia Slachevsky, "Una revolución neoliberal: la política educacional en Chile desde la dictadura militar". *Educação e Pesquisa*. (41) (2015), 1473-1486, DOI: 10.1590/S1517-9702201508141660.

⁹³ Carlos Ruiz Schneider, *De la República al Mercado. Ideas Educativas y Políticas en Chile* (Santiago: Editorial LOM, 2010), 150.

approximately 250,000 students, figures that represent about 12,500 students from the total universe of candidates. About 40% of students come from such public schools. The percentage would rise to 18% if only the three emblematic high schools of the public Chilean educational system were included. 2°) subsidized schools (which are private yet receive contribution from the state and allow the co-payment with the families) get the 17% of higher scores in such tests, which is about 41,500 students. 3°) Private schools obtain the 78% of such scores, and the number of students from private schools, in 2013, for instance, were only 25,152.⁹⁴ If one compares the 2011 figures with the 2018 figures, the inequality gap does not seem to have changed significantly. In 2017, From 209 national scores, 22 were students from public schools; 34 students from subsidized-private schools; and the 153 remaining students came from private schools⁹⁵.

From the point of view of the philosophy of Spinozist education, we could draw several consequences. First, a school segregation is revealed that does not consider the experience and education for the different, impeding the conditions for enabling other types of access to school and university, that is adapted to the socio-economic condition and the respective capability to pay the cost of higher education. Therefore, those with higher incomes will be able to access private schools and, so, have better chances to access higher and greater education. An initial segmentation of the groups that make up the educational agents results in a process of social reproduction. This leads to homogeneous, segmented, and stratified subjectivities since the encounter with other experiences is limited by the encounter with equals. It happens at both the level of the highest and lowest segments (both are unaware of other ways of life). How will the student of a certain social condition know the student of another stratum, if in the educational institution spaces of encounter with the heterogeneous are not generated? Access to a thorough knowledge of the conditions of the territory and the subjects inserted in it is deprived (the less freedom, the more disempowered the collective). The market orientation of this state educational project is a state policy.

A second consequence is the predominance of the general ideas of the imagination, which is linked by easily understandable judgments and the quick desire to understand. Meritocracy is one of such ideas: the certainty that the place occupied in society is dictated by individual and innate capacities⁹⁶ and not by "the network of causation from which it results"⁹⁷. Meritocracy has become commonplace and a real cliché in the educational world. Classical liberalism or Neoliberalism reverses the cause and consequence: they put the freedom of the individual and his decisions as a pillar of the social⁹⁸. For the same reason, they assume that our achievements are only caused by ourselves. But in real life, all individual subjectivity is the product of experiences and encounters with social space, with community: the proper mode of the social is the relationship with the collective (*multitudo* in Spinoza).

⁹⁴ Germán Urrea, Chile: por un Nuevo Modelo Económico. Para una sociedad democrática, solidaria y sustentable (Santiago, Ceibo Ediciones, 2014).

⁹⁵ Diariouchile. "PSU 2018: Las cifras que dan cuenta de la desigualdad en la educación" (2018) from <https://radio.uchile.cl/2018/12/26/psu-2018-las-cifras-que-dan-cuenta-de-la-desigualdad-en-la-educacion/>

⁹⁶ Mónica Peña and Camila Toledo, "Discursos sobre clase social y meritocracia de escolares vulnerables en Chile", *Cadernos de Pesquisa* vol. 47 n 164 (2017): 496-518. <https://doi.org/10.1590/198053143752>

⁹⁷ Gabriel Albiac, Sumisiones voluntarias. La invención del sujeto político: De Maquiavelo a Spinoza (Madrid: Editorial Tecnos, 2011), 239.

⁹⁸ Milton Friedman and Rose Friedman, Free to choose. A personal statement (New York-London: Harcourt Brace Janovich, 1980).

Meritocracy is only based on the self-reflection of those who are in a privileged condition and wish to legitimize it (consciously or unconsciously). This is what we have called the condition of voluntary submission: truth naturalizes and accepts an imagination captured by the values of a dominant culture.

However, the fact that the gaps between public and private schools are so high is due to our social model which generates these structural inequalities *a priori*. The reproduction of the socio-economic conditions and reproductive logics of educational institutions is not explained by natural conditions or by individual merit. It should be cited here the studies of American sociologist Shamus Khan⁹⁹, who exposed the privileged conditions of elite adolescents in the United States. Or Pierre Bourdieu in *The Inheritors* who leaves the superstitions that surround meritocracy unbuttoned: "Blindness to social inequalities both obliges and allows one to explain all inequalities, particularly those in educational achievement, as natural inequalities, unequal giftedness"¹⁰⁰. The individual subject accepts these tendencies through the collective imagination. But the condition that defines the composition of the social field is structural: "Such an attitude is part of the logic of a system which is based on the postulate of the formal equality of all pupils, as a precondition of its operation, and cannot recognize any inequalities than those arising from individual gifts"¹⁰¹. We can start from the blindness that authorizes to present inequalities as natural (social Darwinism), but also from the assumption of a formal principle that homogenizes and that at the same time excludes. If market guidelines are present in all spheres of society, the educational policies, the whole curriculum, and accreditations will be formalized that are consistent with the values of competence, efficiency, and individualism. The philosopher Crawford Macpherson calls this the model of possessive individualism, inherent in a market society¹⁰². In Chile, Carlos Ruiz has pointed out that "the option for a market economy in a kind of metapolitical principle"¹⁰³ homogenizes the subject as a consumer of goods and services, including education. But it is not only about the Chilean neoliberal journey. There are certain practices of exclusion from difference that cross the great history of Chile.

For example, the relationship with the existing indigenous peoples in Chile, which is a common theme to the peoples of Latin America, but which has had different resolutions according to each territory. The *History of Education in Chile* points out that after the occupation of aboriginal lands in 1883, "the State did not have a specific educational policy for the indigenous population"¹⁰⁴.

⁹⁹ Shamus Khan, *Privilege: The Making of an Adolescent Elite at St. Paul's School* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2012).

¹⁰⁰ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Inheritors. French students and their relations to culture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 67.

¹⁰¹ Pierre Bourdieu and Jean-Claude Passeron, *The Inheritors. French students and their relations to culture* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1979), 67.

¹⁰² Crawford Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism: Hobbes to Locke* (Oxford-New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

¹⁰³ Carlos Ruiz Schneider, *Seis ensayos sobre teoría de la democracia* (Santiago: Universidad Andrés Bello, 1993, 176).

¹⁰⁴ Sol Serrano *et al.* *Historia de la educación en Chile (1810-2010) Tomo II. La educación nacional (1880-1930)* (Santiago: Taurus, 2012), 291.

Behind this omission, we find the historical attitude of the Chilean state towards the indigenous peoples in Chile: the will to homogenize the different. If we are all equal¹⁰⁵ as Chileans, why should differentiated policies be formulated for certain groups? The existence of cultural practices other than the official one, and therefore, the need for differentiated policies is omitted. Behind the story of the normalist teacher Martín Alonqueo, segregation can be evidenced as a negator of everything that is not reduced to the official model:

Some teachers would repeat difficult phrases to their Mapuche students just to make people laugh, making a scene in front of their students. Former teachers made the school life of many Mapuche students hard, and turning students into antagonists of natives, by being rude, aggressive, and violent to such group of peoples. The Mapuche student would lose easily against peers and teachers simply for not mastering the language that would allow them to complain and defend properly¹⁰⁶.

Widespread ideas about the practices of the Mapuche people are the following: they are lazy, they do not work the land, they are problematic and not trained for intellectual work¹⁰⁷. The inability to adapt to a different culture, urban and Western, would be its lack and its stigma. If we add that its historical process of pauperization, persecution, and precariousness (social, economic, racial, and cultural), we have a double inscription: you are Mapuche and poor, therefore, responsible for the condition of poverty and responsible for the lack of entrepreneurship. However, behind this position that homogenizes the subjectivity of an entire collective, there is a symptom that can be reported from the same Spinozist philosophy: the affirmation of the existence of a totalizing and unique reason¹⁰⁸. Its spirit would be represented by what Max Weber called the laudable attitude of making money as an end in economic activity¹⁰⁹. But no: what is absent here is the production of the different by the denial of the existence of multiple rationalities. One of the main barriers that the first Mapuche who entered the school had, was to undergo a type of learning alien to their customs and vernacular codes¹¹⁰. But, at the same time, representatives of the Mapuche world such as Juan Antiman, report that "schools were the main actors in the process of making us disappear, by denying original language and cultural expressions"¹¹¹. From the point of view of the philosophy of Spinozist education, this is not only an act that deprives the Mapuche people, but also reproduces a unique vision that deprives the *winka* of establishing effective relations that enhance the freedom of both groups. It deprives itself of access to a whole world of

¹⁰⁵ Patricia Richards, *Racismo. El modelo chileno y el multiculturalismo neoliberal bajo la concertación 1990-2010*. (Santiago: Pehuén, 2016).

¹⁰⁶ Sol Serrano *et al.* *Historia de la educación en Chile (1810-2010) Tomo II. La educación nacional (1880-1930)* (Santiago: Taurus, 2012), 304.

¹⁰⁷ Patricia Richards, *Racismo. El modelo chileno y el multiculturalismo neoliberal bajo la concertación 1990-2010*. (Santiago: Pehuén, 2016).

¹⁰⁸ José Manuel Naredo, "Sobre la Función Mixtificadora del pensamiento económico dominante". *Archipiélago, Cuadernos de Crítica de la cultura*, N°33 (1988), 12-27.

¹⁰⁹ Max Weber, *The protestant ethic and the spirit of capitalism* (London-New York: Routledge, 2001).

¹¹⁰ Sol Serrano *et al.* *Historia de la educación en Chile (1810-2010) Tomo II. La educación nacional (1880-1930)* (Santiago: Taurus, 2012).

¹¹¹ Patricia Richards, *Racismo. El modelo chileno y el multiculturalismo neoliberal bajo la concertación 1990-2010* (Santiago: Pehuén, 2016), 209.

cultural wealth, worldview, which is an authentic waste, and cultural genocide that the Republic of Chile carries on its back.

There should be no denying, however, that certain elements of Mapuche culture have been integrated into education in recent years. The indigenous language or certain material products such as silverware or clothing are incorporated into the educational curriculum. However, this gesture, some scholars argue, has a paternalistic origin, and is not based on the real need for the encounter with difference. Héctor Nahuelpan points out that: "since the arrival of Spaniards and the Portuguese, none of the relationships between the Mapuche people and Western educational institutions have developed from the collective and sovereign consent of Mapuche society"¹¹². It should be remembered, therefore, that the current situation of Mapuche territory is one of militarization (especially in the Araucanía Region) and police violence within their communities. Even this year 2021, a state of emergency has been declared for the macro-southern zone of Chile in the face of the inability to reconcile a conflict that has been going on for centuries¹¹³. If we observe the situation of indigenous educational policies in Chile through this lens, we will have a clear picture: what can be folklorized, can also penetrate the educational system, which can merge the traditional knowledge with the homogenizing knowledge, past culture, dead and narrative, antiquarian culture, as Nietzsche¹¹⁴ would say. That is, an impoverished and stereotyped culture, "that does not imply a threat to understanding [...] of what constitutes the Chilean nation"¹¹⁵.

Thus, the "Mapuche educational, socio-political and religious practices, through which this society is culturally reproduced"¹¹⁶ are rejected, since they are labeled as dangerous while neither its wealth nor its constitution is fully understood. From a Spinozist point of view, discursive practice would not in itself include a development of rationality, since producing the different (freedom) implies a direct commitment of composition with heterogeneous experience and the multiple, the different. But the task of fusion and real miscegenation of the two cultures that meet is avoided, because one of them is dominant and repressive, and the other resistant and persecuted. We should, however, be cautious when considering the Mapuche problem within the neoliberal cultural paradigm. If we do, it is because the strategy of neoliberal multiculturalism is much more sophisticated than other forms of historical denial: it appropriates and affirms cultural rights while remaking hierarchies from other means¹¹⁷. However, the historical situation of the Mapuche people, the problem of the invisibility, and the reduction of their cultural wealth, is not a problem that dates to the last 50 years of neoliberal policies. For this reason, the causes of its reproduction from the philosophy of education must be sought -as we pointed out from Fernand Braudel- from a broader and plural conception of history and time.

¹¹² Héctor Nahuelpan and Pablo Marimán. "Pueblo Mapuche y educación, interculturalidad y/o autonomía". *ISEES. Inclusión Social y Equidad en la Educación Superior* n 4 (2009): 83-102.

¹¹³ José Bengoa, *Historia del Pueblo Mapuche (Siglos XIX y XX)*. (Santiago: Ediciones SUR, 1996).

¹¹⁴ Friedrich Nietzsche, *Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben*. (Berlin: Hofenberg, 2016).

¹¹⁵ Patricia Richards, *Racismo. El modelo chileno y el multiculturalismo neoliberal bajo la concertación 1990-2010*. (Santiago: Pehuén, 2016), 205.

¹¹⁶ Héctor Nahuelpan and Pablo Marimán. "Pueblo Mapuche y educación, interculturalidad y/o autonomía". *ISEES. Inclusión Social y Equidad en la Educación Superior* n 4 (2009), 83-102.

¹¹⁷ Patricia Richards, *Racismo. El modelo chileno y el multiculturalismo neoliberal bajo la concertación 1990-2010*. (Santiago: Pehuén, 2016).

The importance of the educational institution for cultural transmission, "its relevance for families, public authorities, research, politics, opinion, and for the students themselves, requires understanding from the long time, the historical time that is that of education"¹¹⁸.

Finally, we would like to delve into an element that is related, no longer with the practices of voluntary submission, but with the capacity of rational becoming in a context of educational practices, the 'penguin mobilizations', composed by secondary school children between 15 and 18 years old, mostly, plus a large group of undergraduate university students. Neoliberalism in Chile dictated market guidelines in several dimensions of society (single thinking), but it was from the educational field that this model got the first blowback (back in democracy) boosted by the need to bend that mercantile society, imperative in present Chilean life: "During the year 2006, finally, the actors – or at least a very important part of the actors – from the educational field, the secondary students [...] thumped hard on the table to express their own critical vision of education in Chile, and protest against the market system"¹¹⁹. Street demonstrations took place in Chile, which even changed the way in which the media until then profiled students. It can be said that the penguin movement eroded "that incontestable security with which those formulations that exalted consumption, individualism and the impossibility of new collective horizons of action appeared covered"¹²⁰.

If affections have a crucial role in the educational plane, it is due to the accumulation of despotizing experiences that material conditions generate in the subjects. The result is the indignation of a youth social movement that was able to impose a political agenda on a right-wing government. Ruíz comments:

The demands of the 'penguins' started from very specific demands - but very important for the poor students from the public schools - such as the demands to improve the bathrooms in clearly poor condition, the improvement in food rations, and the gratuity of tests to enter University, until reaching heavier issues which questioned the global model of education and the economy, such as the request for free transport and, above all, the rejection of the Constitutional Organic Law on Education (LOCE), one of the 'mooring' laws of the military dictatorship¹²¹.

In summary, this example shows that a collective subject, the *multitudo* in the sense of Spinoza, is capable of resistance against the conditions that disempower its existence, which translates into the attempt to break with a model of social-educational reproduction; but it is also a clear indication of the power of student social movements to configure a map and a possible strategy of action and reconfiguration of forces.

¹¹⁸ Sol Serrano *et al.* Historia de la educación en Chile (1810-2010) Tomo I. Aprender a escribir y a leer (1810-1880) (Santiago, Taurus, 2012), 16.

¹¹⁹ Carlos Ruiz Schneider, De la república al mercado. Ideas educacionales y políticas en Chile (Santiago: Editorial LOM, 2010).

¹²⁰ Carlos Ruiz Encina and Giorgio Boccardo, Los chilenos bajo el neoliberalismo. Clases y conflicto social (Santiago: Ediciones El Desconcierto, 2014), 137.

¹²¹ Carlos Ruiz Schneider, De la república al mercado. Ideas educacionales y políticas en Chile (Santiago: Editorial LOM, 2010), 150.

The process of becoming rational is also a political process and this is evidenced by the consequences of the social explosion in Chile in October 2019: a gender-equal constituent convention with representation of a diversity of different rationalities (indigenous peoples and the social world); a new government constituted in central nucleus by ex-representatives of the student world and "penguin"¹²².

After October 18th, 2019, we have found ourselves in a radically different scenario. Far from the presumed routine normality in which our life unfolded – normality that allowed the president of the republic to affirm, just a few days before the so-called social protests, that Chile was an oasis of democracy, in the region – the discontent of broad sectors of the citizenry took over the public space. The unrest, probably incubated in the origins of the transition, and which has been expressed sporadically and forcefully in the last two decades, led, regarding the rise of the public transport fare, in a massive evasion of it, and in a social movement that came to demand. Once and for all, the cancellation of privileges and inequalities¹²³.

That same segregation that has its correlate throughout the social sphere (the effects of the unique rationality of current neoliberalism), which translates into educational work. The effects of this rupture in the field of education are in the process of reconstruction, so (the convention is in the process of producing a new constitution; the new government linked to the old leaders of the student world will take little time after the publication of this writing). However, it is possible to extrapolate from that, which will always be the objective of a critical pedagogy: its task is "*neutraliser dans les esprits les forces qui veulent supprimer la libre confrontation des opinions; renfoncer l'amour de la liberté et l'aptitude au raisonnement de chacun; accélérer le processus de la constitution des solutions plus ajustées*"¹²⁴. And what else will that neutralization of free confrontation be than the attempt to subject differences to homogeneous patterns? Why must we passively accept those material practices that disempower our own capacity to "be more"¹²⁵? In fact, being able to align concrete demands and understand them as resulting from educational institutional structures is a process of resistance and demand for the different: to desire what is part of myself, of another and of a third party, too. We also wish that the most appropriate solutions do not respond to the tyranny of a totalizing and unique reason, which relies on the strength of the State and its institutions. Thus, the demand of the intellect that became rational would be a collective and useful demand (*utilis*), that is, the empowerment of everything that allows it to act and know properly in life¹²⁶, precisely to enhance that life. This is a social, political, and educational task.

¹²² "Penguin" means a high school student who wears black, gray, and white clothing.

¹²³ Cristóbal Friz, *El exceso de la democracia* (Viña del Mar: Cenaltes ediciones, 2021), 91-92.

¹²⁴ "To neutralize in the spirits the forces that want to suppress the free confrontation of opinions, to reinforce the love of freedom and the aptitude of reasoning of each one; accelerate the process of the most appropriate solutions". Laurent Bove, *La stratégie du conatus. Affirmation et résistance chez Spinoza* (Paris: Vrin, 1996), 272.

¹²⁵ Paulo Freire, *Pedagogía del oprimido* (Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, 2015), 80.

¹²⁶ Cristian Tejada, *Spinoza, una política del cuerpo social* (Barcelona: Gedisa, 2020).

6. CONCLUSION

This writing was proposed, from the thinking of Spinoza and some of his most recognized commentators, to explain what a philosophy of education based on their presuppositions would be. Formally, the presented argument is as follows: if we can affirm that Spinoza's doctrine is a philosophy of tendency, then we can assert that education in Spinoza can be understood as a tendency in two opposite directions: freedom and reproduction. In order to affirm that Spinoza's philosophy is a philosophy of tendency, we have described three elements that underpin it: first, the theory of bodies, in which the tendency to the composition and decomposition of bodies is analyzed; second, the affections, which present us the tendency of the human beings to transit (*transitio*) from a minor to a greater perfection (of acting and knowing); finally, political theory shows us the tendency of political bodies to expand or concentrate their power. It is understood that the concept of tendency invites us to consider the processes under the prism of an internal tension always present and whose resolution is never given.

Having demonstrated the initial premise, we have described the elements that constitute this internal tension in educational processes: freedom and reproduction, where the first concept is defined as the production of the different, and the second as the production of the same. If all education has as its ultimate purpose to set new experiences and so, develop a new type of subjectivity, such objective must be expressed not only on the discursive level, but also on the practical, political, and social level, in *situ*. Spinoza's philosophy is materialistic, but not in a vulgar sense, that of things already given. Spinoza's philosophy is a materialism of encounter, thus, in this sense, an education that produces only "the same thing" will project one type of subject as the foundation and scheme of what "has to be". An education opened to the different will generate a new experience while awakening a new knowledge about anything. Is it possible in the discourse to identify oneself as an enemy of racism, without having the experience of sharing with other cultures? From our point of view, the answer is "no"; anyone can disguise in the discourse: "we hate racism, but we prefer to live among our peers." Precisely, education conceived from a Spinozist point of view, avoids these inconsistencies: the educational circuit is incomplete if we do not enter the genuine experience and generate the effective encounter with different. The possibility of composing real bonds with others and being more powerful is vital, and it is a collective practice of constant inclusion and composition with the others.

It is, for the same reason, that we must not fall into the error of considering freedom and reproduction as two paths that Spinoza traces and the reader must choose: in fact, our nature has the capacity to generate new forms of subjectivity or to reproduce patterns. Without the existence of these elements there would be no tension to solve, and the individual would not need to give himself any education: every problem would already be solved in the ultimate ends of culture¹²⁷ to which we approach progressively. Thinking in terms of tendency implies considering that every process is open and, therefore, that it carries upon itself, always the quality of the unresolved.

¹²⁷ Rodrigo Martínez and Cristian Tejeda, "Crítica de la imagen moral del pensamiento a partir del principio de inmanencia y la teoría de los afectos de Spinoza", *Anales del Seminario de Historia de la Filosofía*, vol. 38 n 1 (2021): 37-50. <https://doi.org/10.5209/ashf.71385>

Thus, in Spinozist education we find two directions: rational becoming, that is, composing ties with the heterogeneous to promote difference as a horizon for the emergence of new ideas; or, voluntary submission, which means assuming a commitment to the homogeneous and promoting general ideas of the imagination, which always skew our link with the immanent constitution of things. In both cases, the function is social, because the subjects' way of being is always linked to the collective (*multitudo* in Spinoza), and, therefore, education always supposes a political commitment. With educational projects that invite us to think about different and possible ways of being in life; it is also possible to affirm the dominant culture as a closed and naturalized process. We can reify from the beginning certain values *a priori* and conceive them as the good or we can create values and describe their effects, understanding them as part of a process of historical constitution with the outside. Finally, we wanted to show how this philosophy of education can serve as an analytical tool for specific institutions. To do this, we are oriented towards the Chilean case and show the way in which the general ideas of the imagination become flesh, suffering, and resistance: we have analyzed the foundation of the discourse on meritocracy and the strategies of the exclusion of the Mapuche in current neoliberalism. To exemplify the processes of rational becoming we have highlighted the importance of the social movement of the "penguins" (secondary students) and the effects of their constitution. We regret, however, that the brief space of this text has not allowed us to elaborate on deeper analyses and arguments. However, just as the educational task never ends, we hope that other pages will allow us to continue with the commitment to develop a philosophy of education under the Spinozist imprint.

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