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PHILOSOPHY, SENSIBILITY AND EDUCATION IN HUMAN RIGHTS: An essay about the resistance against everyday insensitivity

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Abstract
The Human Rights Education is focused on promoting humanization in socialization forms of interaction, and for this the Philosophy of Law is working on a route of criticizing the rudeness and construction sensibility for a democratic, pluralistic and openness view of life in modern societies.

Key Words:
Philosophy of Law – Sensibility – Human Rights Education.

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Philosophy, Sensibility And Education In Human Rights: An Essay About The Resistance Against Everyday Insensitiveness

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Summary:

1. Sensibility and Rudeness: march and countermarch of modern life;
2. Sensibility, Art and Emancipation;
3. Critique, Sensibility and Human Rights Education;
4. Human Rights Education and Sensibilization through the Arts: the example of literature;
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1. Sensibility and Rudeness: march and countermarch in modern life

The term ‘sensibility’ (Sinnlichkeit), in its semantic amplitude, unveils the breadth of all that can be sensed, of the sensitive, very intuitive, the perceptive. One may, however, explore the meaning of the term as the opposite of rudeness. Established modernity, the bearer of instrumental reason in many senses and dimensions, exercises rudeness in the dimension of life. This rudeness, which blocks the senses, allows for the trivialization of absurdity; it builds the dimension of insensibility in everyday life. Toughness and coldness also become forms of expression, determining social practices, and many legal practices as well.

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It follows, since rudeness, coldness and insensitivity block access bridges to the *alter*. If it is true that this is the language of victorious modernity, or instrumental modernity, it is also true that sensibility is, therefore, expelled from the universe of human transactions. While exhausting sensibility, rudeness blocks art and obliterates subtler feelings regarding things and people. Understandably, the old formula of conformism speaks loudly: “This is the way things work…,” or, “That’s how the world is…” Smothering everything that lies in its path, the pulsating machinism of the system allows sensibility to remain, only to exploit its dependency on marketable goods; these may be loved, venerated, adored, no doubt – they are the new icons of modernity; if Bacon, at the early days of modernity, contributed to defeat *idols* of mediaeval society, critical thought today attracts all eyes to the dimension of *idols* produced by modernity.

Late capitalism in globalized times blocks and exhaust all erotic energies that are not directed towards productivism and consumerism in a planned cycle, entangling individuals through competiveness. It counts on the social alienation of its social protagonists, acting against themselves and against all others. Deep-rooted social Darwinism emerges to prompt everything to conspire against any instance of thinking beyond the limits of ‘given factors’ — which, once ‘naturalized,’ represents no more than an “economic social construct.” The metaphor of Darwinism enacts previously determined bouts, confirming the victory of the victorious, and establishing an example to be followed.

Could artistic sensibility even attempt to make a stand with its limited weaponry and accessories against the heavy artillery of prevailing masters of economic interest? Or, rather, is the mission of art predominantly ideological? Would art be an expression of alienation, or possibly the reaction against it? These issues arise in efforts to comprehend the role of art within the framework of sensibility.

Art is, in fact, an ideology; it is integral to symbolic structures of social reproduction. However, its despair in admitting its limitations in altering reality, by no means, implies that art is a means of escaping reality.\(^2\) Escapism only occurs where one no longer attempts to recognize the problems of the world. Actually, art does not merely face the problems of the world; rather, it places the world in suspension, often, completely subverting it, even if in a purely esthetic dimension. Therefore, the

creative ideology of art represents more than ideology, which could be designed to numb our awareness. Thus: “ideology is not always mere ideology, false consciousness. Consciousness and the representation of truths figuring as abstractions in terms of established production processes are also ideological functions. Art is one of these truths. Ideologically, it opposes society of its time. The autonomy of art is ruled by a categorical imperative: things must change. If the freeing of human beings from nature is to occur, then, the social nexus of destruction and repression must be broken,” according to Marcuse.\(^3\)

Suggesting a certain rejection of the world and maintaining a tense relationship with it, art does not accept prevailing social norms. The esthetician abstracts himself from reality as he produces a discontinuum between art-time and reality-time, nourishing the significance of the esthetic instant. Finally, the universe of art requires the creation of a different reality, parallel to this reality, to the reality from which it seeks to abstract itself to gain autonomy. Thus, art co-exists with the objective world, representing it through its channels, but it also shuns the objective world, seeking abstraction. It follows that, the alienation of art is intrinsic to its own essence, as a form of self-sufficient manifestation. If art were a perfect mimesis, faithful to objective reality, it would not be art, but the very thing that it intends to scrutinize through its symbolic language. Thus, when establishing esthetic reality, art renounces the world and “…exposes truths that are not communicable through other languages; it contradicts.”\(^4\) All works of art, in this sense, transgress. By denying reality’s staunch consistency in laying down the rules, art operates a rebellion against the order of the world. Hence, it announces that something beyond everyday life is possible.\(^5\) Furthermore, with all its characteristics, “art is to remain as a force of resistance.”\(^6\)

If art awakens sensibility it is because it elicits more, and involves deeper psychological dimensions than the mechanical banality of everyday life asks of humans. Therefore, the valuation of sensibility, in its different dimensions, requires a hiatus with the present time to establish the precepts of resistance. This resistance originates from its affirmative character, that is, from the intrinsic drive of the spirit to be more, to do more, to go beyond, and, in this manner, to represent a form of “…

\(^3\) Ivi, p. 22.
\(^4\) Ivi, p. 19.
\(^5\) Ivi, p. 22.
\(^6\) Ivi, p. 18.
profound assertion of the instincts of life in its fight against oppression, whether instinctive or social,” within the scope of Marcusean thought.7

There is sensibility where there is appreciation for the body, for life, for existence. Even a life dedicated to science is enveloped in the same kind of rudeness, in the sense that science has allied itself with production forces. The rudeness attributed to science is, in part, an example of the victory of the abstract (mind, concept, theory, purity of ideas, perfection) over the concrete (our body, our guts, our physical needs, our muscles, or passions, our feelings, our desires, our imperfections). So, what is positivism, as an emanation of traditional thought, but the confiscation of all energies that are applied to the field of the abstract? Sensibility refuses the pure formal and bodiless abstraction of narrow methodical practices and the imposition of form as the base of existence. Where there is sensibility, there is perception, there is intuition, options that are barred by modern rationalism, which dichotomizes thought and feelings, mind and heart, truth and passion, knowledge and sensibility, as noted by Eric Fromm.8

The path of sensibility allows for other passageways into the world; therefore, it is ample in terms human expression, and, for this very reason, it broadens the understanding of the world. Sensibility manifests itself, thus, esthetically, socially, naturally and psycho-physically, to name a few options.

Esthetic sensibility is expressed through art, whether in its making or in its appreciation, observing and reconstructing the world through refined perceptions of its subtleties. Especially when engaged in resistance esthetics or social criticism, whether visual, auditory or synesthetic, sensibility is at its highest, differently from consensus esthetics.

So, the work of art is a statement of sensibility as its aura awakens aspects of representation of the world and trespasses over uniform world comprehension. The work of art promotes schisms and ruptures, manifested, on its cutting edge, through form or content.9 The work of art that awakens to sensibility effectively shapes reality, to provide it with a different meaning. However, in exercising its revolutionary role, art is not required to comply with revolutionary scripts;

7 Ivi, p. 20.
8 FROMM, The Revolution of Hope, 2003, p.49
9 MARCUSE, The Aesthetic Dimension, cit, p. 10.
the revolution resides, dialectically, in abolishing, when necessary, even revolutionary pretenses. Thus, one does not place a higher value on art for its engagement or lack thereof. It is also not more or less valuable if produced to depict any degree of class awareness. According to Marcuse, it is possible to state that the character “…of progressive art, in its contribution to freedom struggles, may not be measured based on the origins of the artist nor on the ideological horizons of his class.”

Art is, in itself, a subversion of the principle of reality, and, therefore, liberating. Its significance grows, clearly, as the potential for protest against the absence of liberty and the reification of existence escalate. Within the esthetic transcendence elicited by art, danger lurks for insensible and ignorant systems – two fundamental channels promoting indifference and barbarity itself. Barbarity, in order to happen, does not require monsters; it does, however, require conceptual power resources and articulation strategies, to anesthetize through an atmosphere of sufficient indifference. In respect to these, Marcuse seeks traces of revolutionary works, since “…a work of art can be called revolutionary if, by virtue of its esthetic configuration, it reveals the absence of liberty and rebellious forces rising to shape the destiny of the individual, and also, if it shatters a mystified reality (also reified) and exposes shifting horizons of liberation.”

3.2. Sensibility, art and emancipation

Art is a form of rejection of a petrified reality created by a productivist society, where human leisure, art and interaction are dead. In the idleness inferred from the attitude of making art we recognize a strong rejection to subjectivity, in view of improved productivity, as an instrument of production management systems for which personal aspirations affecting thoughts, feelings, imagination, acts, dreams and suffering are seen as contemptible. Artistic activities involving sensibility, thus, are a form of reclaiming this dimension within a world projected into a deep state of slumber, enthralled by products and mechanical resourcefulness. Artistic practice, as an exercise in sensibility and an expression of subjectivity, is nonconformist and agitated and, in

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11 Ivi, p. 09.
12 Ivi, p. 10.
this sense, it reestablishes the bridge joining reality with dreams and imagination through creation. So, through creation, art distances itself to destroy the “…reified objectivity of the establish social relations and open a new dimension of experience: the rebirth of rebellious subjectivity.”¹³ In this perspective, emancipation is absolute.¹⁴

Art, as an esthetic language, and while regarded in this manner, also represents an erotic outlet and, therefore, a genuine expression of human sensibility. The metaphor, ‘to give wings to one’s imagination,’ speaks volumes about the seduction contained in the semiotic power expressed through diverse artistic forms. Thus, it is said, that art expresses the inexpressible. So, art cannot be translated, although it is always possible to find meaning in it, to interpret it. This language, which cryptographs messages, reveals, in one sense, the artistic subconscious, in another, dimensions of social reality, and still, in a third sense, instinct and materialized symbols, whether by the brush, by the chisel or by the pen of its creator. So, though artistic didactics may be contrary to the immediacy of the senses, the comprehension of artistic expression is subjected to another set of forces. Art extracts its uniqueness from the very language it employs. In this sense, and according to Adorno, in Esthetic Theory, one can say that the works are endowed with life: “Artwork lives while speaking in a fashion that is denied to natural objects and to those who make art. It speaks of the intrinsic virtues of communication and all its particularities.”¹⁵ In fact, symbols possess power; their power is due to the meaning they elicit and to their provocative presence and auralic singularity.

If these forces prove insufficient to effect a major transformation in society, it may be because, to some degree, this transformation is denied to us. Otherwise, how is it that, after the avant-guard of Hieronymus Bosch’s Garden of Earthly Delights, of Velasquez’ Las Niñas, of Picasso’s Guernica, of Pollock’s One, of Goya’s Tres de Mayo de 1808, or of Proust, of Baudelaire and of Sartre’s Nausea, the world has yet to fall to the transforming terrorism of art? Nevertheless, artistic symbols do muster enough power for a revolution through culture, stirring up profound paradigms of subconscious sedimentation and affecting man-nature and man-man relationships.¹⁶ Therefore, the value of an esthetic creation may not be measured by its

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¹³ Ivi, p. 18.
total transformative impotence: its value is measured by its capacity to keep the flame of hope and freedom alive, no matter how frailely it may flicker.

In conclusion, esthetics combat anesthesia, as notes Lyotard: “Post-Auschwitz esthetics and in the technoscientific world. Why esthetics? – We ask ourselves. Is it a unique leaning towards the arts, to music? It is because the question of the disaster is that of the insensible, of what I have called anesthesia.”17 Similarly, we read in Marcuse: “The Auschwitz and My Lai of all times, torture, famine and death – could one suppose that this entire world is nothing but a mere illusion and a bitter disappointment? Rather it persists as a unsavory and unimaginable reality. Art cannot represent this suffering without subjecting it to esthetic expressions and, thus, to a mitigating catharsis, to its fruition. Art is inexorably infested by his guilt. However, this does not excuse art from the need to repeatedly evoke what may survive even in Auschwitz and which, one day, may no longer be possible. If even this memory were to be silenced, then the end of art would have truly arrived. Authentic art preserves this memory in spite of and against Auschwitz; this recollection represents the grounds from which art has always sprung: the need for imagination to allow for the appearance of the other (possible) in this reality.”18

So, art awakens sensibility. But art presupposes sensibility. However, sensibility is not only artistic. There are also, as we have seen, other forms of sensibility. One may say that there is social sensibility when the concern and interest of the ego for the alter go beyond the reified forms of social interaction. Social sensibility takes on the form of solidarity, which improves social life, as our actions and thoughts focus on dimensions that include the other, lost or possibly hidden in capitalist society – the excluded, the destitute, the elderly, the unemployed, the oppressed minority; sensibility must necessarily lift the obscuring veil of ignorance to attempt to reach the dimension of the other through a whirlwind of fetishized merchandise conjured up by ideologies of immediatist societies. In addition, there is also natural sensibility, allowing us to observe through the contemplation of nature and the objective world what instrumental reason has denied us, leading us to the recognition that it is necessary to respect the ancientness of the world for human self-knowledge to the possible; and, finally, there is psycho-corporeal sensitivity, relating to biological self-awareness and

18 MARCUSE, The Aesthetic Dimension, cit., p. 54.
of the value of life, the form of manifestation Foucault’s idea of taking care of oneself, as a form of ethics,\textsuperscript{19} which also expresses a form of self-knowledge and self-perception of the intricate relationship of life in its different dimensions of body and spirit.\textsuperscript{20} As a group, these sensibilities, once recovered, are emancipatory.

However, in opposing sensibility, rudeness reemerges unscathed. Those who regress from a world governed by art are able to observe the clear impotence affecting a person’s capacity to transform reality. The transposition from reality to esthetic dimensions is subversive, sensed as a definite step up; on the other hand, the inverse passage from esthetic dimensions to reality almost always comes as an unwelcome step down. In a globalized world, this means that the acceleration of time, that the subversion of traditions, that the homogenization of products, that the logic of unbridled and unconscious consumption, that the standardization of customs continue to allow domination to trickle into history, perpetuating the vicious cycle of exhausting forces of transformation.

Facing the option of wavering and surrendering to world hostility, I choose the path of resistance through sensibility. Under the pretext of combating rudeness within the system, many become equally rude, or even more so than the rudest representatives of power. Resistance may mimic the ways of power and, thus, join the same level as a form of expression. Rudeness combats rudeness, and generates more rudeness. To fight rudeness, we must opt for the exercise of sensibility. It is more effective to combat rudeness with its opposite, with sensibility.

Power does not desire sensibility; therefore, we need to desire it.\textsuperscript{21} It is the most elaborate and subtle way to perceive the world. Sensibility is a part of an individual’s life, and keeping the individual from being absorbed by the idea of social totality or by the objectivation of social interactions, is a task of great importance. Wherever the individual lies buried, under capitalism, or under socialism, his disappearance nurtures re-emergence of the principle of Auschwitz. Therefore, if the core of sensibility is the person, then the person must the reinstated as the focus of autonomy, of critical awareness and the exercise of conscious emancipation. Flaws in

\textsuperscript{20} MARCUSE, \textit{The Aesthetic Dimension}, cit., p. 46.
\textsuperscript{21} WARAT, \textit{Unknown Territories}: the surrealist search for places of sensorial abandonment and of the reconstruction of subjectivity, v. I, 2004, p. 301.
orthodox Marxism itself must be undone, as they mimic traces of modern hostility. Along with this reconsideration, the comprehension of the esthetics according to Marcuse advances.\textsuperscript{22}

Then, why should we nurture sensibility in a world that has been completely stripped of it? The very purpose of promoting fantasy, self-knowledge, self-perception, the honing of senses, the desire for life, the desire for the world, leads us to adopt an erotic perspective in the Marcusean sense.\textsuperscript{23} The reality principle is quick to reject any sense in this practice. Furthermore, repressive societies do not speak ‘of these things,’ or even mention ‘these things,’ casting them into limbo as what may be considered ‘socially unproductive,’ or ‘countercultural.’ Well, ‘these things’ were rendered uninteresting; ‘these abstract and irrelevant things,’ such as feelings, sensations, affection, pain, anguish, were relegated to the outskirts of civilization, since, even when their usefulness is not contrary to productivism,\textsuperscript{24} they are, at least, relegated to ethical limbo and subject to the contempt of official languages.\textsuperscript{25} Therefore, the perpetuating and multiplying germ of the principle of death lies not dead, but dormant, within the entrails of civilization, as pointed out by Freud in \textit{Civilization and Its Discontents}, stealthily breaking the surface despite hoisted flags of peace ideologies, of justice and social order. The power of suggestion in artworks resides precisely in its capacity to sublimate, whether affecting the artist, or an observer, captured by his sense of taste. Thus, in short, one can state that beauty is an expression of the principle of life,\textsuperscript{26} which must contrast with the principle of death, as a force that moderates its effects over human existence. To all effects, as an attempt to translate the sublime and to transgress the concrete order of things, simply put, it produces sublimation.

Nonetheless, in this sense, art helps to endow with soul the depleted urban spaces, void of nature and corroded by bourgeois greed and proletarian inequality; thus, it fosters the capacity to break away from the perspective that envelops somber cold routine events of a labor-based society. In shaping its own world, art repudiates dry, hard, palpable, concrete and blind reality. Producing art generates the

\textsuperscript{22} MARCUSE, \textit{The Aesthetic Dimension}, cit., p. 15.
\textsuperscript{23} BOFF, \textit{Justice and Care: opposites or complements?}, in \textit{Caring as Judicial Value} and PEREIRA, Tania da Silva; OLIVEIRA, Guilherme de, orgs., 2008, p. 02.
\textsuperscript{24} MARCUSE, \textit{The Aesthetic Dimension}, cit., p. 16.
\textsuperscript{25} Ivi, p. 52.
\textsuperscript{26} Ivi, p. 59.
feeling of violation; one violates the acceptance of the world as it is, and one violates the ban on dreams.

Thus, art frees modern man from his reified, captive predicament. Art promotes emancipation, the emancipation of sensibility, as states Marcuse: “Art is determined to denounce the world that alienates individuals from their existence and their functional role in society – it is engaged in the emancipation of sensibility, imagination and reason in all spheres of subjectivity and objectivity.”

3.3. Critical analysis, sensibility and education in human rights

Critical and social philosophy must cultivate a mindset to promote resistance against the insensibility of daily life and, in this respect, it must represent the force of resistance against the imperatives of social conditioning. This means that critical theory is not to be taken for mere vulgar materialism, as warns Marcuse.

The positioning, therefore, of a line of thought that refuses to bow, resisting the status quo, involves, necessarily, the awareness that the different channels of perception must be unobstructed, allowing for the formation of human character. Certainly, pondering sensibility is different than perceiving it or feeling it. Also, pondering sensibility is different than practicing it. However, what we must bear in mind is that philosophy itself implies a practice of sensibility, while thinking is off limits to the great majority. Thus, more than a privilege, philosophy must be viewed as an exercise of reflection that expresses nonconformity with the order of things.

So, it is not a question of abandoning philosophy to engage in art, giving in to the temptation of thinking dichotomically about philosophy and art as separate trenches, but to propose a wedding between philosophy and art, between art and psychoanalysis, between psychoanalysis and philosophy, between philosophy and law, and transport philosophy into the arts, to promote a trickle through to the means of artistic symbols that represent reality and fantasy.

If philosophy is capable of promoting anything, it should encourage the nurturing dimension of sensibility, enabling will, desire, symbolism and reason to

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27 Ivi, p. 19.
28 Ivi, p. 15.
convergence and, once joined, turn sources of human expression into elements which, cohesively vow to contribute to the formation of the world and, in this sense, to preserve their importance as representative of emancipatory ideas.

Thus, wouldn’t art be a bridge to the dimension of life principles, and lead us away from death principles, preparing, forming and disseminating new ideas and practices in the dimension of human rights? Wouldn’t this be a powerful instrument for reclaiming what has been relinquished in human dimension? Wouldn’t this be one of many possible paths of liberation of the *eros* that lies repressed in civilization? Wouldn’t this aid in awakening the sensibility that is essential for the development of a democratic, pluralistic culture focused on human-social inter-comprehension?

So, sensibility seems join efforts to promote education in human rights, viewing in the study, practice, and understanding of art, means to reclaim the subjectivity that has been lost and buried under the debris of shattered beliefs in modernity.

Considering that education in human rights intends to emancipate through the practice of its premises, the channel used, pedagogically, cannot be dissociated from the means by which it institutes, vocalizes, mediates methods and educational concepts directed at issues of human formation. If education can help in the determination of character and in the construction of personality, paving the way to socialization, then art is a form of human self-comprehension of fundamental importance for human symbolic manifestation, and also in shaping the person through feelings; wouldn’t this be a practice which, articulated towards other knowledge, methodologies and pedagogical contents, could take part in formative process in human rights, in response to the vocation of a national project in human rights education? And this, under the perspective that education in human rights should prepare for tolerance between those that are different and for solidarity between unequal, realizing the need for the construction of people who are prepared for citizenship and for social partnerships\(^{29}\). Education in human rights and for human rights seeks to stimulate all forms by which the rescue of the person may be accomplished, and sensibility is not an irrelevant aspect in these dynamics.

4. Human Rights Education and Sensibilization through the Arts: the example of literature

One of the great challenges of education in human rights is to generate sensibility. What is the importance of the recovery of sensibility in human and humanistic formation? What is the role of education in human rights in this sector? Would artistic sensibility be capable of combating, with its limited weapons and resources, the heavy artillery employed in the game of prevailing of economic structures? Or, in fact, would the role of art be a predominantly ideological task? Or could it be the expression of alienation, or even the reaction to alienation? This and other questions become emblematic in attempts to understand the role of art as it relates to sensibility. It is an exercise in viewing art as an element of fundamental importance not only in education, in the formation of a solidary spirit, in exercising freedom with responsibility, in fostering unbiased, non-violent social identities, in promoting a constructive social spirit and the active and critical participation in democratic life.

It is not only the cognitive apparatus and the access to the concept that define and good assimilation and perception of a reality. If human rights education endeavors, as it claims, to promote citizenship, empower with rights and educate within a historical context, it must do so through multiple languages, which affect the perceptions of learners. Education in human rights in schools requires a complex environment inviting students with different vocations, formations, perceptions and experiences to participate, including learners possessing different perceptions of reality, whether synesthetic, visual or auditory; clearly, the diversity of channels of learning/teaching must be skillfully explored within a formative school environment. Therefore, in positioning education within reality, scientific premises are of great use, no doubt; we should, however, include the esthetic experience, the physical proximity to the object being studied, a visit to an in-session courtroom, films, newspaper and literary work. The arts, therefore, have their place in reality, in their own way, with their own language, which is, by nature, different from the language of science.

One could, on occasion, entertain a classroom for endless hours with the notion of a ‘coup d’État,’ pointing out its peculiarities when compared to a ‘revolution.’ One could even present the theme ‘authoritarianism in politics’ and contextualize ‘totalitarianisms in the 20th century.’ The audience may remain unmoved
through it all, and even confidently prepare for exams and tests. However, the certainty that the students will, on a certain day, leave with a different perspective on the Brazilian dictatorship between 1964-1985 is noticeable in the look in their eyes, in response to a brief video presentation inside the classroom, exposing persecution, censorship, torture and repression against the student movement, deaths caused by violent questioning and irreparable acts against human lives provoked by the generalized political repression of this period. Regardless of exam results, it is certain that those who saw the video will not forget what life was like under a dictatorship. It is clear because the esthetic language contained in the images translates more vividly and offers a higher potential of sensitizing, touching, and stimulating the senses, as compared to the cold and often monotonous discourse presented by the teacher. Therefore, and at this point, we emphasize the importance that an education in human rights be capable of producing educational materials for this teaching logic.  

However, to teach liberty, solidarity, equity, diversity, equality and respect, calls for, from a methodological point of view, a little more than a simple speech.  

Noteworthy is the power of the ‘critical image,’ in a society which has become totally dependent on the ‘ideological and market image.’ But one can also engage in this exercise of understanding, through the literary arts. Antonio Cândido, defines literature broadly in Various Texts, in his essay ‘The Right to Literature’: “I will refer to literature, in the most all-encompassing form possible, as all creations with a poetic touch, fictional or dramatic on all levels of society, in all types of cultures, from what we call folklore, legend, humor, to the more complex and difficult written productions of great civilizations.” Well, in its scope, the definition of literary arts allows us to approach a very wide range of cultural practices, and, therefore, to rescue significant practices which, for its location and regional aspects, have gradually become marginal and lost arts, generally smothered by the hegemony of globalized productions. Artistic forms, such as cordel literature, which originated in mediaeval Portuguese-Spanish tradition, to carry on in Brazil, most significantly in the states of Pernambuco, Paraíba, Rio Grande do Norte and Ceará, represent important channels that employ the

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language experienced in specific social networks. Wouldn’t this recovery contain a significant potential of enrootment for self awareness practices, and would it not speak the language capable of translating concepts of human rights?

After these considerations, it is clear that the arts should be at the service of pedagogical practices, strengthening the expansion of a human rights culture, as favorable portals to the expression of every-man’s humanity, in terms of himself. Simply put, by providing the language, by enabling the cult, by raising awareness, by illustrating feelings and experiences which are common to all, by naming the pain, by christening reality, and by multiplying of the vocabulary of the reader, literature plays an essential role in the process of humanization. One cannot disregard the transforming potential of ‘providing a language’ in fostering awareness and socializing the access to rights, and, therefore, liberating the oppressed from their condition of spiritual solitude and ignorance. So, Antonio Cândido considers literature “…An indispensable humanizing factor, and, therefore, it validates man in his humanity, acting to a considerable degree within the subconscious and the unconscious mind.” Arts in general, though, literary arts in particular, carry this humanizing potential, “…a process which confirms in man the traces that we deem essential, such as, the exercise of reflection, the acquisition of knowledge, the benevolent disposition towards others, the fine-tuning of emotions, the ability to deal with problems in life, the sense of beauty, the perception of the complexity of world and creatures, the culture of humor. Literature develops in us a measure of humanity by promoting comprehension and openness towards nature, society and others.”

As creatures of words, we depend on them, as birds depend on the air to fly. Consequently, mutilating the wings of a bird suppresses its potential to enjoy the freedom contained in the relationship it has with the air. Also, for creatures of words, “to deny the fruition of literature is to stunt humanity,” and, therefore, to take away part of our freedom. If the fight for human rights is a fight for human liberty, it is clear that “the fight for human rights encompasses the fight for a situation in which all may enjoy access to the different levels of culture… A just society presumes the respect for human rights and the fruition of the art of literature in all its forms and on all levels as

33 Ivi, p. 175.
34 Ivi, p. 180.
35 Ivi, p. 186.
an inalienable right.”³⁶ Whether taken as a method to transmit content, whether taken as an end in itself, as a practice of humanization, the example of literary arts is of evident relevance for the discussion of the language of arts applied to the world of education along with educational practices focused on human rights.³⁷

It is evident that, considering the uncertainties contained in education itself, and the daunting challenge faced by human rights educators in dealing with the complexities of the formative process, there can be no guaranteed results. Art does not take one directly to the orbit of humanization, in a cause-effect logical sequence. It opens perspectives that allow each learner to reach a better comprehension of his interior world, the human condition, the alterity of others, as per Lévinas. Therefore, cultured education does not represent a social insurance policy keeping barbarity from returning to social life. As Jaime Guinzburg cautions, “if there is no incompatibility between appreciating Beethoven and exercising violence, as indicated by the protagonists of The Elephant and Clockwork Orange, is it possible to suppose that there is no incompatibility, in a more ample in generic way, between a cultural formation and the disposition towards destruction.”³⁸

The task of the educator in human rights is that of sensitizing and provoking, making use of images and artistic resources, to prompt debates about social issues, historical problems, feelings, values, behavior, etc. However, the educator alone is not able to prevent barbaric events. This task is one of social co-responsibility involving numerous agents; in respect to his field of action, certainly, the human rights educator may be the promoter of many small revolutions which occur in a muted fashion, in the intimacy of every learner, transforming environments, families and regions. Therefore, one may not discredit the potential of the arts, under the pretext of exercising critical thought. True critical thought is genuinely sensible to the dimension of alterity, engaged, as it is, with the dimension of intersubjectivity and the willingness to consider socialization processes conducive to moral development. According to Eduardo Brito: “I don’t know if literature improves those men who have read many and good books. After all what books did Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin Slobodan Milosevic read? And which did George W. Bush read? I know that in the circles in which I live, literature does make a difference in the way of

³⁶ Ivi, p. 191.
interpreting the world; I know that the world that surrounds literature is a means of venturing beyond the reach of my physical limitations.”

Thus, the dimension of sensibility appears to join in a great pool of efforts to promote education in human rights, with the indispensible help of the arts, both in study and practice, in the quest to recover lost subjectivity, buried among modernity’s pile of rubble.

Conclusions

In this chapter, the question of sensibility was investigated along with its formative importance for human beings. The recovery of art is seen as a practice of emancipation, in that it represents a form of cultural and societal transformation. The question of human rights is permeated by these issues and, therefore, becomes the fulcrum of these reflections.

Esthetic sensitivity has been present in the identity of humans since time immemorial. The first cave paintings are evidence of language, pointing to human capacity to depict and create as a distinguishing factor. Therefore, this is not a negligible characteristic in defining what is human. In its task to regulate human interaction and to intervene in human and societal endeavors, concepts of justice may not be indifferent to the significance of esthetics and the relationship that can be nurtured, especially when considering the issue of how law may join efforts with the arts in an effort to humanize social interactions.

In this reflection, what is proposed is not, actually, an attitude of abandonment of philosophy in order to engage in artistic activities, giving in to the temptation of thinking dichotomically, *either* philosophy *or* art, as separate trenches, but rather to propose the marriage between philosophy and art, art and psychoanalysis, psychoanalysis and philosophy, philosophy and justice, projecting philosophy into the arts employing artistic symbolism to represent reality and fantasy. Moreover, the consideration concerning the sense and the importance of art in the formative process of

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human beings may not be foreign to any agent of socially relevant roles, especially in regulating social life, which all agents of justice engage in, in their particular manner.

If nothing else, philosophy should aspire to nurture dimensions of sensibility, promoting the convergence between will (as defined by Schopenhauer), desire, symbolism and reason since, together, these sources of human expression join forces to play a part in effecting changes in the world and, in this sense, realizing their importance as emancipatory ideals. When philosophy encourages art to express and experience freedom, it also allows freedom to approach justice and, thus, aids justice in effectively performing its social mission.
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