

Artistic Sign and Aesthetic Education in Vigotski

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ABSTRACT – Artistic Sign and Aesthetic Education in Vigotski. This paper discusses, in the light of cultural-historical theory, the role of artistic sign in aesthetic education. It emphasizes the concept of sign, aesthetic perception, expression, artistic creation, and human development. Theoretically and methodologically, it dialogues with Vigotski and with two art researchers: the first one carried out semi-structured interviews with professional artists, and the second one organized rounds of conversations, at school, with children of literacy age. The theoretical and practical discussion carried out in this paper allows us to think about elements for aesthetic education in connection with the concept of artistic sign, and indicates possibilities of organizing arts in education, as aesthetic education, in order to potentiate the human cultural development.

Keywords: Aesthetic Education. Artistic Sign. Emotions. Vigotski. Human Development.

RESUMO – Os Signos Artísticos e a Educação Estética em Vigotski. Este artigo discute, à luz da Teoria Histórico-Cultural, o papel dos signos artísticos na educação estética. Enfatiza o conceito de signo, percepção estética, expressão, criação artística e desenvolvimento humano. Teórico-metodologicamente, dialoga com Vigotski e com duas pesquisadoras das artes: a primeira realizou entrevistas semiestruturadas com artistas profissionais, e a segunda organizou rodas de conversas, na escola, com crianças em idade alfabetização. A discussão teórico-prática efetivada no presente artigo permite pensar uma educação estética articulada ao conceito de signo artístico e indica possibilidades de organização das artes na educação, como educação estética, de maneira a potencializar o desenvolvimento humano cultural.

Palavras-chave: Educação Estética. Signo Artístico. Emoções. Vigotski. Desenvolvimento Humano.

Introduction: the issue of art in education

The diverse forms of artistic expression, such as theater, dance, sculpture, architecture, painting, music, among others, are human productions that are part of our development and human-social organization. Musical manifestations, for example, are expressed, in varied cultural contexts, through songs, dances, and different rituals. Musical behaviors are based on a phylogenesis expressed by the body, which has rhythmic elements such as breathing and heartbeat, body movement that is also rhythmic, the voice with its nuances of timbre, height, volume, etc. However, as Autor (autor) points out, beyond this biological basis that gives us the possibility of musical expression through the body, it is in the culture that musicality is developed, amid the appropriation of tools, activities, artistic and musical signs, and in the relationship with people.

Thus, in the expressions of the arts, involved in the webs of culture, there is a shared character of artistic making, which demands diverse experience of social signs expressed therein, as, for example, in the field of theater, in a play by Bertolt Brecht, which demands an encounter with the other and an internalization of various body signs, performed on stage, which are distinct from the Kabuki theater, not only because they are different styles, but also because they have theatrical perspectives and cultural meanings that make up the singularity in which each gesture and artistic expression refers to.

Nevertheless, the arts in the educational institution seem to disregard the plurality of senses and meanings produced in the soil of culture, socially shared signs that give meaning to artistic experiences, since they have served different functions, supported by hegemonic and homogenized forms of thinking this artistic activity in school, implying fragmentation and instrumentalization of aesthetic experiences in formative spaces. Artistic activities that entered schools were largely detached from their unique artistic, social, and cultural contexts, senses, and meanings. When proposed as curricular content, art was moralized, intellectualized, and related in a simplistic way to hedonistic pleasure (Vigotski¹, 2001), moving away from its essence as an authentic human activity in culture. The plastering of the arts that occurs in educational contexts represents a mercadological, instrumental, and spectacular face, just like the society we live in nowadays. In education, it is common to distance an aesthetic education as an authentic experience of the human being in its relationship with culture, considering that the product of art seems to have more importance than the aesthetic experience process itself.

In learning environments, artistic practices, instead of being organized and experienced from the signs of culture produced in terms of their entanglement of meanings and genuine cultural experiences, and thought from unconditional hospitality, as Autor (autor) states, many times, when we seek to break the walls of schools, trying to dialogue with cultural diversity from an aesthetic experience with cultural signs,

we end up instrumentalizing art in educational experiences through homogenization that reinforces socially accepted cultural standards.

The school culture established by a logic of productivity in the organization of school time-space materializes a set of pedagogical, curricular, and disciplinary procedures that define the understanding of art at school. Whether in the school calendar, in the disciplines, dates and annual commemorative parties, as well as the constant need to use people in a spectacularized way in this context, exposing the discourse of arts as a byproduct of this school culture, in which students, who are cultural human beings, become producers of a type of mercadological and schooled art. As Illich (2007, p. 8) states, “not only education, but social reality itself has become schoolized”, in this way, what should be an authentic process of encounter with art in the production of artistic and cultural signs in the search for human development from life itself, from genuinely cultural experiences, has become merchandise of a scholarly art permeated by the search for obtaining titles, confused with the process of learning, measured by quantifications, cut out in curricula alien to life, far from genuine cultural signs, in which people, instead of exchanging knowledge, based on their differences, their diversities and affections, that constitute human beings, are separated by grades, classes, desks, necks and endless periods of certification.

The distancing of life lived from the educational processes in art encompasses not only basic education, in general, but also higher education, with respect to teacher training, since it is in this space that they are constituted for the act of educating and have strengthened the fragmented and schoolized experiences in art (Pederiva, 2009).

Against the educational proposal that aims at a fragmented and antidialogical formation, Freire (1974), in his *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, denounces the antidialogical practice existing in the curricula that is claimed to be educational. For the author, any curricular organization must be based on the dialog that exists between the people who participate in this process, the situations that present themselves as problematic at a certain moment of life, and the experiences that each one brings to solve them. Thus, the concept of aesthetic experience, in its cultural dimension, in its individual, social, historical, and communitarian possibilities, is essential in the organization of any educational process. In this way, to think about an aesthetic education in dialogue with the signs of culture is configured as an educational, political, and cultural act, in which people, as relational beings, together, have the possibility of experiencing the dialogue with the other and with the artistic signs as an aesthetic experience that forms and transforms the world.

In this context, the defense for aesthetic education thought from the perspective of the Cultural-Historical Theory, with its main founder, Lev Semionovitch Vigotski, in which the production of artistic signs is intertwined with human development in its relationship with culture is a path to be followed and experienced in education, as a formative

possibility built in the encounter with art through the aesthetic experience with cultural signs in educational spaces.

The approach to the Cultural-Historical Theory, related to the role of signs, developed by Vigotski, in order to think about an aesthetic education on these bases, launches us into an intellectual adventure guided by some relevant issues to be thought: how does Vigotski think about the relationship between artistic signs and the psychology of art? How does the role of signs, based on this theory, help us think about aesthetic education in its relation to culture? Which pedagogical experiences of an aesthetic education with art can be enhanced and experimented based on Cultural-Historical Theory? These are pertinent concerns that guide the construction of this work and that pose challenges to be thought about at the intersection between the artistic signs, the webs of culture, and the aesthetic experience in education. A challenging path to be traveled with Vigotski, an author who sought to understand the artistic phenomenon, in its psychological and cultural-historical dimension, as well as the signs that make up this activity and its role in human life and development to inaugurate, on these bases, a genuine aesthetic education, rooted in culture, in the individual-social, affective-intellectual experiences, in which the sign has a founding role of cultural human beings.

In this perspective, we envision an educational process based on an aesthetic education that goes beyond what has already been established as the function and place of art in school, in an aesthetic education free from the chains that discipline the bodies and standardize behavior, directing and limiting the thoughts and dreams of students at school.

We seek to share some aesthetic educational experiences in the field of the sensitive, the affections, and the emotions, in the pedagogical search to experience other encounters with the artistic signs that challenge thinking and feeling, and that resonate in new experiences of aesthetic sociability, creative and culture-producing pedagogical coexistence. We seek to think an aesthetic experience with the artistic signs, within a cultural-historical perspective supported by the role of signs developed by Vigotski and his developments, in order to think an aesthetic education in education/at school.

We seek to think of an aesthetic education with Vigotski in which the artistic signs enhance the artistic experience in school, in which the aesthetic experience with art challenges the creation and expression of thought and feeling, an education that is able to awaken in students the most unusual sensations, affectations, experiences, and experimentations. An environment of aesthetic education that mobilizes learning, awakens perception, enhances the expression of the body inserted into culture, and expands the margins of thought. For an aesthetic education that brings vigor to the educational spaces, that awakens to the lightness of acts with transforming potentialities, capable of inspiring other ways of being and existing in the world. An aesthetic education

that gives students the opportunity to meet, learn, and create with the artistic signs in the tangles of culture.

Vigotski and the cultural human being

Lev Seminovitch Vigotski (1886-1934) is a Belarusian author who lived in the last century and, with the strength, density, and uniqueness of his thought, marks his presence in the fields of psychology, art, and education studies today. His short life span, due to his death from tuberculosis at the age of 37, was enough for his story to be perpetuated in the studies of psychology and education, areas in which his work stands out.

His historical time was marked by troubled moments in world history, especially that of Soviet Russia. He lived through three distinct and conflicting moments, namely: Soviet tsarism, the Russian socialist revolution, and Stalinism. There were great challenges for those who were part of these historical times, while the dualism of ideas was effervescent. Vigotski supported the Leninist ideals and believed, along with other revolutionaries, that it was necessary to create a new society with more egalitarian principles.

In this miscellany of ideas and ideological struggles, the so-called Cultural-Historical Theory was born, with a Marxist and Spinozist foundation, with the perspective that a new human being should exist in the midst of a new society. For Vigotski and his main collaborators, such as Luria and Leontiev, the old society, which privileged some in detriment of others, as well as the old education and psychology, should be left behind. To this end, Vigotski dedicated his studies to understanding human development in an innovative and thorough way, defending psychology and education as inseparable sciences. For the author, there is no way to conceive a psychology that is not pedagogical; and a pedagogy that is not psychological (Vigotski, 2003).

In the course of the history of Vigotski's work, it is possible to evidence how troubled was (and has been) the consolidation process of his work, essentially Marxist and Spinozist. Due to his epistemological and ideological positioning, the translations made from Russian to other languages, such as English, are surrounded by cuts in his writings and, also, changes in his historical-dialectical and monistic materialist bias (Prestes, 2010). It is in this way that his works reach Brazil and most of the world, which is why the present historical and cultural presentation of this scholar who strove to understand the human being in its essence, in the light of the writings of Karl Marx and Baruch Spinoza, is so necessary.

At the beginning of the last century, there were several psychological studies in progress, and in his works, L.S. Vigotski elucidates many of them, dialogues with, and performs antitheses to the thoughts of other scholars of the time. The major criticism made by the Belarusian author to the mentioned works is that, most of them emphasize human development as essentially biological, under metaphysical and deter-

ministic bases, devaluing or neglecting the possibilities opened by the cultural development of this species (Vigotski, 1995).

Through the lenses of monism, Vigotski sought to understand the general laws of human development, the differences between the human species and other animals; and evidenced the historical-cultural influences in the process of becoming human. It is in this sense that his studies seek to understand the genesis, the function, and the structure of the Higher Mental Functions (HMFs), that is, the functioning of the human psyche under the organization of culture, beyond its biological configuration. Culture enables the unlimited development of the person, beyond the biological determinations, as the human power of relating in and with the world, among people and with oneself, and of transforming the environment. They, the HMFs, to Vigotski (1995), are developed specifically in culture, unlike the lower mental functions, which have a biological character and have limitations, as stated above. He stands in opposition to authors who assume that the biological sphere governs human development, defending that it is in the cultural development that there is an expansion of these possibilities of human constitution, for example, self-regulation, in the relationship with oneself and in the action with the environment and its transformation.

In his theses, Vygotsky qualitatively differentiates such functions and states that both, biological and cultural functions, are important for human development, they are a unity of functioning. In light of Spinozist philosophy, he relies on Spinoza's (2017) concept of *conatus*, which defines body and mind as different attributes; while body is a matter attribute, mind is a thought attribute, however, they express themselves in unity - this is the monist basis that runs through all of Vigotski's work, and this is how he founds his understanding of human development:

[...] the organism, the personality and the human intellect form a single whole, but not a simple whole, i.e. it is not a homogeneous whole, but a complex whole, made up of a series of functions or elements with a complex structure and complex reciprocal relationships (Vigotski, 1995, p. 318).

In other words, the human being develops in an indivisible way, is constituted as a unity of functioning: affect-intellect, body-mind, person-environment. In this perspective, all human activity is essentially affective-intellectual. Even when in some specific activity there is a greater weight on any of these dimensions, the marks in the development of the psyche involved in the process must be considered both in the intellectual and affective fields, as Spinoza (2017, p. 123) points out:

Indeed, the mind knows itself only insofar as it perceives the ideas of the affections of the body. But it does not perceive its body except by means of these ideas of the affections, and it is also only by means of these affections that it perceives the external bodies.

It is along these lines that Vigotski (2017) affirms that there is a unity of biological and cultural functions, and emphasizes that these are dialectically configured. As they develop, the higher functions become constituted as a new functional system, changing the biological bases, expanding the range of possibilities for behavior in the world. Such a system has unique, singular and unrepeatable characteristics at each moment of life. The higher mental functions,

[...] are not the product of the biological evolution of behavior, but of the historical development of the human personality, in the aspect of ontogenesis they also have their special history of development, closely linked to the biological formation, but which does not coincide with it and constitutes together with the latter the second line of psychic development [...] (Vigotski, 2017, p. 52).

Everything that is found in the phylogenetic development, that is, in our history as animals, has a biological basis and continues to develop in culture, can be considered a cultural, or higher, mental function, such as logical memory, volition, voluntary attention, aesthetic emotions, etc. This development of the higher mental functions is configured in the human development itself, because the human being is understood as a social-historical-cultural individual who constitutes himself/herself as human in the relationship with other human beings, mediated by signs, by instruments, and by work. Here, we will focus specifically on the mediation of artistic signs in human development and its implication in the educational field.

Sign and its role in human development

Vigotski (2017, p. 61) states that “[...] the organization based on sign is, consequently, the most important differentiating feature of all higher mental functions, [...]”. Such mediation, firstly, develops in the intersychic field, that is, between two or more people, to later be internalized in the intrapsychic field, internally to oneself, and has a social character (Vigotski, 2017), to the author,

We come, therefore, to the conclusion that the operation of the use of the sign, which appears at the beginning of the development of each of the higher mental functions, has necessarily in the first moments the character of external activity. At the beginning, the sign is, as a rule, an external auxiliary stimulus, an external means of self-stimulation. This is conditioned by two causes: firstly, that this operation proceeds from the collective form of behavior, which always belongs to the sphere of external activity, and, secondly, by the primitive laws of the individual sphere of behavior, [...] (Vigotski, 2017, p. 21).

Sign, to Vigotski (2017), has an important function in the development of the psyche, considering that the development of the higher mental functions is mediated by it. When we operate with signs, we

start to relate with highly complex mental processes, and, as elucidated by Vigotski (2017, p. 69) “[...] we actually abandon the field of the natural history of the psyche and enter the sphere of the historical formations of behavior”. In the use of signs, we create a new form of psychological-cultural behavior that enables the self-regulation of our conduct.

Unlike other animals, the human being has, in addition to natural development, a cultural development. In other words, in the development process of the human psyche, through the development of the higher functions, it is possible for a person to self-regulate, to dominate oneself in the same way and from how this person dominates and starts to operate with signs, in the same way, as Vygotsky (2021, p. 76-77) asserts:

Cultural development consists in the assimilation of ways of behavior that are based on the use and employment of signs for the realization of a certain psychological operation, that cultural development consists exactly in the mastery of these auxiliary ways of behavior that humanity has created in the process of its historical development and that are language, writing, the system of calculation, among others.

Vigotski (2021), when conducting experiments with children aiming to understand the genesis, function and structure of signs and their role in human development in ontogenesis, proposes tasks with the use of some signs in practical activities, to be performed. In the situations, he observes not only the execution (or not) of the task, but the ways chosen by the children. He states that the proposed activities should always exceed the child’s natural abilities, otherwise, the child will only perform it using natural means. Therefore, he states that in his experiments, “The task presented to the child usually exceeds his or her natural capacities. It is impossible to be solved with primitive and natural means” (Vigotski, 2021, p. 81), thus, he quotes an example in which the child is proposed the task of memorizing a number of numerals or letters, for example, and, in front of him or her, neutral materials are made available, such as paper, pins, string, etc. In this situation, the child is faced with a natural activity, but the solution requires indirect ways to perform it, or the use of instruments (Vigotski, 2021). The author goes on to say:

If a child invents this way out, he or she resorts to the aid of signs, making knots in the string, separating the beads, piercing or tearing the paper, etc. Based on the use of signs, we analyze this memorization as a typical case of any cultural ways of behavior. The child solves the internal task with the help of external means; in this we can see the most typical peculiarity of cultural behavior (Vigotski, 2021, p. 82).

In the situation described, the author exemplifies the use of signs in the development of the higher mental function of memorization, but

this extends to the other psychological functions. Since early childhood, in our daily experiences, we use signs to solve tasks, as the example cited in Vigotski's experience (2021). Signs are created by human beings, and it is we who give meaning to them through their mediation, which allows us to relate to the world, to others, and to ourselves. The sign, in Cultural-Historical Theory,

[...] thereby forms a structural and functional center that determines the composition and relative significance of each particular process. The introduction of the sign with the aid of which any behavioral process is carried out restructures the flow of psychological operations [...] (Vigotski, 2021, p. 84).

We act through sign in all human activities, including the arts, which, for Vigotski, have a unique role, extremely important in life and in human development. The artistic signs are those that constitute the activities in this field, the various artistic manifestations have, then, different signs. For example, in music, sounds are expressed as artistic signs; in dance, movements; in plastic arts, colors; lines, traces, and, in literature, the word in its possibilities of forms and contents.

Each human activity, through its set of singular signs, allows the development of a certain development of the psyche in its integral whole in a unique and specific way, and the artistic signs make it possible, based on Vigotski (2001) the consciousness about our emotions, which are cultural emotions and, thus, the development of our higher mental functions and of our constitution as a cultural, historical, and social human being.

The Arts and Artistic Signs in Vigotski's Cultural-Historical Theory

For Vigotski (2001), the arts are a psychological phenomenon, and it is on this basis that these forms of expression need to be understood. This is because, for him, the psychism of the social being constitutes the common subsoil of artistic activity. Thus, to study expressions in art, it is necessary to understand how it happens as such. To the author:

It becomes entirely comprehensible the specific role that art plays as an absolutely peculiar ideological form, linked to a totally singular field of the human psyche. And if we want to elucidate precisely this singularity of art, that which distinguishes its effects from other ideological forms, we will inevitably need a psychological analysis. It all consists in the fact that art systematizes an entirely specific field of the social man's psyche - precisely the field of his feeling (Vigotski, 2001, p. 12).

Vigotski (2001) argues that the psychism of a particular individual is socially constituted. According to the theorist, even in the most personal and intimate movement of each being, the psychism is social to

him, (2001, p. 22) “the very feelings aroused by works of art are socially conditioned” indirectly determining the nature and effect of artistic creation, which functions,

As a system of stimuli organized consciously and deliberately with a view to eliciting an aesthetic response. By analyzing the structure of the stimuli, we will recreate the structure of the response [...] thus recreated, the aesthetic response will be absolutely impersonal, that is, it will not belong to any particular individual, nor will it reflect any individual psychic process (Vigotski, 2001, p. 26).

This applies to all forms of artistic expression, including popular arts, since art created by the people, people who own the technique of their craft, which is rich and deeply specialized. Artists are not individual authors of their works, but rather disseminators of the evolution of techniques, materials, forms, themes and procedures that have been built up throughout our history and culture.

Art, for Vigotski (2001), has a specific meaning in human behavior. It is, for the author, a *social technique of feelings*, a *tool of the emotions*, a kind of *prolonged social feeling*. For him, “art is not a direct expression of life, but an antithesis of life [...] in art, one overcomes a certain aspect of our psyche that finds no outlet in our everyday life” (Vigotski, 2001, p. 308).

In his work *Psychology of Art*, Vigotski (2001) explains that there are countless events that happen to us on a daily basis. However, only a tiny part of these is registered in our consciousness. The great majority of these stimuli remain in the unconscious field, acting, in some way, on our behavior, which is an affective-intellective unit. When we experience artistic activity, an internal field opens up in us that creates the possibility of awareness of the unique emotions related to the internalized stimuli and, more importantly, of how they leave their marks in the affective dimension. Such consciousness, understood by Vigotski as the property we have to self-regulate ourselves, allows, in the perceptive, expressive and creative experiences in art, a balancing of ourselves in relation to our emotions in the field of our behavior.

The nervous system resembles a permanent battlefield, and our performed behavior represents only a tiny part of what exists in the form of possibility, which has been triggered but finds no outflow. Just as in nature the realized part of life represents a tiny portion of all the life that could have come into being, just as each life that is born is due to millions of lives that are not born, so in our nervous system the unrealized part of life is the smallest part of life that is actually contained within us. Sherington compares our nervous system to a funnel with the mouth facing the world and the beak for action. The world pours into man through the wide mouth of a funnel through a thousand appeals, attractions, an insignificant part of these elements is realized as if flowing out through the

spout of the funnel. It is perfectly understandable that this unrealized part of life, which has not passed through the narrow spout of the funnel, must be eliminated anyway. The organism has been placed in a certain equilibrium with the environment, it is necessary to regulate the scales, as it is necessary to open the valve in the boiler in which the pressure of the steam overcomes the resistance of its body. And art is, it seems, the appropriate vehicle to achieve this explosive equilibrium with the environment at the critical points of our behavior (Vigotski, 2001, p. 312).

But how is this possible? How can art organize our behavior, balancing us in relation to ourselves and the environment? How do we give meaning to the artistic experience, the aesthetic experience?

We are an individual-social unit. Our constitution, as human beings, was structured by the internalization of signs, tools, and cultural activities engendered in human history. Amid relationships with people, since birth, we were and are presented to signs that refer to things in the world and that organize it, organizing us as well. The word, the linguistic sign, for example, generalizes the world. The arts particularize emotions. In the case of the arts, these are structured in their forms, materials and contents (Vigotski, 2001), by means of artistic signs. In these signs are fixed meanings and social senses that were organized by their creators, who are social beings. When experiencing – smallest unit of person-meaning, *pereživânie* to Vigotski (2018) – arts, in their expression, perception, and/or creation, these feelings are particularized, singularized according to each person's experiences, making possible the awareness of singular affections and balancing the emotional field by means of self-regulation.

The meanings attributed to artistic experiences, even though their signs have social meanings, come from social experiences, but do not work as a kind of emotional contagion as Vigotski (2001) says. The colors, the sounds, the artistic materials shaped as art, through their forms, materials and contents, the meanings and senses attributed to them, depend on the diversity of life experiences of each person in relation to the artistic signs, so that they take on their own, singular meaning, as art, because,

The matter does not occur in the way represented by the contagion theory, according to which the feeling that is born in an individual spreads to everyone, becomes social, it is quite the opposite that occurs. The re-founding of emotions outside of ourselves takes place by force of a social feeling, which has been objectified, taken outside of ourselves, materialized and fixed in the external objects of art, which have become instruments of society (...) Art is a social technique of feeling, an instrument of society through which it incorporates into the social life cycle the most intimate and personal aspects of our being. It would be more correct to say that the feeling does not become

social but, on the contrary, becomes personal, when each one of us experiences a work of art, it becomes personal, without ceasing to be social (Vigotski, 2001, p. 315).

In musical creations, for example (Pederiva, 2009), during our entire existence, we are marked by sounds, noises, several sonorities that are intentionally shaped by their creators through their contents and social materials in the form of music. However, depending on each person's experience with everything that constitutes the artistic structure, in this case, the musical structure, the meanings and senses attributed to this experience will be singular, even if its creator's intention is based on shared social musical signs. In this way, the experience in each musical style, rock, samba, pagode, instrumental music, jazz, etc., its sounds, instrumentation, rhythms, melodies, will connect, in the unique artistic experiences, with each person in different ways, organizing their emotional element, their affective dimension. This also happens in relation to colors, images, scenic performances, etc. in each art form. The understanding of the aesthetic effect, therefore, is in the artistic structure itself, which is constituted by means of social artistic signs that are experienced daily by social human beings, and that have the possibility, as such, of developing this consciousness through educational processes, by an affective-intellective recognition of these signs.

It is not by chance that, depending on our emotional states, we seek the artistic experience, which we judge to be adequate to our state of mind at a given moment. We recognize the social senses and meanings given to artistic creations, because we are social beings, artistic beings. Songs with melodies in minor scales to refer to our sadder emotions, low-pitched sounds to create more tense sound environments, for example. The fact is that we usually refer to artistic experiences as emotional, experiences from the realm of the sensible. We surrender to the catharsis of artistic experience, voluntarily, and in this way, based on this awareness, we organize ourselves, achieving the balancing of the emotional dimension. Therefore, artistic activities are necessary for life, unique in psychic terms, and need to be incorporated, not just as an ornament, but as something that should be part of the educational and human development processes. This is what Vigotski (2001; 2003) calls aesthetic education, an educational experience in art, which, as a balancing of the person in the world through the experience of its activity, also becomes therapeutic.

Aesthetic education

The aesthetic experiences for Vigotski (2003) have an educational meaning, thinking of education as lived life, integral, global, more broadly, a unity represented in aesthetic education. There is a complex internal activity of the organism in artistic experiences, beyond the eyes and ears, or any of the sense organs. This perception would be only the first step in an aesthetic education, since

A work of art represents only a system organized in a special way of the external impressions or sensitive influences upon the organism. However, these sensitive influences are organized and constructed in such a way that they awaken in the organism a type of reaction different from the usual one, and this peculiar activity, connected with the aesthetic stimuli, is what constitutes the nature of the aesthetic experience (Vigotski, 2003, p. 229).

Vigotski (2003) understands that there is a creative synthesis in the psyche that experiences art, because it demands that it performs the reunion and the synthesis of dispersed elements present in the artistic whole, in its form, content, and material organized as art. In this experience, reality would not be a mere reproduction made by the artistic creation, but rather, it would be made more difficult, demanding from us a constant tension, an arduous work of the psyche, whose experience, in expressive perceptive and creative terms, would be the main intentionality of an aesthetic education. "Art always carries this dialectical behavior that reconstructs emotion and, therefore, always involves the most complex activity of an internal struggle that is resolved by catharsis" (p. 235). It encompasses contradiction, internal repulsion, overcoming and rising above these components of the aesthetic act. "One must see the grotesque in all its force, and then, through laughter, rise above it" (p. 235).

The fundamental law of art requires this free combination of elements of reality, this essential independence from everyday truth, which, in aesthetics, ends with the border that separates the fantastic from the truth [...] and the reality of art implies only the reality of the emotions linked to it (Vigotski, 2003, p. 142).

The conscious process about the emotions present in the artistic experience would make possible the self-control over the system of experiences, and also to overcome them, to surpass them, promoting the elevation of the psyche, the outcoming of the direct experiences. Vigotski (2003, p. 237) argues that "aesthetic feeling should be an object of education like all the others, only through peculiar forms". Aesthetic education, for Vigotski (2003), would have as its main work, a creative education, which is a possibility for all people, cultural human beings, in which this behavior is present as a potency. These possibilities should be guided and oriented through educational processes, for their maintenance and development. For him:

The creative possibility that each of us possesses, to become co-participants of Shakespeare in his tragedies and of Beethoven in his symphonies, is the clearest indicator that in each of us there is potentially both a Shakespeare and a Beethoven (Vigotski, 2003, p. 244).

Thus, only an aesthetic education, understood as the set of intentionally organized educational experiences in the field of arts, in educational spaces with the purpose of providing experiences of the affective

dimension through perception, expression and artistic creation, in a collaborative and relational way, focused on the discovery of materials, forms and contents.

We understand human beings as people who are able to relate to the various expressions of the arts and their artistic signs for integral development. In this sense, the arts encompass the affective-intellectual and individual-social dimension, without any separation between the educational and/or therapeutic field, because, organized in this way, it will encompass, more broadly, as an educational process, both aspects, acting in the quality as an organizer of life and also as a human activity that balances the affective dimension.

The organization of educational experiences in the field of arts in which the artistic signs are singularly enhanced in the aesthetic experiences amidst the educational processes, in terms of an aesthetic education, according to the cultural-historical perspective proposed by Vigotski, need to be valued in their senses and meanings, experienced through artistic structures in their forms, materials, and contents, through processes of perception, expression, and artistic creation rooted in culture, in dialogue, in lived life.

Therefore, it is necessary to start from the needs related to the arts of the people involved in this process, at each educational stage. Next, we will share two educational and investigative experiences that corroborate the ideas presented above. The first research, by Pederiva (2020), entitled *Musicacting: challenges and possibilities*, within the scope of the professional master's degree in the city of São Paulo/SP, was carefully and ethically carried out and included the acceptance and signing of the Free and Informed Consent Form (ICF) of the participants. The second research, by Oliveira (2020), entitled *Music education: from experiences to the development of children's musicality*, within the scope of the academic master's degree in the city of Brasília/DF, was submitted and approved by the Ethics and Research Committee of the Institute of Human Sciences and of the University of Brasilia. Opinion number: 3,740,012.

In art training, for example, the qualitative research carried out by Pederiva (2020), through interviews, indicated that these artists seek to expand their training as educators in the areas of theater and music, expanding their experiences beyond the educational institution, in its fragmented, intellectualized curricula and pre-programmed activities. "[...] multipotential artists sitting at the bar table after a whole day, exploring scenic and sound possibilities that were intrinsically related" (p. 19). To the author:

Affective links with others are necessary in order to feel recognized in one's identity [...] to understand one's possible place in the world passes through creating the most diverse relations with the world outside oneself [...] the communication of one's consciousness with other consciousnesses (Pederiva, 2020, p. 80).

In this context, these artist educators in training, besides appropriating the cultural signs that are part of their activities, seek to create dialogues between areas and signs and artistic experiences, such as theater and music, for example. They start from the body experiences, rooted in culture, from possible interfaces, from meanings attributed to the artistic manifestations, to organize forms of creation and expression, both in artistic performance and in the organization of educational activities in this area. They understand that they need to enter the world of the meanings given to the artistic signs, and that this happens in everyday life, amidst social relations, cultural practices that mark the meanings of the artistic signs. And that, only in this way, relating vividly with the pulsating life of art that was organized in its forms of expression, which needs to be experienced together with people, they can effectively organize an aesthetic education, amid perceptive, expressive, and creative experiences.

An aesthetic education, based on these baselines, and in this sense, can also be organized in basic education, from kindergarten to high school. Autor (autor), for example, conducted an investigative work with children in a literacy class, organizing the school musical educational environment for this purpose. In the mentioned situation, the researcher-teacher invited the children to record sounds of their daily lives, from dawn to dusk, through their electronic devices. In other words, they recorded sound signs and took them to the school educational space to be shared among themselves and organized by the teacher.

The sharing of the recordings was done during educational meetings with different intentions focused on the development of musicality, and, because it is an educational work that emerges from the children's experiences with sounds, sound signs, the field of affections permeated the entire pedagogical organization. The teacher always asked the children what sounds they recorded, in which ways these sounds could be expressed, created corporally and musically, and, above all, how they felt when they heard these signs, what cultural meanings they attributed to them. On that, Oliveira (2020, p. 39) explains that "there is no way to predict, nor control, how a sound will affect a person, because the experience of each person, at each moment of life, with different sounds, is unique". The author shares the investigative process, narrating situations experienced with the group, that the way sounds affect them has different meanings depending on the experience each one has with that sound. For example, the sound of a blender affects children in different ways, while one child likes to listen to it because one feels like dancing, another feels uncomfortable because it bothers when watching videos and cartoons, so one prefers to use a headset (Oliveira, 2020).

The experiences with sounds, which are the raw material of music, were central in the situation narrated by Oliveira (2020), indicating the possibility of organizing an aesthetic education in the light of the perspective of Vigotski's theory (2003). By organizing the educational space in art and directing it to the dimension of affections, not instru-

mentalizing the arts, nor understanding it as a purely intellectual activity, the teacher enabled the children to develop both musically and affectively-intellectually, in unity, since they became aware of their relationship with the sound phenomenon, as unique people and as the cultural beings they are.

By directing the educational activity with the sound signs to the field of affections, teachers enable the development of consciousness about them, that is, they expand the possibilities of relating to the signs, self-regulating and acting with/on them. In the same way, we can think of other art expressions, not only in the field of music. And, materializing a genuinely aesthetic education, we engender an “[...] education of the powers, of the affections and intellects, of dialogue, of art, of emotions, of one and integral human development, and of experiences as the essence of educational processes” (Oliveira, 2020, p. 169).

Final considerations

It is possible to observe, through this article, that the function of art as an educational activity needs to be rethought in this context. The arts in education cannot be experienced, in educational terms, only as a spectacle, as a routine activity, or through the purely intellectualized artistic signs, as if these represented only a translation of watertight, stagnant, individualized meanings, of a cold intellectuality and far from the affective senses.

The potential that artistic activities have as a tool for balancing emotions, self-regulation, self-balancing, mediated by artistic signs, and transforming action in the world as expression and creation, represents the essence of this activity and it is in this way that it calls for its experience as an educational process. Based on this, the artistic activities in the educational processes, we can organize their spaces considering the affective elements that make up the experience of this activity, structured by means of its artistic signs, which are emotional and, which were internalized by us as cultural human beings, in relation to the individual-social, intellectual-affective, and person-meaning experiences.

Whether through perception, expression, or creation of the arts, the artistic signs need to be deciphered and experienced in their emotional dimension, to deepen the affective experience. This requires dialogue, in educational spaces, about the daily and unique experience of each person, socially constituted, who makes up this space, in relation. It requires exchange among peers, inviting collaborative learning.

In this place, the educational and therapeutic aspects of education meet and add up, strengthening each other, entering the consciousness of unique emotions, and creating conditions of possibility for an integral artistic development of social, historical, and cultural beings.

The artistic sign inaugurates our cultural emotions. It is necessary, therefore, to recognize and consciously experience them through

educational processes organized for this purpose, so that we can develop the artisticity possible in our humanity.

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Note

1 The name Vigotski has been transliterated in countless ways in Brazil. Vigotski, Vygotski, Vigotsky, Vygotsky among other. We have chosen, throughout the text, to bring the author's name in one form only: Vigotski, with the letter i at the beginning and at the end of the name, as he himself used to sign, especially outside Soviet Russia. In the final references, however, the name will appear according to how it was transliterated from Russian into Portuguese, according to the indications of the editions cited, which can be identified throughout the text by the year to which they refer to.

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