Chapter 8
Closing and Opening of Cultures

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ABSTRACT
This chapter describes an objective concept of culture and catalogues, from a pedagogical point of view, large categories of facts that identify cultures. The idealistic perspective of culture is confronted with the perspective of real individuals. When the real subjects become the point of view, the concept of inclusion has to inevitably be taken into consideration. Inclusion, in this context, involves not just individuals with handicaps of whatever kind, but also minority cultures, with a faint voice. It is, therefore, of paramount importance to consider culture from a subjective and inter-subjective perspective.

INTRODUCTION
The general framework of this chapter is that minority cultures seek and need to be heard in order for the general discourse on culture to take them into account. We can define culture as the intertwining of different threads with properties of identity and closure. We will analyse the idealised conception of culture and we will present an analysis from the point of view of the real individuals. This is required by theory of education, which reproduces, promotes, and incorporates culture. This way, culture poses problems in progress, but also pedagogical projects and criteria of cultural value. Probably the most obvious of these values is that of inclusion.

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THE OBJECTIVE CONCEPT OF “CULTURE”

Culture is a system of actions in which artifacts and the use of artifacts are designed, imaginaries are elaborated, discourses are developed, scenarios created and human groups are affiliated to practices; in culture crystallize emotional states, attitudes and values, which shape and give meaning to human beings’ actions.

Hence, we apply the concept of culture to the notion of “way of life,” and its actions and products, highlighting the mental processes that originate them, from what we term rationality; in substance, the practice of human beings’ minds. As main analogies of these practices, from some of the forms that culture adopts we point out, principally, science and technology; “the development” and “the progress” in culture are assessed from these cultural forms. From inter-subjective and relational, attitudinal and evaluative components, we must assess as well progressive and/or regressive aspects of cultural maturity.

FACTS AND THEIR CATEGORIES

In the history of the Universe, facts are properly occurrences, which take place in systems; we can establish three wide categories of facts, which in that history have been evolutionarily emerging: facts in the realm of entities or physical systems; facts in the realm of beings or living systems, in organisms; and facts in the realm of human beings’ minds. In the universal whole of facts, therefore, levels of progressive complexity have appeared which compose and can be narrated as the evolutionary history of the Universe: it is the evolutionary history of gradually more complex systems, with emerging attributes, that produce increasingly surprising facts, without the existence in evolution of an intelligent design. The evolution of systemic complexity always involved, directly or indirectly, material things.

Until the moment in which the mind of human beings appears in the history of the universe, all facts could be termed “concrete facts”; from that moment, we can speak about facts with representational or abstract qualities, such as concepts or propositions. The mind elaborates “fictions,” abstractions, through which it conceives reality, it stores it in the shape of memories, and it reflexively works on representations: in all cases, they are happenings in the mind. Concrete facts can or cannot be; facts of the mind, moreover, can have logic or illogic characteristics, can be true or false, make sense or not, have an evil or good intention. Logic and truth are not attributes of the substance of which the brain is made: they are facts that emerge from the complexity of human beings’ Central Nervous System.

THE OBJECTIVITY OF CULTURE IN THE CATALOGUE OF ACTIONS

Identity and enclosure are too indissoluble properties which run through the realm of life and which contain the concept of autopoiesis. All living beings are autopoietic, they are defined and delimited by their periphery; inwards, they institute an internal medium and, outwards, they delimit a vital environment, which is also part of their systemic definition. The internal medium is characterized by “self attributes”—self-construction, self-reparation, and self-reproduction. The vital environment is distinguished by the group of significant elements and events for the survival and quality of life of each one of the organic species or of the realm of life conceived as a whole.

Cultures also constitute organizations which display systemic qualities of identity and enclosure. The fabric of culture, its systemic structure, is constituted by several categories of threads. (1) Objects and instruments which embody action plans and designing abilities and which acquire the shape of closed systems of techniques and abilities. (2) Imaginaries that qualify with their metaphors
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