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THE METHODOLOGICAL IMPACT OF ART ON THE NEW SPAIN'S PEDAGOGY

ABSTRACT

This article presents the results of theoretical-pedagogical research, the objective of which was to determine, through a documentary-bibliographic study, the methodical role of art in the pedagogy developed and practiced in New Spain. The study carried out shows that in all pedagogical areas developed in the New World, the compelling impact of art can be observed, in its axiological, intellectual, aesthetic, procedural, and methodological aspects. Regarding the methodology of teaching through the arts, the hybrid (missionary) pedagogy existed. Furthermore, given the linguistic difficulties (the evangelizers did not know the languages of the "new" continent, just as the natives did not speak Castilian, Latin, or other European languages) the friars used drawings, pictograms, dance, theater, and music to teach Christian doctrine to the indigenous people. Thus, the methodical effect of art on education from the beginning of the viceroyalty period is evident. Likewise, professional and technical education held a prominent place in New Spain, and within it, the methodology of teaching the arts played a fundamental role. To train stonemasons, blacksmiths, carpenters, bricklayers, tailors, shoemakers, artisans, sculptors, painters, and other craftspeople, the Schools of Arts and Crafts were established. Among these, the School of San José de los Naturales, founded by Friar Pedro de Gante, and the School of Tiripitío in Michoacán stand out. It was from these schools that the great indigenous builders and artists undoubtedly emerged, contributing significantly to the construction and decoration of nearly two hundred Catholic churches in the 16th century. Although documentary records of the indigenous labor employed in the execution of the architecture, sculpture, reliefs, and paintings of churches and monasteries are lacking, there can be found many pre-Hispanic influences in 16th-century buildings. This leads us to conclude that the friars themselves provided instruction to native artists, building upon the talent of the indigenous people and the skills they had already acquired in pre-Hispanic educational centers.

Keywords: *training through the arts, pedagogy of art, the methodical impact of art, pedagogy of art in New Spain.*

МЕТОДИЧНИЙ ВПЛИВ МИСТЕЦТВА НА ПЕДАГОГІКУ НОВОЇ ІСПАНІЇ

АНОТАЦІЯ

У статті представлено результати теоретико-педагогічного дослідження, метою якого було визначити, на основі документально-бібліографічного аналізу, методичну роль мистецтва в педагогіці, що розвивалася та практикувалася в Новій



Іспанії. Проведене дослідження показує, що в усіх педагогічних галузях, що розвивалися в Новому Світі, можна спостерігати значний вплив мистецтва в його аксіологічних, інтелектуальних, естетичних, процедурних та методологічних аспектах. Щодо методології навчання через мистецтво, існувала гібридна (місіонерська) педагогіка. Крім того, з огляду на мовні труднощі (євангелізатори не знали мов «нового» континенту, так само як і корінні жителі не розмовляли кастильською, латиною чи іншими європейськими мовами), ченці використовували малюнки, піктограми, танець, театр та музику для навчання корінного населення християнській доктрині. Таким чином, методичний вплив мистецтва на освіту з початку періоду віце-королівства є очевидним. Так само професійна та технічна освіта посідала чільне місце в Новій Іспанії, і в її рамках методологія викладання мистецтв відіграла фундаментальну роль. Для підготовки каменярів, ковалів, теслярів, мулярів, кравців, шевців, ремісників, скульпторів, художників та інших майстрів були засновані школи мистецтв і ремесел.

Серед них особливо виділяються школа Сан-Хосе-де-лос-Натуралес, заснована ченцем Педро де Ганте, та школа Тірінтіо в Мічоакані. Саме з цих шкіл, безсумнівно, вийшли видатні будівельники та митці з числа корінного населення, які зробили значний внесок у будівництво та оздоблення майже двохсот католицьких церков у XVI ст. Хоча документальних свідчень про залучення корінного населення до виконання архітектурних, скульптурних, рельєфних та живописних робіт у церквах і монастирях бракує, у будівлях XVI ст. можна знайти багато доіспанських впливів. Це дозволяє зробити висновок, що самі ченці навчали місцевих митців, спираючись на талант корінного населення та навички, які вони вже набули в доіспанських навчальних закладах.

Ключові слова: навчання через мистецтво, педагогіка мистецтва, методичний вплив мистецтва, педагогіка мистецтва в Новій Іспанії.

INTRODUCTION

From the perspective of modern science, the arts fulfill several functions: aesthetic, ideological, propagandistic, and also pedagogical. In the Gombrich's words, what most characterizes art is its ideological function, materialized in the expression of social, political, or religious ideas and ideals (Gombrich, 1999, pp. 135–157). However, its pedagogical function is also noteworthy: works of art are used both for instruction and indoctrination as a means for teaching, holistic development, and the promotion of values.

The research the results of which are presented below is based on the approach of pedagogical function of art. It is important to clarify that the term “pedagogical function” refers to the interaction between teachers and learners, through the systematic influence on students’ consciousness, will, and emotions by means of organized, purposeful activity (educational, creative, work-related, and spiritual), with the aim of transmitting sociocultural experience to students, contributing to the harmonious and profound development of their personality, the active assimilation of cultural heritage, and the appropriation of the values, tools, skills, and abilities (or competencies) necessary for their daily and professional lives (Honcharenko, 2007, p. 147).

Likewise, the pedagogical function of art is carried out through art pedagogy, the use of which pursues the following objectives:

– multifaceted development of the student: cognitive, aesthetic, moral, and intellectual, through the arts;



- support in the arts as a teaching tool (for any discipline): through music, painting, architecture, film, theater, dance, etc.;
- construction of the methodology for teaching the arts (Gran Enciclopedia Larousse, 1996).

Thus, one of the main purposes of art pedagogy is the holistic development of the student through the arts. Regarding the second objective of art pedagogy, which refers to the use of the arts as a teaching tool, it is worth noting that the permanent link between pedagogy and the culture of a society or human community establishes the particularity of specific (art) pedagogy for a given social group, as was the case in New Spain. From this, the question we will attempt to answer arises: What was the methodical impact of art on the pedagogy established and practiced in New Spain?

THE AIM OF THE STUDY

The objective of this work is to determine, through a documentary-bibliographic study, the methodical role of art in the pedagogy developed and experienced in New Spain.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH METHODS

The pedagogy of New Spain was studied by Abbagnano and Visalberghi (1992), Bracamonte (1994), García-Icazbalceta (1889), Gómez-Canedo (1993), Gonzalbo-Aizpuru (1990), Mendieta (1983), Merino-Abad (1982), Palacios (1999), Sahagún (2003), and Vázquez (1981), among others. In particular, the pedagogy of art, was studied by Camba-Ludlow (2013), Gonzalbo-Aizpuru (1990), Hernández and Rico (2009), and Reyes-Valerio (2000), among others.

Methodologically speaking, this work is a scientific-pedagogical and historical-documentary analysis, a critical discussion of the Indigenous people's instructing process through the arts during the period of 16th- and 17th-century in New Spain. First, we will establish the academic rigor of this article by situating its subject within a theoretical-conceptual framework, based on the idea of a hybrid approach in education in New Spain. Subsequently, using documents and chronicles from the period, we will identify different models of formal and informal education in the viceroyalty. Finally, we will offer a concluding section with the author's reflections on the subject of this study.

RESULTS

It is important to remember that every investigation is based on a theoretical-conceptual framework. In this sense, we need to clarify what we mean by the terms "education", "pedagogy", "training", "training through the arts", "pedagogy of art", and "pedagogy of art in New Spain". First, it is important to define the concept "education", which is, in fact, multifunctional and polysemous and is defined differently depending on the psychopedagogical, sociological, or philosophical approaches, or on the levels at which it is analyzed: as an educational process, as the result of this process (individual or collective), or as an educational system. However, all these definitions agree on the essentials: education is both the process and the result of learning; likewise, the procedural aspect of education is associated with teaching; and finally, the discipline that studies everything related to education is pedagogy.

When discussing the concept "education", it is important to consider that, since educational theories do not adhere to a single concept of humankind, society, and knowledge, the role of education and the social actors involved in it are not conceived in the same way. In pedagogical dictionaries, education (from the Latin *educere*, "to guide, to lead," or *educare*, "to create, to nurture, to feed") refers primarily to the influence exerted on a person to shape and develop him/her on various complementary levels. It



should be noted that in most cultures (since prehistoric times), it is the action exerted by the adult generations on the younger generations to transmit and preserve their collective existence, passing on from generation to generation the entire universe of their material and spiritual culture (Honcharenko, 2007, p. 122).

It is also important to emphasize that, in general, the educational phenomenon is relatively stable only when it comes to its material objects: educational buildings, textbooks, supplementary books, teaching materials, etc. Regarding the rest, education is a spiritual phenomenon, difficult to perceive, intangible to the touch. Its essence lies in movement, active communication, interaction, counterbalanced exchange, discussion, conflict, struggle, and the approval of ideas, thoughts, categories, concepts, knowledge, skills, abilities, and stereotypes of behavior and activity.

As stated above, the discipline that studies the educational phenomenon is pedagogy. The word pedagogy comes from the Classical Greek *παιδαγωγέω* [*paidagōgēō*] and is composed of *παιδίον* [*paidion*] “child” and *ἀγωγός* [*agōgós*] “guide, leader” (Saavedra, 2001, p. 50). Pedagogy can also be analyzed on the following three levels:

1. As a philosophy and its concept of the ideal human being, according to the prevailing ideology.
2. As the procedural aspect of education, associated with teaching methods and techniques.
3. As the content of the curriculum for formal and non-formal education offered in educational institutions.

It is worth mentioning that throughout the history of human civilization, the notion of pedagogy underwent significant transformations. For the ancient Greeks, who coined the term, it signified the action exerted by the adult generation on the younger to transmit and preserve their collective existence and ensure the link between generations (Abbagnano & Visalberghi, 1992, p. 13). It was, therefore, a philosophy of education and its conception of the individual who should be formed, an enunciation of the aims and goals that should be achieved.

This idea was taken up and refined in the 20th century, by proponents of dialectical constructivism, particularly the historical-cultural approach. According to this view, pedagogy is part of the process of internalizing societal values (traditions, codes of ethics, taboos, norms, rules, etc.), the social institution, and its function of reproducing the culture that individuals experience, determined by all the factors and conditions of society’s existence: economic, political, social, and cultural (Abbagnano & Visalberghi, 1992, p. 5).

Likewise, pedagogy seeks to guide individuals, according to the needs of each society, by initiating them into culture: the more or less organized and coherent set of ways of life of a human group, which would be equivalent to actions regarding the use of their production and behavior, and the rules that define these ways of acting: customs, traditions, beliefs, rites, and ceremonies (Savater, 1997, p. 6); it aims to strengthen communication and coexistence with others and help the learner create their own image, their personality, their “Self”.

In the 17th century, Jan Amos Komensky (Comenius, 1592-1670), the father of pedagogy, first proposed in his “*Didactica Magna*” that the task of pedagogy is to ensure that everyone has access to education (not just the elite or enlightened, not just children, but also adults); all people have an innate aptitude for knowledge. The goal of education should be the moral, political, and Christian renewal of humanity. Just as there is harmony in the macrocosm, humankind, likewise, should become a harmonious whole (at peace with itself



and with others) if all its potential and abilities are fully developed, and not just reason (Palacios, 1999).

Thus, pedagogy is one of the sciences (along with history, psychology, sociology, politics, etc.) that studies education as a socio-cultural phenomenon. In particular, it deals with the problems of the ordered influence exerted on a person to form and develop him/her at various complementary levels at any age.

In this case, regarding the term “formation”, Hegel (1770–1831) spoke of the human need for self-formation and envisioned it based on the Kantian idea of obligations to oneself. Therefore, formation alludes to the development of a genesis of truly free self-consciousness, in and for itself.

In turn, Gadamer (1900–2002) referred to this concept as something internal, a mode of perception that arises from knowledge. In other words, formation suggests an internal process, a potentiality of the human being. Hence, the education received at school is necessary within the set of factors that comprise development, but it must always be understood as a means and not as an end. In his work “Truth and Method I”, he uses the German noun *Bildung* (English: formation, construction), clarifying that it also means [...] the culture that the individual possesses as a result of their formation in the contents of the tradition of their environment [...] is both the process by which culture is acquired, and this culture itself as the personal heritage of the cultured person [...] is closely linked to the ideas of teaching, learning, and personal competence. [...] the formation becomes something very closely linked to the concept of culture, and designates, first and foremost, the specifically human way of shaping the natural dispositions and capacities of humankind (Gadamer, 2012, pp. 38–39).

The formation is not a fixed objective, as it continues to be nourished by the environment day by day; it cannot be understood as a point of arrival to be reached and then become static. It is a task that can never be fully accomplished, and it is this need that promotes the formation of new horizons (Gadamer, 2012, p. 372).

Regarding *formation through the arts*, anyone who receives artistic training at an early age has greater opportunities to develop his/her sensitivity and intellectual capacity. Linking art to educational processes aims to offer students new tools for communication and expression of their emotions and ideas. The union of education and the arts positively impacts the learners’ neural development, strengthens their self-esteem, safeguards cultural identity, and fosters pluralism, recognition, and respect for others. Skills such as attention, memory, and visual-spatial ability are directly associated with the processes of artistic creation (Iwai, 2002, pp. 407–420).

Since the dawn of human history, art has served humanity in the process of transmitting knowledge from one generation to the next: we need only recall the cave paintings in prehistoric caves, created for both aesthetic and pedagogical purposes. The art of Mesopotamian cultures, Egyptian art, ancient Greece and Rome, Mesoamerican cultures, all civilizations of the world have relied on painting, sculpture, and architecture to teach their knowledge and ideology to their descendants. A clear example of this process is found in the medieval period and the beginning of the modern era, where New Spain was no exception.

The elements of art pedagogy, from the three perspectives of its use (as a stimulus for human development; as a teaching tool; or as a methodology), have been implemented in each of the existing pedagogical areas in the territories of New Spain. First, there is education and evangelization (the learning of Latin, Castilian and catechism by the



indigenous people); also ecclesiastical education and education in colleges and universities; likewise, the education of the nobility and secular domesticity; undoubtedly, there was the formal elementary education of the indigenous people and the informal education (learning of indigenous languages, cultures, traditions, crop production, etc. by the conquerors) and vice versa; and, of course, the technical education of the marginalized (learning of new agricultural, textile, construction, mining technologies, instruction in new crops and livestock, etc.; later, literacy).



Image 1. The pictograms in the catechism of Friar Pedro de Gante



Source: Hernández, D., Rico, P. (2009)

Concerning the use of the arts as a teaching tool, specifically in the case of education and evangelization in New Spain, the *hybrid pedagogical approach* - training methods used in European schools or convents combined with elements of pre-Hispanic education (Gonzalbo-Aizpuru, 1990) – led missionaries to invent innovative methods for transmitting knowledge: paintings, catechisms and confessionals with drawings instead of words, dance, theater, and music (audiovisual methods), etc., in addition to teaching arts and crafts in boarding schools for Indigenous people.

The missionaries developed the didactic method of using paintings: hieroglyphs in the catechism explained the main prayers with simple figures and symbols. Friar Pedro de Gante was the first to use pictograms in the catechism (Vázquez, 1981) (see image 1).

Among the first “educational materials” produced in New Spain, the catechisms and confessionals for the indigenous people stand out; these were veritable comics of the 16th and 17th centuries. These were the best-selling comic books, popular books for the people, which described in detail, through images, the life and worldview of the conquerors (Bracamonte, 1994, p. 50) (see images 2–5).

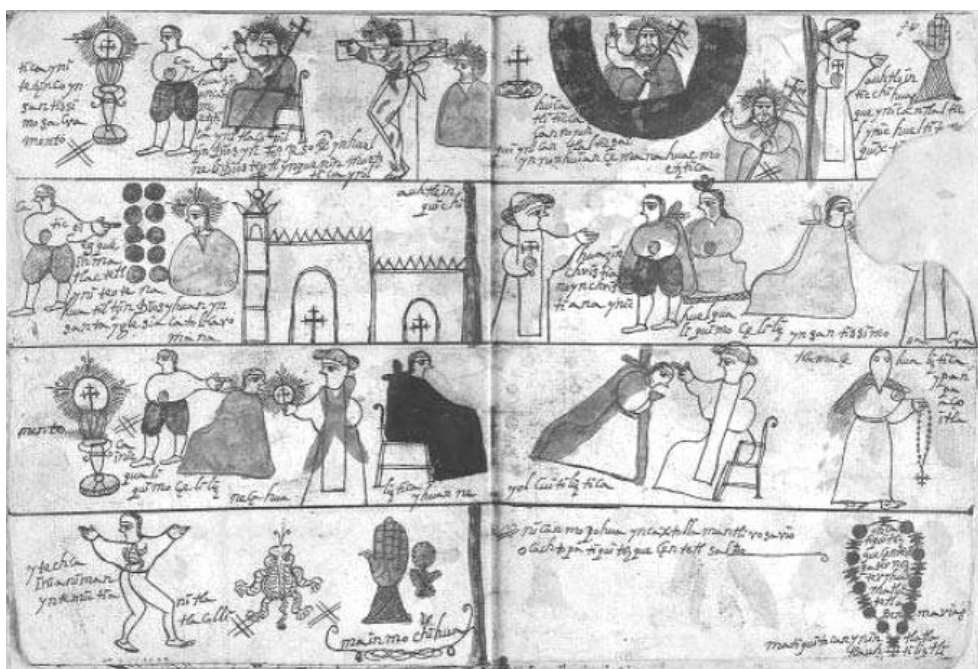


Image 2. Last part of the catechism of questions and answers

Source: Manuscrito de Egerton 2898, folios I8v-I9r. Museo Británico: <https://www.bmimages.com/preview.asp?image=01613418653>

Likewise, to teach Christian doctrine to their parishioners, the missionaries used canvases (like a blackboard or screen) depicting various dogmatic themes. Thus, Friar Diego Valadés shows in his engraving how two friars teach the faithful through figures



Painted on a canvas. To explain the meaning of marriage, the artist includes the figure of the family tree below (see image 6).

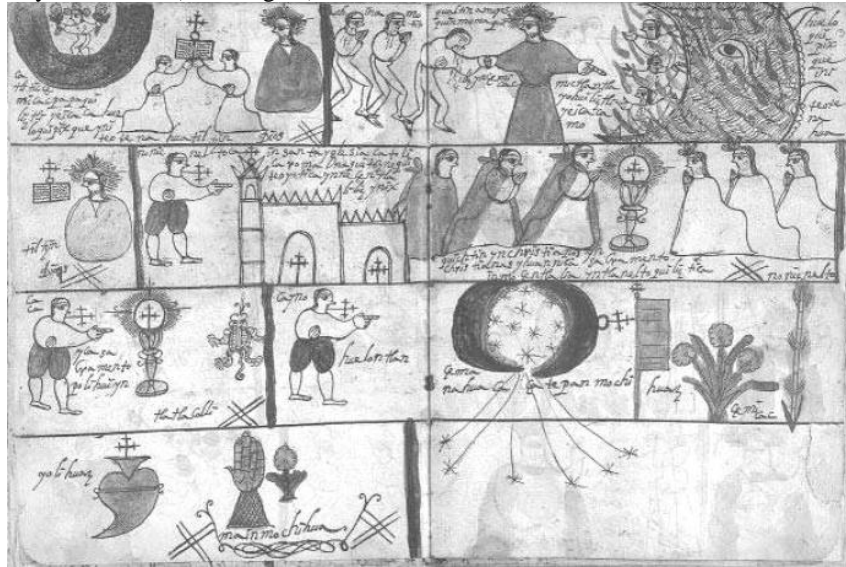


Image 3. Last part of the Apostles' Creed

Source: Manuscrito de Egerton 2898, folios IIV-I2r. Museo Británico:
<https://www.bmimages.com/preview.asp?image=01613418653>



Image 4. Rosary Section



Source: Manuscrito de Egerton 2898, folios 23V-24r. Museo Británico:
<https://www.bmimages.com/preview.asp?image=01613418653>

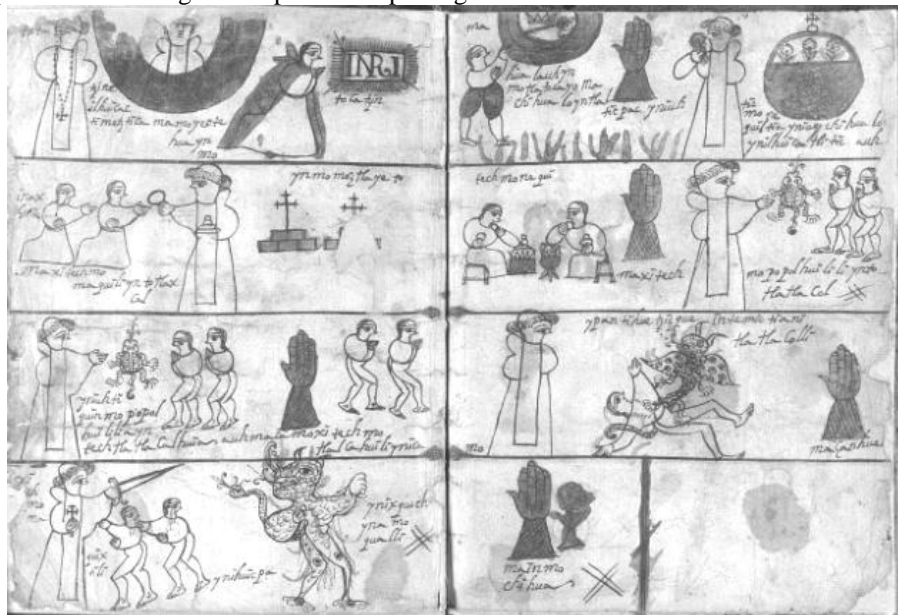


Image 5. Christian Doctrine (1714)

Source: Manuscrito de Egerton 2898. Museo Británico: <https://www.bmimages.com/preview.asp?image=01613418653>



Image 6. Fragment of the engraving by Friar Diego Valadés



Source: Reyes-Valerio, Constantino (2000). *Arte Indocristiano*, México, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, p. 104.

On the other hand, Fray Gerónimo de Mendieta dedicates a section of his “Ecclesiastical History of the Indies” (Spanish: “Historia eclesiástica Indiana”) to describing the didactic painting method used by the missionaries: They had the articles of faith painted on one canvas, the commandments of God on another, the seven sacraments on another, and the other Christian doctrines they wished to teach. And when the preacher wanted to preach on the commandments, he would hang the canvas of the commandments next to him [...] so that with a staff like those carried by constables, he could point to the section he wanted to discuss [...] And it would be very beneficial if all the boys’ schools had it painted in this way, so that it would be imprinted on their memories from a young age (Mendieta, 1997, p. 410).

Hacían pintar en un lienzo los artículos de la fe, y en otro los mandamientos de Dios, y en otro los siete sacramentos, y los demás que querían de la doctrina cristiana. Y cuando el predicador quería predicar de los mandamientos, colgaba el lienzo de los mandamientos junto a él [...] de manera que con una vara de las que traen los alguaciles pudiese ir señalando la parte que quería [...] Y no fuera de poco fruto si en todas las escuelas de los muchachos la tuvieran pintada de esa manera, para que por allí se les imprimiera en sus memorias desde su tierna edad (Mendieta, 1997, p. 410).

Theater also fulfilled an important didactic function. First, in the absence of a common language, the evangelizers had to use gestures, mime, and facial expressions. Thus, by dramatizing scenes from the life of Christ, rituals, and illustrations, they attempted to penetrate and change the consciousness of the indigenous people (Camba-Ludlow, 2013).

Furthermore, they used dance, performances, and music popular in local cultures. Taking advantage of the fact that in the picturesque secular tradition of the Mexica culture, dance was an important element of religious rites, even becoming an incipient form of theater with masks and other costumes for rites honoring Quetzalcoatl, the missionaries adopted these artistic elements to strengthen the faithful’s commitment to the Catholic faith. This pre-Hispanic tradition was used for didactic purposes, bringing the “Nativity of Christ” to the stage. The first reference to a theatrical performance dates back to 1533. The dramatizations of the “End of the World” and “The Incarnation” became the most popular.

The friars’ extensive use of music and dance as key elements in supporting the conversion of the natives to Christianity stemmed from the Indians’ fascination with song and dance. Active participation in large religious processions with flowers, music, and dance facilitated the local population’s acceptance of the dogmas imposed by Catholicism.

To show the Indians the suffering awaiting unrepentant sinners who go to hell after death, the friars organized small theatrical performances, some of which involved bonfires in which they burned dogs and cats “for their sins”. Such “performances” frightened the audience and were very effective: afterward, everyone attended Mass. Another common “teaching method” using theatrical action was breaking the *piñata*. Thus, Friar Gerónimo de Mendieta, in his “Ecclesiastical History of the Indies”, notes that the *piñata* should have seven points, since there are seven great sins: wrath, gluttony, lust, pride, sloth, envy, and greed. Each of the participants in the play had to hit the *piñata*, that is, “get rid” of their sins, destroy them (Mendieta, 1983).

But the most popular theatrical performances among the indigenous people were the *pastorelas*, staged and performed on Christmas Eve. These plays explained the birth of Christ, which the shepherds learned of and came to greet. The indigenous people then



identified with the shepherds, humble and pious people, and hoped to avoid the temptations of demons and hell (Merino, 1982).

Likewise, the indigenous people's attention was focused on plays based on biblical stories. Thus, Fray Bernardino de Sahagún, in his "General History of the Things of New Spain", describes the staging of the play "The Fall of Jerusalem" a few years after the conquest. He comments that the Indians adorned the main square of the city, where the stage was located, with so many plants and flowers and brought so many birds that their singing prevented the audience from hearing the "actors". Consequently, the audience complained of the natives' exaggerated enthusiasm in preparing the play (Sahagún, 2003).

Regarding formal or institutional education, following the traditions of European monastic education, the Franciscans founded two types of school: internal and external. The boarding school "existed in almost all the important convents due to the number of their inhabitants and the noble children were carefully educated there, since they would be the ones who, later, would be in charge of helping the evangelizers in the tasks of spreading Christian doctrine and convincing adults" (Reyes-Valerio, 2000, p. 105).

In the external schools, Christian Doctrine and trades were taught to the children of the Macehuales (Indians of plebeian origin). Fray Pedro de Gante described this process like this: Since dawn they gathered the sons and daughters of Macehuales in the church patios and later they listened to the mass. Then they were divided, for example, beginners who learned the *Per signum*, others who were more advanced the *Pater noster*, and others the Commandments, they were examined in order to advance in grade. At the end of learning the Doctrine, they learn trades or tasks attributed to their sex (García Icazbalceta, 1889, pp. 62–65).

Likewise, in the words of Friar Bernardino de Sahagún, "The commoner children who were educated abroad went two or three hours daily to learn doctrine, singing and notions of writing and arithmetic, and then went to help their parents" (Sahagún, 2003, lib. X, p. 579). According to Mendieta: "[...] a peculiar trait in the natives was their high retentive capacity [...]" (Mendieta, 1997, p. 602).

Apart from these two educational models mentioned, the Franciscans prepared their collaborators by teaching the Indians various "trades, necessary both for the "republic of the Indians" so that they could fend for themselves in life, and for the friars themselves, with plans projected around the development of evangelization activities and the ornamentation of buildings [...] they intended to prepare native priests" (Reyes-Valerio, 2000, p. 106).

Thus, the Schools of Arts and Crafts were established where, in addition to religion, reading, writing and Latin, arts and crafts were taught, such as: painting, sculpture, crafts, the art of embroidery; stonemasons, blacksmiths, carpenters, bricklayers, tailors and shoemakers were trained. A special place is occupied by the School of San José de los Naturales founded by Friar Pedro de Gante, which was established adjacent to the convent of San Francisco de México. According to the Franciscan Codex of Joaquín García Icazbalceta (1889), [...] This monastery of S. Francisco, behind the main chapel of the said church, has a school where the children of the main Indians are taught reading and writing and Christian doctrine, and all the other monasteries of the other towns have the same; and this school is in charge of Friar Pedro de Gante, who came to this land forty-six years before the first twelve invited by the Emperor our lord, of perpetual memory, arrived there; and this was the first who taught the Indians to sing and the music that they now play, and he has made them learn painting and other crafts in which they equal and exceed the



Spaniards, and he has persevered in instructing them and taking advantage of them until today, when he is ninety years old (García Icazbalceta, 1889, pp. 5–10).

Another important school of arts and crafts was that of the Augustinians, established in the town of Tiripitío, Michoacán, which was considered the “Athens of America.” In relation to the pictorial production carried out by the Indians, Gómez Canedo maintains that: At the School of San José de los Naturales, Fray Pedro de Gante ordered that the “great young men apply themselves to learning the trades and arts of the Spanish”, and they did so well that, shortly, according to Mendieta: “they learned more than our Spanish officers wanted”. Over time, this school was declared an official center where every indigenous artist who wanted to paint images had to be examined (Order of Viceroy Velasco, November 11, 1552) (Gómez Canedo, 1993, p. 109).

Therefore, led by the missionaries, the indigenous people learned to build temples, produce religious images, altarpieces, etc. Thus, the painting with the synthesis of Christian doctrine carried out by the labor of the indigenous people themselves, served other natives to learn the catechism. However, the use of the artistic skills of the Indians by the friars was not limited only to the development of “teaching material.” Apparently, the natives were also taught by the missionaries and actively participated in the construction and decoration of Catholic temples.

Thus, the detailed study of both the sculptures of the New Spain convents and temples as well as the mural paintings, ceramics and codices carried out by Reyes-Valerio (2000), allowed him to distinguish the European features of the indigenous ones and reveal the preserved pre-Columbian artistic manifestations; and, on the other hand, deduce the training process of native artists in the monasteries. Based on the results of the analysis of the chronicles of the Franciscan, Dominican and Augustinian friars of the 16th century (Motolinía, Torquemada, Mendieta, Sahagún, Valadés), the author discovers the methodology of teaching the arts to the Indians in New Spain.

Although there is no more testimonies than those provided indirectly by some Franciscan and Augustinian chroniclers, for him, the painters, sculptors, architects, builders that the friars needed, without a doubt, were trained in the schools of San José de los Naturales and Tiripitío, but also in other educational centers within the convents. Reyes-Valerio discovers the evidence of audiovisual monastic education, the testimonies of training, learning and the origin of the artistic ability of the Indians. In addition, he touches on the themes of the fatherhood of the mural paintings, the new spiritual fathers of the indigenous people, the mechanical arts, and the evidence of the training of Indian artists in convents.

According to the author, in the educational system of the convents, music and painting were subjects of great importance. On the other hand, due to the lack of clarity of the data provided by the chroniclers, it is difficult to talk about the convent schools of New Spain. However, Reyes-Valerio dedicates a chapter to the question of the site where the convent school was located, pointing out that, in reality, there was never a premises or building attached to the convent for that purpose. To support this assertion, he analyzes the texts of several authors of the time and concludes that “while there is no research that proves otherwise, we must accept that the school and the convent were one and the same entity” (Reyes-Valerio, 2000, p. 128).

On the other hand, having calculated the area of the convents painted to catechize the natives, the author affirms that to draw those thousands of square meters at a time when European painters in New Spain were very few and the friars could not wait due to



the importance of evangelization, they had to employ indigenous people and concludes that there is no doubt that “the solution was in the training of the native artist, since this was an individual entirely qualified for it, thanks to the education he had received before the arrival of the Spaniards and the one he received from the friars to perfect his technique” (Reyes-Valerio, 2000, p. 382).

He concludes that it was the Indians (taught by the friars) who made Christian sculpture and painting in the convents of the 16th century.

Therefore, “if there is a Coptic art, an Asturian art, a Visigothic art, a pre-Romanesque art, taking into account the people and the time, the region and the country, we have every right to call it Indo-Christian art. Because the fruit of that dramatic union is both Indian and Christian, and it is also an incontrovertible historical fact” (Reyes-Valerio, 2000, p. 149).

The discovery that most of the works produced in the churches and convents of the 16th century were made by Indo-Christian artists stems from the finding of sculptural manifestations related to pre-Hispanic iconography in the churches and convents of New Spain, completely unrelated to European decorative themes (see images 7–9). Thus, for example, in the image of Saint James (possibly made by the indigenous sculptor Miguel Mauricio) that was in the destroyed altarpiece of the Franciscan convent of Tlatelolco, Mexico, in the place of the Moors, the dead are indigenous. This and many other pieces of evidence allowed Reyes-Valerio to assert that the indigenous people were responsible for most of the sculpture. They are not found as easily in the paintings, but some, exceptionally, possess certain pre-Hispanic symbols.



Image 7. Detail of the facade of the temple of Apasco, Hidalgo

Source: Reyes-Valerio, Constantino (2000). *Arte Indocristiano*, México, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, p. 211 (See the comma on the bird’s beak)

Furthermore, in many paintings and sculptures from mendicant monasteries, the treatment of hands, feet, and eyes is deficient; the shape of the hands in a few positions varied and of imperfect dimensions, indicates the intervention of indigenous artists (see images 7 and 8). Despite the extreme vigilance exercised by the friars, and despite the effort to Christianize them, it was ultimately not possible to erase from the indigenous



consciousness certain long-held concepts, nor to prevent their artistic expression on certain occasions.



Image 8. Detail of the facade of the Santo Tomás temple, Hidalgo

Source: Reyes-Valerio, Constantino (2000). *Arte Indocristiano, México*, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, p. 205.



Image 9. Saint James. Altarpiece of the Franciscan convent of Tlatelolco, Mexico

Source: Reyes-Valerio, Constantino (2000). *Arte Indocristiano, México*, Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, p. 193

CONCLUSIONS AND PROSPECTS OF FURTHER RESEARCH

Thus, understanding pedagogy as the philosophy of education, called upon to instruct humankind according to the specific criteria and expectations of the group to which



a certain population belong, it can be argued that the pedagogy established and cultivated in New Spain corresponded, first and foremost, to the interests of the Catholic Church and the monarchs. Therefore, the conversion of the king's new subjects (the indigenous people) to the Christian faith, the teaching of Castilian Spanish, and instruction in new technologies (construction, agriculture and livestock, textiles, etc.) were the main tasks in the early years of the conquest. Furthermore, the education of future clergy in colleges and universities, the education of the nobility, and secular domestic instruction, among others, were the pedagogical areas developed in the New World. In all of these, the compelling impact of art can be observed, in its axiological, intellectual, aesthetic, procedural, and methodological aspects.

Regarding the methodology of teaching through the arts, we can speak of the so-called missionary pedagogy, or a combination of educational strategies used in European schools and procedural components of the schools of the Aztec Empire (*telpochcalli* and *calmecac*). Furthermore, given the linguistic difficulties (the evangelizers did not know the languages of the "new" continent, just as the natives did not speak Castilian, Latin, or other European languages) the friars used drawings, pictograms, dance, theater, and music to teach Christian doctrine to the indigenous people. Thus, the methodical effect of art on education from the beginning of the viceroyalty period is evident.

Likewise, professional and technical education held a prominent place in New Spain, and within it, the methodology of teaching the arts played a fundamental role. To train stonemasons, blacksmiths, carpenters, bricklayers, tailors, shoemakers, artisans, sculptors, painters, and other craftspeople, the Schools of Arts and Crafts were established. Among these, the *School of San José de los Naturales*, founded by Friar Pedro de Gante, and the *School of Tiripitío* in Michoacán stand out. It was from these schools that the great indigenous builders and artists undoubtedly emerged, contributing significantly to the construction and decoration of nearly two hundred Catholic churches in the 16th century.

Although documentary records of the indigenous labor employed in the execution of the architecture, sculpture, reliefs, and paintings of churches and monasteries are lacking, it can be found many pre-Hispanic influences in 16th-century buildings. This leads us to conclude that the friars themselves provided instruction to native artists, building upon the talent of the indigenous people and the skills they had already acquired in pre-Hispanic educational centers, while teaching them European techniques and Christian canons. We consider that training the indigenous population was the only solution to address the labor shortage in the construction and painting that supported the evangelizing mission.

The study of the instruction process of indigenous artisans in New Spain, based on the texts of Franciscan historians such as Sahagún, Motolinía, Mendieta, and Torquemada, among others, could be a topic for future research.

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