

Educational culture in the community

Cosmovision and production Andean – Amazon culture



What do Quechua speaking people from the Andes and the Peruvian Amazon understand by knowledge, and what are the ways that lead them towards that knowledge. The present article offers a series of elements to understand how Andean - Amazon peasants construct knowledge, what is their cosmovision and how they learn all in an affectionate and reciprocal relation between human, nature and the sacred.

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Some things we can learn from our thought, and from other things, watching, we learn this way, or also listening; we, those of the country, don't study to learn, we make like this, because for the peasant every year is different and every year we have to go learning. For example, this year if it is this way, we already have to drain the fields.

SANTOS CAHUANA, CAJAMARCA

En Quechua speaking Andes and Amazon, it is spoken of *yachay* or *yacháy*, Quechua word to which the meaning knowledge is usually attributed; but also, and depending on the context, it is used as to live, to cure, to heal, to learn, to teach, to know, to harmonize, to prepare, to know, to instruct, to accustom (González Holguín 1989: 361). The roads that drive toward the knowledge are as varied as their meanings: the senses, the dreams, the use of plants, the rituals, the reading of the coca leaf, the practices, etc., without roads subordinating the others. They are lived as shared roads, which exchange and complement each other and guide us toward being *chuyman jaque*, as the Aimaras say, or *soncco runa*, as the Quechua say, meaning a human heart. We will show some of their characteristics.

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR. We will understand educational culture of the community as all the ways that the Andean – Amazon communities poses in order to learn and to teach, which have produced and regenerated knowledge and methods that correspond to the wisdom of a way of living in harmony with nature and deities. This educational culture, not less than eight thousand years of history, is the support of a diversity of practices and knowledge that is renewed generation by generation in the Andean and Amazon numerous towns where original agriculture and culture are practiced. We use the concept of educational culture for two reasons. One, to make it visible and to get the attention to its importance in the Intercultural Education in the context of rural schools; and two, to continue and to stimulate the reflection in the teachers, in order to have a pillar concept on which education actions can become acts of cultural dialogue.

n of knowledge in the

The concept of the world, in which the *yachay* lays, grants human qualities to the existent beings. The world is not divided between living and non living things. In the Andean - Amazon life, hills are guardian deities that, as well as humans, speak, breed animals and become authorities. In a same way, the land is not an inert holder, support of the growth of plants. The land is defined as *Pachamama*, the mother of all existing beings; she reunites all in a great family in which each one is brother or sister of the other. Through this way, all beings live and are brought up in a living reality of people and of family. The experience is of being in a world as a living *pacha* ("fabric" in Lamas Quechua speaking), in which the person is a strand knotted to other strands, in a connection of mutual upbringing.

"All that I know is recorded in my heart", Aymaras say. From this perspective, it is not in the mind where knowledge resides, but in the heart. It is not that the natives or peasants do not think and represent things of reality in their minds; it is not the mind that has the primacy but the heart that integrates mind and body not in a dichotomy but in a cordial perspective. As *don* Santos suggests, some things are learnt "with our thought", likewise rural women say that "the hand knows", so everything has its place, its moment and its circumstance. There is a very important affective quota in what is learnt and remembered in any access road through knowledge.

Experience differs from thinking, because it is a reflection on what is lived. As Abram says (2000), experience is: "The world just as we live it, previously to any conceptualization." To think is to explain, to separate, and it supposes the transformation of the experience in facts and an unavoidable "taking of distance" of the reality that surrounds it in order to judge it as an object of analysis and to modify it. To the Andean - Amazon

peasant, the fact and its explanation doesn't matter as much as how it is lived, how it was lived and how it is remembered.

The language used among peers remits to a well-known and in movement reality that does not follow a lineal pattern, and where the ideas expressed are strongly associated to the entities to which they refer. It is about "embodied abstractions" where the word and the reality pointed are one and the same; words have "weight" and they compromise the one who pronounces them as well as the enunciated reality. It is such this connection that many avoid narrating it, because doing it means calling the enunciated reality. For learning and living are closely connected, the transmission of knowledge is strongly experienced; words are worth it, but these, in order to be part of life, have to go by the sieve of its practice which is the one that offers a certain anchorage to knowledge in daily life. Hence, knowledge finds itself connected with making; they are one and the same thing.

This know-how-to-make is local and belongs to the circumstance; it has its established time and space, and its practice is meticulous and detailed. It does not pretend to be a generalization and genuine concept beyond the circumstance in which is manifested and practiced. Because, as *don* Santos Cahuana says: "For the peasant every year is different" (Vásquez 1998: 39); therefore, peasants are saying: "I do it this way" because their knowledge is for their land, which is comprehensible in a world where ecology and culture often vary in reduced tracts. It is not usual to generalize a useful practice to other places and say "It is this way". This attitude takes us to cultivate a wide and open mentality and an attitude associated to the upbringing of heterogeneity, because what is known is for a specific purpose and for a given context.

EDUCATIONAL CULTURES

Criteria	Official	Andean – Amazon educational culture
Connection with the world	Thought. Distance between humans and nature. Abstraction and experimenting prevails.	Experience, immediacy. A connection between feelings and emotions prevails. Transmission of knowledge is experienced, holistic.
World vision	Machine world. Nature as a resource.	Living world, family network.
Field of validity	Universal: "It's this way". Tendency toward homogeneity.	Local. "I do it this way". Tendency toward diversity.
Individual Axis of orientation	Free spontaneity. Ayllu.	Everybody knows. Everyone makes.
Learning Objectives	Transformation of nature.	Bring up and learn to be brought up.
Language	Writing.	Speaking.
Field of realization	Industry.	Land.
Concept of childhood	Chronologic: Childhood. Games as distraction.	Wawa has all ayllu. Games as feasts, learning and announcement.
Regeneration	Reproduction. Institutionalised order.	Recreation. Circumstantial order.

On the other hand, nobody feels as the owner and possessor of knowledge. One lives in a world where the attribute of the knowledge is not the human being's exclusivity but the nature and the deities', that is to say, the extensive family or the *ayllu*, who also possess it. As a relationship fellow-object does not exist but people who dialogue to participate in an activity, the resulting practice is not product of the human (subject) action on the nature (object) to transform it, but a collective action of regeneration of the *pacha* – as the sowing of corn or the construction of a channel - that expresses the dialogue of knowledge among the humans, the moon, the seed and the *mama coca*.

To learn the message of the song of a bird, the location and shape of a coca leaf, or the shine of the moon, requires an emotion of affection and friendship. The Quechua say that "to the land one doesn't go angry", to them the *Pachamama* requires a festive relationship of affection and help, condition to see her kindnesses and to establish a dialogue with her. It is important to say that the emotion of the caring mother earth is not only a human matter; an ethical supposition exists according to which the harmony of the world is built based on the affection, the wisdom and the happiness of the *ayllu*, and if a human wants to learn from the world, it should make it without altering this order. As *don* Domidel Sangay of Cajamarca says: "To learn, the key is to be happy" (Vásquez 1988: 35).

In a community there is a diversity of *ayllus*, and learning how-to-make has its roads – some knitted better than with others -, that form families of affection - *cuyay ayllu* - where the learning relationship flourishes. The

cuyay ayllu are formed by families that have a lot of attachment and affection to each other, as a blanket whose strands relate human, nature and deities in a deep and nurtured way, and in its harmony expresses the affection put in its making, in its upbringing.

In these *ayllus* the relationship grandfather-grandson is one of the basic pillars of the recreation of the knowledge, so much because the *yachay*, to be regenerated, has to establish a favorable intergenerational link, being boys and girls and their grandfathers and grandmothers the first knots of this learning relationship and upbringing. It is also a selfless, free relationship that has no more purposes but the grandfather's wishes of sharing his knowledge, and those of the boy of listening to his grandfather, a way of recreating a filial relationship in the community that leaves any norm or law that regulates the regeneration of the knowledge empty.

It is not that the natives or peasants do not think and represent things of reality in their minds; it is not the mind that has the primacy but the heart that integrates mind and body not in a dichotomy but in a cordial perspective.

Upbringing implies protecting, helping, nursing, loving, and caring. The Quechua word for upbringing is *uywa*, and the same expression is used for what is being brought up. It is a verb that connotes mutuality and help; when bringing up, the one who is brought up, also brings up. If all are breeders, all are raised at the same time. The capacity to bring up is inseparable from the sensibility of being raised. A basic condition to learn is to live an attitude of sensitive, emotional and affective opening toward the speech, the expressions, and the movements of humans, natural and sacred, which populate the world. This quality is crucial in the opening toward the strange and the new. The upbringing does

not have frontiers within its own, its surroundings and the new. There is an attitude of basic hospitality toward the new, although its upbringing can imply a long and slow digestion - at times broken -, as happened with the *hacienda* and with the Church in past times. This is the attitude toward school.

The human being, in this experience, is not on Earth to create the fabric but to accompany its regeneration. It is a *homo maieutic* – birth giver -, as van Kessel says (1990: 76); this means: a being who accompanies the *pacha* to bring up with its know how, helps the land in the crops, and helps make the existent things more diverse; and in that road it is becoming a human heart, somebody that knows how to make things with respect, which means, in its time and in its circumstance, and whose word makes the diversity of necessary knowledge for life grow. 🗣️

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Our solidarity with Salomón Lerner, a person who promotes peace and human rights



The educators of Tarea express our solidarity with Doctor Salomón Lerner Febres, ex-president of the Commission of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) (in Spanish: Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación - CVR) and current vice-president of the special commission entrusted to present the proposal for the creation of the Museum of the Memory, in view of the threats of death against him.

We think that after this attempt there are sectors that were not in accordance with the conclusions of the CVR and, now, are opposed to the project of the Museum of the Memory.

They decline to debate ideas and use violence to silence voices and different political perspectives - unacceptable by the big majority of the population

who does not want to suffer the violence lived in the 1980's again. We reject all kinds of violence, demand that an investigation begins to identify the authors who are behind these acts, which are part of an intimidation campaign, and demand the Government to protect Doctor Lerner and his family in order to avoid irreparable damages, since the Rule of Law is at stake.

From the education we promote a democratic and pacific coexistence and solidarity. We shall not lose the opportunity to see ourselves as citizens with rights in a diverse country, with freedom, but also equal in opportunities, equity and social justice.

TAREA Team