

Reflections on the Phenomenological Description of the Experience of a Teacher in a Colombian Public School

Maricela Correa Castrillón¹

Abstract

This paper is the result of a research process focused on studying the experience of teachers in Colombian public schools. It argues that, based on a phenomenological description, it is possible to challenge the instrumentalist perspective that permeates this experience. Among the various approaches to phenomenology, I opt for Michel Henry's (2015) proposal, which explores the deepest layers of the unfolding of experience and describes affectivity as the ultimate foundation of meaning-making. Reclaiming Henry's perspective entails a particular approach to the study of experience, where, in addition to transcendence, I attend to the ontological sphere of immanence. It is the broadening of meaning with respect to the ontological realities in which life finds its fulfillment that allows us to consider reframing the lived experience in school, as well as to raise questions about how different concepts related to it are understood. In particular, this article reflects on the concepts of knowledge and education.

Keywords: *Teacher, Public School, Lived Experience, Education, Knowledge, Phenomenology.*

Introduction

The educational policies that guide Colombia's public school system have evolved in tandem with the needs of the state project (Mallarino, 2013, 2017; Pedraza, 1999, 2004, 2011; Zuluaga, n.d.). For several decades now, government proposals have been shaped by global power structures that guide countries like Colombia, whose economic ties commit them to fulfilling a series of obligations—not only regarding the productive sector but also reflected in sectors such as education (Borbón, 2005; Salazar, 2008; Suarez and Correa, 2020). Amid this landscape, schools are permeated by narratives of productivity, manifested in homogenizing guidelines, standards, and assessment systems that directly impact the experience of those involved in the educational process². In relation to the above, Rodríguez (2019), for example, explains how the Colombian education system aligns with a mercantilist perspective in which teachers and students are referred to as human capital and, like infrastructure resources, constitute an investment in the country's economic growth.

The purpose of the following text is to share some reflections stemming from a study that examines the Colombian public school system within the aforementioned context and that, furthermore, finds in the phenomenological method an opportunity to reinterpret the lived experience of school, particularly that of being a teacher. In order to outline the fundamental aspects of the theoretical-methodological choice and the reflections derived from the research process, I first present some key elements regarding the phenomenological method and emphasize the particular perspective of the French philosopher Michel Henry on the phenomenality of life. Second, I explain what it means within the framework of this research to reframe the experience of being a teacher and the reasons why I consider it possible to challenge the instrumentalist view of life that is embodied in many of the state policies responsible for setting the

¹ Doctoral candidate in Educational Sciences. B.A. in Mathematics and Physics. Specialist in the Didactics of Mathematics and Physics. M.Sc. in the Teaching of the Exact and Natural Sciences. Academic Coordinator at Vallejuelos Educational Institution. Medellín, Colombia., Email: mcorreac23@gmail.com, ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6200-8644>

² Concerning the practices of homogenization and discipline in the school setting, a number of studies have examined the ways in which schooling has historically been oriented toward the standardization of both knowledge and subjects. Such analyses can be found, for example, in *School Coexistence in Colombia: Discourses, Practices, and Uses 1991–2019* (2022), which traces how the school has attempted to delimit the body in space and time; *Mutations of Disciplinary Practices in the Colombian School* (2018), which shows how practices of power and discipline affect subjects and their experience within the school environment; and *The Body: An Unfinished Pedagogical Knowledge* (2015), which highlights the tensions that become visible between subjects and institutional parameters, thereby revealing the instrumentalization to which bodies are subjected in school.

parameters of teaching work. Third, I argue how this phenomenological approach to lived experience can also broaden our understanding of concepts such as knowledge and education.

Phenomenology as a Theoretical and Methodological Foundation for the Reinterpretation of Experience

Phenomenology is, in itself, a method that denotes a particular attitude on the part of the researcher, one that differs from the attitude we adopt in everyday life—the natural attitude³—and from the attitude in which the world is described in terms of objectivity—the naturalistic attitude⁴. The phenomenological attitude involves freeing data from preconceived ideas and, to the extent possible, describing the condition of possibility by virtue of which experiences are given to us. As explained by Edmund Husserl (1962), the German philosopher who laid the foundations of phenomenology, the method recovers subjective experience as a means of accessing rigorous knowledge about the essential structures that constitute and give meaning to lived experience⁵. In this proposal, I recover first-person experience as a source of knowledge. Accordingly, the description emerges from my first-person experience within the realm of public schooling.

Since experience is the focus of this discussion, it is necessary to examine its fundamental meaning in phenomenology and the way in which this perspective broadens our understanding of the body, subjectivity, and life. The tenets of this philosophical approach hold that all human life, in addition to being experienced in the external world, unfolds within the internal experience of the self⁶. This means that experience not only encompasses the acts of consciousness that direct us toward the world but also extends the study to a deeper layer of constitution, where each subjectivity has an experience of itself; it is a manifest consciousness that turns toward itself and does not go beyond itself, thus revealing its immanent character.

In accordance with Husserl's analyses (1999), consciousness—what is lived through by the ego—is precisely its lived experience (*Erlebnis*) (V, §3); thus, inner perception, that is, the inner consciousness of one's own lived experiences, is itself also a lived experience (V, §5). In this sense, Husserl (1962, §84) identifies consciousness, in its fullest sense, with everything encompassed by the stream and interconnectedness of lived experiences. Furthermore, he adds that “Consciousness considered in its ‘purity’ must be held to be a self-contained complex of being, a complex of absolute being into which nothing can penetrate and out of which nothing can slip” (Husserl, 1983, §49, p.93). Thus, two dimensions in the accomplishment of experience are disclosed here: transcendence and immanence.

From this perspective, experience is not merely the incorporation into consciousness of something external to it, as if it were simply a matter of segments representing the world that are produced through sensory perception and the triggering of a series of neurological processes. Rather, it corresponds to the life of a self that is filled with its own content. For example, when a teacher is in the middle of a class discussing a subject-related topic with their students, although there is empirical (perceived) content, it is not what is external to them—the subject matter being explained, the layout of the classroom, or the students’

³ In the first book of *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy* (1962, §§27–32), Husserl introduces and provides a general characterization of the natural attitude.

⁴ Unlike the concept of the natural attitude introduced in *Ideas I*, the naturalistic attitude is not presented by Husserl in a dedicated section. Rather, it emerges as a progressively developed critical construction concerning objectivism and scientific naturalism, particularly in *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (2008).

⁵ Phenomenology is an “eidetic” science (Husserl, 1983) insofar as it seeks to disclose what is essential within experience. Husserl argues that everything contingent—including human experience—is subject to essential truths of varying degrees of universality (§2). Phenomenology thus traverses the different strata of the accomplishment of experience in order to reveal the obscure ground in which essential structures such as temporality, spatiality, intentionality—the fact that consciousness is always consciousness of something (Husserl, 1983, §84)—and self-affection—the originary affectivity that binds life to its feeling-of-self (Henry, 2015, §5)—are intertwined, thereby making each life an effective living reality.

⁶ Husserl (1983) explains that such experience “We have originary experience of ourself and of our states of consciousness in so-called internal or self-perception” (§1, p. 8).

attitudes—that, in a fundamental sense, determines the meaning of the experience in that class. It is a subjectivity that captures the presence of that world and, in the immanence of its actualization, constitutes it as a unique living reality, endowing it with meaning.

Thus, from the Husserlian perspective (1962, §§33–38): experience is the operation by which what is experienced is there for the one who experiences it, as what it is, with all its content and with the meaning that the experience itself constitutes for it. Thus, here experience is not a sequence of unconnected parts, nor is it scenes from a world existing prior to any lived experience; on the contrary, it is given to us as a whole, and the meaning revealed within it appears in the form of a synthesis (Vargas Guillen, 2018). The perspective proposed in phenomenology is the possibility of rethinking the experience lived by the teacher, no longer as a set of independent events lodged in consciousness, but as a complex operation that, in addition to opening us up to the world, reveals its immanent reality in subjective experience.

In light of the above, the concept of experience is redefined, and consequently, the body as its source must also be understood in a broader sense. The body referred to here is not merely a psychophysical entity; rather, it is a life that is conscious of its own existence: a phenomenological life. That said, both life and the body transcend biophysical understanding. According to Husserl (2005), the living body (*Liebkörper*), while a material object in the world (*Körper*), is also bound to the experience of itself—that is, it is one's own body (*Leib*). One must consider the distance between this perspective and the tradition that presents consciousness and the body as distinct parts—the body as the container of consciousness. Through the lens of phenomenology, the body is not a mere organic reality, nor is subjectivity a set of neurological processes contained within it. All human life is a subjective body, and its condition of possibility is anchored to a physical reality in correlation with the immanent reality of consciousness; it is within this nexus that the meaning of the world is constituted.

In the context of this proposal, I am specifically interested in the principles put forward by the phenomenologist Michel Henry, who explores the idea of the subjective body as articulated by Husserl (2005). Henry (2007) asserts that the body is far from being merely an element of transcendent being⁷; for, although it manifests itself in the truth of this being, it is grounded in a more primitive ontological reality. In this way, he traces the experience back to assert that subjectivity is not an abstract term that finds its culmination in transcendent being, but rather: the subjective body is the real being of the body itself. The unity of the subjective body rests on the ontological duality of a life that opens itself to the world only if it occurs in the immanent sphere. In this sense, since the subjective body is a phenomenological human life, before any glimpse of the world, it occurs in the radical interiority of experiencing oneself as living.

We must pay attention to the all-encompassing and absolute nature with which phenomenology presents the experience of the living body. It ceases to be an assembly of parts, and subjectivity takes on a meaning different from that of a mere representation or impersonal medium, to instead define it as a perfectly determined and absolutely concrete region of being (Henry, 2007). In this phenomenological ontology, the identity between the body, subjectivity, and life is revealed; the subjective body is life in its manifestation. In the words of the French philosopher: and that which sustains life is life itself: not precisely the intellect, but the actual life of absolute subjectivity in all its forms, that is, the body and, generally speaking, that which common language also calls life. And what sustains life is precisely that which life itself is: not understanding as such, but the effective life of absolute subjectivity in all its forms, that is, the body and, more generally, what ordinary language also calls life.

To consider this identity implies recognizing that in every living body, the phenomenological determinations of the life it embodies are fulfilled. For this reason, in returning to the aim of phenomenology for this study—the description of the essential structures that give rise to experience—and in light of Henry's proposal (2010), it is necessary to state as a foundational axiom that the primary determination of life, its radical essence, is the pure experience of itself, the self-affection. In such

⁷ This means that the body is a material object belonging to the world of things. Nevertheless, such a characterization provides only an incomplete account of its mode of manifestation. It is precisely through this expansion of the horizon within which the experience of being a living body is accomplished that the phenomenology of life unfolds.

circumstances, to identify life with the body is to designate the body as having the capacity to experience itself as living and to constitute itself originally in the midst of its self-experience. It follows, then, that the foundation of all human experience—that which allows us to recognize ourselves as a body situated in the world—is that power and, at the same time, that bond through which we have experience of the self without this occurring through the mediation of any sensory organ. In an original sense, all human life constitutes itself; it has a content of which it is, in a certain way, the origin (Henry, 2007).

But how should we conceive of its phenomenological emergence in self-affection? Henry (2015, §52) answers this question by suggesting that it should be conceived as affectivity. The philosopher explains that affective tones are rooted in the essence of life; they are fundamental modalities of its actualization. From this perspective, affectivity is the essential structure or foundation of all possible experience. This means that it is the advent of life itself—that experiencing itself through affectivity—that propels it into action, making its phenomenological actualization possible. It is in the formation of a sensitive and singular ground that the power of the world's things to affect us resides.

In the previous example—that of the teacher in his classroom—while there are institutional parameters aimed at directing the conditions for the classroom experience to take place and intended to restrict or open up the subjects' actions, it is in the radical interiority of those lives—in that suffering through living—that the unique affective experience of each of them with the world and with others occurs. It is each life, in the singularity of its affections, that fills itself with its own content in order to open up to the world; an opening that does not correspond merely to seeing the world in the usual sense, but to a seeing that feels itself seeing (Henry, 2010). Sensitivity is the foundation that makes it possible to constitute the meaning of what is seen, to experience what is seen as part of the world of life; the world, insofar as it is lived by someone, is affective at its core.

My object of study, then, is what arises within the body itself as affectivity, where every affective nuance that comes to express life is also constitutive of its content and the purest data one possesses regarding experience. In this case, each life, in the radical individuality of its feeling, constitutes a form of knowledge, which determines any feeling that life may experience. I thus adopt Henry's radicalization of Husserl's phenomenological method, such that after the first *epoché*—that is, the bracketing of our judgments and theories to redirect us to the lifeworld—a second *epoché* becomes necessary to address the problem of the lifeworld's return to the consciousness of this world (Henry, 2010).

In summary, the postulates drawn from phenomenology highlight, for this study, first-person experience as a means of obtaining rigorous knowledge about the foundation of experience; they point to the self-affecting nature of life as that foundation; and they propose that its original phenomenological manifestation is affectivity. Accordingly, the attitude that prevails in the reflective analysis of experience is not only that which concerns the presentation of things to consciousness—their intentional presentation—but the attitude that recognizes an original emergence occurring as the background for every intentional correlative. This emergence, invisible to the world, is that of the self-experiencing of life in the radical interiority of affections.

Reinterpretation of the lived experience by a teacher in a Colombian public school

First, it is important to clarify how I understand the concept of “re-signifying” experience in this study. According to the Real Academia Española (2025), the prefix re- indicates the repetition of an action, while to signify means to express, declare, or make known a concept or thing. Consequently, “re-signifying” may be understood as the act of returning to a previous signification in order to reinterpret, transform, or reconstruct its meaning. Thus, following these definitions, reframing experience means revisiting what expresses it—in this case, with the specific intention of challenging the existing meaning derived from the norms that shape the experience of being a teacher in the Colombian public school system—and endowing it with a meaning different from the customary one. If I were to study human experience with the naivety typical of everyday attitudes, I would likely fail to grasp the nuances and complexities that enrich its meaning; that is why, in search of such reframing, I expose the experience to the light of the phenomenological approach.

Below, I present the context that motivates my search for a renewed meaning for the experience lived in school. In this institution, amidst a discourse of caring for life and improving the conditions for its development, there lies an underlying set of interests in which life is objectified and, like human relationships, is enveloped in a cold and utilitarian vision. The processes of reification that have been normalizing since the 19th century—when labor became a commodity and the economic intentions of nations began to permeate the classroom—are no strangers to the Colombian public school system. Thus, the bodies that inhabit the school have always been the object of interests that often bear no relation to the unique reality they embody. In this way, the conditions have been set to privilege a certain attitude toward lived experience—one that fails to recognize the fullness of its unfolding and from which it seems possible to reduce life to a tool or a mere functional object.

In response to the growing demands stemming from the country's economic model, the school established mechanisms for self-regulation of the educational experience. Supranational entities, amidst discourses promoting the development of critical thinking, active participation in society, and awareness of global challenges such as inequality or climate change, reveal between the lines a naturalistic attitude in which the human lives inhabiting the school are given a relative and restricted meaning: they are referred to as a resource or capital⁸. In much of the world, including Colombia, it is these organizations that define what constitutes a country's progress or the ideal citizen. Amid their proposals, they deploy economic models that shape the fabric of a world where life is subsumed under the economic productivity. Regarding this situation in particular, Rodríguez (2019) asserts that Colombian teachers have been turned into objects of the productive system, “midiéndolos e interviniéndolos a partir de los resultados en las pruebas nacionales e internacionales, la satisfacción de los clientes, la estandarización de procesos y la creación de códigos éticos” (p. 206).

Although some state regulations and policies recognize the importance of teachers' professional autonomy, creativity, and pedagogical reflection through quality and accreditation systems aimed at following procedures of efficiency and self-management, a naturalistic conception of life is imposed in schools. We see, then, that life is understood as a functional object for which one seeks to regulate, for example, the relationship with knowledge, with the things of the world, and with others, as well as the time allocated for learning, eating, and resting. Such regulations exhibit a clear correspondence with the need to fuel the productive sector and maintain an orientation toward understanding the living body as an object to be instrumentalized. There is a clear orientation toward the objectification of life in school; those who inhabit it have been assigned a leading role in the country's productive machinery.

However, accepting an ontological reality that is broader than mere transcendent realization allows us to consider challenging the objectivist perspective. If it is true that what constitutes the original foundation of lived experience is not the attitude with which we approach life or what is present in the world as a condition of possibility for its unfolding, then it seems appropriate to articulate a renewed meaning for it—one in which the very ethos of the teacher is reevaluated, and within this new perspective, the reflection extends to how we conceive of aspects such as knowledge, assessment, education, community, and so many others that permeate regulations and are certainly linked to that experience. It is the phenomenological attitude that allows me to endow each of these concepts and the experience itself with a profound meaning.

Specifically, what do I find in this phenomenology of life that allows me to think about the re-signification of the teacher's experience? The answer becomes clear when I accept that life feels itself living and cannot escape that primordial feeling; for, given this principle, an immanent reality for experience is established in which I can challenge reification. If, in an original sense, all reality is grounded in the immanent actualization

⁸ Regarding the instrumentalizing view directed toward those who inhabit public schools in Colombia, one can observe how supranational organizations that regulate and shape the country's educational policies issue guidelines in which this perspective becomes evident. For example, the World Bank (2003), in its World Development Report 2003: Sustainable Development in a Dynamic World: Transforming Institutions, Growth, and Quality of Life, states: “La educación es un componente fundamental del capital humano, y su calidad y cantidad tienen un impacto directo en la productividad y la competitividad de una economía” (p. 133). Likewise, UNESCO, in its report on education for sustainable development, states that: “La educación es fundamental para el desarrollo sostenible, ya que permite a las personas desarrollar las habilidades y competencias necesarias para contribuir al bienestar de la sociedad y al medio ambiente. Las personas son recursos valiosos que deben ser apoyados y desarrollados para alcanzar su máximo potencial” (p. 12).

of experience, then it will not be the world that can free the life that is the teacher from the sense of self, if the world appears to each person as the world of life.

Understanding self-affectation as a structural ontological determination of life entails the realization that it is fundamentally determined in itself by the essence of non-freedom (Henry, 2015). A non-freedom that reveals the impotent nature of life with respect to itself—that is, it cannot help but “suffer itself” (Henry, 2010). Thus, it is not even likely that the teacher, upon entering the school, will shed what they experience as affectivity, that they will not suffer what they have lived through. There is no such thing as a switch for affective experience that turns on and off when one enters or leaves school. In fact, what feeling unfolds is not a cold representation of reality, an empirical fact, but the pure and foundational act of experiencing oneself as living. If affectivity constitutes the ultimate condition of any experience—, even when life is limited by the conditions imposed by the given world—there is no exteriority that can undo the bond that ties this feeling together.

As explained, the postulates of phenomenology allow us to see that the public school teacher, despite operating within a set of circumstances that entail the risk of instrumentalization and objectification, is incapable of withdrawing from their own being; in their most original reality, they are inescapably bound to feeling within the experience of living. From this perspective, the anxiety, fear, joy, or any affective nuance that those who inhabit the school may experience—due to the diversity of sensibility in the world’s appearance—presupposes an original feeling of self; it is this act that opens us to exteriority and grounds any manifestation of transcendent being.

From a phenomenological standpoint, one recognizes the immanent reality in which the experience of being a teacher takes place, for which any external claim only attains the meaning conferred upon it by the subjectivity it seeks to affect. The experience lived by the teacher is constituted, in principle, by what arises from that life and by the effect of the self; it is this original reality that allows us to challenge the naturalistic perspective found in the guidelines, educational policies, and labor regulations that guide the practice of teachers in Colombia.

Expanding the meaning of the concepts of knowledge and training

In line with what I have already stated, every subjective body is both a transcendental intentional body and an invisible original corporeality (Henry, 2001). Accepting the different ontological spheres in which life unfolds leads me to rethink the way in which schools have conceived various concepts linked to the experience of those who inhabit them. In this institution, where a naturalistic attitude has prevailed, the fact that experience unfolds as a flow of immanence-transcendence is routinely overlooked. Human life is defined from its corporeal being, situated spatially and temporally within nature, which has led to the exclusion—in much of educational legislation and government policy—of the fact that, thanks to the phenomenological determinations of human life, experience finds its most original realization in the radical interiority of affections. In light of the above, I find it necessary to address the implications for the understanding of concepts closely linked to the experience of being a teacher; specifically, I will discuss knowledge and training here.

To begin with, the question arises regarding the place we assign to subjective experience—as an individual and affective experience—in the constitution of knowledge. As I have already mentioned, everything that affects and touches us in the world, everything that comes to us, can only affect us because it is, above all, the effect of life itself. As Henry (2007) explains: there exists within us a primitive life, an original life that is not an intellectual life and that, moreover, will emerge as the foundation of theoretical knowledge and abstract truth. However, the objectivity attributed to scientific knowledge, coupled with the drive toward standardization and commodification that manifests in schools, has led us to disregard the sensibility that gives rise to all knowledge—which, I believe, is nothing more than an abstraction of life itself.

Is it even possible to develop a theory or treatise that does not begin with life itself? Traditionally, the knowledge discussed in schools is contrasted with the subjective; little attention is paid to the way in which both individual and emotional lives—those of the people who know—are experienced in; scarcely

any thought is given to the life that gave meaning to what was perceived in order to define a law, a theory, or a concept. The predominant scientific tradition in schools leads us to assume that reality is not adequately captured when subjective experience is validated in the development of knowledge about that reality. However, this phenomenology of life gives rise to a radical way of understanding the constitution of knowledge, not as something external to life, but as the result of its growth, which occurs thanks to the return of that suffering within the feeling of living.

The feeling of life becomes concrete in the body in an absolute way; that is, it leaves no parts hidden. If a teacher experiences anguish, it is expressed fully, as it is; the same is true of any other affective nuance that life may express. What cannot always be put into words—which allows the teacher to take action on the world, on themselves, and on others—this primordial feeling is knowledge in and of itself. A question arises here: Why not take this primitive and complete datum, which has nothing to do with representation, into account for pedagogical reflection and, in general, for reflection on how knowledge is conceived in school?

Separating knowledge from the affective dimension in which it originates reduces it to a mere description of mechanistic causality, linking it to a set of parts that are related within the phenomenon to be known; such a decision separates it from that affective being in which the very experience of knowing begins to become real. The effects of this limiting approach to knowledge and the ways of accessing it become evident, for example, in pedagogical reflection, in the methodologies designed to teach the different disciplines, or in the methods of assessment. Almost everything boils down to institutional formats and requirements, drafted in terms of performance levels, competencies, and quality standards, in which little or no account is taken of the original sensibility in which the teacher and their students experience themselves, even though this offers the truest knowledge we have of what is lived, as it occurs without distance and in an absolute manner. Regarding the expansion of meaning, I consider it necessary to question the relevance of continuing to ignore in schools the question of the role of affectivity as the foundation of all experience.

I also find that broadening the meaning attributed to knowledge cannot be limited to considering solely the objectivity with which it has been characterized. Assuming that the world appears to the living only as a world of life—that is, it unfolds in and through life—and that, in school, learning is confined to knowledge of life and the environment in which it reveals itself as a practical truth, leads my research to question the appropriateness of continuing to present knowledge in school in a fragmented manner; even more so when it is a fact that every lived experience is simultaneously related to many different aspects. In school, in addition to the attempt to abstract knowledge from its foundation—original affectivity—a programmatic curriculum separates knowledge into a set of disciplines to determine what should be addressed at each grade level. Consequently, there is no room for the interweaving in which life unfolds; instead, the separation of knowledge is established as the norm, and students often move from one class to another, from one performance indicator to another, in a state of total disconnection.

The foregoing does not mean that the need for the specialization of knowledge is ignored; it is of great value that humanity has perfected the fragmentation of an object into minute parts to explain the types of associations and relationships, which has led to great advances in the understanding of how the natural world functions. However, as has already been emphasized, this is only one view of reality, one that leaves in the dark the absolute nature of that which makes its constitution possible; it is life in its most radical sense that remains hidden, even though it is constantly stated in school that this is what one wishes to know and what is discussed almost all the time.

On the other hand, the fact that life constitutes itself—that is, that it fills itself with its own content while being knowledge in and of itself—opens up a space to consider whether it is possible to direct or shape it from an external perspective, especially when one considers that, as I mentioned earlier, its radical essence is not dependent on the world. It is at this point that I find a space to question the way the concept of education is presented in government guidelines and how, from the perspective of this phenomenology of life, that concept can also be reinterpreted.

In ministerial guidelines, education appears in an affirmative sense, as if it were possible to shape the lives of those participating in the educational process. This is evident, for example, in Law 115 of 1994, where the common objectives at all levels for the comprehensive development of students include “shaping the personality” (Article 13a) and “forming an educational consciousness” (Article 13b); Similarly, they refer to teacher training when they propose “training qualified and competent teachers” (Article 70) or “training educators of the highest scientific and ethical quality” (Article 109). The assumption that one can prescribe what a human being can be is clear.

It appears that, within some institutional guidelines, the concept of formation remains closely aligned with an objectivist understanding of life. Educational policy statements, such as those discussed in the previous paragraph, reveal the naturalistic perspective that at times prevails. Once life is conceived through an instrumental lens, the assumption emerges that it can be shaped and molded, thereby privileging an instrumental approach to human existence. In the classroom, both teachers and students find their actions constrained by directives that promote what can be quantified. Standards, indicators, and competencies become mechanisms through which educational institutions seek to verify and control the formative process, reducing subjective life in its living reality to that which can be made visible, quantified, and evaluated.

I believe that re-signifying this concept requires recognizing that formation, as the self-development of Life itself, unfolds in a singular manner, as singular as each living human being. Can we really expect all students in a class to experience what happens in exactly the same way? Would it be accurate to say that what they experience returns exactly as it was to those lives already shaped by the uniqueness of their existence? Or, can two teachers who follow the same institutional parameters, who teach the same group of students, who cover the same topics, and who experience nearly identical contextual conditions, be affected in the same way by these mundane conditions? The conclusion drawn from what has been said is that this is not possible; sensitivity is, by its very nature, individual—this is what distinguishes one life from another.

In this sense, it is therefore unreasonable to think that education aims to mold others or that it is aligned with a simple adaptation to an external reality. We see, then, that this phenomenology offers a non-affirmative view of education, in which it is understood as a journey toward oneself, toward that sedimentary life that is each individual, and a return to oneself as a formed being—that is, as a life that has developed itself. The question then arises as to whether it is the school that determines how or what is formed in those who inhabit it, or whether the school’s role is to provide the conditions of possibility for each person to unfold in their individuality.

It is my proposal, as a possible way to counteract the crisis in which our society is mired due to the primacy of technology and productivity, that in school—which has been saddled with the mission of addressing, through a series of lectures, nearly all of society’s problems—we begin to speak of a vital education, in which we turn to the invisible that occurs in human experience, to that which occurs without distance and constitutes the truest knowledge. These are joy, anguish, pain, fear, desire, suffering—in short, all those affective nuances in which we feel alive and which cast us into the world, forms of resistance against the instrumentalization and objectification of life. The call, then, is to rescue, for life in school, life itself as affectivity.

Final Considerations

The phenomenological path taken so far reveals the possibilities that this theoretical and methodological choice offers for research focused on human experience. In addition to broadening or redefining what it means to be alive—by accepting it as a practical and concrete truth embodied by every living body—this type of research also makes it possible to understand human experience beyond a collection of disconnected experiences resulting from our relationship with the world, thereby granting it an original character. The living being, before having any experience of the world or of itself as an object of the world, must give itself over to the affective experience of being life. A horizon of the actualization of life is proposed here for

studies of human experience, one that is constituted in the ontological spheres of immanence and transcendence, revealing the inadequacy of a perspective that focuses solely on the exteriority of the world.

On the other hand, the path of reductions followed in this phenomenological project directs reflection toward the way in which knowledge of life and the world is understood. It opposes the perspective in which the standardization of the educational act, through legislative and curricular provisions, delimits action in schools and imposes conditions of standardization and the reduction of knowledge to a productive functionality. This homogenizing perspective, consistent with the global market, is embodied in the institutionalization of knowledge, in curricula framed by ministerial guidelines, and in standardized assessment systems.

In schools, there seems to be an attempt to distance life—in its tangible reality—from education and the educational process in general; however, as has already been noted, it is impossible for a living body to detach itself from the radical and absolute experience of being alive, so such a distance cannot truly be achieved. In an original sense, the life that is the teacher, although it is a manifestation in the natural world, originates in a reality that does not belong to the visible world and is far from being reducible to an object.

Finally, a primary consequence of research of this kind is the researcher's own reframing of self, of the life they embody, which the phenomenological path reveals as a unity of ontological realities. Therefore, one of the main consequences of research of this nature is the reframing of one's own experience, not only as a public school teacher, but even more so, the meaning of life is expanded, filling the experience with new nuances in all its forms of realization.

References

- Ayala Rengifo, M. L., Noreña Noreña, N. M., & Sanabria, M. (2015). The body: a pending pedagogical knowledge. *Tesis Psicológica*, 10(2), 126-141.
- World Bank. (2003). *World Development Report 2003: Building Institutions for Markets*. Washington, D.C.: World Bank.
- Borbón, R. D. (2005). *Educational Policies in Colombia in the Neoliberal Era*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Valencia]. Source: <https://docplayer.es/113352526-Las-politicas-educativas-en-colombia-en-la-ERA-NEOLIBERAL.html> - HYPERLINK "https://docplayer.es/113352526-Las-politicas-educativas-en-colombia-en-la-ERA-NEOLIBERAL.html" - HYPERLINK "https://docplayer.es/113352526-Las-politicas-educativas-en-colombia-en-la-ERA-NEOLIBERAL.html"
- Commeleran, F. (1889). *Classical Etymological Dictionary: Latin-Spanish*. Source: <https://www.rae.es/archivo-digital/diccionario-clasico-etimologico-latino-espanol>
- Galeano, Tabares, E. T. (2022). *School Coexistence in Colombia: Discourses, Practices, and Uses, 1991–2019*. [Doctoral thesis, Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana]. Source: <https://repository.upb.edu.co/items/5c004c21-6070-45be-b5db-ffacd014dea>
- Henry, M. (2001). *Incarnation: A Philosophy of the Flesh*. Sígueme Publishing.
- Henry, M. (2007). *Philosophy and Phenomenology of the Body*. Ediciones Sígueme.
- Henry, M. (2010). *Phenomenology of Life*. Prometeo Libros.
- Henry, M. (2015). *The Essence of Manifestation*. Sígueme Publishing.
- Henry, M. (2009). *Material Phenomenology*. Translated by J. Teira and R. Ranz. Ediciones Encuentro.
- Henry, M. (2006). *Barbarism*. Domingo, T. (trans.) Caparros Editores.
- Husserl, E. (1962). *Ideas Concerning a Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy. Book One: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology*. Gaos, J. (trans.). Fondo de Cultura Económica. <https://profesorvargasguillen.files.wordpress.com/2012/11/husserl-edmund-ideas-relativas-a-una-fenomenologia-pura-y-una-filosofia-fenomenologica-ocr.pdf>
- Edmund Husserl. (1983). *Ideas Pertaining to a Pure Phenomenology and to a Phenomenological Philosophy. First Book: General Introduction to a Pure Phenomenology* (F. Kersten, Trans.). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers. <https://www.finophd.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Husserl-Ideas-First-Book.pdf>
- Husserl, E. (2005). *Ideas Concerning Pure Phenomenology and a Phenomenological Philosophy. Book Two: Phenomenological Investigations into Constitution* (2nd ed.; A. Ziri6n, trans.). Fondo de Cultura Económica. (Original work published in 1952)
- Husserl, E. (1999). *Logical Investigations*. Morente, M. and Gaos, J. (trans.). Alianza Editorial.
- Husserl, E. (2008). *The Crisis of the European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology* (J. V. Iribarne, Trans.). Prometeo Libros. (Original work published in 1936).
- Mallarino, C. (2013). *School Bodies and Social Bodies: A History of Encounters and Disagreements*. *Revista Iberoamericana de Educaci6n*, (62). pp. 89–105. Source: <https://rieoei.org/historico/documentos/rie62a05.pdf>

- Mallarino, C. (2017). Bodies, societies, and institutions in Colombia since the last decade of the 20th century. [Doctoral dissertation, National Pedagogical University]. Source: <http://repositorio.pedagogica.edu.co/bitstream/handle/20.500.12209/90/TO-20603.pdf?sequence=1>
 HYPERLINK "http://repositorio.pedagogica.edu.co/bitstream/handle/20.500.12209/90/TO-20603.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y"&
 HYPERLINK "http://repositorio.pedagogica.edu.co/bitstream/handle/20.500.12209/90/TO-20603.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y" isAllowed=y
- Ordóñez Andrade, G. M. (2018). Changes in disciplinary practices in Colombian schools. An ethnographic study in two educational institutions in the city of Neiva [Doctoral dissertation, International Center for Education and Human Development Foundation - CINDE]. Source: <https://repository.cinde.org.co/handle/20.500.11907/3361>
- Pedraza, Z. (1999) In Body and Soul. Visions of Progress and Happiness. Bogotá: Universidad de los Andes. [Original 1996: Berlin, Freie Universität; Doctoral Dissertation]. Source: <https://repositorio.unal.edu.co/handle/unal/55346>
- Pedraza, Z. (2004). The Biopolitical Regime in Latin America. Body and Social Thought. *Revista Iberoamericana*, 4(15), pp. 7–20. Source: <https://www.iai.spk-berlin.de/fileadmin/dokumentenbibliothek/Iberoamericana/15-pedraza.pdf>
- Pedraza, Z. (2011). The hygienic strategy. Movement and regeneration. *Physical Education and Sport*, Vol. 30, No. 1. Source: <https://revistas.udea.edu.co/index.php/educacionfisicaydeporte/article/view/10051/9263>
- Royal Spanish Academy. (n.d.). Source: <https://dle.rae.es/>
- Rodríguez Amaya, C. (2020). The Entrepreneurial Teacher: Urgency, Origins, and Emergence of a New Teaching Ethos in Colombia (1960–2015). [Doctoral Dissertation; National Pedagogical University]. Source: <http://upnlib.pedagogica.edu.co/bitstream/handle/20.500.12209/11368/TO-23646.pdf?sequence=1>
 HYPERLINK "http://upnlib.pedagogica.edu.co/bitstream/handle/20.500.12209/11368/TO-23646.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y"&
 HYPERLINK "http://upnlib.pedagogica.edu.co/bitstream/handle/20.500.12209/11368/TO-23646.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y" isAllowed=y
- Salazar, F. S. (2008). The welfare state and social policies at the crossroads of the 21st century. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Seville).
- UNESCO. (2015). UNESCO Report on Education for Sustainable Development. Paris: UNESCO.
- Vargas, G. (2012). Phenomenology, education, and the lifeworld. Theoretical and methodological problems of phenomenology. Saarbrücken: Editorial Académica Española. Source: https://tic.uis.edu.co/ava/pluginfile.php/95097/mod_resource/content/1/Phenomenology, Education, and the World of Life - Germán Vargas Guillén.pdf
- Zuluaga, O. (n.d.). Public Education in Colombia, 1845–1875. Freedom of Education and the Adoption of Pestalozzi in Bogotá. Institute for Educational Research and Pedagogical Development; University of Antioquia.