Pop Culture Art as Educational Bridge: Connecting Generations through Games and Animation Movies in Classroom Environment

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Abstract

This article seeks to shed light on the use of content from pop culture found in audiovisual media, especially those that have great appeal to younger generations. Starting the discussion from the critical principle that visual media today have enormous popularity among different age groups in our society, we seek to understand how the visual elements of pop culture were being engendered in a generalized way around the world. Based on these perceptions, we will understand how such elements can be used in the classroom as a pedagogical instrument with the use of theories of culture semiotics and edusemiotics, where socio-cultural references will be verified in the perspective of creating bridges between students and teachers, carrying out a process known as the transgenerational process. Finally, the article contemplates the use of pop culture as an instrument of education and arts by presenting its essence, called heART, where artistic elements and social connection are essential to maintain a society in the constant flow of exchange of ideas and consequent life. In conclusion, it is clear that pop culture is still underutilized in educational contexts and that its achievements for the exchange of experiences with different generational peers are enormous.

Keywords

Pop-Culture, Teaching and Learning, Transgenerational Process, Cultural Semiotics, Arts and Education

1. The Age of the Image: How Visual Arts Became Socially Imperative

The 21st century is marked by a huge number of images that are shared with us in practically every moment of our days. The spread of the screens has been en-

hanced with mobile devices, which allows us to share static and moving images at any time of the day, and this also means that we are in contact with more images than at any previous time in history. These images architect a culture within society and become largely responsible for building countless references for all generations living in our time. Mirzoeff (2001) indicates that the rise of electronic devices, since the 1940s, was also responsible for the rise of what he calls "the era of the visual reader".

According to the author, the predominance of images within the postmodern culture was achieved with the change of communication systems from audio to video platforms. Firstly, numerous magazine publications and the increase in film productions in theatres during the 1930s already pointed to a preference of the great masses for visual media. In line with this movement, the popularization of other devices, such as comic books and the first animated cartoons, also helped to attract new (and younger) audiences to this new communication format (Mirzoeff, 2001: p. 17). Television at the beginning of the following decade also helped to spread the popularization of electronic images within homes and was quickly incorporated into classrooms, with the display of educational films, documentaries and other content intended for students and teachers.

Even though the trajectory of the image is rooted in the political and ideological disputes that broke out during the cold war, Rampley (2005: p. 9) points out that the heyday of the image era occurred in a scenario that combines broad popular interest, large corporate profits and an exponential increase growth of both artistic and commercial productions. At this point, he still indicates that although very contested, artistic movements such as pop art and counterculture were quickly incorporated by the mainstream media and also by the advertising market, mixing what was critical with what was profitable, always aiming at the new generations and their tendencies.

Even though such relations between the image and such political and ideological fields exist, it is undeniable that the process of massification of culture that takes place from the 1960s onwards allows other phenomena to manifest themselves as well. Firstly, according to Morin (2007: p. 83), the popularization of visual and audiovisual media helped to elevate other forms of visual art, such as paintings, sculptures, dance and choreography. Instilled as references in films, documentaries, cartoons, sitcoms, talk shows and educational programs, erudite art came close to popular art, and allowed numerous (visual) identities to be created, allowing adults and children to search for those images that best translated their way of being.

Secondly, those same manifestations that were emerging in line with urban media culture were also being incorporated in schools, which now had not only the obligation to teach about Renaissance artists or Greek sculptures but also, needed to help the students to understand all the changes that were taking place at that very moment in society. An effervescent atmosphere of cultural change was taking place, and much of it was driven by the visual changes that were taking place, as a result of other phenomena such as globalization and the emer-

gence of transcontinental media.

To Morin (2007: p. 66) the first satellite media placed images of distant (and exotic) countries inside people's homes, and with that, helped to demystify countless global cultures. The prints of African fashion, the ancient architectures of China, the film industry in Argentina and the exotic Australian fauna left the collective imagination and now gained images (static and in motion) that gave an even more real air to all these manifestations that were occurring around the world. The imagery culture was enhanced by the globalization that was underway and was strengthened in the main means of culture and entertainment that were disseminated inside and outside everyone's homes. It was common that over the years from the 1960s to the 1980s, cultural products broadcast on television showed other artistic references in a referential manner, especially for children. It was common for television cartoons to show pictures like Mona Lisa in the *Looney Tunes* shows, great operas turned into parodies in the *Woody Woodpecker* cartoon or even the Smithsonian museum in one episode of *Tom and Jerry* Show, and such bridges aided the role of educators to explain the importance of visual arts in our lives inside and outside school spaces.

As part of a dual process of globalization, which corresponds to both the economy and culture, the images managed to gain an important position within society and acted as connectors for countless people around the world. Even though there are some problems within this sharing, as indicated by Morin (2007: p. 41) such as the disproportionate appeal of media culture to the detriment of popular manifestations, globalization found in some media segments (mainly on the internet) an important vehicle that boosted the approach of people around the globe. As humanity advanced in information technologies, more and more images were produced, shared and referenced in popular culture, and could even break the productive processes of large media corporations and present a characteristic of resistance, confrontation and cultural originality.

With the emergence of the popular internet in the late 1980s and its respective popularization in the following two decades, the image gained its predominance as the main tool for the exchange of cultures, and reached the fields of music (with video clips), books (theatre plays and audiovisual adaptations), and plastic arts (with animations), which can even be used inside classrooms. This condition raised the image to an imperative position among the other communication channels and also helps to increase educational strategies aimed at media such as television, and cinema.

Semetsky and Stables (2015: p. 158) point out that there has been an exponential increase in the importance of fields such as semiotics within education precisely because of the approximation between the pedagogical means of teaching and the use of images from the media inside classrooms. For them, this represents a need to reinterpret the importance of the image with all social groups, especially students, since there is an increasing appeal that the culture existing in the media directly affects the new generations. Media that were previously viewed with suspicion by educators, such as cartoons, electronic games and comic books,

now have other references and present a rich field of study for semiology and its field of investigation of cultural representations.

The approximation between semiotics and education refers to the field of edusemiotics, where the authors also point out that such analytical tools are essential to expose how media images (today essentially digital) manage to sew cultural references between different groups, and thus, also be used as an intelligible meeting point for students and teachers, in search of a growing understanding in educational environments. There is a growing need to bring the fields of image, media culture and entertainment closer to the studies of education and cultural representation (or semiotics as understood here earlier) so that it is possible to point out ways of a greater connection between students and teachers, and thereby transform the teaching/learning process into something not only more effective but also more pleasurable for everyone involved.

But how can we integrate education, images and semiotics within the same study? Perhaps the answer lies precisely in the use of pop culture within the classrooms.

2. Connecting Image, Education and Generations: Pop Culture inside Classrooms and the Semiotic Meaning

After understanding that the contemporary era consists of an infinity of media outlets and (essentially) the dissemination and sharing of images, it is also necessary to understand that students today spend much more time in contact with the content that comes from these sources than with the materials that are taught in educational settings. According to Bennet, Kendall and McDougall (2011: p. 245), while in some countries students spend about 5 to 6 hours inside the school daily, they spend about 3 to 5 hours in contact with electronic media, which vary between computers, tablets, cell phones and video games. Proportionally, activities within educational environments are composed of breaks between one activity and another, and a class does not last more than 50 minutes without a break, while contact with electronic devices usually occurs in an interval between one hour and a half and two hours of use.

It can be seen here that, although the school environment occupies a larger part of the student's lives, the intensity with which they dedicate themselves to electronic media is much greater, and puts them directly under a broader influence, especially concerning the contact with elements that help you build your cultural references. According to Acland and Guins (2014: p. 15), the aspects of cool that were found is school among students gravitate in the references obtained through media contents that are popular between those groups. Elements such as clothing, sense of humor and what is cool (and what it is not) had its main resources found in visual media, including series, films, social networks and memes in Youtube videos.

According to Danesi (1994: p. 82), there is a semiotic combination of what it means to be cool, and this manifests itself even more sharply in the younger

generations looking for ways to differentiate between themselves and their predecessors. By semiotic, the author means the field attached to the philosophy and language studies that analysis the representation of the images (and the phenomena, including the cultural ones). Generally, young people look for sources that represent their dissatisfaction with the world, something that, according to the author, is even understood as a normal process of the growth phase. In the search for differences, they subvert some symbols that exist in society and adopt such representatives as manifestations of their culture. Quickly, in a search for alignment with such audiences, the media use such elements in their media products and popularize such cultural manifestations, making the production cycle (countercultural) and commercial diffusion into an endless cycle.

The author also points out that, although there is such a cultural process, this cycle is highly changeable and, a certain symbol that is considered to be cool at a certain time can (and probably will) stop being cool at some point. This allows there to always be a renewal in popular culture and constant commercial exploitation of cyclic signs that appear, are explored, saturated and replaced in the images of media products before they were reinvented in the media again to start the process all over again. This means that something like cigarettes, for example, was extolled as a sign of rebellion and freedom during the 1950s and 1960s, but today it no longer has that same semantic charge and has lost its potency as a symbol of something cool.

Assuming that the digital images currently shared in our society have the important task of sharing what is cool for young people, these places should also be the framework of references so that teachers can find signs that can make reference bridges with their students. This means that the rapprochement between pop culture and education is a reality, passive for the observation of the semiotic field, especially for teachers who consider it important for the learning process to occur both in the cognitive and the affective fields.

Here, the semiotic studies of images and generations, according to Tosi (2019: p. 283) have not only a cultural appeal but also a connection (or disconnection) function between different age groups. Image references can be shared between different generations, allowing that within a cultural environment as vast and plural as that of audiovisual media, there are meeting points that allow for a cultural exchange that does not obey "the classic hierarchy found in the relationship between adults and children" (Tosi, 2019: p. 284). That said, it is understood then that images can act as affective bridges that become communicational allies of adults to access children and can be applied in different environments where such generational groups live together, especially in schools.

To Allen and Friedman (2010: p. 3) effective learning using images not only helps students to overcome the barrier of the abstract but also brings the contents closer to their knowledge, using intelligible bridges for them. When approaching the student's universe, the teacher also has the opportunity to practice otherness, understanding that within the educational environment, the other (the student) also has a valid contribution to the universe of knowledge, which is

placed inside the classroom in a perspective of knowledge exchange.

This means that the image consumed by the new generations must also be the target of the older ones and that their contact must be made without any prejudice that can settle the signs that appeal so much to the cultural universe of the students. Here we can locate the importance of semiotics as a philosophical-analytical instrument of education since they present a unique perspective of deconstructing the imagery representations, and with that seek the referential nucleus of films, videogames, animations and any other content that is popular with the new generations.

In a perfect example of this approximation, Gee (2003: p. 10) highlights that video games faced exactly the two extremes, from being initially seen as instruments of dumbing down students, even as important allies of teachers for reinforcement of disciplines such as social studies and arithmetic. The author also points out that as the electronic devices themselves evolved, it was possible to complex the narratives and visuals of the games, and with that also bring this field of cultural production closer to visual art. The author also affirms that the culture of electronic games has risen very recently and that it is still a field seen with a lot of distrust by adults (and educators), especially about its potential to create pedagogical bridges between fictional content of games with the content taught in a classroom.

However, this is not the first time that other visual instruments are viewed with suspicion by specific groups linked to education. According to Burke (2008: p. 26), the consumption of images by children and young people has always been associated with the playing field, and part of their initial representation of the world. As the images that the younger ones consume daily became more complex, their symbolic representations (linked to the study of signs in semiotics) also became more complex and allowed an interpretive advance of the world more advanced than in other previous generations. This means that it is not incorrect to say that contemporary generations are more "advanced" in certain topics, since the images they are in contact with are so more complex, opening an even greater range of knowledge in a shorter time of life.

As for Leitch (2008: p. 38), the narrative composition of these new generations is structured from the images and references they obtain from the world, and as they are most of their time in contact with audiovisual media, it is common for their representation necessarily passes through such signs. Although educators look for other ways to access the ludic universe of the youngest, the most appropriate path for an effective bridge with the culture of these students should be their aesthetic and also narrative references. This means that, instead of just instrumentalizing the teaching of classical architecture, one should also look carefully and with an equal pedagogical dedication to contemporary architecture, since they make up the knowledge arc that is found in the student's memory. The same can be said about other content related to history and also to art, such as paintings, handicrafts, music and so many other manifestations that make it possible to mark the existence of the human being in the historical line of the

planet earth.

Thus, it is understood that the learning curve in the digital age also includes teachers and educators, and not only the youngest. In other words, adults also need to keep themselves (constantly) up to date on other knowledge that is linked to pop culture, in the perspective of achieving a better harmony with students and thus, guiding them through examples that are intelligible to them. Fitzpatrick (2020: p. 43) points out that the intra-generational relationship is essentially composed of the idea that both the younger and the older groups can find points of support that allow an encounter of interests, and consecutively an exchange of respect. For the author, this means that it is not enough just to look at the students with respect for what the teachers are teaching, there is also a need for an inverse way to observe what is produced by and for children and adolescents.

Here we can find an important point for this article, which includes seeing how the current images have achieved the status of digital art, and how this field has a strong characteristic of connecting different fields of knowledge and different age groups. It also shows here how these images can also symbolically carry a condition of educating and instructing different generations, as long as they are used correctly as pedagogical instruments.

But how to make such a bridge? How can we more coherently relate art, pedagogy and affectivity between students and teachers? The answer lies at the very heart of the question, as we can see below.

3. The heART of Education: Pop Cult Art as a Pedagogical Method

The definition of art includes, according to the dictionaries, describes the production, expression, and recognition (according to the aesthetic precepts) of what is beautiful, meaningful and appealing to humanity. Within this understanding, what can be considered beautiful and meaningful is directly linked to the aesthetic sense, which can vary from time to time, and from culture to culture.

According to Trembley and de Oliveira Jayme (2015: p. 299), art should be seen as a powerful instrument that allows the other to observe the specificities of the artist, and thus, share (for a moment) a certain worldview. This brief moment of sharing the world can connect two opposite worlds, allowing that within this clearing there is an exchange between speeches that can be opposite and conflicting. Also, art is always seen as a connector between different age groups in an extensive historical line, which allows different generations to constantly revisit the aesthetic sense of a given historical period.

For the authors, it is possible to use the concept of art in a poetic plaything with what resides in the heart, which makes it possible to link emotions, aspirations and projections of the past and present through artistic expressions. What is found in the heART of all of us can also help us to find common points that connect us (or distance us) and, at the same time, enable an approximation (or

distance) of teachers and students within a learning environment. That said, the metaphor used by Trembley and de Oliveira Jayme makes it possible to approach the emotional aspects of a certain group with their predilection for access, consumption and involvement with the arts. Within this context, the arts have their way of connecting with people's feelings, and therefore, they belong to how they "recognize each other and can approach or distance themselves, creating the bonds of affinity that are found within this emotional relationship, art and society" which the authors call heART (Trembley & de Oliveira Jayme, 2015: p. 303).

The same conditions that allow us to understand the term heART applied to paintings and sculptures can also be applied to other art forms, including those existing in pop culture (pop cult) images, such as cartoons and video games. Those audiovisual languages have great transit between the different generational groups that are found within the school environments and share numerous points of connection between these groups. According to Mirzoeff (1998: p. 16), the visual arts (in special audiovisual ones) are known today as the main source of aesthetic and cultural references for society. This means that in the 21st century, it is not uncommon for many parents and children (as well as students and teachers) to share a wealth of knowledge about audiovisual art that is currently available in the media, including television channels, streaming services, movies and electronic games. Those media used here as an example have already been consolidated in popular culture for at least a hundred years (in the case of cinema) and their younger representatives have been culturally relevant since the 1970s and 1980s (video games and the internet) which means that they are already part of the lives of adults, whom today find themselves in the role of educators in the classrooms of schools and daycare centers (and even in universities).

To find the heART of such cultural manifestations and consequently the construction of educational bridges that link teachers and students, it is first necessary to understand that both cartoons and video games are relevant art forms for our contemporary society, being popular among children and adults and, can be used as pedagogical instrument. Differently from the previously constructed understanding of the seven classic art forms—where cinema also plays an important part—there is a relevant artistic essence in the symbolic constructions of cartoons and video games that gives them an essence, and therefore, a "heArt". This understanding also shared by Bennet, Kendall and McDougall (2011) points out that there is a "new representation of the culture" (p. 58) that came after the ascension of digital media, changing forever the relationship between society, culture and knowledge, and therefore, this also represents the way we should understand these new forms of art. For the authors, these "new forms of art" (p. 60) have spread rapidly since the beginning of the 1980s, and have greatly influenced the culture of children, adolescents and young adults around the world, enabling not only artistic manifestations to be prestigious (such as painting, sculpture, theatre and cinema) but also that new languages and narratives also

stood out over the other arts and created new signs that had great cultural representation. As mentioned above, cartoons parodied countless art forms, but at the same time, they also found their language to become relevant in popular culture. The same was felt with electronic games, which also took advantage of technological developments (Gee, 2003: p. 89) to become increasingly relevant and authentic as a form of artistic and cultural expression.

Establishing themselves as new art forms, these new languages also found numerous educational applications, and continue to be used in studies involving a limited number of students in a few territories around the world. Thompson (2008: p. 13) had already pointed out that children from countries like Israel, South Korea, the United States and South Africa have among their main visual identity reference elements that came directly from cartoons or electronic games that they more consumed. Such notes allow us to imagine how much we could gain from a real approximation between teachers and students if everyone involved shared the same cultural references, and could act within an edusemiotic line of encounter and understanding of shared signs. Here we find the heART bridge that will only be built when the valuable contribution of these art forms within our classrooms is recognized. Although numerous currents are critical of the idea that products of mass culture can be understood as art, Morin (2018: p. 129) highlights that even if "such productions serve explicit commercial interests, their contribution should not be devalued", since several other classic works "also served the commercial interests of the time and nevertheless were relevant to the test of history".

By recognizing "pop cult art" as an artistic niche of important cultural references in today's society, we can also assign greater educational responsibility to computer animation (such as cartoons) and electronic games, and look for more elements in their narratives for them can act as a bridge between knowledge, pedagogical curriculum and cultural references of both teachers and students. Benson and Chik (2016: p. 107) conducted a study together with students between the third and sixth grades and found that in groups students could use cultural references from the daily lives of these children as a reference point with the content that was being taught in the classroom, there was greater than 95% success in fixing the content and also in the way these students were able to understand and explain mathematical equations, historical facts, geographic maps and political and cultural scenarios about environmental preservation. Among the instruments that were used in the research, some electronic games and cartoons have as their main semiotic reference the themes in which the students obtained improvements. The authors found in shared cultural symbols that existed in these digital and audiovisual media elements made it possible to ground teachers' pedagogical strategies to introduce curricular content from subjects such as history, social studies, geometry, financial education and ecology. Again, we can see the edusemiotic field helping to understand how those cultural references act as an important learning anchor for the students, and could also be

used by teachers to increase the learning process.

This referential bridge that connects adults and children must not cross only the boundaries that separate the culture of two different social generations, but it must also go beyond the limits of the educational prejudice that was being built in media such as cartoons and video games. Far from being narratives that have no cultural value, Morin's view of how "cultural critics in contemporary times always tend to judge what was previously done as more valuable" (Morin, 2018: p. 201), helps us to realize the need to update not only our teaching methods amid the digital revolution but also our mindset about the culture generated, distributed and consumed by younger generations. The teaching process necessarily undergoes a constant update that seeks not only to better teach the skills and abilities that students need to be successful subjects in our society but also in how it will be possible to continue maintaining educational environments such as schools attractive to the younger generations, who are constantly tempted to seek more knowledge from videos on the internet than from their teachers. It is noticeable that their questions are not aimed at the content itself, but at how they are transmitted and passed on to them.

What we are proposing in this article is precisely the understanding of the other, in this case, the student, and the search for cultural references that are popular in their generation, intending to find meanings that can be used in the classroom as an educational, affective bridge and generational between these two groups. When we find the heART of these new generations, especially among pop cult elements such as cartoons and electronic games, a new way to bring teachers closer to students will emerge. If in one side we have the older generations formed especially from generation X (1963-1981) and millennials (1982-1995) and the youngest generations with Gen Z (1996-2010) and Alphas (2010-today), those groups, who "have already seen themselves habitually immersed in a globalized popular culture that greatly stimulated the consumption of entertainment from characters and narratives from movies, cartoons and video games" (Tosi, 2019: p. 281) can be the first foundations that will pave the way for other (older) generational groups to see all the educational possibilities of these media, in addition to understanding the main artistic references that are passing through in younger generations.

The transgenerational approach to education means a new understanding of how generational cultural background can be used as a tool to bring together curriculum content with different audiences' references. That process known as referencing inside the edusemiotics field means that once a bridge of reference is built between a curriculum content with another (cultural) content such as movies, novels, plays or even video games. Once the schools are a universe composed of different age groups, it is not new that different generations have different cultural backgrounds that can be related to the curriculum content, to create those references bridges with their content. Since pop culture is a wheel that is constantly turning what appeals to the older audiences does not necessarily ap-

peal to the younger ones, leaving a space to be felt where usually the interest in the subject is lost.

The heART of the transgenerational approach means that the cultural references used inside classrooms must obey not only a monological speech imposed by the teachers but need also to incorporate the references that are been appealing to the younger generations to create a real bond between teachers, students and curriculum content. This dualogical use of pop culture inside classrooms means that students will share examples of the curriculum content using their cultural references extracted from the audiovisual media they are in contact with and share with the content that is also brought to the classroom by their teachers. This two-way communication exchange of cultural references establishes the transgenerational bridge because allows different age groups to exchange their universes creating a microcosm of possibilities for learning and connecting, being the real meaning of the art and its core (the heart).

Using a common language founded in audiovisual media and with pop culture, references not only connect two different age groups inside school spaces but also can lead to a unique opportunity to create shared spaces of knowledge where video games and cartoons can be resignified to naturally fit into curriculum content. Danesi (1994: p. 32) once pointed out that "the incorporation of cool things easier the connection between groups" and knowing how popular are specific contents of digital art and pop culture among different generations, those connections can become stronger and the exchange of experience more genuine when younger and older peers share different examples of their own culture about a specific content linked to the curriculum.

Studies conducted by Gee (2003), Benson & Chik (2016), Bennet et al. (2011), just to name a few, already recognized the importance of introducing pop culture and digital art in the classrooms as part of increasing interest among students. Examples such as *Super Mario Bros.* video games that transcend one specific generation can be used in a different context to bring other types of discussions in classrooms. The game originally released in 1985 is still massively popular among different generations despite its age. Adapted for different narratives, *Super Mario Bros* is present in video games, cartoons, movies and in an animated movie to be released in 2023, and its presence is also found in theme parks and different merchandise products such as t-shirts, toys and house products. Designed to be a game where players have to go from starting point to finishing point jumping platforms and hitting enemies, the game was used to teach about distance and resistance in calculus classes, about different environments and structures in engineering classes, about progress and ability learning in management classes and about immigration and the representation of individuals in different narratives in social studies. This example just synthesizes the many ways different content shared by different generations can be used inside the classroom to promote important and relevant discussion about curriculum content in different forms, using a dualogical approach with pop culture and digital art.

While different aspects of how to apply curriculum content in different educational environments at school and university levels can be found in different pop culture audiovisual contents, it is clear that cartoons, animation movies and also videogames can be used as an important ally to bind different age groups and starts (and engage) discussions among essential curriculum topics. The example made above using the video game *Super Mario Bros.* can also be applied to different contents that can cover different generations being part of a transgenerational approach, especially after the consolidation of different media across the decades. The main generations sharing school and university environments in the second decade of the 21st century are mainly those that have been in contact with audiovisual culture and digital media from their young adulthood or in some cases being raised with that sort of media. That means that most of the individuals that are now coexisting in the classrooms, despite their hierarch position, not only share proximity with the media itself but also with media content. Most of the children now in an early, middle year or high school have teachers that also watched cartoons, played videogames, engaged in movies or followed sitcoms while there were growing up, and that common ground can be explored by the heart of the content itself and its power of promoting dialogue and exchange between the generations.

The real change that method can bring not only to refresh the approach to curriculum content is also how those cultural barriers that can be shortened until they are simply banished allowing the true exchange of generational culture and bonding between different age groups. To recognize that art is also a latent and essential part of education, finding itself in the position of the importance of the heArt in many aspects of providing life is a process to allow different art manifestations to be brought to school context and embrace them and not seclude, to understand not underestimate, to bring to light not to throw it on the shadows.

4. Conclusion

The evolution of audiovisual devices through the second half of the 20th century helped expressly the dissemination of popular content in different formats using every form of language inside the audiovisual format. Movies, animation, cartoons, sitcoms and later videogames became an important part of people's day-by-day experiences and helped them to connect with their peers in different environments, elevating pop culture to a status never seen before. With no exaggeration, many authors and researchers point out that in the last 80 years, we saw the ascension of the visual culture and the shape of the aesthetics of culture inside the different contents shared in those different media.

The timeline detected in which this audiovisual culture has risen coincides with the same period where different generations have populated our world, and also have been shaped by those cultural waves promoted by those media. Initially, the popularization of television as a truly popular medium in the late 1940s and the early 1950s pavement the highway to how audiovisual content was

incorporated into the culture, fixating on cultural icons and ways to share content that is still being used to this day. Important critical studies regarding the damage that pop culture and the mass media were provoking in society have emerged—being the Frankfurt School one of the most celebrated—and even with many important and relevant notes on how those cultural industries have impoverished the culture itself, they completely ignored the potential of community and connection of those contents and how they could be used as a tool of education.

Although the discussion about how the media content and also the media conglomerates have shaped contemporary culture is extremely necessary, the fact is that movement is already a reality and once the personal computers have spread outside the offices' rooms and scientific labs, the ways of accessing and sharing visual culture have been facilitated even more, transforming the pop culture into a real connection mechanism between different social groups. It is also important to highlight that the timeframe in which the audiovisual culture has risen to this point also marked the same period where the most social generations that are now sharing different learning/teaching environments have been born and raised.

The coexistence of different generations' cultures was never marked by harmony during our history, and that also can be extended to our most recent generation charts. That dispute that marks the succession of older generations to new generations shows not only how pop culture has been turned into something even more relevant and permanent than the critical thinkers judged about this sort of manifestation, but also reveals that through the evolution of those media, the ways different generations found to create narratives and bring relevance for that type of artistic manifestation. Concurrently, movies and animation started to be taken more seriously; video games improved their narratives to be more complex; and even television cartoons have gained a different cultural and critical aspect of representing their present society.

Even with this important phenomenon occurring in those media, the schools have kept all the content that was very popular among the younger generations away from schools, ignoring how those contents could be used as an important generational bridge to connect learning content between different age groups. While the teachers and professors kept trying to bring their references to the classrooms looking for ways to connect content with perspectives, rarely did the generations' references create dialogue, transforming the pop culture into a separate wall and not a connecting bridge. Identifying a one-way street on this relationship allows also to understand that mainly, while teachers are using pop culture inside classrooms as a tool to rely upon curriculum content, those examples make sense more for the teacher than to the students and that monological way not create any more enchantment for the classroom. On the other hand, students keep sharing their understandings about the content with their pop culture references, but that content only appeals to their peers and keeps the same problem where pop culture references from both sides hit a wall of mis-

communication and lack of dialogue, or other words, dualogical communication where the both group's references are important and need to make sense.

In that perspective, the understanding of the heART of pop art leads us to the connections that can be made and how to use appealing cultural references in classrooms to not only make the curriculum content more related to the younger generations but also to the older generations as well. The essence of how those cartoons, animations, movies, videogames and even memes can reveal the core of how pop culture can actually connect different generations in the educational process and how art can also be the essential part that distributes acquaintance between different groups and brings life, the same way the organ does outside the metaphor.

To finish, the transposition of those barriers that naturally appear between the generations using pop culture can lead us to a generational connection process known as transgenerational. In this phenomenon, the generational connection occurs in both ways, allowing not only the older generation to transmit their knowledge to the younger ones, but also allowing those new generations to share their findings with their older peers. The common point where that exchange occurs generally is the transgenerational point where the references make sense to both groups and allow not only the connection through the pop culture but also the exchange and negotiation of different languages of the same reference. Many cartoons, animations, videogames and other audiovisual products have been in the common culture for more than 60 years and have suffered subtle modifications through the years to fit the time where they were exposed. Even though this modification represents that different age groups had access to a different facet of the same product, those multi-facet products can act as a transgenerational link where in a two-way-street dialogue (dualogic) both groups can find the common point on how to use that product to illustrate a discussion about a specific topic.

The heART of the pop-culture relies on the ways in which the cultural references provided by audiovisual media can be mindfully used inside classrooms tacking as a starting point how easy and appealing are those references to the students and how strong it becomes the learning process when it is associated with something familiar with the students. On the other hand, the students will also have the possibility to transpose the generational wall (transgenerational) and also present or resignify other pop-culture elements to their teachers helping the learning process fluxing and pumping, in the same way as the real heart does to maintain life in any living organism.

Conflicts of Interest

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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