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Education from the marxist perspective: an approach based on marx and gramsci

A educação na perspectiva marxista: uma abordagem baseada em Marx e Gramsci

La educación en la perspectiva marxista: um enfoque basado em Marx y Gramsci

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ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to demonstrate the humanistic principles of education inherent to Marx and Gramsci's works. For both of these authors, the basis of a humanistic education are the real conditions of existence that individuals organize to keep themselves alive. Thus, individuals forge certain kinds of social relationships of production that have a double transforming function: humanizing nature and humans at the same time. In a society founded on the principle of private ownership of the means of production, this humanization process is interrupted by the alienation manifested towards objects that humans have produced. In summary, the complete human (omnilateral), educated in the arts of doing (non-alienated work) and speaking (policy of emancipation) for which the premises already lie within the sphere of capitalist society, will only historically come into being in a socialist society marked by the absence of private ownership of the means of production.

Key words: Marxism. Education. Labor.

RESUMO

Explicitam-se os princípios humanistas da educação inerentes às obras de Marx e Gramsci. Os fundamentos de uma educação humanista em ambos os autores têm como premissas as condições reais de existência que os próprios homens organizam para se manterem vivos. Assim, os homens travam determinados tipos de relações sociais de produção que desempenham um duplo papel transformador: humanizar a natureza e os próprios homens a um só tempo. Na sociedade fundada no princípio da propriedade privada dos meios de produção, esse processo de humanização fica interrompido pela alienação que o homem manifesta em relação aos próprios objetos produzidos. Em síntese: o homem completo (*omnilateral*), educado nas artes do fazer (trabalho não alienado) e do falar (política de emancipação), cujas premissas já estão postas no âmbito da sociedade capitalista, só se realizará historicamente na sociedade socialista, marcada pela ausência da propriedade privada dos meios de produção.

Palavras-chave: Marxismo. Educação. Trabalho.

RESUMEN

Se explican los princípios humanistas de la educación inherentes a las obras de Marx y Gramsci. Los fundamentos de una educación humanista en ambos autores tiene como premisas las condiciones reales de existencia que los propios hombres organizan para mantenerse vivos. Así los hombres traban determinados tipos de relaciones sociales de producción que desempeñan un doble papel transformador: humanizar la natureza y los propios hombres al mismo tiempo. En la sociedad fundada en el principio de la propiedad privada de los medios de producción, este proceso de humanización queda interrumpido por la alianza que el hombre manifiesta en relación a los propios objetos producidos. En síntesis: el hombre completo (omnilateral) educado en las artes del hacer (trabajo no alienado) y del hablar (política de emancipación), cuyas premisas ya están puestas en el ámbito de la sociedad capitalista, sólo se realizará históricamente en la sociedad socialista, marcada por la ausencia de la propiedad privada de los medios de producción.

Palabras clave: El marxismo. Educación. Trabajo.

Introduction

The aim of this paper was to study the humanistic dimension that education assumes within the scope of the Marxist conception of the world. This humanistic perspective on education is shown at two separate but dialectically interlinked times: (a) when criticism is made regarding the alienation produced by the educational process within the context of a society founded on the primacy of private ownership of the means of production, for which the principal result is the mutilation of humankind; and, at the same time, (b) when the possibility of human omnilateralism is proposed within the scope of revolutionary society based on the economic, social, political and cultural presuppositions advocated by socialism.

Furthermore, the humanistic dimension starts from the premise that one of the corollaries of education is the process of production and reproduction of knowledge inherent to the mediation needed for praxis, which results in humanization of humans. Consequently, the classic knowledge historically accumulated by humanity is taken to be the essential and predominant medium for educational action. Thus, human knowledge (scientific, technological and cultural) forms a superstructure within the multiple and contradictory social relationships that people establish with each other and with nature, during the process of achieving their material and spiritual conditions of existence. Within this perspective, knowledge provides an abstract representation of the concrete realities of the world and expresses the two dimensions of mankind's social praxis, i.e. the dialectical relationship between theory and practice, as stated by Marx and Engels (1980, p.25):

The production of ideas, representations and consciousness is primarily, directly and intimately linked with people's material activities and material trade: it is the language of real life. People's representations, thoughts and intellectual exchanges arise here as direct emanations from their material behavior.

Thus, there is a close connection between knowledge and the material production relationships developed historically by socioeconomic formations. However, once knowledge has been created, it has relative autonomy in relation to the historical context that shaped it. Moreover, it only becomes a constitutive part of the universal heritage of humanity when it is capable of providing summarized understanding and explanation for the contradictory and complex historical movement of its time, as expressed by Gramsci (1999, p.141):

It is true that a historical era and a given society are particularly represented by the average intellectual level and consequently the level of mediocrity. However, disseminated mass ideology needs to be differentiated from scientific works and major philosophical syntheses, which are also the true keys to interpretation. Such syntheses need to be clearly surpassed, i.e. their grounds

need to be positively or negatively confirmed, by contrasting them with philosophical syntheses of greater importance and significance.

Thus, knowledge accumulated historically through the process of humanity's development is selectively filtered through bodies within society of an ideological nature. For example, universities deal with knowledge in a two-way manner: on the one hand, they rank it with the aim of reproducing it through education for new generations of individuals; on the other hand, they make explicit the epistemological logic of construction of such knowledge, i.e. they standardize theoretical methods for producing new knowledge.
Since the beginning of Western civilization in Greco-Roman society, schools have been the social site tasked with systematizing both reproduction and production of knowledge and have become the main institution for enabling the process of knowledge transmission between generations of humankind. However, throughout history, education has also been thought of in another dimension, as can be seen in Tolstoy (1988), which in certain way was a precursor of the ideas concerning pedagogical activism. Already in his old age, he wrote thus:

I have meditated greatly about education. There are questions for which I have arrived at doubtful conclusions, but there are also questions for which the conclusions that I have reached are definitive and I feel unable to change them or to add to them, whatever they are. Education is only a complex and difficult task if we wish to educate our children or any other person without educating ourselves. If we understand that only through ourselves can we educate others, the question of education will disappear and a question of life will remain: how should we live? (p.235).

From the perspective of this great Russian writer, in which life and education amalgamate, instruction for work ends up forming one of the branches of classical knowledge accumulated through humankind's social praxis. Consequently, it is not at all appropriate to establish a mechanical separation between humanistic education and instruction for the world of work. Incidentally, in criticism of the educational reform proposed at the time of Italian fascism, which distinguished between traditional humanistic studies (education) and specialized professional learning (instruction), Gramsci (2000,) argued that:

It is not completely correct that instruction is not also education: exaggerated insistence on this distinction was a serious error of idealistic pedagogy and the effects from this can now be seen in schools reorganized using this method. For instruction not to be equally education, students would need to be merely passive subjects, i.e. "mechanical recipients" of abstract notions, which is absurd and is also "abstractly" denied by defenders of pure educability precisely against mere mechanistic instruction. (Gramsci, 2000, p.43-44)

The distinction established between education and instruction also emphasizes an elitist concept of schools, in that it imposes a mechanical separation between propedeutic training and professional training. Within the sphere of the history of education, this dichotomy has taken on the following sense: for children of the elite, schools provide general humanistic education than aims towards higher education within the liberal arts. On the other hand, for children of the workers, elementary education is followed by training in mechanical arts. Based on this educational concept, it is argued that access for all children to traditional schools would inexorably imply lowering the teaching quality level, i.e. such schools would gradually be placed at the same level as the "culture" of the popular masses. Gramsci (2000, p.33) expressed this as follows: "the fundamental division of schools between classical and professional was a rational scheme: professional schools were destined for the instrumental classes, while classical schools were destined for the dominant classes and intellectuals". Manacorda, interpreting Gramsci in his book ***History of Education***, argued that this was always the fear among conservatives in any era, i.e. the fear that "excessive numbers" might mechanize and lead schools to be lowered "to the level of the multitude". He recalled "that this risk continues only if conditions are not effectively created for the dissemination of instruction also to provide elevation" (Manacorda, 1989, p.331). Along these lines, he referred to Pythagoras, in ancient Greece, for whom education was a superior human condition and an asset transmitted without loss, i.e. individuals who disseminate education continue to have the knowledge that they socialize.

THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION IN MARX AND GRAMSCI

The advent of capitalist society and its consolidation in the second half of the nineteenth century was the focus of analysis by Marx and Engels, who, in the ***Communist Manifesto*** (1848), laid out the advances and contradictions of this economic and social system. In this classic work, which incidentally inaugurated the interpretative form of globalizing historical synthesis, its authors pointed out the revolutionary transformations brought about by the ascending bourgeoisie, but denounced the conditions of exploitation to which manufacturing workers were subjected. Subsequently, endeavoring to comprehend the contradictions of capitalist society and to overcome it, Marx and Engels' political proposals aimed towards an overall strategy capable of putting an end to capitalism itself. From this perspective, education was not Marx and Engels' central theme, but it appeared among their concerns regarding the construction of individuals whose physical and spiritual potential would be fully developed and not subjugated to the domination of capital. However, it was the sites of capitalist production themselves, i.e. large-scale industry, that allowed Marx and Engels to formulate a social theory capable of overcoming the conditions that mutilated and impeded full human formation. The first demands extrapolating from merely mechanical training came from

the workers themselves, according to what can be read in resolutions approved by American workers meeting at a general congress in Baltimore in August 1866:

We, the workers of Dunkirk, declare that the working day required in the present system is excessively long and that, far from leaving workers with time for rest and education, it reduces them to the condition of serfs, only slightly better than slaves. For this reason, we resolve that eight hours is enough for a day of work and should be legally recognized as sufficient (Marx and Engels apud Marx, 1984, p.343).

Together with the working day of eight hours, the trade union movement also achieved factory legislation prohibiting work by children who did not have certification that they were attending school.
Marx formulated the core of this educational concept along the lines of the combination between education and labor. He took the view that it was possible through education, allied with social praxis, to shape new individuals who would be aware of their historical potential that, in an embryonic manner, had already been shown in the industrial revolution. The outline of this teaching took shape in the following excerpt from ***Das Kapital***:

The factory system, as detailed by Robert Owen, gave rise to the buds of future education that would joint together the productive work of all boys over a certain age with teaching and gymnastics, thereby forming a method of raising the social production and the only means for producing fully developed humans (Marx, 1984, p.554).

So what exactly is the significance of this pedagogical concept for education? It is based on establishing an organic link between practice and theory. Moreover, it has to be borne in mind that in ***Das Kapital***, Marx's study subject was the capitalist society of factories with chimneys, i.e. a certain level of development of productive forces and the social relationships of capitalist production, within a given period of capitalist society. At that stage, it was characterized by a certain degree of technological advance of the productive forces (workers, machines, tools and raw materials), in which production of material wealth took place through the interaction of the workers' physical strength and the mechanical work of the machines. Within this context, for workers to become professionally qualified, public schools were enough. These were also a legitimate offspring from the fabric of bourgeois society, which made it possible for people to learn to read, write and perform arithmetic. This was, therefore, the minimum educational proposal that bourgeois society enabled factory workers to have.
In the first years of the twentieth century, Gramsci (2000) went back to the directions of practice and theory at the core of the Marxist concept of education

and questioned the possibility that this precept could be fully manifested within the scope of capitalist society:

The crisis has a solution that, rationally, should follow this line: a single type of initial school for general, humanist and formative culture that has an even balance between developing capacities for manual, technical and industrial work and developing capacities for intellectual work. From this type of single school, through repeated experiences of professional guidance, there would a progression to a specialist school or to productive work (Gramsci, 2000, p.33-4).

At the current stage of development of productive forces attained by capitalist relationships of production, i.e., the stage of the technical-scientific revolution, the factories with chimneys are slowly giving way to a new type of work. In this, contrary to the great capitalist industries of the nineteenth century, workers' qualifications are a fundamental question: it is not enough just to be able to read, write and perform arithmetic.

At the same time, public schools as developed in bourgeois society are unable to achieve an effective relationship between school education, technological training and gymnastics, as proposed by Marx, i.e. to combine intellectual and physical training with productive work. Perhaps today, this would be required more in the sense foreseen by Gramsci, i.e. with strong emphasis on general, humanistic and intellectual training.

Today, however, at the same time as the so-called "information society" is experienced, which has raised optimistic perspectives for the possibility of achieving free time (i.e., the possibility that mankind could finally become free from the "curse of Sisyphus", the symbol of repetition, eternal restarts and confinement to heavy work), severe socioeconomic inequality continues to plague the majority of society. In addition, the aggravating factor is the domination of capital over all social relationships, at a scale never before experienced by humanity. Individuals are turned into objects and this requires urgent and increasingly complex reflection, including in classrooms and in relationships with students. At this time of restructuring of capitalist production, schools are adjusting to the maxims of the market and increasingly converting to spaces of non-knowledge and emptying of purpose. Within this context, there needs to be action to resist the dominant tendency, so that schools can become places for reflection, criticism and combat against hegemony.

Furthermore, reference can be made to Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), who, as is known, was one of Marx's reference points. This Greek philosopher, following the lines of Homer's concept of education, also advocated pedagogical concepts based on the arts of speaking and doing, as a formative process for citizens who would decide on the political destiny of the city-state at assemblies in public meeting places. In other words, arts taught at a single time, which would shape omnilateral individuals. However, these would potentially be used at different ages during citizens' lives: in their youth, the art of doing (war) would be

preferentially developed as an activity responsible for ensuring the material basis for sustaining the society; while in old age, the art of speaking would be practiced, i.e. the art of governing the city-state well. Nevertheless, Aristotle was one of the first thinkers to put forward the idea of a state school and criticize education for specific positions within the family. He took the view that only the city-state would be able to educate for the common good, although he restricted this view to citizens. With regard to the possibility of achieving the utopia of intelligent mechanical work, as a means of replacing the slaves who performed the so-called "vulgar arts", he stated the following:

In fact, if each instrument could carry out its mission through obeying orders or perceiving in advance what it had to do, it would, as the poet says 'enter the meetings of the gods as an automaton"; if, therefore, shuttles wove cloth and plectrums played zithers by themselves, constructors would not need assistants and masters would not need slaves (Aristotle, 1988, p.18).

On the other hand, Marx and Engels did not think of freedom for a particular social class, but for all. They envisaged the utopia of a world based on equality in which there would not be an exploited class that was subjected to manual work. On the contrary, there would be a society in which everyone would be able to improve themselves within fields that suited them. Thus, people would not have exclusive spheres of activity, but would be able to "do one thing today, another tomorrow, hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, herd in the evening and make criticisms after meals, and all of this as one pleases, without having to become solely a hunter, fisherman or critic" (Marx and Engels, 1980, p.41).
The ideal of a world and of education based on the principle of full human fulfillment is still a utopia, but as Manacorda wrote, only humankind has broken the ties of natural unilateralism and invented the possibility of becoming something else that is better and even omnilateral. In his view, if this possibility, which is given only through living within society, was denied to the majority by society itself, or rather, denied to everyone to a greater or lesser degree, the categorical imperative of human education can be stated thus: "Although individuals seem in nature and in fact to be unilateral, efforts can be made to educate them in any part of the world so that they can become omnilateral" (Manacorda, 1989, p.361).

The concept of omnilateral individuals in Marx and Engels

The passage from the twentieth to the twenty-first century was marked by a crisis caused by the end of "real socialism" and restructuring of capitalist production. This triggered a wave of ideological attacks on so-called "old interpretative schemes" and thus giving value to so-called "new postmodern theories" of knowledge construction, along with proclamation of the "death of Marxism". In other words, a reduction in the value of Marxist "products" in the

“market for symbolic goods” was heralded, which is amply supplied with “new paradigms”. At the same time, criticism revealing a lack of knowledge of Marx and Engels’ work persists. Among this, for example, is the notion that Marxism is anti-humanistic because it replaces individuals with “productive forces and production relationships”.

However, at the start of this new century in which so much is said regarding rediscovery of the value of the individual, is there anything more current than the place that Marx reserved for individuals in his concept of human emancipation? Marx taught that capitalism is a system in which the production process dominates people and not people the process. Marx’s humanism in ***Das Kapital*** is not a simple moral protest: he tears up the mythical veil of reification, deciphers the “hieroglyphics” of value and grasps social (human) realities concealed by the opacity of the market. In this work, in which the process of workers’ physical and intellectual degradation is dissected, the chapter on fetishism is the key to understanding his humanism. But would the “new critics” really read it?

Regarding the concept of humankind, texts that better express the principles that guide Marx’s anthropology and pedagogy can be referred to: a) the central and dialectical role of work; b) the idea of the omnilateral individual (in which “work time” and “free time” are balanced). According to Marx and Engels, education cannot be spoken of without referring to the socioeconomic realities and the class struggle that characterizes and sustains it. Thus, education loses all appearances of idealism and neutrality and all anti-industrial romantic reminiscences are rejected. This interpretative model introduces two proposals that are considered revolutionary: a) reference to productive work, contrasted with the whole of the intellectual and spiritual tradition of education; b) affirmation of a constant relationship between education and society.

Within Marx and Engels’ works, these texts present coherence over a 30-year period with their ideas on shaping individuals, which coincide with the workers’ movement. This is seen in the text of three political programs: a) for the first historical movement that took on the name of the Communist Party (1847-1848); b) for the first International Workers’ Association (1866); c) and for the first United Workers’ Party in Germany (1875). In this paper, only their main traits are outlined.

In 1848, in the ***Communist Party Manifesto***, Marx and Engels proposed polytechnic schools: “Free public education for all children and abolition of all child labor in factories as practiced today. Combination of education with material production, etc.” (Marx and Engels, 1982, p.125).

It can be seen that, from the outset, the formulation of Marxism contained the principle of the role of work in social transformation and full human development. More than once, Marx drew attention to this essential aspect of his philosophy, as in the criticism that he made regarding the program approved by the Party in the city of Gotha (1875), in which he dealt with the question thus: “The paragraph on schools should at least demand technical schools (theory and practice), combined with primary schools” (Marx, 1985, p.27).

In his ***Criticism of the Gotha Program***, he also took up a position against "popular education under the auspices of the State", by stating:

This matter of popular education under the auspices of the State is completely inadmissible. It is one thing to determine through a general law what the resources for public schools should be (the qualifications of the teaching staff, teaching materials, etc) and to monitor the compliance with these legal prescriptions by means of inspectors [...] it is another completely different thing to designate the State as the educator of the people! Far from this: what should be done is to keep schools separated from all influences of the government and the Church [...] (Marx, 1985, p.27).

Here, the distinction between the State as guarantor for the functioning of schools and the State as educator is evident, along with freeing people simultaneously from the Church and State, a proposition that exceeds the current situation.

In the ***Instructions*** to delegates to the first congress of the International Workers' Association (Geneva, 1866), Marx not only reaffirmed that all adults should work with both their brains and their hands, but also made it clear that "education means three things: intellectual, physical and technological education" (Marx, 1983, p.83-4). However, education based on these three dimensions would only materialize in practice if the workers gained political power, as shown by the following:

Even if the factory legislation, which comprises the first concession dragged out with great effort from capital, solely combines elementary education with factory work, there is no doubt that the inevitable achievement of political power by the working class will bring in both theoretical and practical technological education, in workers' schools (Marx, 1984, p.559).

In addition, in ***Das Kapital***, Marx emphasized the idea of surmounting humankind's unilateralism with omnilateralism, through showing that private ownership made people obtuse and unilateral. The division of labor creates unilateralism and all of the negative determinations are placed precisely under this sign, in the same way that all of the perspectives of humanization are placed under the opposite sign, omnilateralism.

But what does omnilateralism mean in Marx and Engels?

This concept is inevitably linked with work, which is one of the fundamental categories of the historical materialism that consequently occupies a central position in Marx's pedagogical proposals. Differing from Hegel's concept, Marx did not see work only in terms of its positive aspects. He wrote in his ***1844 Manuscripts*** that Hegel "takes the point of view of modern national economists. He views work as the affirming essence of humankind. He only sees the positive side of work and not its negative side" (Marx, 2004, p.124). Since work is the subjective essence of private ownership in capitalism, it

appears to workers as owned by people other than the workers. In this work, Marx drew attention to the problem of the relationship between workers and production and indicated that the alienation consists not only of their relationship with the products of their labor, but also of the act of production itself. Marx concluded in the end that work is lost to individuals themselves, writing thus:

So far, we have examined only one aspect of workers' estrangement or alienation, i.e., their relationship with the products of their labor. However, estrangement is not only shown in the result, but also and especially in the act of production, within the productive activity itself. [...] So what does alienation of labor consist of? Firstly, this labor is outside of the workers, i.e., it does not belong within their being and therefore the workers are not fulfilled through their work, but are denied; they are unrecognized and unhappy; and they do not develop any physical energy and free spirit, but are mortified in nature and ruined in spirit. Consequently and primarily, workers only feel whole when away from the work, while feeling distant when at work. They feel at home when they are not working and away from home when they are working. Their work is therefore not voluntary but forced: obligatory work [...] Finally, the externality of the work appears to workers as if the work were not their own, but belonged to another person, and as if it did not belong to them, but to another person. Thus, in the way that religion and people's internal fantasies of the brain and heart act independently of individuals and on them, i.e., as strange, divine or diabolical activities; likewise, workers' activities are not their own activities. They belong to others and are lost to the workers themselves (Marx, 2004, p.82-3).

Thus, the alienation process among humankind originates from the division of labor and all individuals subjected to this division become unilateral and incomplete. Unilateralism is therefore a negative point in Marx and Engels' concept of work.
On the other hand, they showed that without work, which is a historical part of human activity, life itself would not exist, as demonstrated in the ***Manuscripts***: "work, vital activity and productive life itself appear to people only as the means for satisfying a need: the necessity of physical existence" (Marx, 2004, p.84). Furthermore, Marx and Engels stated that to be able to "make history", humans had to be in a living condition and consequently, their first historical action was to create the means to satisfy these needs: the production of their own material lives. On this basis, the following can be seen in ***The German ideology***:

It may refer to consciousness, religion and anything else that distinguishes between humankind and animals. However, this distinction only starts to exist when humankind starts to produce its means of life, the step forward that is consequent to body organization. Through producing their means of existence,

humans indirectly produce their own material lives (Marx and Engels, 1980, p.19).

Only after observing the multiplication of needs on the first productive basis, i.e. human reproduction and social organization in production, was the following observed:

[...] humans also have consciousness; but this is not consciousness that would be "pure" consciousness beforehand [...]. It only arises with the needs and demands of contacts with other humans. Where relationships exist, consciousness exists in my view. Animals do not have relationships with anything and in fact are unaware of relationships. For animals, relationships with others do not exist as relationships. Consciousness is therefore a social product and will continue to be so for as long as there are humans (Marx and Engels, 1980, p.35-6)

Humans therefore are in a fully objective and subjective position to act consciously of their own free will, since it is this voluntary and universal nature of human activity that contrasts with the domain of naturalness and chance. However, social relationships of production based on private ownership of the means of production alienate individuals from their capacity to act consciously. Consequently, such individuals no longer dominate the social relationships needed for their material and spiritual development. Through domination, they are not fully individual, but unilateral members of a given sphere and they live in the kingdom of necessity and not of liberty.

Marx and Engels showed that work lost all appearance of personal manifestation in capitalism. Therefore, only through appropriating all of the instruments of production would it be possible to achieve personal manifestation, i.e., "only in this state would personal manifestation coincide with material life, which would correspond to transformation of individuals into complete individuals" (Marx and Engels, 1980, p.93).

A fundamental point is reached here: the development perspectives for omnilateral individuals are put into effect precisely on the basis of work, i.e., if there is the possibility of abolishing exploitation of labor, division of labor, class-based society and the division of humankind. This would only occur if presented as a division between manual labor and intellectual work, given that the latter requires free time for its full development, i.e. "productive idleness" in the Ancient Greeks' words. Thus, the two images of divided humankind, each of them unilateral, consist essentially of manual workers and intellectuals, as created through the social division of labor within capitalist society.

The German ideology is the key to understanding the meaning of omnilateralism in Marx and Engels, since it contains the elements for reflecting on the petrification of work within objective power that exerts domination, such that the work unexpectedly escapes from personal control. According to Marx and Engels, from the time when work starts to be divided, each individual has

an imposed exclusive sphere of activity from which there is no escape without losing the means of subsistence. Negative acceptance of work appears here, as clearly delineated in the ***1844 Manuscripts***. In this work, Marx showed that workers were physically and mentally lowered to the level of machines and were made increasingly unilateral and dependent through the division of labor, thereby considered in terms of political economy to be like animals reduced to the strictest bodily needs. The ***Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*** denounced these conditions experienced by workers. In this, Marx wrote:

No doubt. Work produces marvelous things for the rich, but produces deprivation for workers. It produces palaces, but caves for workers. It produces beauty, but deformation for workers. It replaces work with machines, but sends some of the workers back to brutal work and does the rest by machines. It produces spirit, but for the workers it produces stupidity and cretinism (Marx, 2004, p.82).

Over the course of these works, the negative characterization of both the alienated workers and the capitalists can be seen. These are contradictory products of the same contradictory society and the characterization is only partially positive for certain aspects of one or other profile. As interpreted by Manacorda (1991, p.75), “perhaps it can be said, paraphrasing Marx’s discourse on what work is according to realities and according to whether workers are unilateral in reality or omnilateral as another possibility”.
Marx indicated that private ownership leads to obtuseness and unilateralism. The latter is often used even to characterize capitalists, since everything shown among workers as acts of expropriation or alienation is shown among non-workers as states of appropriation or alienation. This same concept appears in ***The Sacred Family***:

The owners’ class and proletarian class represent the same human alienation. However, the former feels good and approves of this alienation, knowing that it represents the power of this class, in which there is the appearance of human existence. In turn, the latter feels annihilated through the alienation and discerns its impotence and a reality of inhuman existence (Marx and Engels, 2003, p.48).

Thus, it is division of labor that creates the reality within which spiritual activity and material activity, fruition and labor, and production and consumption are attributed to different individuals. However, the privilege of spiritual activity, fruition and consumption is only apparent and partially positive because the power of capital subverts everything. Money converts the representation into reality and the reality into simple representation, as indicated by Marx in the ***1844 Manuscripts***:

As an invasive power, money also stands against individuals and against social ties, etc., that are intended to represent the essence. It transforms faithfulness

into unfaithfulness, love into hate, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, serfs into masters, masters into serfs, stupidity into understanding and understanding into stupidity (Marx, 2004, p.160).

For this reason, the fruition that the owners' class has available is a positive condition that is only relative, because everyone is subjected to the division of labor, without leaving room for omnilateralism, but at most, a multiplicity of needs and pleasures.
Thus, the division of labor creates unilateralism and, under its sign, brings together negative determinations. In the same way, under the opposite sign of omnilateralism, positive perspectives of human beings are brought together. However, since Marx's studies relate to the means of capitalist production, many more explanatory elements are available for unilateralism than for omnilateralism. Given the non-utopian nature of Marx's research, the outlines describing omnilateral individuals lack the precision of those for unilateral individuals. In summary, as assessed by Manacorda, the concept of omnilateralism in Marx includes elements of availability, variation and multilateralism, along with theoretical and practical capacities (Manacorda, 1991). In the first case, the assertion in fully exemplified by opposition to divided society, as appears in this well-known page from ***The German ideology***:

In communist society, however, in which each individual would be able to improve themselves within fields that suited them, there would not be exclusive spheres of activity. Society would regulate the general production and would make it possible to do one thing today, another tomorrow, hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, herd in the evening and make criticisms after meals, and all of this as one pleases, without having to become solely a hunter, fisherman or critic (Marx and Engels, 1980, p.41).

In addition to this hypothesis of a communist society in which there would not be painters, but no more than people who also painted, the perspective of omnilateralism seems to be more closely tied to factory life, i.e. modern mechanized factories (today, electronically mechanized), from the perspective of reunifying the structures of science (microelectronics, microbiology and nuclear energy) with those of production. Although Marx's concept of education is opposed to the exclusive aim of technical training, it is often accused of being based on economic man, when in fact it is not Marxism, but capitalism that limits the workers to education on practical matters. The concept of humankind in Marx and Engels completely demolishes the theory of mutilated beings. However, these two thinkers' ideological adversaries accuse them of being concerned merely with the material dimension of human existence, i.e., the economic dimension. To refute this, a nice excerpt from the ***Third Manuscript of 1844*** can be cited. In this, Marx emphasized the subjective dimension of human existence, beyond alienation:

Taking humans to be humans and their behavior in relation to the world as human behavior, love can only be exchanged for love, trust for trust, etc. If fluency of art is desired, one has to be artistically cultivated; if influence over other human beings is desired, one has to be able to act effectively on others in a stimulating and encouraging manner. All relationships with humans and with nature have to effectively go outside of individual life in some manner corresponding to the desired purpose. With unreciprocated love, i.e., with love that, as love, does not produce reciprocal love, and if, through externalizing life as a human in love, one does not become loved, love is impotent and unhappiness exists (Marx, 2004, p.161).

Thus, the criticisms of the means of capitalist production and divided humans, in Marx, ultimately become a radical defense of full development of human subjectivity, given that individuals cannot develop in an omnilateral manner if they do not possess all of the productive forces and all of the productive forces cannot be dominated except by all of the individuals, freely associated. “This is the reality of free and original development of individuals in communist society” (Marx and Engels, 1980, p.92-3).
Omnilateralism therefore represents individuals’ achievement of full productive capacity and, at the same time, full capacity for consumption and pleasure, in which there should be special consideration for enjoyment of spiritual assets, as well as material goods, from which workers were excluded because of the division of labor. Even if this ideal has not yet been achieved, this does not invalidate it. Above all, utopia serves as a reminder to always set the sights high, for better prospects in the future.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The Marxist concept of education proposes omnilateral shaping for humankind. This is therefore a radically humanistic educational proposal. Thus, Marxism operates on the principle that individuals’ bodies and spirituality need to develop harmoniously and concomitantly, i.e., people do not consist only of a material body and, even less so, they cannot be reduced only to dependent subjectivity, for example to a teleological view of the surrounding world. According to Marxism, omnilateralism can only be achieved within the scope of a self-regulated society, from the point of view of production, organization and distribution of the things that are needed to ensure people’s material and spiritual basis.
Therefore, achieving the omnilateral human depends on the existence, under equal conditions, of the free time needed for full development of their physical and mental potential. Homer, Plato and Aristotle, for example, described the importance of productive idleness in the process of historical materialization of complete individuals, i.e., the pedagogical achievement of the arts of speaking and doing, as manifestations of the two fundamental expressions of human

daily life. In the context of their slave-based society, this became substantiated in preparation of the body for war and of rhetoric for politics. However, with the end of Classical Antiquity and the rise of Christianity, the omnilateral concept of individuals broke down. In the religious saga of monotheism, Christianity denied relevance to the culture of the body, since flesh was regarded as an inexhaustible source of sin, notably sin founded in sexuality. Thus, for many centuries, the harmonious concept of humankind, i.e., individuals who were fully developed from the point of view of the body and subjectivity, came to an end.

Later on, with the advent of mercantile capitalism and renascent humanism, an ideological process of returning to the principle of conjugation of these arts as pedagogical foundations for shaping complete individuals was seen within the scope of modernity. However, because of the influence of economic activities of the bourgeoisie, the art of doing had changed in nature: it was no longer preparation of the body through gymnastics, for war, rather, it was work, which initially was manifested by means of craftwork inside incorporated workshops and subsequently moved into the sphere of big industry with the appearance of modern machinery.

It was within the context of this historical inflection of the art of doing that Marxism gave new dimensions to the concept of shaping omnilateral individuals, even while recognizing that their manifestation could not be achieved within the context of capitalist society. However, at the same time, Marxism advocated that the process of omnilateralism for individuals would not take place from a "historical zero", i.e., the movement would arise from within capitalist relationships of production. Thus, according to Marxism, capitalism originated the historical possibility of omnilateral education, in embryonic form, through the combination of general education, technological education and gymnastics. In other words, as stated by Mario Manacorda (1989, p.360): "it seems to me, however, that the way into the future will be one that was unknown in the past, but which has been shown to us as a negative, thereby revealing its contradictions".

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