
The Ideal of Education and the Emancipation of Labour

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ABSTRACT This article discusses the ideal of education in relation to the pursuit of alternative perspectives in education, beyond its currently dominant subordination to the needs of the market. It presents the philosophical traditions of *paideia*, *Bildung* and *liberal education*, with special emphasis on the element they all share – namely, the perception of education as a self value, as an end in itself. At the same time, the article adopts a critical approach to the detachment of the ideal of education, put forward by the above traditions, from issues pertaining to man’s material, productive activity, and the alienating relations developing within it. In order to present an alternative perspective, the ideal of education is seen in the light of the Marxist social ideal, with a focus on identifying the educational content of the prospect of labour emancipation. Finally, the article touches upon the future of education, which is presented in association with the possibility of transforming labour into cultural activity.

Introduction

A discussion about the position of knowledge and education in the contemporary world would also include the investigation of phenomena that tend to shape a new social reality. These phenomena are usually defined as the emergence of ‘knowledge society’, and allude to the radical reinforcement of the intellectual-scientific content of labour activity, and the diffusion of knowledge applications in all sectors of social life. At the same time, and as a consequence of this development, we observe a strong upgrading of the social significance of education. Given that the issues of knowledge and education are at the heart of contemporary studies on the trends and prospects of social evolution, they have a fundamental significance for contemporary philosophy, social theory and policy.

A critical fact that is associated with the recognition that knowledge is a decisive factor of scientific, technological and economic success is its highly utilitarian perception. Education is perceived as the acquisition of the appropriate knowledge for specific practical applications in the light of the interests of capitalist economy, within which every commodity (including intellectual commodities) has a use value as long as it has an exchange value – that is, as long as it can be bought and sold. Lyotard’s renowned statement that in the notorious postmodern condition the old perception of education not only as acquisition of knowledge but also as cultivation of minds is becoming obsolete (Lyotard, 1984, p. 4) indicates an inevitable process in capitalist economy: the more knowledge is becoming a productive power, the more its creation and acquisition are becoming organic parts of commodity production.

The prevalent attitude towards education perceives the acquisition of knowledge on the basis of criteria that are external to the development of one’s personality, criteria determined by the demands of the wage labour system, which significantly shrinks the importance and content of educational activity. Emphasis on the acquisition of usable knowledge is translated into an idealisation of information, of the transmission and possession of data and the development of basic skills for their management. Educational institutes, programmes and practices are placed under the

authority of external auditing mechanisms, and are constantly subjected to measurement and evaluation processes based on standardised criteria of economic performance. The fact that the available knowledge and educational work are perceived as marketable services would inevitably lead to an extremely shallow relationship with these, thus diminishing interest in any deeper meaning education could have for human life.[1]

Under these conditions, the education provided is detached from any fundamental or multifaceted development of consciousness; it is also distanced from the cultivation of the individual's ability not just to acquire knowledge but also to reflect on it, to pursue its meaning as he pursues the meaning of his existence and the conscious formulation of life's aims. In other words, what in the present circumstances is overlooked is the special relationship between education and the formation of the individual as a human being, the development of intellect and consciousness, the cultivation of the ability to understand the world as well as man's position within it.

Opposed to this utilitarian and profit-seeking perception is the approach that connects education not merely with the transmission of a set of cultural achievements, but also with the development in people of abilities that will allow them to be subjects of social life, active creators of culture. The attitude that perceives education as a process through which the individual acquires his pre-eminently human characteristics has been emblematic in a number of diverse attempts at philosophical reflection on education. From antiquity to the twentieth century, these attempts formed an ideal of education which is characterised by the promotion of its human dimension, its importance for the formation of the individual and, consequently, the valuing of an engagement with education for its own sake. It is an ideal of education, the ideal of education par excellence, in which education is an end in itself. This ideal is expressed, with some variations, through the Greek notion of *paideia*, the German of *Bildung* and the English of *liberal education*. [2]

Since this ideal is substantially opposed to any form of instrumental, utilitarian perception of education, it is objectively in opposition to the contemporary commercialisation of educational goods and activities, aimed at serving the needs and interests of capitalist economy. The ideal of education for its own sake reveals to us dimensions of education that allude to another approach to the meaning of human life and the aims of education, which is radically different from the currently prevalent perception. Thus, a study of the content of this ideal would be associated with the most crucial role of philosophical criticism: the pursuit, within dominant reality, of alternative perspectives of human existence, and the development of alternative perceptions of education, in order to establish the strategy of an active, transformative attitude of people towards their world. The task of philosophical criticism lies in processing and consolidating the strategic aims of political action.

Based on the above, the study of ideals that promote education for its own sake is associated with the most important social issue of our times: the emancipation of labour; the most penetrating study on this issue has its origins in the work of the classics of Marxism. In this article, I shall discuss the relationship between the ideal of education as an end in itself and the Marxist concept of the emancipation of labour, exploring the social conditions for the implementation of the former and highlighting the special educational content of the latter.

The Notions of Paideia, Bildung and Liberal Education

Education was the subject of systematic reflection in ancient Greek philosophy. Seeking the objective of life, ancient Greek thought would highlight the special significance and position of education in the activity of the free individual. Education will be perceived as what truly distinguishes man. As Socrates characteristically states, 'the soul enters Hades taking nothing else but its education and nurture' (Plato, 1975, 107d). The ideal of *paideia* will find its manifestation in the belief that education as a perpetual cultivation of man's general properties and, primarily, his intellectual abilities is a way of life that gives meaning to his existence.

In classical times, *paideia* as general education clearly has a political and moral content, and is associated with the preparation of the free individual for his participation in the self-government institutions of the *polis* (city-state). This is initially the humanistic aspect of Greek *paideia* – that is, the formation of man in order to become a member of the *polis* (Jaeger, 1946, pp. 300-301, 321-322).

For the Greeks in the Classical era, personal morality is practically identical with political morality; according to Jaeger, '[a] purely private moral code, without reference to the state, was inconceivable to the Greeks' (Jaeger, 1946, p. 326). The responsibility of the members of *demos* (the collective body of people) for collective affairs and, primarily, the need for active involvement in public life are the fundamental motivation for the pursuit of a superior education which enables a diverse cultivation of *logos*, as reasoned thinking and also as rhetorical speech. The Socratic emphasis on the cultivation of inductive reasoning, which leads from empirical data to general definitions, and also the Platonic ideal of the philosophers-rulers who are able to contemplate the Ideas (the unchanging Forms – i.e. the general concepts) of things indicate the esteem of Greek philosophy for an education of high intellectual content.

However, what became the most fundamental property of the ideal of education was an emphasis on intellectual activity and the cultivation of intellectual power for their own sake – that is, without the pursuit of some practical benefit. As Aristotle suggests, since reason is the best thing in us, the contemplative activity of reason is the most important thing in human life, because it gives man perfect happiness (Aristotle, 1966b, 1177a). As long as the purpose of man is happiness (*eudaimonía*), contemplation as a theoretical-intellectual activity and as the true content of man's happiness 'would seem to be loved for its own sake' (Aristotle, 1966b, 1177b).

The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake and not for utilitarian purposes indicates a liberal activity; since it belongs to its subject, it serves only him. As a man who exists for his own sake and not for another's is considered to be free, so the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is also considered to be free (Aristotle, 1966a, A,982b). In contrast, if an activity is pursued for the sake of others, then it is banausic and servile. That is why Aristotle underlines the importance of free children not being taught mechanical (banausic) arts – that is, those that 'make the body, or soul, or mind of a freeman unfit for the pursuit and practice of goodness', meaning the arts that adversely affect the condition of the body and that are pursued for the sake of gain (Aristotle, 1948, 1337b).

Evidently, Greek thought clearly understands that engagement with education as an end in itself is undertaken under certain conditions; man must have secured the necessities of life and the possibility of free time. Hence, as Aristotle notes, the engagement of the Greeks with the pursuit of deeper knowledge (*sophia*) for its own sake – that is, with the reflection on the first principles and causes of the world – was possible only 'when almost all the necessities of life and the things that make for comfort and recreation had been secured' (Aristotle, 1966a, A,982b). For Aristotle, there is no doubt that the ideal of happiness (*eudaimonía*) is only attainable in conditions of leisure and not of labour (Aristotle, 1948, 1338a).

In Hellenistic times, contemplative life would become the content of a new meaning of life aiming at 'the fullest and most perfect development of the personality' (Marrou, 1964, p. 141). In conditions of a decline of the *polis* and public life, and the development of a strong interest in individuality, *paideia* will take the form of an ideal for man's inner world and independence. The key feature of this ideal is, undoubtedly, its emphasis on the cultivation of all human powers, on the shaping of the individual in general. With this conceptual content, *paideia* will be translated into Latin as *humanitas*.

Another important version of the ideal of education for its own sake can be found in German thought in one of its highly productive periods, between the second half of the eighteenth and the first half of the nineteenth century. Here, the main concept that is promoted is that of *Bildung*. Initially, the concept had a mystic, religious content, meaning that man is fashioned according to the image of God, which he carries in his soul and must cultivate in himself (Gadamer, 2004, p. 10). But in the eighteenth century, the concept of *Bildung* suggests the inner activity of a person's formation and cultivation according to a model image, as an aim in itself and through his active participation in this process.

Bildung appears in the ideas of early German romanticism with the meaning of learning and personal growth, as the crucial process of becoming a human being in general and an individual in particular. *Bildung* was considered an essential part of the general process of self-realisation, as the development of all universal human powers and at the same time as the cultivation of all unique characteristics of an individuality. In this sense, the German romantics regarded *Bildung* as the highest good in life (Beiser, 1998, pp. 286-287).

In German neo-humanism, *Bildung* as self-realisation is not an entirely solitary course of self-creation for the individual. It presupposes his interaction with social reality but without subjecting

the individual to the latter, to the various utilitarian and profit-seeking ends emanating from it. As Nordenbo put it, 'neo-humanist *Bildung* theory tries to preserve the individual in the objective and the objective in the individual – to unite “the ego and the world”' (Nordenbo, 2002, p. 351).

We should make special note of the perception of *Bildung* in Wilhelm von Humboldt, where the concept is evidently influenced by the ancient Greek idea of *paideia*. Humboldt believes that the ancient Greeks represent an ideal of what people would like to be, because of their high esteem for the inner man and for the harmonious development of all human powers. This approach is opposed to the dominant ideas of his time characterised by one-sided development of individual capacities and the subordination of life to 'laborious sociality' (Humboldt, 1963, p. 78). Each human being should become a multifaceted individuality. Authentic learning comes only from inside, '[f]or all educational development has its sole origin in the inner psychological constitution of human beings, and can only be stimulated, never produced by external institutions' (Humboldt, 1963, p. 126). As *Bildung* Humboldt conceives an intellectual activity to cultivate the self according to the individual's intrinsic nature via a spontaneous free activity and apart from the importance of this process for the improvement of the world outside. Humboldt's ideal was to be as independent as possible from everything external (Bruford, 1975, p. 17).

Bildung, of course, is connected with human activities, endeavours and achievements inside the world, through which it is being enriched with the 'concept of what is human' (Lüth, 1998, p. 46). But the application of his faculties for the study of the world should not alienate man from himself. For this purpose, it is essential for man, in his intellectual activities, to direct his attention once more away from the objects of science and reflect back on his self, get awareness of his inner being, study his mental faculties. *Bildung* is a process of self-formation. Of course, it involves relations with other people, but such in a way that the self can be sustained. Each person can enrich his self through relationships with others, provided that these relationships correspond to his inclinations and development potential, do not restrict his independent development and maintain an optimum degree of diversity between individuals (Lüth, 1998, p. 52). Therefore, the progress of humanity is conceivable only as an 'organic development of its individuals' (Humboldt, 1963, p. 143).

I consider Georg Hegel's contribution highly important for an understanding of the significance of education in shaping the individual. As we know, Hegel perceives physical and social reality as the work of absolute intellect, which creates the world in order to know it, and thus accomplish self-consciousness. In the thought of the German philosopher, the entire human history, the entire being of culture is presented as the intellect's educational pursuit of self-knowledge par excellence (Hegel, 2004, pp. 17-18). Therefore, for Hegel, the term *Bildung* refers, primarily, to 'the formative self-development of mind or spirit (*Geist*), regarded as social and historical process' (Wood, 1998, p. 301).

Evidently, the concept of *Bildung* also refers more specifically to the individual being's education and learning, always in relation to the broader development of humanity. Man, according to Hegel, is distinguished by two basic aspects: his physical individuality and his universal essence, his rational-cultural universality. As an individual, man is a natural being. He is in a condition of natural immediacy and 'behaves according to caprice and accident as an inconstant, subjective being' (Hegel, 1986, p. 41). By adopting views diametrically opposed to Rousseau, Hegel believes that the uneducated individual by nature is not what he ought to be – that is, a spiritual, rational being (Hegel, 1986, p. 41). Therefore, he needs *Bildung* as a process of ascendance from physical individuality to cultural universality. In the condition of physical being, man appears as something accidental, as hostage to his physical properties and drives. On the contrary, as an educated being – that is, as bearer of common modes of thinking and acting – he partakes of the spiritual universality of people. Thus, Hegel notes that '[t]he more educated a man is, the less is there apparent in his behaviour anything peculiar only to him, anything therefore that is merely contingent' (Hegel, 1971, p. 52).

A fundamental element of the educated man is his capacity to perceive reality in a rational way, to understand things not in the light of his arbitrary subjectivity and his immediate sensual perception but through the conceptual apparatus of the mind that is universal for all men, and through the universal forms of mental activity, the ways concepts move and interconnect. Thus, through the process of education, man is liberated from the dominance of mere subjectivity and immediate desire, and acquires his human form par excellence; he becomes a moral-universal

being, associated both with his era and with the diachronic intellectual-cultural achievements of humanity.

In the English-speaking world, the ideal of education is related to the tradition of *liberal education*. By liberal education is meant non-professional and non-specialised education, the liberation of the intellect from errors, fallacies and doctrines, an engagement with rational knowledge without the pursuit of practical outcomes. A leading representative of liberal education in the nineteenth century was Cardinal John Henry Newman, the first rector of the Catholic University of Ireland. One of his fundamental views was that the value of education as a free activity is based on the cognitive process itself, on scientific research and philosophical thinking for its own sake. Liberal education is connected with the cultivation of mind; it is, therefore, opposed to learning for professional and mercantile activities, to any activity which Newman, in the spirit of the Aristotelian tradition, calls 'servile work', which is 'bodily labor, mechanical employment, and the like, in which the mind has little or no part' (Newman, 1959, p. 133). Newman identifies liberal education with science in general, and with philosophy, since they include all forms of knowledge impregnated by Reason, because 'Reason is the principle of that intrinsic fecundity of knowledge, which, to those who possess it, is its especial value' (p. 137).

Among the representatives of liberal education in the twentieth century, we should note those who are moving within the framework of analytic philosophical tradition, such as R.S. Peters and Paul Hirst. Peters was opposed to those theories that wanted an education subordinated to external ends, and leading to certain financially or politically beneficial outcomes. Attempting a definition of the concept of education, he claimed that education means not an activity itself, but a set of criteria, on the basis of which these activities and their result, the educated man, can be evaluated. Peters introduces three criteria. The first one involves the commitment of a person to theoretical and practical activities with a non-instrumental attitude, as valuable and desirable in themselves; education means learning something for its own sake. The second criterion embodies the idea that 'education is of the whole man'; for Peters, being educated is incompatible with being narrowly specialised. More precisely, this criterion refers to the importance of developing knowledge and understanding in every learning activity. The educated person must develop in all the main forms of awareness (scientific, historical, mathematical, moral, aesthetic, religious), and must also have some understanding of the basic principles for the organisation of facts in the various fields of knowledge. The third criterion suggests that an educated man's worldview, actions, activities, his living in general, must be transformed by his knowledge, understanding and sensitivity (Peters, 1967, pp. 5-9; 1973, pp. 18-21).

Similar ideas are presented by P.H. Hirst, for whom liberal education is incompatible with the mere acquisition of encyclopaedic information, specialised knowledge or isolated skills. On the contrary, its specificity consists in the comprehensive development of the mind, in the acquisition 'of the complex conceptual schemes and of the arts and techniques of different types of reasoning and judgment' (Hirst, 1974, p. 47). This can be achieved via the initiation of pupils into the basic forms of knowledge, such as mathematics, physical science, human science, history, religion, literature and fine arts, and philosophy (Hirst, 1974, p. 46).

The Alienation of Education

The ideal of education as we saw it in the cases of *paideia*, *Bildung* and liberal education, which focuses on the pursuit of education for its own sake, is synonymous with the concept of humanism, which considers man and his cultural development as a self-value. Nevertheless, in the above historic versions, this ideal's general and latent precondition was to avoid involvement with the problems and inequalities that characterise the world of labour. The thinkers of *paideia*, *Bildung* and liberal education, considering all labour-productive human activities as instrumental and servile, placed – explicitly or implicitly – the ideal of genuine education in the life of leisure. At the same time, the historical condition of an oppressive division of labour was falsely understood as a permanent, eternal characteristic of labour in general; therefore, every practical, productive activity was considered as inevitably inhuman or anti-human. Similarly, engagement with knowledge and the cultivation of the spirit was considered genuine only if it was inherently free from issues pertaining to labour.

An inevitable consequence of this detachment of education and any form of cognitive activity from labour was the perception of knowledge per se as asocial and ahistorical – that is, as outside its social and historical context. In the philosophical traditions we discussed, knowledge is presented in a predominantly abstract, idealistic mode, as something that arises out of an internal activity of the spirit, without being determined by specific social relations, controversies and conflicts, by problems and issues of social reality.

In Greek philosophy, the idea of spiritual cultivation for its own sake was founded on a complete alienation of the people of leisure from those of manual labour. It was also the inevitable outcome of using a large number of workers as physical means, as *instrumentum vocale*, so that a small minority was able to work on the cultivation of the spirit. Nowadays, this idea corresponds to the opposition between the world of leisure and the world of labour, which is still strong, since the majority of people can survive only insofar as they can transform their labour capacities (including knowledge and intellectual powers) into a commodity. What comprises a fundamental feature of the capitalist system of production is that 'labour is external to the worker, i.e. it does not belong to his intrinsic nature' (Marx, 1977, p. 59). The worker in his work 'does not affirm himself but denies himself, does not feel content but unhappy, does not develop freely his physical and mental energy but mortifies his body and ruins his mind' (Marx, 1977, p. 59).

In the conditions of a capitalist alienation of labour, man as wage labourer is inevitably alienated from his creative powers, and transformed into a means for the production of surplus value. Under these conditions, the ideal of education – the multifaceted cultivation of personality as an end in itself – comes up against the predominately utilitarian, exploitative treatment of human powers by the system of alienated labour. For most people, the dominance of alienated labour implies the alienation of education. The acquisition of knowledge and creative capacities, the overall shaping of the personality, obeys the inevitable need for its transformation into the commodity of labour-power and, consequently, for its exploitation for the production of value/surplus value. Therefore, the perceived indifference to a multifaceted education for the sake of education itself, and the subordination of education to utilitarian purposes is not an issue of individual desires and choices. On the contrary, it is an inevitable, prevalent rule of capitalist society, in which man, as a waged worker, can exist only if he can find a buyer of his labour power. As a result, personality, the cultural wealth of individuality, is addressed on the basis of its exchange value. 'The economic mask coincides completely with a man's inner character. Everyone is worth what he earns and earns what he is worth' (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1973, p. 211).

Thus, the ideal of education is inevitably devalued and annulled in conditions where labour and, consequently, the existence of men are not determined by them, where 'the domination of material relations over individuals, and the suppression of individuality by fortuitous circumstances, has assumed its sharpest and most universal form' (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 438). The ideal of education, as long as it remains detached from the contradictions of labour and, more broadly, of social relations, seems highly abstract, completely disconnected from the specific socio-economic conditions of its realisation. The theoretical research that develops within the context of this ideal may ignore the phenomenon of labour alienation-exploitation, the class division of society. If this is the case, then it lacks the conditions that would make it critical, both toward the social conditions of the creation and transmission of knowledge, and toward the dominant forms of consciousness and spiritual traditions.

Two characteristic examples are provided by Mortimer J. Adler and Robert M. Hutchins, who refer enthusiastically to the possibility of leisure time people can enjoy as a result of industrial progress and the great importance of liberal education for a democratic society; however, they do not say a word about the class contradictions of industrial capitalism, implying that the implementation of their educational ideal is just a matter of choice, either individual or collective (Adler, 1951, pp. 44-45; Hutchins, 1953, pp. 83-90). What the ideas of the modern proponents of liberal education have in common is that they do not see, or they try not to see, that 'no capitalist liberal democracy wants too many liberally educated people about' (Harris, 1979, pp. 154).

As a general principle, it is impossible to understand the dominant purpose and content of education or to identify alternative prospects without referring to the character of labour, to the technological and cognitive dimensions of labour – the division of labour, and the dominant class labour relations. Moreover, the defence of education as an end in itself, when it ignores the material-social conditions of human life, the problems and inequalities that characterise it, fails to

distinguish and promote life attitudes that would generate a genuine interest in the world of men as a necessary condition for the development of a genuine interest in education. The defence of education for its own sake, when it is not accompanied by an interest in humanity, in the pursuit of prospects for a better human world, takes the form of an extremely egocentric conception of the meaning of life. If education means the mental assimilation of the achievements of humanity, of the universal social modes of understanding the world and planning human activity, then the utmost, the most genuine interest in education is associated with the utmost interest in humanity, in its fundamental-existential problems and its prospects.

Evidently, the pursuit of education for the sake of individual pleasure is a stronger stimulus than the pursuit of knowledge acquisition for the creation of a marketable workforce. Nevertheless, when knowledge is pursued for the sake of individual cultivation, and given its egocentric horizon, it risks being limited to a narcissistic and vain superficial erudition. Such an egocentric attitude towards education is usually prone to an uncritical acceptance of the currently dominant forms of knowledge and culture, and to the reproduction of their reversed, fetishistic aspects which prevail within a conformistically oriented common sense.

I believe that a real interest in education is associated with the type of person for whom the meaning of life is the social progress of all people, the universal development of social bonds, the maturity of sociability itself. When individual life goals encounter universal social needs and affairs, the individual interest in education transcends the horizon of a purely individual satisfaction and pleasure, and it is concluded through the struggle for universal happiness. From this perspective, the individual relationship with education is determined by the continuous effort for a deeper understanding of the human condition, and of the needs, achievements and potentials of humanity.

Thus, the humanistic ideal perceives knowledge as highly important for the development of the individual in all his fundamental properties, and for his genuine existence as a developed being. Based on the above, I believe that this ideal acquires specific social content when it is associated with the assumption of an emancipation of labour, its promotion into a free and creative occupation of men, within social relations of comradeship and solidarity. Education, as the shaping of individuals within and through culture, acquires its most decisive significance for human life when labour and social relations in general gain an educational character, when they serve, as an ultimate goal, the optimum and multifaceted development of each man. Thus, I fully agree with Paula Allman's comment that liberal education 'is better suited to a socialist than to a capitalist society' (Allman, 2001, p. 189).

The socialist prospect of a free life in which education is an end in itself is associated with a social reality in which man and his development is an end in itself. This prospect can become realistic only when it is possible to satisfy the material needs of society without the necessity for an exploitative-instrumental use of human forces. The transition of society into a world of freedom presupposes the radical change of the world of necessity, the transcendence of its suppressive properties. As Terry Eagleton put it, '[i]f human energies are to become an end in themselves, a great deal of purely instrumental infrastructure must first be in place. If you are to be free to turn your thoughts to higher, purer things, you need to be excessively well-heeled' (Eagleton, 2010, p. 102).

It is Marxist thought that emphatically referred to the material preconditions of the emancipation of labour, placing this pursuit at the heart of the progressive evolution of humanity. Marxism perceived this prospect as a radical change of social relations and the content of human life, as a transition from the realm of necessity to the realm of freedom. Indeed, Marxist thought has been eminently dialectical, given that it attempted to discover, within the realm of necessity, within the world of necessary production activity, the conditions and prospects of the realm of freedom, of free activity for its own sake. We can say that Marxist thought gave emancipated labour an educational-cultural dimension, which brings the ideal of communist society very close to the humanistic ideal of education. In the light of the Marxist perception of emancipated labour, education for its own sake acquires a specific socio-historic content.

The Process of the Intellectualisation of Labour

In Marx's thought, knowledge and its acquisition are definitely given a practical-labour dimension, and are associated with the fundamental transformative activity of people, through which their environment is shaped. The motivation for the pursuit of knowledge and the understanding of the world does not arise from the activation of an internal spiritual power; rather, it is primarily defined by the material, practical needs of men in their physical and social environment. Man explores the world and is educated, not merely because he has the capacity for understanding, but because he is an individual with needs; he transforms the world in order to satisfy those needs within a historically specific nexus of social relations.

For a long time, the predominantly manual character of labour (either in the form of using manual tools or in the form of manually serving machines) signalled the minor significance of intellectual activity and spiritual cultivation for the development of the production system. Empirical knowledge, acquired in the form of apprenticeship, was sufficient for the formation of the labour force. In the centuries of human history, a predominantly theoretical-intellectual activity had little or no relation to labour as material production; therefore, school as a place of systematic education was intended only for a small minority of the population, while the majority were illiterate.

Of course, the craftsman of the pre-industrial era usually had a comprehensive perception and management of his vocation. His empirical knowledge was the result of a long-intergenerational accumulation of observations, which allowed him to manage all the phases of a good's production, quite often at a high level of craftsmanship. Nevertheless, this knowledge was always limited to the superficial, external properties of things as these were revealed directly in the practical activity. Empirical knowledge that supports pre-industrial labour cannot grasp causal relationships, internal dynamic interactions and processes that determine the birth and evolution of things.

The situation changed with the advent of capitalism in the period of industrial revolution – presently, the scientific-technological revolution; its fundamental feature is the systematic transformation of science into a productive power. Nowadays, scientific research and scientific planning are crucial factors that determine the function and development of the means of production. Moreover, the expansion of the scale of scientific research, well beyond the boundaries of the sense-perceptible world (in the microcosm and macrocosm of matter), enables the development of highly complex technologies that increase, to an unprecedented degree, the boundaries of the productive impact of men on their environment (soil and subsoil of the earth, biosphere, near space). These conditions give rise to the need for an ongoing engagement with knowledge, in a way that is radically different from the one that corresponds to the economy and education of industrial capitalism.

For the needs of industrial society, it is enough to have a large number of labourers who are bearers of an amount of basic homogeneous, standardised knowledge, which they are called upon to apply in their work as given and static. Their relationship to knowledge is mainly utilitarian, while any job specialisation, which is often quite restricted, is consistent with the fact that labourers have minor differences in their level of education and intellectual capacities. Most labourers of industrial society are basically exchangeable.

The emergence of post-industrial elements (automation and informatisation of the production process) within contemporary capitalist societies is linked with the scientific-technological revolution. It brings to the forefront the need for the labourer's education, so that he can be activated not as a mere bearer and user of knowledge, but as its creator, as a creatively thinking being capable of managing an inventive-innovative research project. This need for a new role of education is inscribed in Karl Marx's highly acute observation on the prospect of a mechanisation and automation of production, as a consequence of which:

Labour no longer appears so much to be included within the production process; rather, the human being comes to relate more as watchman and regulator to the production process itself. ... No longer does the worker insert a modified natural thing [*Naturgegenstand*] as middle link between the object [*Objekt*] and himself; rather, he inserts the process of nature, transformed into an industrial process, as a means between himself and the inorganic nature, mastering it. He steps to the side of the production process instead of being its chief actor. (Marx, 1973, p. 705)

As an organic element of the process of mechanisation, and even more of automation, of production, general social knowledge is becoming a direct force of production, while 'the conditions of the process of social life' are coming under the control of 'the general intellect' (Marx, 1973, p. 706). As a consequence of the tendency for an intellectualisation of labour, the muscular strength and stamina of the workers and the rationalisation/intensification of their use/exploitation are no longer the decisive factors in the evolution of the system of production. Their place is taken by the intellectual/cultural forces of men.

In this transformation, it is neither the direct human labour he himself performs, nor the time during which he works which appear as the great foundation stone of production and of wealth. Rather, it is the appropriation of his own general productive power, his understanding of nature and his mastery over it by virtue of his presence as a social body – it is, in a word, the development of the social individual (Marx, 1973, p. 705).

This general productive power of the individual is nothing other than science, the individual's understanding of the world, his knowledge and intellectual powers.

Science, as a general productive power, is an eminently collective power of men. Its operation is what Marx calls universal labour: 'Universal labour is all scientific work, all discovery and invention. It is brought about partly by the cooperation of men now living, but partly also by building on earlier work' (Marx, 1981, p. 199). In this form, science is realised through specific means of the intellect, through linguistic symbols, scientific concepts and theories, as well as through the entire spiritual traditions of humanity (cognitive, artistic, philosophical). Scientific knowledge is encoded in language, in concepts, and can thus be the property of all men simultaneously, without ever being alienated by any one individual creator. The creations of the intellect are the ones that all men can have together and each one individually; they can be developed and enriched only as long as they are part of the thinking and creativity of other people.

The intellectual-scientific work of each individual is an activity accomplished through the support of universal human means. When people work through scientific concepts/knowledge, then all of humanity indirectly participates in their work (all present and past generations).[3] Scientific knowledge as productive power is, essentially, the universal productive power of humanity. When people work mainly as bearers of scientific knowledge, they work as agents of social consciousness, as beings who do not simply have a knowledge of the world and themselves as something objective, but who also have knowledge-consciousness of their existence as subjects and of the content of their consciousness. Developed, creative intellectual activity presupposes an understanding of the operational modes and laws of consciousness.

When scientific knowledge becomes a productive power, education acquires unprecedented social significance as an activity for the multifaceted cultivation of the intellectual powers of men; this would enable them to understand the causal relations of things, perceive the systemic interactions of dynamic processes as a whole, identify existing latent alternative possibilities and prospects. Education is primarily called upon to develop the general intellectual powers of man, so that he can engage with a broad spectrum of scientific-technological issues, and follow radical scientific-technological developments flexibly and independently. At the same time, in order to empower a creative relationship with knowledge, education will have to enable people to reconsider their cognitive activity, understand both the cognitive-methodological and moral-social dimensions of science, those that relate to the impact of scientific and technological applications on the existence and evolution of humanity. From this perspective, education evidently comprises the fundamental and diverse cultivation of the intellect. Given, however, that the entire content of consciousness participates in the function of the intellect, education is also presented as the multifaceted cultivation of moral, aesthetic and philosophic forms of consciousness.

We could say that, since social labour is associated with the decisive role of what Marx called 'general intellect' and 'general social knowledge' (Marx, 1973, p. 706), with the development and objectification of the intellectual-cognitive powers of society, education is the key factor for the formation of the subject of labour. Consequently, education is an organic part of the system of social labour and a crucial factor in its progressive development. When scientific knowledge becomes productive power, then the ability of a society to ensure the progress of knowledge is related to its capacity to constantly improve people's level of education. The planning and promotion of scientific-technological progress presupposes the planning and promotion of the

fundamental development of education. So, if we can define the society of the future as a 'society of knowledge', then it will also have be a 'society of education' at the same time.

Here we should note that people are the subjects of labour when they are able to actively transform their environment as bearers of intellect-consciousness, as labourers mainly through the intellect and consciousness, and consequently as collective designers and managers of production means and processes. This is the type of labourer who, according to Marxist thought, corresponds to labour organised on communist principles. Consequently, multifaceted education and the cultural development of people are perceived by Marxism as constituting a necessary precondition for the socialist transformation of society, for the collective control over the huge productive forces emerging from a capitalist economy, which are then turned into uncontrolled and destructive forces for humanity through commercial competition. 'Industry controlled by society as a whole, and operated according to a plan, presupposes well-rounded human beings, their faculties developed in balanced fashion, able to see the system of production in its entirety' (Engels, 1976, p. 353).

Concerning the contemporary mechanised and automated productive forces and processes, Marx and Engels's suggestion about the productive forces of their time is fully applicable: 'only individuals that are developing in an all-round fashion can appropriate them, i.e., can turn them into free manifestations of their lives' (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 439). The appropriation of these productive forces is conceived by Marx and Engels as an 'educative process' of 'the development of the individual capacities corresponding to the material instruments of production. The appropriation of a totality of instruments of production is, for this very reason, the development of a totality of capacities in the individuals themselves' (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 87).

Quite significantly, the assimilation of means of production changes dramatically when these are automated means of production; these means exist as unified complexes on an international scale and cannot be placed under the separate physical control of individuals or groups without being destroyed as means of production. In this case, appropriation can be achieved only as collective appropriation, as the collective planning and management of these means of production. Each individual can take automated means of production under his possession only as bearer of the necessary knowledge and cultural capacities that will allow him to participate in collective labour for the planning and management of their operation.

The Educational Aspect of Emancipated Labour

Education, as the multifaceted cultivation of each individual, is a necessary element of mature labour, of the intellectual activity for the social management of automated means of production and productive processes. This is not an instrumental perception of education and personality. Labour, as an element of social totality, is an integral part of the formation and existence of man. Man and socio-cultural reality are inconceivable without labour activity. What is important in the trend we have highlighted is the apparent possibility for a radical change of labour, its complete transformation into a cognitive-cultural activity. The prospect of transforming labour into a field of activation and exercise of the diverse creative forces of man and, primarily, the intellect-consciousness signals the maturing of the social character of labour, the maturing of labour itself.

As V.A. Vazjulin emphatically stresses in his work *The Logic of History*, labour in its initial appearance has not yet developed its social character. Labour, for a long period in history, is still immature, given that man is engaged in it as bearer of physical-bodily powers, in order to satisfy his material needs (Vazjulin, 1988, p. 92). Labour, as an activity, is simply the means of survival for workers. In the case of a class exploitation of labour, it is also the means of survival for its exploiters. On the contrary, mature labour is associated with the completion of the gradual transformation, by labour itself, of all its elements: the means of labour, the object of labour, and man as a labourer (Vazjulin, 1988, p. 92). Mature labour is labour whose means are not physical bodies any more but constructs of culture (automated means of production – representing objectification of scientific knowledge), and man as a labourer is the bearer of knowledge, of universal intellectual-cultural forces. We can say that the social significance of education is relevant to the degree of maturity of the sociocultural nature of labour. In other words, the maturing of

labour implies its organic coupling with education, the promotion of education into a central domain in the social system of labour.

In light of the above trends and prospects for the development of labour and society, the dominance of capitalist relations of production, which are founded on the transformation of waged workers into means for the accumulation of capital, is a huge obstacle to social progress. When the fundamental development of each man in relations of comradeship and solidarity is a precondition of scientific and technological progress, then the exploitation of man by man and the attendant phenomena of unemployment, marginalisation and poverty are a destructive anachronism for humanity.

Here we should note that in Marxism the emancipation of labour evidently implies the abolition of class-exploitative relations, the establishment of social property over the means of production; but it also means a radical change in the content of labour itself, the transcendence of the opposition between manual and intellectual, administrative and executive activity, the transformation of labour into a collective, intellectual activity for the management of production means and processes. The emancipation of labour is accomplished through the transcendence of the forms labour has taken in the history of mankind as a predominantly physical-manual activity, characterised by the production and the appropriation of goods for the satisfaction of only material needs. It is also accomplished through the promotion of labour itself into a creative activity, an internal cultural need of people. 'Labour for the sake of the need in labour is labour for the sake of the use, the perfecting and development of human labour qualities' (Vazjulin, 1988, p. 97).

Here, the importance of emancipated, mature labour for people is related to the wealth of activities that make up its content, the ability to transfer people from one activity to another, with the sole purpose of their multifaceted and sustained development. The activity of people is no longer subject to a system of an oppressive division of labour, which, in their social development so far, condemned them into a partial and underdeveloped state. Marx insists that 'the partially developed individual, who is merely the bearer of one specialised social function, must be replaced by the totally developed individual, for whom the different social functions are different modes of activity he takes up in turn' (Marx, 1976, p. 618).

Due to the dominance of the oppressive division of labour and the extremely partial formation of individuals so far, universal and individual aspects of developed personality, such as a cultivated sensibility, imagination, reflective thinking, as well as specific fields of their manifestation, like fine arts, music, literature, philosophy, seemed to be the exclusive property and opportunity of exceptional individuals 'gifted by nature'. The emancipation of labour – not only from the relations of class exploitation but also from the material and social conditions of its oppressive division – will signal the development of people in the universality of their particular human traits. Thus, even though being a leading musician or painter presupposes a particular temperament, in conditions of emancipated, mature labour, each individual will be able to develop the aesthetic-artistic aspect of his personality as well. It is in that sense that we can interpret Marx's renowned statement that '[i]n a communist society there are no painters but only people who engage in painting among other activities' (Marx & Engels, 1976, p. 394).

Emancipated labour is an educational experience, and as such it acquires its greatest significance for the individual person, not from the perspective of the end product it produces any more, but mainly from the standpoint of the activities it includes, the degree to which these activities are creative. As V.A. Vazjulin notes:

The perfection of the existing labour process and the transition to another, new labour process, from the point of view of man's role, is creation. This labour is creative labour. Perfection is beauty. Creation, in its essence, means perfecting. In our opinion, every creative labour is labour in accordance with the laws of beauty. The main and most characteristic feature of labour, which is carried out for the sake of the need for labour, is creation by the laws of beauty. (Vazjulin, 1988, pp. 97-98)

In the historic evolution of humanity so far, labour, under the laws of beauty and for the sake of satisfaction by beauty, mainly concerned the field of art outside production. This field comprises a set of activities which, to one degree or another, became independent from immediate economic imperatives such as productivity and profitability.[4] Emancipated labour, labour which has ceased to directly serve material needs and is realised for its own sake, acquires the characteristics of art; it

becomes creativity under the laws of beauty, aiming at aesthetic pleasure and the cultivation of personality. According to Marx, emancipated labour is achieved by shifting the focus of human life from the sphere of the necessary time required to handle or manage the means of production to the sphere of leisure activities, offered for the 'free development of individualities', for 'the artistic, scientific etc. development of the individuals in the time set free, and with the means created, for all of them' (Marx, 1973, p. 706).

However, we have to underline that from the moment people cease to participate actively (as a set of physical-bodily forces) in the production of things, given that these can be produced by automatic machines, the transformation of their labour activity into intellectual, planning, managing work also signals the transcendence of the opposition between necessary and free time. Necessary and free time, in terms of the difference that characterises them, are mutually suspended, transformed into their alterity. This prospect is associated with the fact that the activity of the general intellect, as scientific-theoretical thought and as aesthetic-artistic creation, is not restricted to specific time frames; rather, it expands to all the moments that make up the life and action of the personality, and depends crucially on the degree to which all conditions of life are beneficial for the development of the personality. The activity of the intellect-consciousness is a universal activity of the personality, whose wealth is decisively determined by the wealth of social life.

It should also be noted that the shaping of consciousness in its ethical, aesthetic and scientific-philosophical form is determined in its configuration by the entire spectrum of social relations. Consequently, a condition for the fundamental development of consciousness is the development of sociability, the existence of relations of comradeship and solidarity between people. The emancipation of labour as the foundation of the prevalence of such relationships between people adds an educational dimension to every aspect of social life, making it beneficial for the development of the personality.[5] From this perspective, the emancipation of labour emerges as a dialectic removal of the difference between labour and culture:

labour as an end in itself, labour for the satisfaction of inner physical and spiritual needs under the laws of truth, goodness and beauty, is no more labour but culture in its multifaceted action, the life of culture in its fundamental manifestations, a multidimensional cultural activity.
(Vazjulin, 1988, p. 307)

The humanistic ideal of education with the sole purpose of the development of human forces, the multifaceted cultivation of personality, finds its most concrete form in the Marxist ideal that acknowledges as an authentic form of wealth of man

[the] absolute working-out of his creative potentialities, with no presupposition other than the previous historic development, which makes this totality of development, i.e. the development of all human powers as such the end in itself, not as measured on a predetermined yardstick.
(Marx, 1973, p. 488)

At the core of this ideal we can find emancipated human activity. Through the transcendence of the oppressive division of labour and the dialectic removal of the opposition between necessary and free time, emancipated human activity becomes an ongoing educational experience, the creation and development of socio-cultural reality as a manifestation of essential human powers. In this social perspective, it is possible to approach the multifaceted development of each individual personality as a prerequisite for the genuine development of society as a whole.

Notes

- [1] As Richard Pring underlines, the new language of education is that 'of inputs and outputs, of value-addedness, of performance indicators and audits, of products and productivity, of educational clients and curriculum deliverers', which significantly transforms our understanding of teaching, undermining its substantially moral content (Pring, 2004, p. 20).
- [2] Of course, as *liberal education*, we can define all traditions which perceive education as an end in itself. However, in the present article, by *liberal education* we mean the Anglo-Saxon version of these traditions.

- [3] That is why Marx called science 'the product of general historical development in its abstract quintessence' (Marx, 1999, p. 391).
- [4] Not accidentally, Kant defined fine arts as a free activity of the mind, in which 'it feels satisfied and aroused (independently of any pay) without looking to some other purpose' (Kant, 1987, p. 190).
- [5] It is quite significant that the emancipation of labour is also associated with the transformation of man's physical-bodily activities par excellence into free creative pastimes for the sake of the pleasure derived from the exercise of these physical forces. Freeing people from the burden of manual labour in conditions of a universal emancipation of labour paves the way for the transformation of physical activity into artistic creation and physical culture.

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