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THE POSSIBILITY OF PEDAGOGICAL OVERCOMING OF DYSTOPIAN REALITIES

Abstract*: The aim of the paper is to synthesize a pedagogical theoretical-practical position that can produce antidystopian subjects. On this path, it is necessary to first establish common determinants of dystopias and their pedagogical meaning analytically. The paper will then raise the question of pedagogical dialectics as a pedagogical perspective, and within it the question of the pedagogical necessity of the negative (negating, opposing) moment in thought, action, and relation. Since the common denominator of various dystopian determinants is alienation in its various manifestations, which is the dominance of an already established reality over the production of reality, negativity will be shown to be a condition for the possibility of critical overcoming of dystopian forms of existence. Therefore, after defining the dialectics of pedagogy and negativity in pedagogy, the idea of alienation and its later forms of the culture industry, spectacle, and simulation will be analyzed in more detail, in order to explicate the essence of various forms of dystopia. The final part of the paper, based on previous analyses, synthesizes pedagogical thinking and action that can overcome dystopian forms of reality and alienation in them.*

Keywords*: pedagogy, dystopia, dialectics, negative thinking, alienation*

INTRODUCTION

The concept of dystopia has been used and developed in the context of art and philosophical debates for decades, and is used as an important framework for understanding key social issues. Starting from the claim that dystopian novels have a ”relatively long history” and that there is a ”rich corpus of literary texts that have been created over the past centuries” [translation B. K.] [1] (Levanat-Peričić, 2022, p. 706), it becomes clear that it is precisely the development of dystopian literature and its associated narratives that has continuously encouraged and still encourages theorists from various scientific disciplines to further research, interpret and analyze its role in society and its understanding. Although numerous authors describe dystopia as a world without hope, its strength is manifested precisely in the disclosure of mechanisms of alienation and repression and in opening space for critical reflection and the development of mechanisms for resistance. Through characters whose consciousness is gradually awaken, dystopian narratives encourage the reader to recognize the processes of normalization of alienation that shape their own experience. This is precisely where the pedagogical potential of dystopia lies, in its ability to serve as a critical mirror of the education system and to expose the mechanisms that shape social values, behaviors, and beliefs. Pedagogy as a science has been trying for decades to make a turn (Roth, 2019) from the marketization of education, the ideology of education, the learning of formulated outcomes, goals, and competencies, towards a humanistic form of pedagogy that is based on freedom, choice, and the development of an autonomous subject. However, contemporary pedagogy and the organized education system can often be compared to dystopia, not only in a metaphorical but also in a functional sense.

Dystopia, although often analyzed through the lens of literature and art, can also be understood as a philosophical construct that encompasses a society with a specific set of values. If we consider it in the context of systematic upbringing and education, it appears as a structure and the activities arising from it that perpetuate social tendencies incompatible with the humanistic principles of pedagogy. The central mechanisms through which such dystopian logic is realized are curriculum policy, knowledge selection, discipline, and standardization. Through them, children’s interests are shaped, their obedience and memory are controlled, while through evaluation and constant surveillance, freedom is narrowed to the point where it is no longer even apparent. The system thus functions as a device for the reproduction of the existing order, rather than as a space for emancipation and empowerment.

However, educational processes are not unambiguous. They simultaneously carry the dystopian potential of system reproduction and the utopian potential

[1] „relativno dugu povijest… bogat korpus književnih tekstova koji je nastao tijekom prošlog stoljeća”

of liberation. In this sense, pedagogy has a key role. It must be ready to help the subject to stop being determined by heteronomous and external elements; otherwise, it remains trapped in structures that stifle its essence and the possibility of self-determination. Merely ”calling for freedom, self-determination and self-responsibility in education is not enough – through education we must make available to young people, instill in their body and soul both insights and strength, and moreover techniques and achievements that liberate them and enable them to master themselves” [2] [translation B. K.]. (Roth, 2019, p. 34) While dystopia functions as a kind of vacuum in which the subject loses responsibility and becomes the executor of other people’s orders, pedagogy can offer a space in which freedom of thought, moral responsibility, and critical awareness develop. We will explore pedagogical resistance to dystopian patterns of domination, control of thought, and ideological apparatuses that shape real problems in education through the dialectic of pedagogy and its implicit moment of negativity (difference) in thinking and being, which is an essential condition for the possibility of overcoming various forms of alienation as the essence of dystopian realities. It is precisely the being established by the logic of pedagogy that represents an antidote to the alienation and depersonalization that characterizes the dystopian educational apparatus. It opens up the possibility of understanding education not only as the transmission of given values and certain knowledge, but also as an ethical act in which the goal is to form an autonomous and responsible subject. It is precisely in challenging dystopian values that pedagogy finds its emancipatory potential. Through the affirmation of subjectivity and freedom, education ceases to be an instrument of reproduction of social order and becomes a space in which the possibility of a different, more just, and more humane world is imagined and built. Ultimately, pedagogy ”thus responsibly participates in the critical mediation between tradition, the existing, and the becoming.” [3] [translation B. K.] (Roth, 2019)

DETERMINATION OF A DYSTOPIA

Although the term dystopia is most often, almost intuitively, associated with literary works that depict repressive and totalitarian social systems through their plots and motifs, it should be emphasized that the influence of dystopian novels has long since surpassed the boundaries of literary fiction itself, since the term dystopia itself, as well as the concepts formed in dystopian

[2] „pozivanjem na slobodu, samoodlučivanje i samoodgovornost u odgoju nije dostatno – mi odgojem moram mladim ljudima staviti na raspolaganje, usaditi im u tijelo i dušu i uvide i snagu, štoviše tehnike i postignuća koja ih oslobađaju i osposobljavaju da ovladaju samim sobom”

[3] „tako odgovorno sudjeluje u kritičkom posredovanju između predaje, postojećeg i postajućeg”

literary works, have long since entered wider use and become an integral part of everyday social and cultural discourse. Dystopian narratives, viewed from the perspective of their symbolic and analytical power, often prove to be a kind of mirror of real social mechanisms because in their structures they reflect systems based on control, discipline and power relations that shape human everyday life. It is particularly important to point out that dystopian novels have had a pronounced social and critical dimension from their very beginnings, where they ”served as a critique of society and the world” [4] [translation B. K.] (Malenica and Matek Šmit, 2018, p. 333), opening space for questioning dominant values, political systems and ideological patterns. As a consequential example in the analysis of such repressive and control systems, the educational system is very often cited in theoretical discussions, precisely because of its key role in the process of forming and shaping students, but also because of its strong, direct, and intense influence in the articulation and structuring of thoughts, attitudes, and understanding of the world.

In order to define the term dystopia, it is necessary to first define the meaning of the term utopia, since dystopia stems from its very concept. ”Utopia has long been another name for something unrealizable and impossible, opposed to the ‘real’ world.” [5] [translation B. K.] (Mumford, 2008, p. 9) Its historical and etymological origins date back to the 16th century, when this term was first used by T. More in his famous work, Utopia. (Sargent, 1994) The word itself comes from the Greek expression ou-topos, which means nowhere or a place that does not exist (Polić, 1988, p. 16), or ”originally etymologically ‘a place that simply does not exist’.” [6] [translation B. K.] (Polić, 1988, p. 16) However, More played with a double meaning because the term can also be read as eu-topos, or a good place. (Sargent, 1994, p. 5) Throughout history, and especially after the publication of T. Campanella’s book The City of the Sun, the concept of utopia began to be interpreted almost exclusively positively (Polić, 1988), increasingly becoming synonymous with optimism and progressive social ideals, or ”a positivist political message with future applications” [7] [translation B. K.] (Polić, 1988, p. 16).

The concept of dystopia is also developing as the opposite of the concept of utopia, as a negation of its ideals. ”Dystopias are, therefore, qualitatively distorted utopias, gone wrong” [8] [translation B. K.] (Malenica and Matek Šmit, 2018, p. 334). Etymologically, dystopia could be described as ”displacement”,

[4] „služili kao kritika društva i svijeta”

[5] „Utopija je dugo bila drugi naziv za nešto neostvarivo i nemoguće, suprotstavljeno ‘zbiljskom’ svijetu”

[6] „izvorno etimološki ‘mjesto kojeg naprosto nema’”

[7] „pozitivističku političku poruku s budućnosnim aplikacijama”

[8] „Distopije su, dakle, utopije kvalitativno narušene, pošle po krivu”

with the prefix -dis denoting the absence of a positive meaning. (Polić, 1988) The first recorded use of the term dates to 1868, when the British philosopher J. S. Mill used it in speech to denote the opposite of utopia, arguing that ”if utopia was commonly seen as ‘too good to be practicable’, then dystopia was ‘too bad to be practicable ‘”[9] [translation B. K.] (Vieira, 2010, p. 16). In earlier definitions, the term was primarily associated with literature and philosophy, so Polić, relying on Mayakovsky, emphasizes that dystopia is ”a literary work that inaugurates anxiety about the fate of humanity, i.e., that does not contain the principle of hope, or (if it is an avant-garde work) an optimal projection into the future”. [10] (Polić, 1988, p. 16) We find a similar tone in the definitions of famous world dictionaries. Webster’s dictionary describes dystopia as ”an imagined place that is depressing and miserable and whose inhabitants live a terrible life”, while the Oxford dictionary states that it is ”an imagined place or state in which everything is as bad as it can be”. [11] [translation B. K.] (Polić, 1988, p. 16) L. T. Sargent defines dystopia as a form of negative utopia, i.e., ”non-existent society described in considerable detail and normally located in time and space that the author intended a contemporaneous reader to view as considerably worse than the society in which that reader lived.” (Sargent, 1994, p. 9). In this way, dystopia functions as a warning of possible negative directions of social development. G. Claeys (2010) expands this interpretation by stating that after the First World War, societies were increasingly imagined in a negative, dystopian form, as a reaction to the failures of totalitarian collectivisms. Dystopias then act as a mirror of reality (Claeys, 2010, p. 108) in which the ”quasi-omnipotence of a monolithic, totalitarian state” and its control through technology and science are particularly emphasized. (Claeys, 2010, p. 109) Furthermore, Vieira (2010) believes that dystopia arises from the loss of faith in utopian ideals and emphasizes that works that leave no room for hope miss their purpose because the goal of dystopia is not to discourage, but to encourage action. Therefore, she concludes that the true call of dystopia is for ”man realize that, since he can not build an ideal society, then he must be committed to the construction of a better one” (Vieira, 2010, p. 17). Similarly, K. Nikodem connects dystopian narratives with totalitarianisms, which rapidly arise not only between the two world wars, but always in structural conditions of ”loss of confidence in modernist promises” [12] [translation B. K.] (Nikodem,

[9] „ako je utopija bila nešto ‘predobro da bi bilo ostvarivo’, distopija je ‘preloša da bi bila ostvariva’”

[10] „književno djelo koje inaugurira zebnju za sudbinu čovječanstva, tj. koja ne sadrži načelo nade, odnosno (ako je riječ o avangardnom djelu) optimalnu projekciju u budućnost”

[11] „koje je potišteno i bijedno i čiji stanovnici žive strahotnim životom… zamišljeno mjesto ili stanje u kome je sve toliko loše koliko samo može biti”

[12] „gubitak povjerenja u modernistička obećanja”

2004, p. 369), and in doing so, he paraphrases H. Arendt's thought that the key to the emergence and development of totalitarianisms is "…the breakdown of class society in Europe, the transition of classes into masses and the emergence of atomized individuals, the emergence of mass man."[13]. [translation B. K.] (Nikodem, 2004, p. 369) In such conditions, the mass is ready to surrender to a "strong leader" and simple "solutions", in other words, to accept the alienated (de-subjectified, non-autonomous – which is the essence of the mass man) and surrender into the hands of a "fate" outside itself that will lead it out of an unfavorable reality. In such circumstances, dystopian realities can be successfully produced and reproduced. Here we can see that dystopias cannot be treated as mere historical facticity of a particular time, which may have once been and passed, but as what is structurally and socially produced every time certain social conditions arise. These conditions, primarily of alienation and de-subjectification, will therefore be the central focus of this paper as what we must overcome pedagogically.

In their analysis of the narrative structure of dystopian texts, Baccolini and Moylan (2003) note that such texts often begin within a terrifying world, but through the feeling of alienation that arises in the characters, it opens up a space for resistance and "a character who questions the dystopian society". (Baccolini and Moylan, 2003, p. 5). Thus, dystopia does not exclusively depict a dark, hopeless environment, but contains an internal tension between forced adaptation and resistance, between repression and emancipation. A similar perspective is brought by F. Jameson, who interprets dystopia as a consequence of collective alienation (Jameson, 2005). For him, dystopia is an anti-utopia (Jameson, 2005, p. 199), which radically emphasizes the negative aspects of the present and warns of the dangers of political programs, especially through anomalies of human behavior such as control, dehumanization, and alienation. Such criticism starts from an analysis of capitalism, with Jameson arguing that dystopia depicts an ideological crisis in which people are no longer able to even imagine a complete social change (Jameson, 1991). H. Marcuse provides a deeper philosophical framework, describing in his work One-Dimensional Man how contemporary societies create a system that makes the very thought of change impossible (Marcuse, 1968). In this sense, repression becomes imperceptible and internalized, alienation extends not only to society but also to man's thoughts, and dystopia appears as an image of modern slavery. The author emphasizes that existing as an instrument, as a thing, is a form of slavery [14] [translation B. K.] (Marcuse, 1968, p. 47) and that "The more rational, productive, technical, and total the repressive management

[13] „slom klasnog društva u Europi, prijelaz klasa u mase i pojava atomiziranih pojedinaca, pojava čovjeka mase"

[14] „egzistirati kao instrument, kao stvar"

of society becomes, the less possible it is to imagine the means and ways by which people could break their slavery and achieve their own liberation" [15] [translation B. K.] (Marcuse, 1968, p. 26). On the trail of these diagnoses and definitions of the term dystopia, although dystopian forms are diverse, we can extract moments of alienation as preconceived "reality" and preconceived thoughts, control, surveillance (external, but also internal), the impossibility of the subject overcoming the manipulation of the established "truth" as the common denominator of dystopian realities. On this track, our analysis of the essence of dystopia will focus on the terms and concepts of alienation, culture industry, spectacle and simulation as what essentially enables the setting up and maintenance of dystopian realities, while the dialectic of pedagogy, which carries an essential moment of negativity (difference), which makes the condition for the possibility of overcoming dystopian realities a fundamentally different formation of the pedagogical subject, will be seen as the opposite of them.

DIALECTICS OF PEDAGOGY

In order to discern the possibility of overcoming dystopian forms of existence from a pedagogical perspective, we must determine what we mean by pedagogy. The fundamental, not merely conceptual but ontological ground that establishes both the possibility and the necessity of pedagogy as a theory and practice of upbringing and education is the fact that the human being is freedom, in the sense of the capacity to initiate a chain of causality, a capacity that begins from itself, without being caused by anything prior to itself, but rather caused by itself (Kant, 1953b)[16]. The pedagogical formulation of this capacity is the concept of educability (Bildsamkeit). The founder of pedagogy as a science, J. F. Herbart, thus states in the very first paragraph and its accompanying note of his Outline of Pedagogical Lectures from 1835: "The fundamental concept of pedagogy is the educability of the pupil… we recognize the educability of the will toward morality only in human beings." [17] [translation: Z. K.] (Herbart, 1976c, p. 229). Concerning the concept of morality (Sittlichkeit), it is necessary to emphasize that Herbart follows his practical philosophy in dialogue with I. Kant, whereby this concept is constituted through the determination of the subjective will by the rational law, which the will is capable of representing to itself and following out of pure

[15] „Što represivno upravljanje društvom postaje racionalnije, produktivnije, tehničkije i totalnije, to je manja moguće zamisliti sredstva i načine kojima bi ljudi mogli slomiti svoje sužanjstvo i zadobiti vlastito oslobođenje"

[16] See especially the discussion on pages 102–103.

[17] „Der Grundbegriff der Padagogik ist die Bildsamkeit des Zoglings…Bildsamkeit des Willens zur Sittlichkeit kennen wir nur beim Menschen."

duty toward it, leaving no room for heteronomous motivations of action such as inclination or happiness (Kant, 1953a, pp. 163–164). Thus, this is not a matter of any empirical morality, positive culture, values, and the like, but rather of the human capacity for self-production through the autonomy of rationally determined action of freedom. In these same lectures, Herbart quickly proceeds to summarize his practical ideas, which generally determine the will and are systematically and pedagogically essential not only for the establishment of morality but also for the constitution of the purpose of pedagogy itself (Herbart, 1976c)[18]. This is not a matter of dogmatically establishing morality, but of philosophically grounding it in line with Kant's investigations into the causality of freedom as that which makes practical reason possible and thus practical reason itself and the teleological concepts through which it necessarily determines the causality of freedom (Kant, 1953a, p. 190; Kant, 1976, p. 334).When addressing the question of morality, the fundamental issue is how it is possible to establish a concept of purpose through which the will autonomously determines itself in a non-contingent, non-arbitrary, necessary manner. That this concept of purpose must be established autonomously means that it must be derived from the very possibility of being human, without presupposing any being outside the human (such as God, society, culture, history, etc.) in which this purpose would be heteronomously grounded. Following the establishment of educability as the principle of pedagogy, Herbart immediately, in the second paragraph of his Outline, sets forth the basic structure of pedagogy as a science constituted on the one hand by practical philosophy and on the other by psychology (Herbart, 1976c, p. 229). It is crucial to understand that Herbart does not mean by this that pedagogy is not an autonomous science, nor that it is derived from two other sciences. Rather, he means (as he later systematically elaborates) that pedagogy, in its internal structure, depends on knowledge that exists in a normative "ought" mode on the one hand, and on the empirical conditions of human existence on the other. The former is the domain of practical philosophy, established in the wake of Kant, which deals with the autonomous determinations of practical reason; the latter is the domain of psychology, which deals with the empirical reality of the given pupil and the educational situation. Herbart expresses this dual unity of pedagogy elsewhere, in his Pedagogical Aphorisms, as follows: "Inquiry into the purpose of education leads us into the realm of the ideal; on the other hand, consideration of means and obstacles leads us back to ordinary, lowest reality." [19] [translation Z. K.] (Herbart, 1976b, p. 413). Herbart does

[18] See especially the discussion on pages 231−232.

[19] „Die Betrachtung des Zwecks der Erziehung führt uns ins Gebiet der Ideale; hingegen die Überlegung der Mittel und Hindernisse zieht uns wieder herab in die gemeine, ja in die niedrigste Wirklichkeit."

not believe that these areas of inquiry should be left to other sciences and that their results should simply be adopted. On the contrary, both must be integral parts of a systematically developed and established general pedagogy, as demonstrated in his General Pedagogy Derived from the Purpose of Education (Herbart, 1976a), where he proceeds from discipline (Regierung der Kinder) as the negative condition of education, through education proper (Eigentliche Erziehung), in which he grounds and develops the two components of the purpose of education, through the theory of interest, to specific determinations of pedagogical processes. If these domains are not part of pedagogical inquiry, pedagogy becomes a mere technique or skill of implementing the findings of other sciences, which is precisely what Herbart opposes.

Fully in line with this, educability has two dimensions or levels, as formulated by H. Hornstein. The first level concerns the empirical givenness of the individual pupil, in the sense that no concrete pupil is a tabula rasa, but rather a specific constellation of prior determinations from which education proceeds, determinations that must be recognized, heard, and respected, and upon which upbringing and education build. These determinations are not educationally legitimate simply by virtue of existing; rather, they constitute the reality from which pedagogy must necessarily begin. This reality includes both pedagogically valid forms of formation and all other forms of formation that already exist in the pupil. The second level of educability is the fundamental freedom of the human being, which signifies the infinite possibility of change and which, as Hornstein states, is the a priori structure of human openness (Hornstein, 1959, pp. 17–18).

Regarding the structure of pedagogy, the central relationship is that between educability as a self-determining modification of the capacity for further becoming, as formulated by E. Anhalt (Anhalt, 1999, p. 81), and education as the capacity for forms through which the pupil determines themselves (Humboldt, 2017, p. 8). This relationship is the pedagogical formulation of the relationship between freedom and morality. The capacity for forms spoken of by W. von Humboldt is the mentioned human capacity for practical concepts of purpose, through which the human being, for a practical reason, autonomously determines itself, rather than a space of arbitrariness. The human being as a pedagogical being is a dialectical interplay of educability and education; that is, the human exists as their own becoming, self-transformation, and self-overcoming. By the a priori structure of their being, the human already is this, but this does not mean that they will necessarily actualize and live this essence. Therefore, public education and planned pedagogical activity are necessary (Kant, 2024, p. 21; Fichte, 1979, p. 162) in order to enable every human being to enter into such a form of self-conscious, critical, and free interaction with themselves and the world. Pedagogy is thus the awakening and sustaining of human educability and the guidance of human interaction with oneself and

the world in a purposively open form. It is especially important to note that practical teleological concepts, in Kant as well as in Fichte or Herbart, do not possess a closed ”teleological” form aimed at realizing any predetermined purpose. In Kant and Fichte in particular, these practical concepts of purpose are what practical reason produces through its autonomous activity, not by mirroring any empirical or ”ideal” being, but by producing being: ”A rational being has the capacity to act according to the representation of laws, that is, according to principles, or a will. Since reason is required for the derivation of actions from laws, the will is nothing other than practical reason… The representation of an objective principle, insofar as it is compelling for the will, is called a command (of reason), and the formula of this command is called an imperative. All imperatives are expressed by an ‘ought’ (Sollen) and thus indicate the relation of an objective law of reason to the will…” [20] [translation B. K.] (Kant, 1953a, pp. 175–176). Through its practical power, which arises from the causality of freedom rather than natural causality, practical reason produces representations of law, that is, concepts of purpose. The question is only how general and necessary concepts of purpose can be produced so that the determination of the will is legitimate, that is, oriented not merely by maxims as subjective determinations of the will. The way Kant formulates the autonomy of the will and the categorical imperative as the general principle of determining the will is completely non-normative in a material sense and thus provides the foundation for a dialectic of human being. This is evident in the further development of his philosophy in thinkers such as Fichte, Hegel, Marx, and the theorists of the so-called Frankfurt School, along whose lines concepts of praxis, critique, and historical thinking are developed. In the same open manner, Herbart, through his so-called five practical ideas, does not establish any materially normative ethics, but rather sets forth a system of essential relations of the will to itself and to other free and rational wills in a processual manner. The idea of inner freedom, for example, is determined as non-conclusive in the sense that it cannot be annulled in any determination. The idea of perfection is determined by the concept of clarity of insight, which posits only a necessary and open striving for knowledge, not any specific material content of knowledge. The idea of benevolence does not materially determine which activities of other wills should be supported and which should not, but is likewise bound to the idea of perfection through which the other (supported or unsupported) will determines itself, and so on (Herbart, 1976c, pp. 232–233; English, 2013, pp. 34–37).

[20] „…umno biće ima sposobnost, da djeluje prema predodžbi zakona, tj. prema principima ili volji. Kako se za dedukciju djelovanja iz zakona zahtijeva um, to volja nije ništa drugo nego praktični um... Predodžba objektivnoga principa, ako je za volju prisilan, zove se zapovijed (uma), a formula te zapovijedi zove se imperativ. Svi se imperativi izažavaju nekim „treba da” (Sollen) i naznačuju na taj način odnos objektivnoga zakona uma prema volji...”

In this dialectical interplay of educability and education, education as the self-determination of educability through forms takes place in interaction with the world as the ”material” through which educable freedom is mediated. Thus, W. von Humboldt states in his fragment The Theory of the Education of the Human Being from 1794: ”However, just as mere force requires an object upon which it can be exercised, and just as mere form, pure thought, requires material in which it can continue to develop once expressed, so too does the human being require a world outside of himself.” [21] [translation Z. K.] (Humboldt, 2017, p. 6). These reflections again follow the line of Kant’s investigations in the Critique of Pure Reason, where he demonstrated that experience can be constituted only as an a priori synthesis of the categories of pure understanding and empirical material (Kant, 1976)[22]. This opens the path to stating, in the narrower educational sense, precisely what Humboldt expresses here. When he speaks of thought as ”mere form” and ”pure thought,” he clearly has Kant in mind, for whom the subjective moment of experience is the form of the a priori categories of pure understanding, while what Humboldt calls the world is the material moment of experience that which Kant calls empiricism or nature. In educational terms, this means that the pedagogical subject must enter into interaction with the world. It is necessary that the subject be oriented toward the world, that the subject mediate itself through the world (that is, determine its educability through reflection upon the world), and that it mediate the world through itself (that is, through its autonomous, free activity, introduce change into the already existing empirical world). In line with Kant, J. G. Fichte states that the temporally open, never-completable purpose of this dialectical relation between the human being and the world, and of their mutual mediation, is as follows: ”The perfect agreement of the human being with himself—and, in order for him to be able to agree with himself, the agreement of all things outside him with his necessary practical concepts of them, concepts that determine what they ought to be—is the ultimate and highest goal of the human being.” [23] [translation Z. K.] (Fichte, 1979, p. 145) The logic of this dialectic is that the human being, in determining himself through the world, reciprocally transforms that world according to his practical concepts (concepts of rational freedom), which exist in the mode of the ”ought.” This means that through them, the human being constitutes and produces the future. Consequently, the human being is not a being who merely

[21] „Da jedoch die bloße Kraft einen Gegenstand braucht, an dem sie sich üben, und die bloße Form, der reine Gedanke, einen Stoff, in dem sie, sich darin ausprägend, fortdauern könne, so bedarf auch der Mensch einer Welt außer sich.”

[22] See especially the discussion on pages 111–112.

[23] „Savršena suglasnost čoveka sa samim sobom i – da bi time mogao da se saglasi sa samim sobom – suglasnost svih stvari izvan njega s njegovim nužnim praktičkim pojmovima o njima, - pojmovima koji određuju kakve one treba da budu, - jeste poslednji najviši cilj čoveka.”

has a world, but a being who produces a world. If the human being ceases to produce the world, he then exists in a pseudo-world. This world produced in accordance with free reason is what Fichte calls culture (Fichte, 1979, p. 145).

A moment that has been constantly implicitly present in the above considerations, but which must now be explicitly emphasized, is that education must necessarily be an end in itself. We have spoken of the autonomous, self-legislating production of teleological concepts and of practical reason. This is one of the central moments of Kant's concept of morality, and it is along this line that the other cited thinkers also proceed. For Kant, morality is not driven by anything external to the will itself and its capacity to represent the rational law. There is no true value, true norm, or true being in itself that the will would have to mirror and then live as truth through such mirroring. The moral, true will is the will that determines itself in accordance with its practical concepts, that is, autonomously and self-legislatively (Kant, 1953a)[24]. For this reason, Kant is able to label all eudaimonistic systems of ethics which presuppose the existence of a virtue that materially determines happiness and, more broadly, every earlier form of metaphysics that presupposes some underived being, as well as every finite empiricist science that metaphysically presupposes the being of empiricism, as dogmatic. Pedagogy that takes these circumstances into account is therefore justified in formulating the following demand: "Educability, as the functional center of education, must not be subsumed under any determinations other than pedagogical ones" [25] [translation Z. K.] (Anhalt, 1999, p. 198). Pedagogical determinations are those that arise from the pure pedagogical logic of (self-)determination that is, from the self-determination that constitutes the being of the pedagogical subject. In other words, educability and freedom must not be placed in the service of any form of heteronomy, such as, for example, the needs of capital in its various manifestations, a mode of existence that today is almost exclusive not only for education but for science as well.

As the well-known theorist of pedagogy and Neo-Kantian P. Natorp states in line with all that has been said, pedagogical being is the dialectic of autonomous human self-determination: "Pedagogy connects insight into the nature of the human being with insight into his vocation, in order to teach how nature might be brought closer to vocation. Thus, it unites the investigation of what is with the investigation of what ought to be." [26] [translation Z. K.]

[24] See especially the discussion on pages 195–196.

[25] „Bildsamkeit als funktionales Zentrum von Erziehung darf nicht anderen als pädagogischen Bestimmungen subsumiert werden."

[26] „Die Pädagogik verknüpft die Einsicht in die Natur des Menschen mit der Einsicht in seine Bestimmung, um zu lehren, wie die Natur der Bestimmung angenähert werden könne. So vereinigt sie die Forschung nach dem Sein und nach dem Sollen."

(Natorp, 1923, p. 8) By ”nature,” Natorp here means the purely empirical moment of the human being, what Herbart referred to as the psychological, while by ”vocation” he means Kant’s ”ought,” the moment of teleological concepts of the autonomy of practical reason. What internally enables this movement and this relation is educability. Pedagogy is therefore the guidance of given empirical reality toward the autonomy of reason, the production of a human, free, and rational world. Along these same lines, M. Heitger speaks in his book Education as Self-Determination of the necessary unity of freedom and self-consciousness, that is, knowledge, in the concept of self-determination: ”His [the human being’s] being human is given to him as a task. Whoever speaks of an ought must presuppose freedom and self-consciousness. Without freedom, the ought is replaced by the necessity of causal lawfulness. Without knowledge of the ought, freedom loses its orientation and becomes arbitrariness.” [27] [translation: Z. K.] (Heitger, 2004, p. 33)

THE LOGIC OF NEGATIVITY IN THE DIALECTIC OF EDUCABILITY– EDUCATION AND THE ORIGIN OF THE POSSIBILITY OF ALIENATION

Within the dialectic of pedagogy examined above, we can now identify an essential moment that is crucial for the possibility of pedagogically overcoming dystopian realities. This is the moment of negativity, both in thinking and in being, without which there can be neither pedagogical dialectic, nor pedagogical being, nor pedagogy as a science. When speaking of the concept of negative thinking, it must be understood as a logical determination of the negative, that is, as the moment of negation or nullification. In what way is negativity present in the dialectic described above? When we state that educability, as the fundamental openness of freedom, cannot be exhausted in any particular determination (that is, in any single form of education), negativity is present in the fact that educability is always opposed to every particular form of education, just as particular forms of education are themselves negations of absolute educability. For example, if a pupil determines himself as a mathematician, this particular determination negates his absolute possibility of self-determination (educability). While I am a mathematician, I am not a poet or any other possible determination. In this sense, every particular determination is simultaneously a negation of the absolute possibility of self-determination. The same holds from the other side: as long as I am rooted in my absolute possibility, I see myself primarily as the possibility of transcendence and otherness in relation to all

[27] “Ihm ist sein Menschsein als Aufgabe gegeben. Wer vom Sollen spricht, muss Freiheit und Bewusstsein voraussetzen. Ohne Freiheit tritt an die Stelle des Sollens das Müssen der kausalen Gesetzmäßigkeit. Ohne Wissen um das Sollen verliert Freiheit ihre Orientierung und wird zur beliebigen Willkür.”

my finite determinations that already exist. If I see myself as possibility, I do not see myself as what I currently am, but as the possibility of transcending what I already am. In this sense, the self as possibility is the absolute negation of every finite determination. The dialectic of educability–education is thus a play of self-determination (the positive positing of oneself in finite empirical determinations) and the negation of every finite determination in the pure possibility of educability. For a pure and fully developed logic of this dialectic, it is advisable to study Fichte's Foundation of the Entire Doctrine of Science, especially the exposition of the three principles of the Doctrine of Science (Fichte, 1974, pp. 41–70).

H. Marcuse, for his part, reflects dialecticality and negativity already in the basic form of the Aristotelian formal-logical predicative judgment S is P: "The affirmative judgment contains a negation that disappears in the form of the proposition (S is P)… If these propositions are true, then the copula 'is' expresses an 'ought,' desideratum… (S) must become what it is. The categorical statement thus turns into a categorical imperative; … dialectical thought understands the critical tension between 'is' and 'ought' primarily as an ontological circumstance that concerns the structure of being itself" [28] [translation B. K] (Marcuse, 1968, pp. 131–132). Marcuse here puts forward something extremely important that only on the surface concerns formal logic. Namely, in dialectical thinking, the subject that is to be determined by a predicate can in fact never be exhausted by the predicate, cannot be closed off by the predicate and terminated (semantically univocally deadened) in the predicate. What Marcuse here names the dialectical tension between subject and predicate can never be closed; the subject never becomes the predicate without remainder. The structure even of the affirmative judgment (where the copula is affirmative "is" rather than negative "is not") does not express that the subject is without remainder in identity with the predicate and fully determined by it. In judgment, the subject always eludes complete determination by the predicate or a set of predicates; it is always partly the predicate and partly not the predicate. To that extent, determination by a predicate, which does not exhaust the subject, always remains in this "ought" tension of the subject in relation to the predicate, whereby Marcuse here quite clearly also invokes Kant's philosophy, the concept of praxis, and the concept of the categorical imperative. This "not fully being the predicate," this having an undetermined "remainder" through predication, is the negative moment that remains in the subject in the mode of possibility, as unaffirmed in determination. It

[28] „Afirmativni sud sadržava negaciju koja iščezava u formi stava (S je P)… Ako ovi stavovi jesu istiniti, tad kopula „je" izražava „treba da", diseratum…(S) mora postati to što jest. Kategorički iskaz tako se preokreće u kategorički imperativ… Dijalektička misao razumijeva kritičku napetost između „jest" i „treba da" prije svega kao ontološku okolnost koja se tiče strukture samog bitka."

simultaneously negates the particular determination, just as the particular determination negates the subject as a whole. E. Bloch, in his book on Hegel, Subject–Object, speaking about the relation between dialectical thinking and empiricism, emphasizes that empiricism in principle cannot go beyond formal-logical correctness and validity in judgments of identity A = A, where so-called common sense comes to a halt at finite determinations, whereby precisely the opposite of what Marcuse speaks of above is presupposed namely, that the subject is exhausted by the predicate in formal-logical determination (Bloch, 1959, pp. 83–84). Reason thus operates as a series of particular determinations which, in an essential sense, remain mutually unconnected (because they do not arise dialectically from one another, nor all together from a principle), or at best are only a posteriori in an accidental, empirical, merely probable connection. In this context: "The world itself becomes in this conclusion a non-world, that is, an infinite multiplicity of particular 'givens'… the apparent exactness of positivism thus corresponds to a correlate: a non-world with pluralistic absurdity as the sole determination of the object" [29] [translation B. K.] (Bloch, 1959, p. 84). It is precisely the insight that in judgment the subject is not exhausted in the predicate, but rather that, as Fichte says, the subject posits itself only as a finite, determined, empirical I, alongside which it also posits the Non-I as the opposite of its determination, and that the subject is not exhausted in the posited empirical, on account of which it must again reflect back into itself in a new form of thinking, in order to posit itself again and again reflect (Fichte, 1976, pp. 36–37) that leads to what German philosophers called reason (Vernunft) as distinct from understanding (Verstand) (Hegel, 1983, pp. 447–448), to which Bloch refers above. Namely, the subject that posits itself in its empirical determinations always remains in an inner tension between itself as absolute subject and itself as posited, empirical subject. On this insight and reality is grounded the essence and constitution of the later understanding of historical thinking, the concept of critique, and so-called critical theory.

With regard to the negative, dialectical, rational moment of thinking and being highlighted above, pedagogical implications can also be clearly derived. If negativity were abolished in pedagogical thinking and being, this would mean that the human being is locked into what he already is, into positivity, empirical givenness, an eternally already produced present, that is, into some determinate form of education, whereby educability as such would be abolished. However, we have emphasized that educability as such cannot be abolished in any form of education. The same is shown by the above consideration of the negative moment in thinking. The subject is never exhausted in a particular

[29] „Sam svijet postaje u tom zaključku ne-svijet, to znači, beskonačno mnoštvo partikularnih „datosti"… prividnoj egzaktnosti pozitivizma odgovara tako korelat: ne-svijet s pluralističkim bezumljem kao jedinom određenošću objekta."

determination, because knowledge is not a series of essentially unconnected, absurd, particular determinations. Thus, we see that the logic of dialectics and of knowledge on the one hand, and of pedagogy on the other, are in essential correspondence. This is crucial for the theoretical legitimacy of pedagogy, because only if this correspondence exists can pedagogy be such that it does not deal with fictions, ideology, the economic needs of the day, or mere arbitrariness, but with the autonomous self-production of the human being. At the same time, this insight also gives us a clear direction for pedagogical action and positioning with regard to the concept of purpose. Pedagogy cannot be set up as any kind of fulfillment of a predetermined purpose. From the above concept of the human being and of knowledge, it follows that the human being is a self-production that is not merely a mimetic mirroring either of some essence that would already exist in ideal being, nor a mirroring and adaptation to any existence or empiricism, an introduction into the needs of life, and the like. Both of these are what Kant would call dogmatism, mere presuppositions of already existing being with regard to which the human being is then determined, without deriving the conditions of possibility of the given being. On the contrary, the human being is pure self-positing, self-producing power.

Along these lines, the first pedagogical activity is self-awareness and the encouragement of educability, which is meant to lead to the autonomous self-activity of the pupil (Nikšić, E. and Komar, Z., 2024)[30], and the maintenance of the pupil in the pedagogical openness of their self-conscious educability toward the world (Humboldt, 2017). Every closure of this dialectic is the desubjectivization of the human being, turning them into a product, a mere empirical givenness, heteronomy, or function, reducing autonomous freedom to a mere empirical identity. On the basis of all that has been said above, it can be stated that pedagogical action in its fundamental sense is the encouragement of self-awareness and the maintenance of dialectical tension (and only in this sense ”guidance”) of the pupil–world relation. It is necessary to bear in mind that in this relation the pupil must exist as a unity of freedom and reason, which are indeed two concepts that are unthinkable without one another.

On the basis of what has been examined, we can now clearly determine what alienation is in its essence. Namely, it is every form of human self-understanding in which the human being does not see themselves as autonomy, practical reason, the producer of themselves, dialectical self-positing and self-reflection of themselves, but rather as an object, a ”fact,” a predetermined essence, or an empirical existence. All of these are positions in which the object is abstracted from the subject–object dialectic of self-production and posited as an ontological ”reality,” as some given being. What is lacking is both insight into the character of existence and thought as produced through

[30] See especially the discussion on pages 47−50.

free praxis, of the space of history and culture, as well as reflection of particular productions back into the subject, whereby every production can in principle be transcended and transformed, and through this establish human existence as praxis (Kangrga, 1984)[31]. Forms of alienation will briefly be examined through the theoretical articulations of the culture industry, spectacle, and simulation.

ALIENATION, THE CULTURE INDUSTRY, SPECTACLE AND SIMULATION AS DYSTOPIAN FORMS

Before discussing several recent theoretically significant articulations of alienation, it is necessary to define the very notion of alienation as clearly as possible. This notion is one of the central themes in the philosophy of K. Marx; however, it is merely a derivative of what the classical German philosophers, such as Fichte and Hegel, had already arrived at. We have already indicated, primarily through Fichte, that if the positing I (the absolute I) understands itself through its specific, empirical mediations and determinations, and insofar as it perceives the posited, and not the positing, as its foundation and origin, it then loses self-awareness as self-production and begins to understand itself as a product. Marx terms this self-relation as alienation. In short, presupposing the product to the act of production, understanding oneself as that which already exists, reality or being—any heteronomy whatsoever—is an index of the alienated self-understanding of the subject. Marx, in his *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, clearly defines the various dimensions of the notion of alienation, as well as its dialectic, and thus clearly shows that labour, through its alienation, does not merely produce the product as a commodity, but in the process structured as commodity production, it also produces itself (labour) and the worker as a commodity, whereby in this activity the product is set apart from the act of production itself. (Marx, 1978, pp. 245–246) When he speaks of the notion of labour, Marx, unlike the notion of production, means *alienated* labour. In the unfinished *Outlines of a Critique of Political Economy* from 1857/58, Marx defines the commodity as: 'Every commodity (product or instrument of production) is = the objectification of a definite quantity of labour-time.' (Marx, 1977, p. 39) The commodity, however, is *petrified* labour, labour which is no longer the *activity* of labour and is therefore separated from the human, who by his/her very nature is a practical, active, temporal being. This petrified labour can then be appropriated, exchanged, and used by other subjects in ways that are abstracted from the life-energy that produced it as a commodity. If the production, appropriation and exchange of products are socially organised in such a way that labour is not the free, originally creative act of the producer, but rather the producer is merely a function of a system of production divorced from human creative production, of appropriation and

[31] See especially the discussion on pages 26−28.

exchange, then the presumed alienated product exists as the purpose, of which the human who (co)produces is the means. In such an activity, a human does not exist as a free agent, but as a heteronomously determined one in which his/her life-energy (labour) is a means to an end external to him/herself. Marx now draws attention to something important in the first quote above: in the very act of labour so organised, the worker produces not only the product, but also his labour as a commodity, as well as himself as a commodity, that is, as mere alienated labour power.

Marx's further step after Hegel consists in the fact that Hegel had philosophically completed the notion of rational freedom, whereas Marx, taking up Hegel's result, demands that this liberation becomes material, that is to say, "real". In other words, Marx seeks the realisation of Hegel's philosophy, since humans do not act as pure spirit in the world, but his/her free, autonomous practice unfolds in material conditions, by which it is co-determined. If it is also materially determined, then it is necessary for this materiality to be established in such a way as to structurally enable free and rational action. If, however, human acts as a function of an unfree and irrational world, then in that action (s)he reproduces him/herself as unfreedom and irrationality. In other words, it is necessary to produce a free and rational world.

In one of the further essential steps in the elaboration of the notion and reality of alienation, M. Horkheimer and T. Adorno, in their essays collected under the title *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, written in 1944, in the essay *The Culture Industry. Enlightenment as mass deception* states that alienation in Western societies has permeated not only the narrower sphere of (industrial) labour in the second half of the 19th century, but the entire sphere of culture, art, entertainment, and popular forms of life. In a condensed formula, they state: "The apparent unity of the macrocosm and the microcosm demonstrates to people the model of their culture: the false identity of the general and the particular" (Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T., 1974, pp. 132-133). In other words, the macrocosm is trapped in the microcosm. The universal is reduced to a manufactured particular. The particular, as the created, has become the totality of experience, thought, and life. Fichte's empirical I has swallowed the absolute I as the absolute possibility of self-production. Further on in the same essay, they say: "The achievement which Kantian schematism still expected of the subjects, namely, to bring the sensory manifold into relation with the fundamental concepts in advance, industry now takes from the subject and performs itself. For it, schematism is the first duty towards the customer… Consumers cannot classify anything that has not already been classified in the schematism of production" (Horkheimer, M. and Adorno, T., 1974, pp. 136-137). Whereas in Kant the *subject* produced experience on the basis of the categories of pure reason, by which it synthesises the manifold of sensation, this function of reason is now taken over by the culture industry, which determines

its products in a predetermined unambiguity, a semantically closed-off clarity and absolute banality. The industrial form of culture signifies precisely that cultural meaning is now produced in a process without any contradiction, tension of meaning, or open process of production. The very activity of the culture industry is without contradiction, in principle without negation, and the cultural products themselves are equally so – without conflict within them. It is for this reason that Adorno states in his later essay, *The Schema of Mass Culture*, that the only thing the products of such a culture do, by their entirely manifest informational dimension, is invite their mere identification: ”This universal informational character sets the seal upon the radical alienation between the consumer and the inescapable proximity of the product.” (Adorno, 1991b, p. 70). The product of the culture industry has only an informational character; it informs the former subject (now the consumer) about himself and, in so doing, renders him completely passive. In this sense, Adorno identifies three stages in the development of the domination of alienated consumer as *advertising*, which evolves into *information*, which evolves into *command* (Adorno, 1991b, p. 73). The irony is that this total command is perfectly ”democratic”; it does not exist in the form of explicit coercion, but rather in the way the system of production, appropriation of labour, exchange and consumption is organised, and as such, it is a perfectly internalised command. This non-conflictuality and the ease with which the culture industry exists is one of its fundamental characteristics: ”Mass culture treats conflicts, but in fact proceeds without conflict” (Adorno, 1991b, p. 62). In other words, even when it has conflict as its ”theme” and ”content”, the culture industry treats it in a pre-reconciled manner, fitted into an already existing and closed informational structure of meaning. Examples are numerous, such as the perfectly harmonious and melodic music, produced with a smoothness characteristic of recorded music; treating of themes like genocide, or films about various aspects of real fractures in human existence which proceed according to a predetermined, safe pattern that ultimately only serves to console, where any emotional upheaval serves only a short-term dramatic function, to novels with pre-calculated plotlines in which intrigue, development, tension, relaxation and resolution unfold without following the internal and messy logic of the characters and events, universal techniques of applying sound in films where cheap auditory stimuli excite, soothe, amuse and sadden the consumer, not to mention the lowest genres of reality content and pseudo-documentaries. In the context of today’s dominant atomised and pseudo-democratic production via social media, where seemingly everyone is not only a consumer but also a producer of their own ”content”, this production is merely an algorithmised self-falsification of the producers themselves, under the ever-watchful eye of the algorithm and artificial intelligence. ”Personality” is merely the first and most potent of the products for consumption.

Regarding the essence of the culture industry, Adorno says in a brief formulation: ”Reality becomes its own ideology through the spell cast by its faithful duplication” (Adorno, 1991b, p. 55). In other words, the alienated-produced reality of the culture industry deprives existence itself − and the dialectical, creative, life-giving potential of that very dialectics − of its existence the moment that reality begins to dominate the act of production itself. Thus, culture becomes an ideology that completely neutralises the questionable, ambiguous, open, conflictual, historical, and dialectical moments of life itself. Reality duplicates itself into its cultural-industrial image, which gains an ontological primacy over life. In the essay *Culture Industry Reconsidered*, Adorno further emphasises that the culture industry, by its very form and method of producing culture, has made an *explicit* advertising form of culture and art unnecessary, as it is perfectly embodied in the very mechanisms of production and therefore cannot produce anything other than alienated products, while the consumer, accustomed to this form and reduced to a detached extension of such a mode of production, no longer needs any mode of existence that has the meaning of genuine transformation. It is precisely for this reason that the products of the culture industry no longer need to signal to the consumer the content to which he is to conform. The very form of the production and consumption of culture produces abstract conformity as blind obedience (Adorno, 1991a.). It is precisely the spirit of this *blind* obedience, obedience for its own sake, that is extremely dangerous, for it is the essence of the internalised authoritarian spirit of fascism, which is determined in its desire to submit to the language of mindless, seductive force that manipulatively promises to lead it out of difficult economic times, at the same time against (conveniently emptied of meaning) Others, whether in 1920s Italy, 1930s Germany, or the USA and Europe in the 2020s. Moreover, as Adorno observes in his 1967 lecture entitled *Aspects of the New Right-Wing Radicalism*, fascism is always essentially insubstantial, or rather ”ideologically flexible” (Adorno, 2021, p. 30), which means precisely the above, blind authoritarianism, or as Adorno says of the culture industry – a spirit of submission through consumption, without even knowing what one is submitting to. A. Scurati, ironically describing the early conceptual doubts and disputes among the Italian fascists as early as 1919, primarily between B. Mussolini and C. Rossi as one of his chief advisers, expresses Mussolini’s position in which he completely distances himself from the earlier clearly articulated theoretical positions of the fascist movement: ”Who are the fascists? What are they? Benito Mussolini, their inventor, considers the question meaningless. Yes, of course… they are something new… something unheard of… an anti-party. There you have it… fascists are an anti-party! They pursue an anti-politics, excellent. But the search for identity must stop there. What is important is to be something that will allow the obstacles of consistency, the burden of principles, to be avoided. Benito Mussolini gladly leaves theories and the paralysis they bring to the socialists”

(Scurati, 2021, p. 60). And further: ”One only has to stoke the hatred between the factions, to sharpen the intolerance. Then nothing will be forbidden” (Scurati, 2021, p. 60). By factions, he does not mean the factions of the fascist movement, but the factions within society as a whole. A position that, in a chillingly almost identical fashion, evokes images of the current political playbooks of the dominant forces in the USA and Europe, as well as of the conservative centrist (neo)liberalism which, the more opportunistically it approaches such policies, the more it hands over the dominant position to right-wing movements, because it will never itself be ”the real thing”. Again, eerily similar to the politics and role played by the centrist prime ministers F. Nitti and G. Giolitti in Italy in 1919 and beyond in the final victory of fascism. To summarise, the very form of the culture industry implicitly nurtures a spirit prone to authoritarianism. In this sense, the preparation for today's dystopia has been underway for a long time, laying the structural foundations for our present reality. To think that the dystopian nature of the modern Western world can be personalised in any way is a fallacy on a par with the belief that, after the Second World War, people not only uttered but also truly understood what ”never again” meant.

Following on from the notion of alienation, and then the culture industry as a further and more comprehensive manifestation of alienation, the next step in the development of alienation is what G. Debord, in his 1967. book *The Society of the Spectacle* calls the spectacle. He defines the notion of the spectacle as follows: ”The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relationship between individuals mediated by images” (Debord, 1999, p. 36). Several points are crucial here. First of all, by spectacle (Latin: *spectaculum*) (Klaić, 1988, p. 1255), Debord does not mean the term in its everyday usage of something extraordinary, exciting, and astonishing, but rather the emphasis is on the moment of theatre and speculative viewing. This moment of its linguistic sense is also visible in the above definition. Namely, Debord emphasises, first, that the spectacle indeed has to do with the image, the representation, the spectacle; however, it is not the image and spectacle itself, but a *social relation* which is *mediated* by the image. The image alone does not yet constitute the spectacle. But the social relation, which is constituted in such a way that it is, in a *fundamental* sense, mediated by the image, i.e. that it is not itself, that it is not its own lived, experiential reality, but is constituted through the image, is the spectacle. In this light, the idea becomes clearer: ”All life in societies where modern conditions of production prevail manifests itself as a vast accumulation of spectacle. Everything that was directly lived has moved away into representation” (Debord, 1999, p. 35). Following Marx and his analyses, Debord develops the concept of the spectacle, and, just like Adorno, shows that it is precisely the conditions of production, the conditions of organisation of modern capitalist life, that produce society as a spectacle. The spectacle is not an accident, but rather it stems from the material social relations of production, exchange, and consumption. If the

two preceding quotations are synthesised, the essence of the spectacle is shown to be, firstly, the duplication of lived experience into its image, where, secondly, the image of that experience becomes dominant over the lived experience itself and, as the dominant one, begins to mediate experience, social relations and social structures in such a way as to produce them in accordance with itself. In this dialectic, alienation is shown not so much as the object of labour alienated from the activity of labour, but more abstractly, as an image that dominates over the original experience. Human active production of meaning is alienated into an image, which image in turn determines the meaning of the individual, relationships, and social structures as a dominant force that prevents the free activity of meaning production. Thus, Debord can say: ”The spectacle is capital at the stage of its accumulation in which it becomes an image” (Debord, 1999, p. 47). In other words, it is the very same dialectic of alienation analysed by Marx, but it now alienates itself into forms that are ever more abstract, ever more detached from the immediate, active, productive experience. The person who is trapped in the image of themselves, of a social relationship, of a desirable brand, etc., is trapped and alienated much more deeply than when dominated by any concrete, material product, because in the case of the spectacle, their very power of thought, criticism, imagination, and of conceiving an alternative, is negated. The spectacle, as an alienation, has as its material the entire space of meaning production, not just industrial goods or culture as commodities. Talking about spectacular production of meaning, even love, justice, freedom, and democracy can become alienated products. This opens up a dystopian space in which hatred can truly appear as love, unfreedom as freedom, and so on.

In the society of the spectacle, as Debord describes, alienation is no longer merely a logical consequence of material production but becomes a complete and all-encompassing form of reality. ”The spectacle in society corresponds to the concrete production of alienation” (Debord, 1999, p. 32). Thus, a space is opened up in which the meaning is inverted. That which is essentially false is presented as true; that which alienates appears as liberating. In this inverted perspective of the dystopian experience, hatred can be presented as love, unfreedom as freedom, or, as the famous Orwellian slogan goes, ”War is peace, freedom is slavery, ignorance is strength” (Orwell, 2015, p. 10). In essence, the spectacle not only represents the world but subsequently goes on to *produce* it in its own image. When a person becomes alienated from their own experience, they can no longer distinguish the false from the authentic but are instead in a mediated relationship in which the very possibility of critique is impossible. Marcuse’s formulation that ”…the dialectical process involves consciousness: the perception and utilisation of the emancipatory possibilities. It thus involves freedom” (Marcuse, 1968, p. 207) emphasises precisely the idea that the spectacle makes impossible: a dialectical consciousness that recognises the semblance as semblance. When such a form of consciousness is absent, the space of thought and the space of

action are left to the apparatuses that play the part of freedom, while the state of unfreedom is carelessly consolidated. Ultimately, the mentioned theses confirm that to impose a dystopian world upon humanity, force is not required; only images presented as imperative reality are needed.

That Debord means by the spectacle the very same dialectic of alienation we have been discussing is clearly evident from the following description of the actualization of spectacle: "...the spectacle, whose *concrete mode of existence* is abstraction. In the spectacle, a part of the world is *presented* to the world, and it is superior to it. The spectacle is simply the general language of this separation." (Debord, 1999, p. 46) The spectacle is therefore the language and logic of abstracting the image from existence, from experience, by which act the alienated image becomes ontologically primary in relation to experience. This is the same logic as that of a product which is abstracted from the activity of production and becomes primary in relation to production, in that production becomes a function of the product, and not a free activity. In the spectacle, however, the image of love dominates over lived and experienced, and possibly critically questioned, love; the image of courage over truly courageous acts, and so on. The advertising form of culture that Adorno speaks of thus acquires, through the spectacle, the character of a completely separate, supra-world in the form of an image. The person who relates to the world according to principles of spectacle, as in the case of the culture industry, is a consumer, only here an even more enslaved consumer, because (s)he now no longer consumes only culture, but consumes all of reality as an image. The spectacular relationship, like any alienated relationship, ensnares humans in the position of perpetual consumerism: "...consumer survival is something that must constantly be expanded, because it still *contains deprivation*. If there is nothing outside of expanded survival, if there is no point at which it would cease to proliferate, it is because it itself is not outside of deprivation - it is deprivation that has become richer" (Debord, 1999, p. 54). The subject who relates to the world in the manner of the spectacle must be a mere consumer, because in the spectacle's relation, the produced world and the free subject cannot, *in principle*, meet. The image here does not stem from life as being rooted in life. It does not spring from the free production of meaning, but is reified in its pure referentlessness. The consumer here remains a mere deprivation, no matter how much of the image they consume, because the image is not, in principle, an authentic expression of any autonomous, free form of life. Therefore, the alienated commodity and the alienated image do not, in principle, satisfy, and they survive only in the form of constant consumption and the increase of consumption. As Debord points out, in this form we have a play-acting of the struggle of one commodity against another in their relation of competition on the so-called "free market", where one commodity perishes, and another survives, but what absolutely persists is the very form of alienated consumer existence (Debord, 1999, pp. 66−67).

The spectacle as a social relationship ultimately leads to what J. Baudrillard called simulation, which he specifically linked to the modern mediatisation of the world: ”…in the case of television and modern mass media, we assimilate, ”consume” not so much a particular scene, but rather the virtuality of all scenes. The truth of the mass media, then, is this: their function is to neutralise the lived, unique, eventful character of the world and to replace it with a complex universe of media… which denote one another and refer to one another. Ultimately, they become reciprocal content for one another – therein lies the totalitarian ”message” of consumer society” (Baudrillard, 2012, p. 112). When the spectacle becomes the dominant mode of mediation for the totality of individual and social experience, when the alienated image completely replaces the experience that produces meaning, we arrive at the ultimate logical consequence of the sign freed from its referent (being, fundamental reality, lived experience), a sign that no longer denotes, does not express any referent, but merely points to itself and to other signs. At this degree of alienation, one can speak of simulation as a state where the underlying reality no longer exists, but it has been replaced by a system of self-referential and cross-referential signs where the sign that cannot be distinguished from its referent consequently cannot be represented either, because it has itself become the immediacy of the image that has become life itself (Krivak, 2000, p. 101). The image which no longer has a referent is in the abstract sign alienated life, but one which no longer even allows itself to be represented as alienation, because that from which the abstraction abstracts is abolished. In place of experience, simulation steps in. In place of life, simulation steps in. The state of simulation is, therefore, the completion and logical conclusion of the society of the spectacle. As Baudrillard says: ”Television images want to become the metalinguistic language of an absent world” (Baudrillard, 2012, p. 112). Unlike television and the classic mass media discussed by Baudrillard, it could be said that in the world of social media, the algorithmisation of human existence and AI mediation of the whole of human experience, a complete realisation of the spectacle and simulation is taking place. In these circumstances, immediate experience, the distinction between the essential and the non-essential, the distinction between truth and falsehood, and the space for creating meaning disappear. History itself also disappears, and not in the sense in which F. Fukuyama wrote in 1992, completely uncritically and ideologically, as the final victory of what he sees as ”liberal democracy” (Fukuyama, 1992), whereby what was theoretically clear regarding his position from the outset, is now confirmed both by the dark, real existence of the Western world and by the descent into a pre-democratic, and almost pre-state, order. In contrast, the end of history about which one could speak meaningfully today has a different character: ”…it is a question of imposing, through a systematic sequence of messages, the equivalence

of history and the trivial news item, of event and spectacle, of information and advertising at the level of the sign" (Baudrillard, 2012, p. 110). In other words, if the absence of reference of images and signs establishes a state of their *principled* untruthfulness, i.e. not merely a *factual* falsity but the very *impossibility* of truth since the sign no longer corresponds to anything, then history is also impossible. History, as a humanistic category, is not merely the indifferent passage of physical time and the eventual, uninterested recording of "events" within it, but is a *qualitative difference* in time which is now made impossible by the non-referentiality of the sign. If eventfulness has become a principled non-eventfulness, a simulation without an ontological foundation, the absolute of appearance, then we are not only beyond truth and falsehood, but also beyond history. Hence, in a state of simulation, the experience of total sameness, the loss of the distinction between mere chronology and history, of which Baudrillard speaks. The use of concepts such as "post-truth" (Farkas, J. and Schou, J. 2020, pp. 50−53) and "fake news" (Farkas, J. and Schou, J., 2020, pp. 53−55), which is today completely devoid of irony, and the entry of the Western world into neo-fascist reformulations of individual, collective and international space, with the actual destruction of the validity of the ideas of democracy, the legal system, international law, and human rights, has roots that can be clearly discerned in Marx's analysis of alienation. The development of this concept and its manifestations is more quantitative in nature than that it contains anything conceptually new.

IN CONCLUSION: NEGATIVITY, AUTONOMY AND PRACTICAL SUBJECTIVITY AS A PEDAGOGICAL OVERCOMING OF DYSTOPIAN EXISTENCE

The abstraction and separation of subject and object is revealed as the essence of alienation, as well as its later forms of the culture industry, spectacle, and simulation. The subject is not merely rational, but a productive or self-productive moment in humanity. This is what Kant identified as freedom and defined as the power to initiate an event from itself (sponte) (Kant, 1953b)[32]. Freedom, as the possibility for a chain of causality to begin of its own accord, without a prior cause to which the free act would be a consequence, is the condition of possibility of subjectivity. It is that which essentially tears the subject out of mere nature, which is a two-way infinite chain of causality, and which sets him/her as a task for him/herself. It is that which makes upbringing and education a *necessity* for humans, and not a mere chance that may or may not occur (Kant, 2024, p. 13). The object is, in this respect, that by which the subject, as the causality of freedom, is determined. As Kant showed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, experience cannot be constituted either as a pure

[32] See especially inquiry on pages 102−103.

rationality that would determine itself from pure rational notions, nor as mere impressions of empiria on (self-)consciousness understood as a *tabula rasa*. In contrast, experience is only possible as an a priori-synthetic, spontaneous act of the categories of pure reason, which synthesises perceptions, i.e., empiria (Kant, 1976, p. 136). In other words, the subject requires the object in order to come to experience. Experience is not possible without either the transcendental subject or empiria (Kant, 1976, pp. 111-112). Empiria, nature, materiality, the world is the object through which freedom is mediated and given its determination.

However, the subject as freedom cannot in principle be confined to any empiricism, any concrete and final form of the world, any concrete object. In the strict sense, the subject is always the dialectic of subject-object. If one thinks strictly, neither an abstracted subject nor an abstracted object is possible. The position that they are possible as such, takes us back to the pre-Kantian discussion of so-called rationalism and so-called empiricism, both of which unilaterally presuppose the ontological reality of either reason or empiria, and derive one from the other. To confine the subject to an object, to a specific empiria or a specific appearance of subjectivity, is the very essence of alienation. The notion that an object is a final ”reality”, a ”fact”, not seen as a product of action but as an ontological being, any empiria to which we relate as ”reality” while thought is merely its mere reflection, in the way J. Locke conceived it, is a reified relationship. But equally, it is not only the empirical that can appear to us as an independent object, but also, for example, the idea of values that would exist as a being-in-itself, prior to any subject, or indeed any ideal being which the subject, just as with the empirical, would merely reflect in its existence. The *image* in the relationship of the spectacle exists in this way, as well as in the *sign* freed from the referent in simulation. In contrast to both of these positions (that of the abstracted subject and object), the result of thought from Kant to Hegel and Marx is the insight that human freedom is understood as autonomous, self-legislating self-production. This self-production has its root in human as the causality of freedom, who is, alongside it, capable of practical, or teleological, notions, by which (s)he gives him/herself his/her determination in relation to the object, the world, and through the mediation of the world. In this dialectic, the secularisation of man and the humanisation of the world occur simultaneously. Alienation is any position where an abstracted object, be it an empiricism or an idealism that exists as an object-being-in-itself, is posited as a ”reality”, a ”truth” which, as an ontological foundation, determines the subject. The situation is the opposite; subject-objectivity produces both the subject and the object. Herein lies the key to overcoming dystopian realities. Namely, despite the great differences and metamorphoses of what is called dystopia, it always rests on a pre-supposed ”reality” and understanding of the world, the disabling and suppression of

otherness (which is necessary for opening up the space for negativity and dialectical development), locked definitions of the individual, leader, state, nation, historical ”sacred cows”, often technocratic rationality, propaganda and manipulation. Alienation and its forms are therefore a means of producing the groundwork for dystopian realities, as well as, in principle, closing off the possibility of their overcoming. Conversely, as we have shown above, the dialectic, negativity and subject-objectivity in the form of pedagogy ensure that ”reality” cannot be ”locked down” in this way. The subject-object dialectic in pedagogy is conceived and framed as the dialectic of educability-education. How can and should pedagogy act if it wishes to overcome alienation and its forms, and thereby, in principle, position itself as anti-dystopian?

Firstly, pedagogical activity, in order for the dialectics of pedagogy to be established at all, must be directed towards *awakening and fostering educability*. Namely, although the causality of freedom is that which constitutes the notion of human in him/herself, this does not yet mean that this essential possibility of human will also be *actualised* in a particular existence. Educability must not only exist in the notion of the human in him/herself, but must also be self-consciously realised by each pedagogical subject, in relation to him/herself, in order for the process of self-determination to be realised and set in motion. Especially in dystopian scenarios, consumerist survival, the pressure of surveillance, the culture industry, the glare of the spectacle, and various heteronomies hinder the self-awareness of educability in the individual. The knowledge about one’s educability cannot simply be ”transmitted” to the subject from the outside. Pedagogical action can only *point this out* to the pedagogical subject, but this self-awareness must be realised at the level of each individual subject, from within. Therefore, the first task of pedagogy is the deconstruction of the uncritically, non-autonomously adopted positions within the individual, dogmas, habits and norms that the subject has acquired through acculturation, without having examined them with their own reason, as well as the heteronomous attitude towards the world in general, which constitutes an obstacle to the pedagogical subject’s opening up to their own freedom, educability and the use of their own reason. Liberation from heteronomy is not sufficient; alongside it, educability must also be actively fostered by stimulating interest as an autonomous orientation towards the world, an orientation towards otherness in relation to one’s own pre-formed experience. This is a focus on negativity, in the way we have previously considered it, on that which I am not yet, and which lies outside of me. A focus on otherness as the negation of the already-formed self. It is precisely this negativity that ensures the pedagogical subject remains in an open dialectical relationship with the world. Therefore, the educator must constantly encourage not just knowledge and the formation of experience, but this tense, dialectical relationship with the world in their pupil.

Secondly, in line with the self-aware and enlivened educability of the pupil, it is necessary to *equip and encourage the pupil towards autonomy*. Self-awareness of educability is a prerequisite for autonomy. Namely, when I am aware that I am nothing pre-given, that there is no pre-given essence that I have to copy in my existence, then I am open for experiences of myself, other people and the world to mean something to me in an educational sense, that they form me, not that I merely ”know” them in an abstract-cognitive way. I can ”know” that human is freedom understood as self-production. I can even understand this conceptual determination. That is mere knowledge. But only if I grasp that this is *essential* knowledge, that this insight fundamentally defines my human *being*, and not merely my abstract, logical knowledge, then that knowledge, that insight, becomes something that defines me in my *existence*. The pedagogical notion of education (Bildung) has this character. Without self-awareness of educability, knowledge will always remain merely knowledge *about* something, knowledge *of* something, which has no feedback, no reflexive, formative quality for the very character of the subject's existence, and thus will not become education. The same applies to skills and competencies. An individual can be an athlete with supreme abilities and achievements, but not be formed as an athlete, or in other words, not *be* an athlete him/herself. It is possible to be a professor with supreme teaching skills or a surgeon with supreme surgical skills, without those individuals being formed in such a way that they think, feel, and experience the light of freedom and reason, or a healthy physical life, as their essential and universal need. Autonomy combines the moment of freedom with the moment of determination. Educability must be realised as the *self-mediation* of freedom through the world, its content, and its determinations. Self-mediation is the development of the pupil's capacity for rationality and determination, for reflection and teleological notions. The crucial point regarding autonomy is that an individual cannot be pedagogically and legitimately mediated by another's, heteronomous, understanding of the world. (S)he must understand the world for him/herself, and pedagogy should guide him/her in developing this ability. This ability is the empowerment of one's own reason, one's own power of critique as the analysis of objectivity, one's own power of synthesising objectivity, one's own patience, thoroughness, systematicness and perseverance, which enables one not to fall under the influence of alienated, heteronomous, already formed realities, manipulation and propaganda, phenomena such as ”fake news”, contradictory determinations, and insincere promises that a critical subject could see through, and so on. Dystopia, in its various manifestations, always exists as a pre-formed ”truth”, whereas pedagogy, through its dialectic, can in principle overcome this by fostering the autonomy of reason in the learner. The pupil, therefore, after self-awareness and the encouragement of their own educability, should be enabled and encouraged to use their own reason, by which this

awakened educability will now self-mediate in an open, dialectical, and self-producing manner. A person so educated cannot become an authoritarian spirit, which includes both the position of the authoritarian subject and that of the object of external authoritarianism.

Thirdly, in the wake of the awakening of educability and the realisation of autonomy through self-mediation, it is also necessary to develop the educand as a political subject. Following Kant and Fichte, whom we have cited and who have contemplated the notions of freedom, autonomy, self-production and self-determination, but equally in the wake of the educational thinkers on whom we have relied, such as Humboldt, Herbart, Heitger and Hornstein, the dialectic of pedagogy in the relationship between freedom and the self-mediation of self-awareness through the world is an essentially *practical* category. I. Kant from the outset reveals the logic of self-mediation and self-determination as a matter of practical reason, and not of pure (theoretical) reason, that is to say, as a matter of the *will*. Fichte and the entire philosophical tradition to which we refer clearly and consistently follow and develop this further. The fact that this concerns the practical reason and the will means that the pedagogical subject, understood in this way, must first actively transform itself in its existence and its practical manifestations, but then equally that it must, after this *individual, ethical* practical space, enter the *common* practical space, and thus form itself as a *political* and social subject (Fichte, 1979, pp. 153−159). This sociability, as mutual interaction towards self-perfection through freedom, historical dialectics, and consequently the idea of democracy, is what the Enlightenment project also entails in the sense of the free *public* use of reason (Kant, 2000, p. 36). In this vein, the pedagogical subject must become an active citizen, an active democratic subject. A necessary prerequisite for this, however, is that they realise their individuality as autonomy, as discussed in the previous two points. Whereas dystopia works on the individual's powerlessness, not only external but also internal, as well as on their passivity and inability to use their own reason, pedagogy here emerges as Enlightenment in the sense of first the ability, and then the courage, to use one's *own* autonomous reason (Kant, 2000, p. 35) and then the necessity of using it *publicly*.

In the dystopian context of totalitarianism, the school as an educational institution no longer functions as a space for education and emancipation, but as one of the fundamental apparatuses for maintaining the current ideology. In line with Hume's thought that "all authority must rest upon the control of the mind" (Chomsky, 2006, p. 4), Chomsky describes how in contemporary democracies power is no longer maintained through open repression, but by controlling thought because "thoughts are what can lead to action and must therefore be kept on a leash" (Chomsky, 2006, p. 8). In this context, schools, rather than fostering the development of critical thinking, actualisation and educability as such, become *part of the apparatus of disinformation* (Chomsky,

2006, p. 41). Indeed, in his text Chomsky describes the roles of the school and states that they are ”institutions for teaching, for imposing obedience, for preventing the possibility of any independent thought” (Chomsky, 2006, p. 42), and notes that the role of the school boils down to control and coercion. Such a school does not educate, but trains; it does not teach one to think, but only to repeat. Such an education, which presents itself as liberating yet in its essence produces obedient subjects adapted to the logic of the order, can be very skilfully linked to the mentioned Orwellian slogan that symbolises this very paradox. Ultimately, ”the result is the well-known Orwellian language, which is, without a doubt, only the language of terrorist totalitarianism” (Marcuse, 1968, p. 94). A similar thought is expressed by S. Alić, who argues that ”schooling pretends to be a process of educating” (Alić, 2012, p. 18), thereby turning the processes of upbringing and education into a spectacle and a market product. In such totalitarian circumstances, it is clearly visible that to maintain dystopian frameworks, violence is not necessary; as has been described earlier, only the semblance of freedom and knowledge is sufficient. Ultimately, it can be clearly inferred that the school has lost its emancipatory function, retaining almost exclusively its disciplinary one.

Ultimately, when considering broader social transformation as opposed to dystopian elements, social change articulated through pedagogy can only be articulated from the bottom up. Pedagogy, as P. Vuk-Pavlović said, always takes place as a ”face-to-face” relationship (Vuk-Pavlović, 1932, pp. 82−83), that is to say, pedagogical action does not take place like the actions of politicians, administrators, and so on, but rather seeks to establish a basis for action through broad, fundamental, public educational work, a basis which, as self-aware pedagogical and social subjects, should empower democratic and transparent co-governance of society. Dystopia always appears as the totalitarianism of a spurious truth, enclosed in some alienated form, whereas pedagogy has a self-determining, co-governing, temporal, and time-creating democracy as its social outcome. In this sense, the social transformation that stems from pedagogy cannot be reduced to an exclusively technical or institutional change, but is a process of transforming people themselves, their relationships, their consciousness and their values. In a world where, as E. Fromm warns, ”we become happy when we kill the time which we try so hard to save” (Fromm, 1989, p. 17), a profound alienation of the individual from their own community, and from themselves, is evident. Antidystopian and pedagogical action, in contrast, seeks to awaken a consciousness of individual responsibility and the capacity for change, guiding individuals and society towards forms of community founded on dialogue, understanding, and cooperation. Finally, as Adorno points out, the fate of society need not be predetermined, and ”It depends upon human beings themselves whether they will extinguish these lights and awake from a nightmare which only threatens to become actual as long as men believe in it.” (Adorno, 1991b, p. 83).

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