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Formação humana, identidade big-data e os desafios da educação

Human formation, big-data identity, and the challenges of education

Formación humana, identidad de big data y los retos de la educación

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Resumo: A reflexão crítica e autocrítica sobre a formação cultural, diante de crises mundiais de diferentes ordens, é uma exigência da realidade social e seu contexto político. Esse artigo é uma releitura da cultura moderna entre indústria cultural e cultura digital, os elementos que contribuíram para os avanços tecnológicos, formação cultural e constituição dos sujeitos. Fundamentado na teoria crítica da sociedade e na dialética negativa adorniana, questiona-se como ocorre, no contexto da realidade capitalista, a relação entre o grande salto tecnológico na cultura moderna e o potencial de humanização. O artigo é dividido em três seções e discorre sobre o conceito de progresso tecnológico, reflexões sobre a cultura moderna e as evidências do recrudescimento de uma semiformação sobre a educação.

Abstract: Critical and self-critical reflection on cultural formation in the face of world crises of different kinds is a requirement of social reality and its political context. This article is a rereading of modern culture between cultural industry and digital culture, the elements that contributed to technological advances, cultural formation, and the constitution of subjects. Based on the critical theory of society and Adorno's negative dialectic, the question arises of how the relationship between the great technological leap in modern culture and the potential for humanization occurs in the context of capitalist reality. The article is divided into three sections and discusses the concept of technological progress, reflections on modern culture, and evidence of the resurgence of semi-education.

Resumen: La reflexión crítica y autocrítica sobre la formación cultural, ante crisis mundiales de diferentes órdenes, es una exigencia de la realidad social y su contexto político. Este artículo es una relectura de la cultura moderna entre industria cultural y cultura digital, los elementos que contribuyeron a los avances tecnológicos, formación cultural y constitución de los sujetos. Fundado en la teoría crítica de la sociedad y en la dialéctica negativa adorniana, cómo ocurre, en el contexto de la realidad capitalista, la relación entre el gran salto tecnológico en la cultura moderna y el potencial de humanización. El artículo se divide en tres secciones y habla sobre el concepto de progreso tecnológico, reflexiones sobre la cultura moderna y las evidencias del resurgimiento de una semiformación sobre la educación.

Introduction

This paper comprises a critical reading on digital culture features. Antunes and Maia (2018) conceptualize digital culture as a new industrial domain with specific characteristics, masquerading as an open and democratic culture that endorses total individuality.

Hence, this article aims to reflect on cultural formation in light of the Critical Theory of Society and the updated concept of Cultural Industry, as elaborated by Adorno and Horkheimer (1985). The phenomenon refers to an alleged unremarkable progress and emancipation of social experience. It supports the maintenance of continuous consumption, which affects the state of consciousness and unconsciousness socially conditioned to cultural conformity.

Modern culture comprises ideological content for social conformity and a political context within a self-preservation drive. These ideologies manipulate objects and social relations of production. Considering technology reflects enhanced work in material and human terms, it prompts a profound analysis of ideological and cultural mediation, which presents itself as a crafting and alienation instrument in the face of institutionalized rationality (Adorno; Horkheimer, 1985).

What stands out in modern culture are various social challenges rooted in pragmatic activities that lack critical experiences. They prioritize general results and quantification, restructuring the working world through

classificatory criteria as a "key" for progress, knowledge, and rationality. Considering Adornian criticism, this context prevents the genuine experience of consciousness and self-critique (Adorno, 1994). Nonetheless, the Cultural Industry aids prominent economic groups. It conceals the historical aspects of the alienation process and secures a communication network that reinforces the insufficiency and fragility of studies that could advance its criticism (Adorno; Horkheimer, 1985).

The advantages of quantifying data are inherent to historical development and have made meaningful contributions to science to some extent. However, Mau (2019) stresses significant issues, namely contradictions in the process that require attention and critical examination. In response to the accelerating trend of metrication, which Dueck (2013, p. 37) also labels as "omnimetria" or universal measurement, we highlight that quantitative attributions actively reinforce ideological mechanisms that shape our comprehension of inequalities, visibly and directly. Thus, although previously unthinkable comparisons justified and established hierarchical contexts, numbers emerge as the primary agent of metric standardization, demonstrating their role in institutionalizing politics and markets.

Available statistical data craft reality and enable the creation of a direct competition mechanism between individuals. In this domain, classification concerns the evaluation and social value judgment. These features are continuously interested in reinforcing the levels of consumer

satisfaction and new self-surveillance practices that disperse modernized competitiveness and optimization methods.

According to Antunes and Maia (2018), the social effect of digital culture comprises the production of life in the face of content reception, whose format is not fixed and absolute. It responds to an apparent determination using resources drawn from its creators. Sichman (2021) emphasizes that the effects of digital culture heavily depend on dispersal mechanisms. Therefore, they rely on statistical control, which results from a series of systematically planned commands (through instructions or operations) to reach a singular goal, the algorithm.

Moreover, Mau (2019) stresses algorithms as mechanisms to apply administered formulas and methods, promising retribution as a "genuine experience" for consumers of culture. They encounter a system of unrestricted stimuli, manipulating choices, ways of thinking, and behaving. Thus, it comprises a cumulative effect, primarily to accomplish a standard structure under the mask of individuality, fed by content and procedures of conformity control to the new media order.

Adorno and Horkheimer (1985) observed these procedures in the 1940s. Even then, the authors exposed that the Cultural Industry's massification effects should constitute an object for self-critique and critical education due to mechanisms that obscure its intentionality. Although modes of production and thinking about social life historically change, we emphasize the need to reflect on the

elements that contradict the praxis of promised freedom and subject emancipation.

These elements conceal the inflexibility of dominant social structures beneath the facade of freedom. The connection between development and power projection is inconsistent because, although mediatic expansionism is inherent in the capitalistic accumulation mechanism, it simultaneously suggests anticapitalist propaganda when stating that digital culture offers commodities, services, utility, consumption potential, and unrestricted access to the masses.

Alongside this, Adorno (1995a) recognizes that education advanced in humanization to a certain point. However, when linked to culture and its facets, it reinforces contradiction and remains an education for social conformity, convention, administration, integration, and maintenance of instrumentalized rationality. Therefore, in its potential and diminishment, critical education is crucial, above all, to objectively analyze the content produced by modern culture and the specific structural mechanisms that impact human formation.

Considering this, it is essential to comprehend the significance and escalation of technique over the individual in modern times. Moreover, we need to consider the developmental impacts concerning progress conceptualization and its implications for digital culture in contemporary society, especially regarding the formation of individuals.

The fact that modern culture presupposes a different logic, which, according to Adorno (2020b), constitutes itself as an administrative sector of entertainment, sets it apart from the one that opposes administration: "It aspires to embody what is most elevated and pure - something untouched by technical or practical criteria. In the realm of humanistic education, this is called autonomy"[1] (p. 242, our translation).

Thus, we inquire if contemporary culture - including the digital one - doesn't carry traces of false consciousness, which has become more sophisticated. The prevailing conformity historically consolidates itself due to a culture measured by stimuli and information incoherent with the concept of culture. It is necessary to reflect on how a dimension of digital culture presents itself as a strong and socially integrated "network" for content diffusion.

Furthermore, according to Adorno (1995a), education is a multidisciplinary endeavor and, thus, encompasses a wide range of subjects. These subjects comprise an essential philosophical reflection on consciousness formation and self-mediation. The question regarding consciousness formation relates to the products of the mind and how aspects of social structure, positions, and ideologies impact education. Accordingly, we can critically reflect on what

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[1] **Original citation:** "Ela gostaria de ser tudo aquilo que há de mais alto e puro; aquilo que, sendo intocável, não foi modelado por quaisquer critérios técnicos ou práticos. Na linguagem da formação humanista isso se chama autonomia" (Adorno, 2020b, p. 242).

culture communicates and what experiences formation presumes.

The impact of the Cultural Industry in reality and the behavior of individuals intensified with digital culture. Antunes and Maia (2018) mention the dimension within reach of its immediate messages, suggesting the significance of analyzing its impact. However standardized they are, even the slightest nuances within the constant provide opportunities for differentiation within the broader context.

Following this theme, this article constitutes three sections. To start, it approaches the concept of the technological process and its outcomes. Secondly, it discusses the restructuring of modern culture in the face of Cultural Industry and digital culture. Finally, it reflects on the educational challenges under an emancipatory perspective facing digital culture. Thus, the relationship between education and culture requires consideration.

The theoretical and bibliographical references review "Big Data, Ubiquitous Exploitation, and Targeted Advertising: New Facets of the Cultural Industry"[2] by Antunes and Maia (2018); Dialoguing with Adorno and Horkheimer (1985); Adorno (1973; 1995a; 2009, 2020a; 2020b); Benjamin (2012); Hobsbawm (2005); Kant (1987); Koselleck (2020); Mau (2019); and Zuin (2001, 2015).

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[2] ANTUNES, D. C.; MAIA, A. F. Big Data, exploração ubíqua e propaganda dirigida: novas facetas da indústria cultural.

Historical context of technological progress and its results on culture

The industrial society carries traces of progress, which, according to Hobsbawm (2005), was ideologically understood as a technical and social process allied with successful and positive potential in reality. Therefore, the concept registers effective uncritical transformations in society. Ideologically, as a crucial historical concept, progress has a mystified dimension as the progress of humanity. The advancements indicated the impossibility of living without technology, manifesting in different ways throughout the years.

Thus, from one perspective, culture, at the service of life, connects to progress to provide new possibilities. On the other hand, Adorno (2020b) mentions how its control promoted a coercive habitat camouflaged with universally programmed identities. The manipulative effects of culture produce these identities and reach subjectivity, offering mechanisms and technical means as a "window of sense"[3] of irresistible power triggered by the dialectics of progress.

Digital culture aims to engage individuals. Its authority lies within the engagement appeal using standardized strategies and tricks - that are objectified and transformed into authoritarianism. Considering there is no space for objection, the individuals conform to its demands. Additionally, what supports the adherence by a majority is

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[3] **Original expression, in Brazilian Portuguese:** "janela de sentidos".

the ideology's psychological factors, which emanate from the individuals' emotional needs.

For Adorno (2020a), the illusory security that promotes this adherence takes root in anti-democratic prospects. In a determined and authoritarian order, the appeal to the standard personality nurtures that very personality. This process happens through the skill of propagandist means based on rational methods but for irrational purposes. As a result, their technical mechanisms overpower social goals.

The generalization results in progress as a relevant element and emphasizes subject-object inversion. This concept of progress, assuming a distinctive and dominant meaning, infiltrates the political, economic, scientific, educational, and cultural domains and promotes instrumental rationality within administered society (Adorno, 2020b).

Essentially, digital culture is an ideological potential of the dominant culture, and it manifests as its central core. Its mechanisms impact the formation of individuals in the 20th century, and Adorno and Horkheimer (1973) highlight the dimensions of this historical connection in their work. The authors state ideology "as conscious objectively needed and, at the same time, fraudulent, as the inseparable relationship between truth and untruth, which therefore differentiates from complete truth and absolute fallacy, belongs strictly to

our society [...]" (Adorno; Horkheimer, p. 190-191, our translation)[4].

The critique of ideology relates to power and the knowledge produced for its maintenance. Its fallacy in association with industrial work became the societal model and evolved to conceal the contradictions between oppression and freedom justified by so-called progress.

Although significant advancements enabled social change, especially in the 20th-century culture, there is a common denominator - the expansion of virtual features, in which Adorno and Horkheimer (1985) identify mechanisms like "[...] the statistical survey, cataloging, and classification that introduces culture into the domain of administration. Only industrialized subsumption is entirely suitable for this concept of culture. This subsumption, ironically, conveys the unitary culture concept [...]" (Adorno, Horkheimer, 1985, p. 108, our translation).[5]

The persuasive and ideological discourse of modern culture hinders the subjects' autonomy. It acts through mechanisms of the Cultural Industry, while ideology is the paradigmatic expression of reality, characterized by standardized definitions and representations.

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[4] **Original citation:** "como consciência objetivamente necessária e, ao mesmo tempo, falsa, como interligação inseparável da verdade e inverdade, que se distingue, portanto, da verdade total tanto quando da pura mentira, pertence senão, unicamente à nossa sociedade [...]" (Adorno; Horkheimer, 1973, p. 190-191).

[5] **Original citation:** '[...] o levantamento estatístico, a catalogação, a classificação que introduz a cultura no domínio da administração. Só a subsunção industrializada e consequentemente é inteiramente adequada a esse conceito de cultura. [...] essa subsunção realiza ironicamente o conceito de cultura unitária [...]" (Adorno; Horkheimer, 1985, p. 108).

For Zuin and Zuin (2001; 2015), this culture emerges as a new and necessary phenomenon for maintaining social structure. Thus, modern culture persists and intensifies, suggesting equalizing their content to the microelectronic revolution and strengthening digital production in different media. The monopolization of power instigates this equalization, which encompasses the public and private spheres and is nothing more than the association of the sovereign authority of monopolized power with the universal interest of society.

Technological rationality reproduction subjugates individuals and leads them to adhere to the system and its illusions. In *Dialética do Esclarecimento* [Dialect of Enlightenment], we observe how the ideological support preserves "[...] blind and progressive domination. It transforms into the deception of the masses, thus functioning as a mechanism to restrain their consciousness" (Adorno; Horkheimer, 1985, p. 99, our translation).[6] A socially produced mechanism emerges, and it can make reality a symbolic environment that conceals conflicts. Thus, the product offer, including publicity, seduces individuals and induces them to deny the factuality and themselves.

Adorno (1995b) argues that, in the face of the concealed rigor justified by the self-preservation behaviors of social individuals, the generalization of discourses elicits conformity. Thus, cultural mechanisms, which sustain

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[6] **Original citation:** "[...] a dominação cega e progressiva, se transforma em engodo das massas, isto é, um meio de tolher a sua consciência" (Adorno; Horkheimer, 1985, p. 99).

individuals' defenses and adaptation in their ways of life, "nourish" and promote an increasing disconnection from the self.

Throughout historical events, alienating conditions and determining factors come into play, extending themselves at various levels and periods guided by their respective political and economic power agendas. In addition, the significance of critical experience lies in distinguishing between representations understood as concepts and the opportunity to uncover what they hide: the contradictions. Thus, reflection raises questions so that, in the face of conflicts, it allows searching for paths that resignify what has been shaped by reality.

In that sense, Antunes and Maia (2018) emphasize: "The cultural industry, while offering a standardized world and a series of boxed and stereotypical ideas to consumers, has kept them from the possibility of choosing beyond the reproduction of patterns within the behavior of masses" (p. 190, our translation).[7]

The authors analyze the Cultural Industry considering the lack of a formative experience. This phenomenon is somewhat obscure, where appearances replace essential meaning since people choose under the influence of suggested cultural options and compulsive adherence. What one abides or expels from oneself is highly connected to the pursuit of autonomy within heteronomy, seeing as the

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[7] **Original citation:** "A indústria cultural, ao oferecer um mundo padronizado e um rol de pensamentos estereotipados e em bloco a seus consumidores, os havia privado da possibilidade de exercer uma escolha para além da imitação de padrões dentro de um comportamento de massa" (Antunes; Maia, 2018, p. 190).

apparatus defines the former on what is deemed valuable and profitable.

Reconceptualizing culture: cultural industry and digital culture

Considering the law of dialectic movements within society, especially those that express the origin of the current situation and its tendency, is not restricted to historical facts and evidence or even isolated social manifestations, often generalizing the particular. On the contrary, this reflection requires practicing critical sense when assessing structural social relations, the tendencies, control, and mechanisms in current society, with no restriction to particular inquiries.

According to Adorno and Horkheimer (1985), society contradicts humanizing formation and prioritizes profit. Consumption helps to achieve this priority, classifying social individuals as clientele. The subject of needs lies far beyond any naive imagination, stemming from the technical stage of productive forces and economic relationships.

In that sense, society is not socially neutral. We must understand it through a functional concept rather than a sum of people who live in the same era or time. Additionally, we must consider another aspect: how people exist for others and how they are classified based on what they do and the relationship between them.

The outcomes concerning technology, culture, and society of exchange relate to the concept of Cultural Industry. Thus, when studying the objects, we must not disregard their historical materiality. To Adorno, "the knowledge of an object within its constellation is the understanding of the process that it accumulates in itself. As a constellation, the theoretical thinking outlines the concept it wishes to open, hoping it will arise [...]" (2009, p. 141-142, our translation). [8]

If concepts undergo historical modifications, although history does not restrict itself to a conceptual notion, it's inconceivable to reflect on it without this conceptual assessment. It is worth mentioning that something unique and new may emerge, but it's never so fresh to be considered infeasible by long-established social conditions.

Indeed, as Kant (1987) asserted, "Without drawing from experience itself the example of its connection, we would fall into mere chimeras" (p. 269).[9] Therefore, since there are no experiences without concepts and vice versa, we should not comprehend the concept's temporality and repetition constantly and linearly but rather consider its temporal structures and dialectic movement.

The current concept of Cultural Industry expands to include Digital Culture and refers to the outcomes of social

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[8] **Original citation:** "o conhecimento do objeto em sua constelação é o conhecimento do processo que ele acumula em si. Enquanto constelação, o pensamento teórico circunscreve o conceito que ele gostaria de abrir, esperando que ele salte [...]" (Adorno, 2009, p. 141-142).

[9] **Original citation:** "sem retirar da própria experiência o exemplo da sua conexão, cairíamos em puras quimeras" (Kant, 1987, p. 269)

history. We can't overlook the difference between fading reality and its linguistic expressions, which can never become a supposed identity. Thus, it is crucial to inquire about the state of the things the Cultural Industry apprehended and the things that changed, allowing the individual to escape the concept through digital culture. How should the shifting reality be understood and conceptualized in a new perspective if its structure proposes the same principles?

Concurrently, with the advancement of the cultural industry, fundamental historical concepts instigated changes in the existing conditions (desirable, necessary, and obligatory modifications). These concepts are highly generalized, a product of ideological influence, and susceptible to ideologies of all kinds. This process promotes the democratization of these concepts, which are no longer built upon experience but instead forged in their immediacy. Consequently, social and political factors beyond concrete experience increasingly shape real-life experiences.

The conflict arises between the necessity for organization and decision-making in individual and collective life and the question of which symbolic and life references individuals can use. The fetishized image created by the cultural industry relates to what Freud (2010) called a "narcissistic rupture with the fantasy of an omnipotent Self" (p. 46, our translation).[10] It promotes the possibility of being

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[10] **Original citation:** "fissura narcísica com a fantasia de um Eu onipotente" (Freud, 2010, p. 46).

and knowing oneself, of surrendering to reality's imperatives, thus requiring a concealed standardization, portrayed as a model of freedom in the public space.

Antunes and Maia refer to the Cultural Industry as a "result of enlightenment and all of the techno-scientific progress it fostered, dedicated to perpetuating a collective state of false consciousness, vital for the sustenance of economic imperatives"(2018, p. 191).[11] Digital culture is a consequence of the Cultural Industry or its endorsement. It acts as a tool that further conceals contradictions within the Culture Industry while highlighting the facade of freedom. This culture intensifies through continuously advanced technological means, similar to how the Cultural Industry did through advertising. Consequently,

> [...] it is evident the need to assess and consider technological advancements in the communication field, which have the potential to elevate users of new digital devices to the status of consumer-producers, surpassing the supposed passivity of cultural industry viewers in the mid-20th century (Antunes; Maia, 2018, p. 191).[12]

This concept of freedom, proposed through standardized forms of communication, implies the

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[11] **Original citation:** "fruto do esclarecimento e de todo progresso tecnocientífico por ele fomentado, e amplamente voltada para manter a todos em um estado de falsa consciência necessária para a manutenção de necessidades econômicas" (Antunes; Maia, 2018, p. 191).

[12] **Original citation:** [...] é evidente a necessidade de avaliar e considerar os desenvolvimentos tecnológicos no campo da comunicação, que teriam o poder de alçar os usuários das novas máquinas digitais ao nível de consumidores-produtores, superando a suposta passividade dos espectadores da indústria cultural em meados do século XX (Antunes; Maia, 2018, p. 191).

association of democracy with limited experiences. This results in the establishment of the naturalization of a pseudo-freedom. The collapse of cultural formation neglects the parameters of human experience. Thus, the universalization of semi-formation (*Hallbildung*), as Zuin mentions (2001), contradicts the practice of resistance and weakens individuality.

Moreover, we cite the significant paradox in historical evidence since the Enlightenment, when knowledge expanded to enhance reason and the false state of consciousness for progress' sake. Therefore, if knowledge ideologically serves formation, enlightenment, and emancipation, then understanding the concept of progress should be a conscious action where subjects are mindful of their role in promoting and altering it.

Much like the absence of formative experiences, digital culture stands out for the immediate, valuable, and the lack of critical discernment. Antunes and Maia (2018) display the expression *Big Data,* which Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier define as "society's ability to benefit from the information in innovative ways, aiming at useful perceptions or goods and services of significant value" (p. 192, our translation).[13] The authors elucidate that:

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[13] **Original citation:** "a capacidade da sociedade de aproveitar a informação de formas novas, para obter percepções úteis ou bens e serviços de valor significativo" (Antunes; Maia, 2018, p. 192)

> Rather than theories to explain occurrences aiming to generalize results through samples, data processing operates through frequency analysis, searching for **patterns to obtain predictability**. In that sense, Big Data **does not scour for the reason of occurrences, but what occurs,** compelling society to forfeit "part of its obsession for causality in exchange for mere correlations" (Mayer-Schönberger; Cukier, 2013, p. 18 apud Antunes, Maia, 2018, 191, our emphasis, our translation).[14]

The possibilities concerning formative experiences that enable inquiries, from doubts to reflection, are decisive in building consciousness. Not by chance, digital culture targets the erasure of this process. The goal is to sustain alienation and user control and liquidate memory, time, and recollection as if they were irrational residues. Accordingly, Adorno comments:

> [...] the progressive rationalization of industrial production procedures extinguishes, with the remnants of artisanal activities, categories like learning [...]. When humanity alienates itself from memory, breathlessly expending itself in adaptation to the existing, this reflects an objective law of development. (Adorno, 1995a, p. 33, our translation)

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[14] **Original citation:** No lugar de teorias que explicariam os acontecimentos buscando generalizar resultados a partir de amostras, o processamento dos dados trabalha com a análise da frequência, na busca de **padrões, visando obter previsibilidade**. Nesse sentido, o Big Data **não busca nenhuma explicação do porquê as coisas acontecem, apenas o que acontece,** forçando a sociedade a abrir mão de "parte de sua obsessão pela causalidade em troca de meras correlações" (Mayer-Schönberger & Cukier, 2013, p. 18, apud Antunes; Maia, 2018, p. 191, grifo nosso)

In this context, the one who actively exerts economic and political power continuously observes economic parameters and indicators. They aspire to ascend and follow perceptions of value that should prevail and maintain new competitive environments, considering the algorithm's singular power to avoid the question of legitimacy and strengthen commercial interests.

To Mau (2019), the escalation of quantification and its outcomes illustrate the concept of administered rationality. It underlines professional patterns, the creation of false incentives due to goal indicators, and time waste that sum up to other resources that heighten competitiveness. The connection between quantification and control relies on the growth of surveillance and the promised transparency of numbers, and it offers the high-level engagement that quantification requires; surveillance comes from the outside, but the individuals also facilitate the conduction of such procedures.

When examining the reputation of status data converted into social currencies, quantified society actively establishes disparities among individuals, which are associated with advantages and disadvantages. Thus, an inequality regime expands concurrently to the power of numbers, transitioning from class conflict to individual competition. This aspect constitutes a challenge to envision education.

Challenges of education in the face digital culture

Imposed standardization and the absence of experience - hence, the lack of critique and self-criticism - are enough to reflect the challenges education encounters. Adorno (2009) attributes the change to the unparalleled predominance of technicism, which shapes thought and turns it against its essence, against the core of reflection:

> Anything distinctive appears as divergent, discordant, and negative until the point in which consciousness, according to its formation, is compelled to impose unity, until the moment it begins to assess what is not identical to it based on its claim to totality. That is what dialectics presents to consciousness as contradictory. (Adorno, 2009, p. 13, our translation)[15]

This cultural formation could convey the Cultural Industry's domination mechanisms, which offer the appearance of exceptional progress and the misleading idea of social experience emancipation. According to Zuin (2011), "It is harsh for critical thinking to survive in a society in which individuals become 'resonance boxes' of messages that seduce through the encouragement of integration [...]" (p.

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[15] **Original citation:** O que é diferenciado aparece como divergente, dissonante, negativo, até o momento em que a consciência, segundo a sua própria formação, se vê impelida a impor unidade: até o momento em que ela   passa a avaliar o que não lhe é idêntico a partir de sua pretensão de totalidade. Isso é o que a dialética apresenta à consciência como contraditório (ADORNO, 2009, p. 13).

11, our translation).[16] However, education for liberation can undertake moments of reflection, aiming at elucidating and comprehending the cultural and political conditions that arise. Such conditions must be confronted in their domain, opposing the impossibility of critical reflection with the persuasive strength of reason and the non-ideological truth of education for conformity and cultural identification.

The consequence of forgetfulness, promoted by forms of identification with conformity to what society has established, does not align with what we call education for emancipation; this form of education risks the immediate fixation of values, behaviors, and concepts. However, if critical reflection is still possible, we can observe the need for critical education. Digital culture, by enabling the integration of all individuals and keeping them simultaneously "connected", forms a virtual mass without the traditional pyramidal hierarchy - without someone making decisions. In this context, aiming to constitute political subjects, the digital culture "network", which fosters the fallacious idea of democracy and conceals the true nature of this sociability form, must engage in self-critique; the same applies to Communication and Education.

The "network" encompasses meeting multiple people who connect online as a new way of sociability. In that sense, Antunes and Maia (2018) mention its goals: "[...]

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[16] **Original citation:** "dificulta-se a sobrevivência do pensamento crítico numa sociedade em que os indivíduos se transformam em "caixas de ressonância" de mensagens que seduzem pelo incentivo da integração [...]" (Zuin, 2011, p. 11).

individualism, consumption, difficulty in accepting differences are new marks of technoculture - a term used by Sodré (2010) to characterize the fresh face of a technologically mediated culture" (p. 190, our translation).[17] Considering this, and concerning the users, micro-orders follow under the cloak of a hegemonic force, delineating standardized and manipulated identities.

Furthermore, the sociability produced in "network" raids the world, privacy, and individuals. It comprises algorithms from so-called Artificial Intelligence, which possesses individuals and positions them as citizens of information within their own particular "bubbles", conveying an apparent subjectivity distinguished by their interests but compliant in form.

Digital culture enables this form of sociability (distant from physical encounters) through the reality created by the operation of technologies. These technologies allow machines to perform specific and intricate tasks analogous to human thought, also known as Artificial Intelligence. According to Sichman (2021), "it is certainly a branch of computer science/engineering and, thus, seeks to develop computer systems that solve issues. To this end, it employs numerous techniques and models, depending on the issue at hand" (p. 38, our translation).[18]

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[17] **Original citation:** "[...] Individualismo, consumo, dificuldade de aceitação das diferenças são algumas das marcas da Tecnocultura – termo usado por Sodré (2010) para caracterizar a nova faceta de uma cultura tecnologicamente mediada" (Antunes; Maia, 2018, p. 190).

[18] **Original citation:** "Trata-se certamente de um ramo da ciência/engenharia da computação, e portanto visa desenvolver sistemas computacionais que solucionem problemas. Para tal, utiliza um número diverso de técnicas e modelos, dependendo dos problemas abordados" (Sichman, 2011, p. 38).

Furthermore, besides artificial intelligence, optical and auditory stimuli foster an interaction that rearranges individuals' connections in online life. A fictional reconstruction of life permeates the latter, masquerading as reality. This rupture in social life promotes cognitive modifications, including the absence of a requirement for authenticity. Such changes are underscored by how a new element is sufficient for individuals to identify with something and live with "fresh" possibilities of adherence (Adorno, 2020b).

Despite the abundance of information possibilities, Koselleck (2020) stresses that modernity's progress imposes itself as a new guise. Additionally, the author mentions that "[...] although with a universal facade - what reverberates is a partial experience that remains consistent in itself" (p. 189).[19]

This regulation of life hinders the experience of autonomy and tangible freedom in the face of domination, thereby threatening the education aimed at developing an emancipated consciousness. Consequently, it threatens the concrete goal for the continuity of life, which is critical and self-critical education.

In fact, concerning individuals' online lives, digital culture displays actions that rupture the ethics of social life as if it were a battleground. Individuals post their advantages in magnified competitiveness, submit

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[19] **Original citation:** [...] a despeito da sua pretensão universal – repercute apenas uma experiência parcial que permanece consistente em si mesma" (Koselleck, 2020, p. 189)

themselves to unrestricted labels, and build filters to edit images of themselves, which they deem a perfect mirror. In addition, video editing restores historically experienced moments timelessly, as if they could bring them into the present.

For psychoanalysis, according to Freud (2010), narcissistic individuals live at the border of little differences, the ones that nurture a resentment superior to meaningful distinctions. Narcissism for self-recognition embodies a defense mechanism, hindering the attainment of emotional autonomy. Thus, digital culture gets fuel from the narcissist culture. Beneath the facade of diversity, considering only minor differences, we ask: how could the individual renounce their fetishized self, attempt to reach an ideal self, and deal with the other in their subjective difference? Both education and communication must reflect on these aspects.

With the advent of cities, public life significantly swarmed private life. As Benjamin remarks (2012), in this context, the home becomes merely a place from which one goes onto the street. Moreover, in the 21st century, the emergence of sanitary issues related to the worldwide pandemic required distancing on behalf of preserving life; thus, this possibility could cease. However, online life sets itself as the chance to "go out" to wherever, and it circulates to know every city, through the house and planet. Free time and work interweave, just like the real and virtual. Hence, "porosity is the inexhaustible law of this life, to be

rediscovered. A grain of Sunday hides in every weekday, and how many weekdays within this Sunday!" (Benjamin, 2012, p. 152, our translation).[20]

Therefore, if the subjects' supposed autonomy concerning online life is a one-way street, the machine does not encompass our potential ability to use it. As for human beings, through voluntary compliance, functions in the social, cognitive, and discursive realms have already been tasked to machines, no longer demanding individuals to perform them. Then, who would be the authority in this process, understanding that this concept presupposes autonomy?

According to Adorno, "experience would be precisely the unity between tradition and yearning for the unknown" (2009, p. 21, our translation).[21] The greatness of experience, distant from life experience, is within manifesting what ideology camouflages as the truth, thus, the consciousness that fosters resignification. It delineates a demand for truthfulness in the realm of ethical and aesthetic values and the crucial reflection so that consciousness does not cease guidance by criteria based on critical education. Therefore, it is up to the authority to take on the challenge of this progress.

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[20] **Original citation:** "A porosidade é a lei inesgotável dessa vida, a ser redescoberta. Um grão do domingo se esconde em todo dia de semana, e quantos dias de semana nesse domingo!" (Benjamin, 2012, p. 152).

[21] **Original citation:** "experiência seria justamente a unidade entre tradição e anseio pelo desconhecido" (Adorno, 2009, p. 91).

Accordingly, school, as the primary institutional space of education, must be the major resistance *locus* within its resignification. However, it configures itself in the online educational model and is subject to the superficial endorsement of curricula. Keeping things in perspective, the advancement of digital culture must encounter the movement of resignification. The aspiring to greatness through progress should be the desire for the condition of freedom of the conscious self, considering the imperative of existence and the act of making oneself exist.

Ultimately, the educational challenge is to propose constant reflections on the content culture offers. In addition, to challenge the established and to consider the movement required by critical experience so that one can "listen to the collective song",[22] a source of reflection rather than the instrumentalization of copying the proposed model. There is an "us" inside every individual; however, the ruptured individual should undertake the "one-way street' of digital culture - the "vicinities" within them - to invite an experience of memory, narrative, and reworking. It is an invitation to return to dialectics so that history builds itself against the current, and communication can shatter the doors of mere information, problematizing life critically and dialectically.

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[22] Original expression, in Brazilian Portuguese: "ouvir a canção coletiva".

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