

## Love and passion as facets of education: the relationship between school and appropriation of knowledge

Sandra Soares Della Fonte

Philosopher; PhD in Education; lecturer at Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo (UFES), Vitória-ES, Brazil. <[sdellafonte@uol.com.br](mailto:sdellafonte@uol.com.br)>

### ABSTRACT

This article accepts the general proposition that love and passion are essential elements of the school education practice. However, contrary to the contemporary trends that argue that the loving facet of education dismisses truth and the objective knowledge and takes place as a linguistic experience, I advocate that the primordial Eros of school education is not effective without objective knowledge and its appropriation. To develop this idea, I borrow some of Plato's considerations on love in his classical text Symposium/Banquet in order to rethink them based on the reflections about passion in Marx's Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts.

**Key words:** Love. Knowledge. School instruction.

Prometheus: Thanks to me, men do not wish death anymore. [...] Besides, I made them share the heavenly fire [...] and from that master, they will learn many sciences and arts.

Esquilo

The dwelling-light that Prometheus, in Esquilo, means as one of the greatest rewards for he turned the savage into a man, ceases to be to the worker.

Marx (2004, p.140)

The associations between education practice and love are very frequent in the social thought. Such associations get many nuances and can, for instance, be present in a religious way (similar to a priest,

the teacher comes as the one who embraces the mission to teach and assumes all the sacrifices of his vocation, for love) or in a motherly way (the teaching activity as a *naturally* feminine talent).

In Brazil, one of the classic relations between education and love was made popular by Paulo Freire, who, in his statement for freedom and against any kind of domestication, proclaimed education as “[...] *an act of love, and for that, an act of courage. It cannot fear debate. The analysis of reality. It cannot escape productive discussion, not to be fake*” (Freire, 1989, p.96). Thus, the progressive aspect of that statement about education as an act of love in Paulo Freire is lost in Gabriel Chalita’s (2003) proposition of a “pedagogy of love” aiming the preparation for the competitive world.

In contemporary academic research, I emphasize the argument of two authors that relate education to love. The first is the Chilean Humberto Maturana, with his proposition of the *biology of love*. According to this author, the human being starts with language and always lives in dialogue. On the other hand, love “[...] *emotion that constitutes the space of actions where the hominy way of living, the central in the history of evolution that originates us*” (Maturana, 1998, p. 97) is associated to that condition. Maturana considers love the primary emotion of life that originates the social, since it establishes the acceptance of the other and its recognition as a legitimate existence. Therefore, with approximation and mutual acceptance (Maturana, 1998), love originates the relationship that happens through dialogue.

Maturana (1998, p.98) declares that it is the human existence in speech that configures the various domains of reality; thus, reality is “*an explanatory proposition of the human experience*”. Besides that, the author asserts that the human beings do not refer to an external reality that is detached from their own observation. Maturana’s resolution to put “*objectivity in parenthesis*” meets the precept that, in his view, contributes to the consolidation of a loving relationship between people. Because of the lack of an external reality to rely on, “[...] the different points of view are valid in different domains, because they are based on different precepts” (Maturana, 1998, p.154). In the author’s perception, any attempt to define a position that is right beyond another that is wrong provokes mutual denial and goes against the loving biological constitution of the human being. Knowing is, therefore, a language construction, i.e. the result of “the domain of coordinated conduct coordinates” (Maturana, 1998, p.96). Maturana understands that, as a social phenomenon, education is founded on love and its center is relationship. In that context, the teacher is “*Someone who accepts himself as a guide in the creation of that space of relationship*” (Maturana, 1990, p.2), who produces common actions and joined changes. Education would preserve, in that way, the loving biological aspect of the human being.

From a perspective that is different from Maturana’s arguments, Larrosa (2001) suggests thinking about education as an experience of sense. For him, experience does not mix up with information, opinion and work. It is what surrounds us, happens to us, touches us. The subject of experience is, in his view (Larrosa, 2001, p.6), a “passing territory”, “arrival point”, the space where things happen. The subject of experience is not defined by its activity, but for its passionate condition, i.e. its passivity, essential opening, receptivity to whatever comes to it and succeeds it. In this sense, according to Larrosa, experience is passion, because it is, essentially, suffering. The subject of experience is not active, it is patient, it is a “*sufferer, receptive, interrupted, subordinated*” (Larrosa, 2001, p.7)

According to Larrosa (2001), the knowledge of experience is not the one of information, technique and science; it is in the relationship between knowledge and human life, as

[...] learning in and through suffering, in and through the things that happen to us [...] what is acquired throughout life and in the way we give meaning to the events. In the knowledge of experience, it is not about the truth of the things, but it is about the meaning and the lack of meaning of what happens to us (Larrosa, 2001, p.9).

If education is understood as an experience of meaning, the educational knowledge is also linked, according to the author, to the exercise of conveying meaning and it shares other characteristics with the knowledge of experience in general: it is finite, strictly articulated to the existence of a particular individual or community. “*Because of that, the knowledge of experience is a particular, subjective, relative, uncertain, personal knowledge*” (Larrosa, 2001, p.9). Two people can face the same situation without having the same experience, because the meaning of what happened to each of them can be different. Against the experiment praised in modern science (general, repeatable, predictable, that produces agreement and consensus), experience asserts its singularity, its non predictable character, its uncertainty, its production of difference and plurality. It shows not only that the human being conveys meaning to what happens to him through words, but also that he “[...] *exists in words and through words*” (Larrosa, 2001, p.2). According to Larrosa, education is such an experience that gives up truth and privileges the originative exercise of the language that occurs in a particular living situation, that takes the subject, i.e., that makes him a passionate being.

The ways traced by Maturana and Larrosa when they talk about the link between education and love/passion are distinct. However, they draw attention to the fact that, in both cases, the loving aspect of education rejects the truth and the objective knowledge and it becomes effective as a linguistic experience (either as attribution of meaning to whatever happens by the singular subject, or as conversation that accepts the other as other and coordinates his behavior).

In this article, I corroborate the general proposition that love and passion are essential elements in school education and, as a result, in the pedagogical work of the teacher. Nevertheless, differently from the authors quoted above, I advocate that the primordial *Eros* in school education becomes effective in the specificity of the educational process itself. It means that, it is not possible to talk about the loving dimension of the school when you give up truth and objective knowledge. In order to develop that idea, I borrow some considerations by Plato about love (*Eros*) in the classic text *The Banquet*, aiming at rethinking them, taking into consideration Marx’s reflections about passion in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*.

### ***Eros* in Plato**

Plato writes about love in many texts and under different perspectives. Here, I do not intend to map that differentiation or elaborate comparisons, but actually, extract from *The Banquet* some considerations that will allow me, in the boundaries of an article, to make the meaning of the platonic *Eros* as an educational agent evident.

In *the Banquet*, Plato reports the gathering at Agathon’s house, where the guests were asked to make a speech to praise love at the symposium time (drinking time after the meal), as usual. Socrates reportedly observed that, before talking about issues involving love, they should ask what love is.

Many guests made their speeches, but I will focus on Socrates’.

One of the first elements to be emphasized in the Socratic speech is his presentation of *Eros* as a cosmic strength that involves all beings. Love refers to something, it is always the love of something. The love relationship turns to the lack of something. Therefore, to Socrates/Plato, love is desire, and desire is the need of what one lacks: “[...] *what one lacks; is, precisely, the object of desire and love*” (Platão, 1987, 200e).

Love trespasses the human condition as far as it is presented as incomplete and needy. This aspect makes the human being a creature of desire. That way, love is a movement, since it establishes a relationship that turns to the not-being, which means whatever we need, but cannot be found in ourselves. Besides, it is also directed to the means of its acquisition, to the satisfaction of that need.

*Eros* starts from privation and longs for plenitude. In this sense, it involves at the same time, the passivity to be afflicted by the lack and the *desiring* activity to fulfill that privation. In Plato, the feeling of human unfinishedness has as its source “[...] *the incompleteness intrinsic to the condition of a fallen soul*” (Pessanha, 1990, p.94) that, when incarnates a body, forgets how to contemplate the existing things in their *pure* form. Something that was possible in the world of the ideas, where it used to live before residing in a body. The loss of the knowledge acquired in the life before the incarnation of the soul is felt as nostalgia of a perfect world, compared to the bodily existence in the multiplicity of the world of senses.

Another very vigorous element in the platonic reflection in *The Banquet* is *Eros's* contradictory and unstable nature. In the Greek mythological tradition, as the god of union and universal affinity, in order to develop, *Eros* needs his opponent *Anteros*, god of antipathy and aversion. Poets narrate that *Venus* complained to the goddess *Themis* that her son *Eros* did not grow, he remained a child. *Themis* answered that he would not grow while she did not have another son, and therefore, give *Eros* a brother. Thus, in order for *Eros* to grow, *Venus* gave birth to *Anteros* (Commelin, 2000). As expression of need and desire, the platonic *Eros* is the impulse that relates to another one and implies, necessarily, the recognition of the not-self, of negativity.

If, on the one hand, Plato preserves the contradictory side of love in the Greek tradition, on the other hand, he innovates in, at least, two aspects: he recreates the myth of the birth of *Eros* and removes this god from his divine aura. For him, love is not a god, but an intermediate between mortals and immortals, in other words, a genius, a demon (from the Greek, *dáimon*). This term does not have a pejorative meaning. In that context, it refers to the bond between gods and mortals. The demoniacal function “Interprets and takes to the gods what comes from men and to men what comes from the gods [...]”. Between both, it fills this gap, allowing the Whole to connect to itself [...]” (Platão, 1987, 202e-203a).

The mediating character of *Eros* can be better understood with the myth of his birth, which was reportedly told to Socrates by Diotima. According to this wise woman, the gods performed a banquet to celebrate Aphrodite's birth. Among them, there was *Poros* (who represented wealth and resources). However, *Penia* (poverty) arrived at the end of the party to beg, and saw *Poros* drunk and asleep. Because of her lack of means, *Penia* took the chance to become pregnant of a *Poros's* child – *Eros*. As the son of wealth and poverty, *Eros* inherited characteristics of both. He is neither beautiful, nor ugly; neither good, nor bad; neither rich, nor poor. That condition allows him to go from one extreme to another. Thus, the platonic *Eros* is a demon who mediates the vertical relationship between gods and mortals. *Eros's* demoniacal part is being the mediator between unequal beings and, as a mediator, playing the role of cohesion in the cosmos.

Since neither the wise (because they already have wisdom), nor the ignorant (because they ignore that they do not know) search for knowledge, *Eros* is between one and another and, because of that, he dedicates himself to philosophy. “Knowledge is the most beautiful thing. So, since *Eros* is the beauty's lover, he is necessarily a philosopher or a lover of knowledge, and in that position, he is placed between the wise and the ignorant” (Platão, 1987, 204b).

From that point, it is talked about a progressive erotic asceticism in Plato, which means ways or degrees of love that unite necessity to completion, the mortal to the divine, ugliness to beauty, ignorance to knowledge. The erotic asceticism builds a bridge from the multiple and sensible beauty, to the ideal beauty of the intelligible world. The erotic asceticism goes “[...] *from the level of the affective relationships between people to the level of the affective-intellectual relationship between the subjects and the truth* [...]” (Pessanha, 1987, p.85). Because of that, *Eros* is an educational agent. He is neither wise, nor a complete ignorant, he knows what he ignores. For being aware of his ignorance, he desires knowledge. Only *Eros* can be a philosopher. Thus, for Plato, love does not oppose to the process of knowledge, but it is its engine. The complete reflection does not shut love up, on the

contrary, it does not happen without love. *Eros* and *Sophia* embrace. Supreme love becomes *Philia* (friendship).

The erotic asceticism in Plato also consists in overcoming its own mortal limit. When in love, mortals get closer to gods. When bodily fertile, humans give birth to children. When fertile in their souls, they give birth to knowledge and virtue. Through procreation (of children of the body, or children of the soul), the mortals are able to share the eternity and the immortality of the gods.

Plato considers problematic the love that remains tied to the appeal of the sensitive and immediate impatience. The Socratic disciple Alcebiades represents in *The Banquet*, that kind of love in the lowest level, by paying attention to Socrates with the intent to tie the master to his passion, through stratagems (Pessanha, 1990, 1987). One of the lessons of this classic platonic text is that the real lover does not enslave the beloved one, but takes him to knowledge.

### **Love and passion in the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts***

If you love without arousing reciprocal love, i.e. if your act of loving, as love, does not produce love in return, if in your life expression (*Lebensäußerung*) as a loving man, you do not become a beloved man, so your love is powerless, a misfortune.

Marx (2004, p.161)

When asking about how love and passion are approached by Marx in the 1844 Manuscripts, there is an initial observation. Detaching any theme from the *Economic-Philosophical Manuscripts* to be analyzed requires some attention due to a series of elements, especially, the characteristics and the context of those writings in the intellectual path of Marx.

*The Manuscripts* present embryonic ideas when crossing elements that, later on, Lenin considered the three sources of Marxism: the German philosophy, the French socialism and the English political economy. Some of those ideas were deepened, or even, reviewed by Marx in posterior works. Without losing track of the necessary care in relation to the writings of the Marxist theory in its initial moment, I take the *Manuscripts*, as suggested by Frederico (1995): notes where there is a provisory and incipient formulation of a materialist ontology.

In the Manuscripts, the Marxist reflections about Eros have the mark of a certain appropriation of Feuerbach's philosophy and are connected, in a special way, to considerations about the human senses and feelings. Due to his proximity to the Feuerbachian philosophy, Marx (2004) gets to the point to utter that sensitivity is the basis of all the sciences. If on the one hand, the Feuerbachian sensualism confronted the speculative Hegelian philosophy, on the other hand, as Frederico (1995) observes, the exaltation of the sensitivity promoted an empiricist ontology from which, in many moments, Marx was not able to detach. The equivalence between the objective being and the sensitive being illustrates that. The real is understood by Marx (2004) as something that is an object of the senses.

Thus, as observed by Frederico (1995), this proximity did not prevent Marx from assimilating, with a certain freedom, the Feuerbachian reflections and also elaborating unthinkable innovations to that philosopher. It occurred, fundamentally, with the election of work, "vital conscious activity", as a center of his reflections.

In his fight for existence, the human being is impelled to produce the means to satisfy his needs. The work consists in the metabolism between human being and nature. However, talking about the relationship between human being and nature implies, to Marx, affirming that “[...] *nature is interconnected to itself, because man is part of nature*” (Marx, 2004, p.84). The natural dimension of the human being indicates its bodily, sensitive and objective condition. As such, the human being shares an aspect of passivity and need with the other beings:

[...] he is a suffering, limited and dependent being, as well as the animal and the plant, which means that the *objects of his desire exist outside himself, as independent objects*. But these are objects of his needs (*Bedürfnis*), essential objects, crucial to the performance and the confirmation of his essential forces (Marx, 2004, p.127).

In his explanation of the human being as a natural being, Marx presents some general lines of his ontology: being objective is suffering for having an outside. The essential outspread of that proposition is that being objective is also being an object for another being. In other words, suffering from the need of an object implies being the object of someone else’s need. Therefore, with that statement, Marx not only identifies the concepts of being and objectivity, but also lines off the *relational* aspect of the permanent objective interaction between effective beings as such. Every existing thing is objective and, as a consequence, part of a concrete complex and in diverse and determined relations with other beings. Thus, as a whole, the being is a historical process.

In this sense, according to Marx (2004), a non-objective being is a non-being: he does not have any need and is not necessary to any other one; he does not need any object and is not object of anyone’s need; he is timeless. Therefore, “*Such being would be, at first, the only being, there would not be any being outside him, he would exist singly and lonely*” (Marx, 2004, p.127-8).

On the other hand, Marx stresses that the human being is a natural *human* being. The structure of the human is given by its vital activity. Through work and in work, the human being prints in nature his own end, originating a new objectivity: the *humanized* nature. When operating in nature, the human being engineers a world of external objectivities to himself, although he is dependent on it. Through work, the human being not only produces himself, but also he produces himself as universality, as a generic being, in a way that his individual life is only constituted as a generic life. Only with the appropriation of that universe of objectivations produced historically and socially, the individual can be formed.

The relationship between an individual’s life and generic life described by Marx avoids, on the one hand, the affirmation of an isolated individual, and, on the other hand, an abstract concept of society. In this sense, he insists that “*The individual is the **social being***” (Marx, 2004, p.107, author’s italics) even if his manifestation of individual life is not performed with other people.

According to Marx, the human essence opens inside out and constitutes new objectivities. In this process of becoming objective, the human being asserts himself in the objective world “*Not only in thought [...], but in **all** the other senses [...]*” (Marx, 2004, p.110, author’s italics). However, these are the same objectivations that he needs to exalt, in an omnilateral way, as to confirm his humanity.

Man appropriates his omnilateral essence in omnilateral way, thus, as a total man. Each of his *human* relations with the world, seeing, listening, smelling, tasting, feeling, thinking, intuiting, realizing, wanting, being active, loving, and all the organs of his individuality, as well as the organs that are immediately in their form as community organs, are in their *objective* behavior or in their behavior *in relation to the object* the appropriation of it, the appropriation of the human effectiveness [...] (Marx, 2004, p.108).

The nature of the object and the essential human strength that corresponds to it determines how the object becomes an object for the human being. The peculiar aspects of the human senses and feelings have to do with the determination of the object and the peculiar way of its fruition: “*To the eye, an object becomes different than it is to the ear, and the object of the eye is other than that of the ear*” (Marx, 2004, p.110, author’s italics). Thus, the human being needs to guide his action towards the various objectivities through their properties and causalities. These, on the other hand, set out the possibilities of its delight.

Nevertheless, it is fundamental perceiving that, in the constitution of the individual, the senses and feelings are socially generated and they distance from the animal world, constrained by the immediate need. They humanize as human objectivations are produced, objectivations that are appropriate within determined social relations. Therefore, Marx (2004, p.110) states that it is from the richness objectively unfolded from the human essence that human sensitivity richness, subjective in form, is developed, for example, from “*a musical ear, an eye for the beauty of form*”. Thus, not only the object necessity (the humanized nature) is emphasized in subject formation, but the historical character of this process itself:

Because not only the five senses, but also the so-called spiritual senses, practical senses (will, love, etc.), in one word; *human* sense, the humanity of senses, comes into being firstly by the existence of *its* object, by the humanized nature. The formation of the five senses is a work of all world’s history until now (Marx, 2004, p.110).

The term natural *human* being used by Marx involves an apparently excluding double dimension: it reveals the human being in his suffering as a needy being, and in his vigor towards satisfying his needs. In Marx, passion condensates this human movement of passivity and activity:

Man, as a sensitive objective being, is consequently, a sufferer, and for feeling his torment, a creature in love. Passion (*Leidenschaft, Passion*) is the essential human strength that walks energetically towards its object (Marx, 2004, p.128).

Passion has, therefore, a double face: it is “*the domination of the objective essence in me*”, but also “*the activity of my essence*” (Marx, 2004, p.113). The way Marx treated passion, as well as human senses, is beyond merely anthropological and takes an ontological condition. However, it is worth highlighting that Feuerbach (1972) had already stated the ontological dimension of passion. To him, love interchange (love as passion) establishes not only human sociability, but it is also a requirement for existence: only what is object of a passion exists, in a way that not-being and not-loving are equivalent.

When Marx signals the ontological condition of feelings and senses, he does not define intersubjective relations, especially, love, as the generating principle of human sociability and existence in general. Having his own being outside himself is a characteristic of every objective creature; but being in love is a trait that, in Marx, is only for humans. Differently from Feuerbach, who defines love as an institutor of being, and from Plato, who treats love as a cosmic force that goes through all beings (although it takes a special form within the human being), Marx circumscribes love to the human extent<sup>1</sup>. The role love relations get in Feuerbach is displaced, in Marxian theory, to work: the conscious vital activity establishes the sociability extent. The senses and feelings are not prior to the human being; they are constituents of a human, even though they are ontologically secondary (in relation to the priority of work).

What Marx calls passion in the *Manuscripts* characterizes the passivity and activity of an individual when asserting himself as a social being. He lacks the determination of his own being materialized in historically produced objectivations. However, this lack pushes him towards this externality that, when

appropriated, creates conditions for new objectivations. Saying that men and women are creatures in love expresses the *modus operandi* of human sociability established by work, to Marx in the *Manuscripts*.

In the *Manuscripts of 1844*, Marx also reveals the contradictory nature of work: source of humanization, it transmutes itself, in social relations where private property reigns, into the “de-effectivation” of human essence. The relation of worker with his product, his objectivation, is one of strangeness<sup>2</sup>: “[...] the object (*Gegenstand*) work produces, its product, faces it as a *strange being*, as a *force independent of the producer*” (Marx, 2004, p.80).

Alienated work establishes a relation of strangeness of human being with the product and the production activity, with the human genus itself (that changes itself in a means for individual life) and with himself. When the product of his work is presented as a strange object, the world the worker creates before himself becomes extraneous to him, it faces him in a hostile way, so he himself becomes poorer, his inner world belongs less to himself (Marx, 2004). Under strange relations, the fundamentals of social organization are fight, war, hostile opposition (Marx, 2004). As a result of this process, there is, for some, the refinement of needs, whereas for workers, only depreciation to awkward limits remains, where everything beyond physical reproduction is presented as luxury (Marx, 2004). Food only exists in its abstract facet and there is “*no sense to the most beautiful spectacle*” (Marx, 2004, p.11, author’s italics). Strange work degrades all human strengths: passions and sensitivity deteriorate, “*stupidity [is transformed] into understanding, and understanding into stupidity*” (Marx, 2004, p.160).

Therefore, Marx visualizes communism as positive sublation of private property, as complete emancipation of human qualities and senses. Under the presupposed socialism, Marx (2004, p.139) talks about the “*richness (Reichheit) of human needs*” and, therefore, a *new manner of production* and new *object* of production. Thus, he glimpses the enrichment of human essence in which “*The rich man is simultaneously the needy man, needy of a totality of human manifestation of life. Man whose own effectivation exists as inner need (Notwendigkeit), as lack (Not)*” (Marx, 2004, p.112-3, author’s italics). The *rich* human being is educated to enjoy the arts, to appreciate beauty, to act in a stimulating and encouraging way over others, exchange love for love (Marx, 2004).

### **Education and knowledge: school in its demoniacal function**

In order to think about the relation between school and knowledge, I borrow from Plato the notion that *Eros* plays a demoniacal role, mediator, that leads from ignorance to knowing, or better saying, it is the search for knowledge and truth from the recognition of their absence, of our not-knowing. Besides the contradictory character, which is typical, erotic asceticism is fundamentally educational. It is not possible to talk about access to or production of knowledge without love, without desire that carried away by need, is made to search its satisfaction. Based on Plato, I would like to suggest that education has an erotic facet connected to desire for knowing. I agree that the discussion about the eroticism of school educational practice may follow several paths. However, these discussions may be lost if not placed in the particularities of this social practice. That is why I advocate that the primordial *Eros* of school education becomes effective in the educational process’ own specificity. Nevertheless, I examine the meaning of this general proposition, i.e. its substantial content, from Marxian reflections elaborated in the *Manuscripts of 1844*.

The first question posed is why the human being needs to know, why knowing is object of human desire. Ontologically, knowing is an essential element of human practice, from everyday life to spheres of more elaborated and systematized objectivations, such as philosophy, politics and the arts. By searching for means of achieving goals put in the work process, the human being needs to know the causal system of objects, their qualities and properties; he needs to unveil the object determinations



in order to guide his action and the specific manner to transform it. Thus, as mentioned before, the human being produces a universe of objectivations (knowledge, habits, values, concepts, ideas, ways of feeling, etc.) a world of generality, without which an individual can not be formed. In order to be constituted, he needs to make this objectivated production part of his nature.

Hence, the human being learns how to become human and this is only possible by appropriating human objectivations properties. When this happens, functions and aptitudes historically created by mankind are reproduced by the human being in himself, who converts them into his own abilities and establishes the possibility of producing new human objectivations.

In a broad sense, education consists in the production of individuals as social beings, i.e. it corresponds to the process of learning how to be human. For this reason, Saviani (1991) explains that education is the requirement of and for the work process, as well as education is a work process itself, for “[...] *producing direct and intentionally, in each particular individual, the humanity that is produced historically and collectively by the group of men*” (Saviani, 1991, p.21). The object of education concerns, in this author’s opinion, the identification of cultural elements that need to be assimilated by individuals in order for them to become human, and the discovery of the most appropriate means to achieve this objective. Thus, education has a love dimension, desirous, in which knowing is an absence to the human being, a necessity affecting directly his human condition.

Education’s erotic dimension is made effective when it takes what Plato used to call demoniacal role. However, it concerns conceiving, from Marx, the platonic vertical relation of *dáimon* in horizontal terms. The erotic-educational asceticism does not take place between gods and mortals, between mortal and divine, but between human beings. Educational love is demoniacal because it establishes the mediation between the human being and the knowledge produced by other generations and accumulated historically. In other words, it is the mediator between the individual and the human genus, between existential singularity and generic universality.

The eroticism of school education becomes peculiar as the primordial role of this institution consists in socializing systematized knowledge (elaborated and not spontaneous knowledge, systematized and not fragmented, erudite and not popular). The school needs to make this knowledge assimilable, dose and order it in the school space, throughout a determined period of time, in a way that it goes from its non-domain to its domain (Saviani, 1991). The school educational work shows its erotic facet and, therefore, demoniacal when it mediates spontaneous, popular knowledge and erudite, systematized knowledge. It is not unilateral mediation that annihilates spontaneous knowledge, but a radicalization of the bonds between these modes of knowledge. No matter how diverse they are, the types of knowledge have a point in common: they aim, through their particularity, at seizing and representing the world’s objectivity in order to guide human actions towards some goals. Certainly, the systematized forms of knowledge derive from spontaneous modes of knowledge. However, this does not prevent systematized knowledge from also having (concerning beliefs, values, ways of feeling, habits and ideas of spontaneous living) a relative autonomy: it can confirm and develop, as well as criticize these objectivations of the everyday social life sphere.

In this sense, access to elaborated forms of knowledge involves distancing from everyday living and, at the same time, a new approach in which this everyday may be re-measured, re-evaluated and enriched. Hence, “[...] access to erudite culture allows to appropriate new forms through which the contents of popular knowledge may be expressed” (Saviani, 1991, p. 29). This permits individuals to reconstruct the hierarchies of everyday activities and the values that regulate them (Duarte, 1993). The erotic asceticism of school educational practice works two-ways: it moves from spontaneous living to the universe of elaborated cultural forms, and vice versa.

The demoniacal and, consequently, erotic function of school education also allows a new relation of the individual with more elaborated generic objectivations. Marx (2004) considers that the human

being is not only a needy being, but also one who knows his needs and can recognize generic life as a constitutive part of his individual existence:

But man is not only a natural being, but a *human* natural being, i.e. one who exists to himself (*für sich selbst seiendes Wesen*), therefore; *generic being*, that has to act and confirm himself both in his own being and his knowledge (Marx, 2004, p. 128).

Being to himself implies that the human being recognizes himself as a creature in love, struck and taken over by needs, and pushed by an active conduct that creates satisfaction to his needs. Consciousness about himself appears, therefore, as consciousness about the social and generic dimension of his existential singularity. This possibility of the human being to be to himself allows him to lead his life by means of a conscious relation with the genus, which is not only an aware thinking, but it comprises all human faculties: “*This relation is not just a relation of thinking, but about life itself, about the social activity of man*” (Duarte, 1993, p.140). In Marx, love asceticism, sensitivity and affection due to intellection (as in Plato) are not depurated, but the enrichment of human existence in its omnilaterality is sought.

This passage from an existence in-him (unconscious) to an existence to-him demands from the individual the recognition that the human generality is, to the human being, the necessity, object of desire. Building that relationship that is enriched and conscious of the generic extent of human construction requires an intentional and organized intervention. Also, in this case, school pedagogical practice reveals its loving aspect when it assumes the mediation between spontaneous living and the conscious management of life. “[...] *because of the conscious relationship with the historical process of universal objectivity and independent for the human genus*” (Duarte, 1993, p.119). According to Duarte (1993), the school pedagogical practice not only allows the access to elaborated generic objectivations, but also, makes them a necessary to the complete development of the student. Therefore, school education is “*a process that creates necessities*” (Duarte, 1993, p.189, author’s italics). As a consequence, when school education responds the human desire in relation to knowledge, it organizes ways to allow it to fulfill its demoniacal function to mediate the access to elaborated cultural means. When it does that, it ends up reinforcing that desirous and passionate human condition.

The erotic asceticism that Marx allows us to think about represents a path that moves between spontaneous knowledge and elaborate cultural forms, between the particularity of the individual and the universality of genus, between the existence in-him and to-himself, between the satisfaction of necessities and the production of new desires. Only when it fulfills its mission as a mediator (thus, demoniacal), school education affirms men and women as passionate beings and opens horizons to new objectivities that respond to those new desires and necessities.

As far as the production of knowledge is concerned, considering the post-modern allegation that reality is unknown (because it does not exist, or is not accessible), all effectiveness is anthropomorphized. Objectivity is annihilated and the ontological state concerning knowledge is changed. When the in-him is suppressed, his objective knowledge is discredited. This way, it is discussed the possibility to say something about the world – knowledge is seen as mental elaboration and reality, as consensus.

In the *Manuscripts*, Marx denounces that the strangeness produced by the capitalist relations breaks up the relation that makes the individual recognize this universality, because the access to the universality of human objectivities is restricted to a few people and turns the generic life only to a means of maintaining the physical existence. The strangeness corrodes human life in its totality, and that way, dispatches passion from the human practice. It destroys what we name here demoniacal function of school education, when it makes access to knowledge private.

Nevertheless, the contemporary ideological atmosphere tends to disguise this phenomenon. It is spread out today the idea that we live in the “*society of knowledge*” (UNESCO, 2005, p.147), in which the transmission and spread of knowledge are considered vital functions that guarantee its maintenance. The announcement that the contemporary social pattern has, in knowledge, its structural and organizational core lives together with the fact that 20% of the world’s population is illiterate (approximately 875 million people). Besides that, the supposed value of knowledge expresses, in fact, the seduction of the knowledge that can be applied immediately, rapidly tasted and evaluated according to its ability to respond to the appeal of the efficient and useful *practice*, convenient to the manipulating interests of the capital.

This depreciation trend of objective knowledge of the present post-modern agenda was traced throughout defeats experienced by the political left wing in the twentieth century. In this article’s space, it is not possible to analyze its historical course in-depth, but we can record that, on the one hand, the work class, deprived of any emancipating horizon, questions its own need of theory aiming at unveiling the mysteries and the dynamics of social reality. On the other hand, when capitalism reveals its most malignant face and its impossibility of granting dignified life to all, any theory responsible for unveiling the facets of the objective world needs to be combated and discredited.

In the context of objective knowledge devaluation, the school is emptied in its role of socializing knowledge and bonded to mere acculturation whose commitment concerns just “*the way things are said*” (Rorty, 1994, p. 353) and the valorization of singular and immediate life experience. The prohibition of objective knowledge and the redefinition of the school’s role in terms of merely linguistic exercises and aggrandizement of life experience, empirically molded, are presented as surrender to the manipulated historical configuration of capitalism disguised as advanced and left wing propositions. Nevertheless, school education of the majority is actually emptied, while the elite’s education is improved (Duarte, 2000). Under capitalism, the effectiveness of schools intended for workers takes place when schools do not play their role and deny access to elaborated and historically accumulated knowledge, or offer knowledge in a deteriorated manner.

Thus, fighting against the strangeness produced by capitalist relations also concerns intolerance of the disqualification of knowledge. Educational practice that does not lead to new needs, new desirous forms that enrich the human sense, that only acculturates hegemonic values, that renounces its eminent demoniacal role of socializing scientific, artistic, political-ethical and philosophical knowledge, abdicates *Eros*, falls into disaffection. It is not intended here to conceive disaffection as immediate sentimental relation of displeasure and embarrassment between teacher and student, but “[...] *considering it as a denial of teacher and student’s desire of/in appropriation of knowledge, a fact that does not imply emptying the role of the school*” (Loureiro, 2006, p. 227).

Hence, some challenges remain. Effectivating *Eros* of and in education involves evoking the directed *Anteros*, in an intransigent way, against the human degradation, against capital. Besides that, if it is the school education’s duty to organize the means to satisfy the human desire for knowledge, it is necessary to be aware in order for these means not to reproduce relations of strangeness and, in this sense, to oppose the given objective. Thus, one can not deviate from the fact that the use of physical violence in the education process, as well as sarcasm and mockery, minimizes the desire for knowledge. Likewise, establishing pleasant and friendly affective relations by the teacher, but that do not intend to stimulate a both passive and active passionate attitude of suffering and vigor in the student before the rich human objectivations, carries a subtle disaffection.

## REFERENCES

CHALITA, G. Educar é um ato de coragem e afeto. **A Tribuna**, Santos, 27 maio 2003. Available from Internet: <[http://www.chalita.com.br/textos\\_detalle.asp?ID=27](http://www.chalita.com.br/textos_detalle.asp?ID=27)>. Access on: Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

COMMELIN, P. **Mitologia grega e romana**. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2000.

DUARTE, N. **Vigotski e o "aprender a aprender"**: crítica às apropriações neoliberais e pós-modernas da teoria vigotskiana. Campinas: Autores Associados, 2000.

\_\_\_\_\_. **A individualidade para si**: contribuição a uma teoria histórico-social da formação do indivíduo. Campinas: Autores Associados, 1993.

FEUERBACH, L. **Principles of the future philosophy**. 1972. Available from Internet: <<http://www.marxists.org/reference/archive/feuerbach/works/future/index.htm>>. Access on: Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

FREDERICO, C. **O jovem Marx**. São Paulo: Cortez, 1995.

FREIRE, P. **Educação como prática da liberdade**. 19.ed. Rio de Janeiro: Paz e Terra, 1989.

LARROSA, J. Notas sobre a experiência e o saber de experiência. In: SEMINÁRIO INTERNACIONAL DE CAMPINAS: a escola como centro do processo pedagógico, 1., 2001, Campinas. Available from Internet: <[www.campinas.sp.gov.br/smenet/seminario/seminario\\_pronto\\_jorgelarrosa.htm](http://www.campinas.sp.gov.br/smenet/seminario/seminario_pronto_jorgelarrosa.htm)>. Access on: Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

LOUREIRO, R. **Da teoria crítica de Adorno ao cinema crítico de Kluge**: educação, história e estética. 2006. Doctoral thesis (PhD in Education) – Programa de Pós-Graduação em Educação, Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, Florianópolis, 2006.

MARX, K. **The holy family**. 1997. Available from Internet: <<http://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1845/holy-family/index.htm>>. Access on: Nov. 6<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

\_\_\_\_\_. **Manuscritos econômico-filosóficos**. São Paulo: Boitempo, 2004.

MATURANA, H. **O que é ensinar?** Quem é um professor? Trecho final de aula gravado por Cristina Magro, transcrito por Nelson Vaz. Universidad de Chile, 27 jul. 1990. Available from Internet: <[www.institutoser.com.br/new\\_site/faz\\_acontecer/oqueensinar.doc](http://www.institutoser.com.br/new_site/faz_acontecer/oqueensinar.doc)>. Access on: Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

\_\_\_\_\_. **Da biologia à psicologia**. 3.ed. Porto Alegre: Artes Médicas, 1998.

PESSANHA, J.A.M. A água e o mel. In: NOVAES, A. (Ed.). **O desejo**. São Paulo/Rio de Janeiro: Companhia das Letras/Funarte, 1990. p.91-123.

\_\_\_\_\_. Platão: as várias faces do amor. In: NOVAES, A. (Ed.). **Os sentidos da paixão**. São Paulo/Rio de Janeiro: Companhia das Letras/Funarte, 1987. p.77-103.

PLATÃO. O banquete. In: \_\_\_\_\_. **Os pensadores**. 4.ed. São Paulo: Nova Cultural, 1987.

RORTY, R. **A filosofia e o espelho da natureza**. Rio de Janeiro: Relume-Dumará, 1994.

SAVIANI, D. **Pedagogia histórico-crítica**: primeiras aproximações. São Paulo: Cortez/Autores Associados, 1991.

UNESCO. **From the information society to knowledge societies**. Unesco: Paris, 2005. Available from Internet: <[http://educationclearinghouse.nairobi-unesco.org/docs/Global\\_report\\_information\\_society\\_to\\_knowledge\\_societies.pdf](http://educationclearinghouse.nairobi-unesco.org/docs/Global_report_information_society_to_knowledge_societies.pdf)>. Access on: Aug. 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006.

Departamento de Ginástica, Centro de Educação Física e Desportos UFES  
Av. Fernando Ferrari, 514  
Campus Goiabeiras Vitória, ES  
29.075-910

1 This decision is ratified in *The Holy Family*, when Marx (1997) reacts to the attempt of making love something independent from the human being, i.e. talking about love detached from the individual who loves.

2 In general, in the *Manuscripts*, Marx distinguishes objectivation (*Entsäusserung*) from strangeness/alienation (*Entfremdung*), although he sometimes uses these terms interchangeably. While the former has a positive sense of exteriorization (production of human objectivations), the latter refers to the social relation typical of societies based on private property, in which the human being does not recognize his product.

Translated by Sandlei Moraes de Oliveira  
Translation from **Interface - Comunicação, Saúde, Educação**, Botucatu, v.11, n.22, p. 327-342, May/Aug. 2007.