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SCHOOLS “DETACHED” FROM REALITY. ON THE ARCHITECTONICS AND DYNAMICS OF CONTEMPORARY EDUCATIONAL SPACE¹

*In our days we receive three
different or contrary educations;
namely, of our parents, of our
masters, and of the world.
What we learn in the latter effaces
all the ideas of the former*

Montesquieu, *The Spirit of Laws*

The statement in the title can be read as a metaphor used primarily for persuasion, but it also reflects a phenomenon important for pedagogy, namely the gap between school education and social reality. It is justified in the sense that each social practice, especially institutionalised one, is subject to regionalization, takes place in a separate, appropriate time, spatial and situational context, so that, undisturbed, it can unfold at its own pace². However, our pedagogical anxiety is aroused when school education, contrary to expectations and assumptions, is

¹ Originally published: Rafał Włodarczyk, “Szkoly »oderwane« od rzeczywistości: o architektonice i dynamice współczesnych przestrzeni edukacyjnych”, [in:] *Transgresje w edukacji*, vol. 2, ed. I. Paszenda, R. Włodarczyk, Impuls, Kraków 2014, p. 43-58.

² See A. Giddens, “Time, Space and Regionalisation”, [in:] *Social Relations and Spatial Structures*, ed. D. Gregory, J. Urry, London 1985, p. 265-295.

not compatible with social reality, and when we see that rather than being bridged, the gap is growing; so is dissonance. This anxiety is not a *signum temporis* of a particular period. The history of pedagogical ideas suggests that it has accompanied pedagogies present in schools for a long time. Contemporary research indicates individual processes that are responsible for this state of affairs, while the aim of this article is to organize them by distinguishing three dimensions of ‘*detachment* of school from reality’.

1.

In his *Essays*, Michel de Montaigne often expresses his unfavourable opinion of teachers and schools. As can be deduced from his scattered remarks, he was irritated by the cult of superficial knowledge, the underestimation of the role of experience, genuine engagement, and personal involvement. As he observes in his essay “On Schoolmasters’ Learning”: “I dislike the borrowed and begged for wisdom. Learned we may be with another man’s learning: we can only be wise with wisdom of our own”³. In addition, there is waste of time, spoilage of character, emphasis on unproductive effort and learned helplessness. This is what he writes about classes taught at school:

If our souls do not move with a better motion and if we do not have a healthier judgement, then I would just as soon that our pupil should spend his time playing tennis... But just look at him after he has spent some fifteen or sixteen years of studying: nothing could be more unsuited for employment⁴.

In Montaigne’s work teachers, focused on linguistic precision and providing instruction, seem to symbolise the type of school’s *detachment* from the everyday reality of the world. This looks similar to the currently oft-repeated accusation that the staff of the education system prepare pupils to “gather encyclopaedic knowledge”, and thus separate them from the realm of personal experience of the world. He claimed that: “They have learned the theory of everything: try and find one who can put it into practice”⁵.

³ M.de Montaigne, *The Complete Essays*, London 2003, p. 155.

⁴ *Ibidem*.

⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 157. See also: *ibidem*, p. 163, 182-183. “Our soul acts, directed solely by others’ authority, bound and given to others’ illusions, enslaved and subdued by the seriousness of their teaching. We are so much used to walk in the treadmill

The voice of the Renaissance humanist, despite the passage of time and civilizational changes, still sounds familiar, hence the assumption that what we are complaining about at present, given some weaknesses of school education, is not only relevant to the present time. Nor is the awareness of the school's mission, which Montaigne seems to include in the following statement: "the most vital thing is to awaken willingness and love; otherwise one produces fools only burdened with books [...]"⁶. These intuitions may be confirmed both in the writings of the precursors and leaders of the New Education movement active in the era of dominance of the ideology of Modernism, and in contemporary representatives of humanistically-oriented pedagogics, such as Benjamin M. Spock, Paulo Freire, Ivan Illich, Carl R. Rogers, Alice Miller, Marshall B. Rosenberg, and Henry A. Giroux⁷.

In his book published almost a century ago, *Democracy and Education*, John Dewey notes:

There is the standing danger that the material of formal instruction will be merely the subject matter of schools, isolated from the subject matter of life-experience. [...] Those which have not been carried over into the structure of social life, but which remain largely matters of technical information expressed in symbols, are made conspicuous in schools⁸.

Recognizing reflective experience as the fundamental component of effective education, Dewey expected that its conscious use in the processes of upbringing and education would not only result in the integration of theory with practice, school space with social space, but also in the alignment of the school curriculum with the student's inner world. In the second half of the 20th century, a similar concept of personally-centred teaching was developed by Carl R. Rogers. Opposing traditional school education, i.e. the one which "There is no place for whole persons in the educational system, only for their intellects" with the concept of education aimed at a holistic development of the human person, i.e. one thanks to which "the learning tends to be deeper, proceeds at a more rapid rate, and is more per-

that we are no longer able to walk freely; our power and our freedom are gone [...]" (ibidem, p. 132).

⁶ Ibidem, p. 152.

⁷ See K. Sośnicki, *Rozwój pedagogiki zachodniej na przełomie XIX i XX wieku*, Warszawa 1967; B. Śliwerski, *Współczesne nurty i teorie wychowania*, Kraków 2010.

⁸ J. Dewey, *Democracy and Education. An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education*, New York 2009, p. 8.

vasive in the life”⁹, he expected its effects to be both the merger of the pupil’s passion, feeling and intellect and his or her school and extracurricular experience.

Despite repeated criticism and recurring demands for change, the problem seems to be still present in the late modern era. The pupil, his world of experiences and experiences connected with social reality and school education function as *detached* from one another. However, this is not the only dimension in which the claim made in the title takes on meaning.

2.

One can moreover refer to “schools *detached* from reality” also in the sphere of organization. Analyses offered by Max Weber at the close of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th one about the expansion of bureaucracy, so characteristic of modernity, ushered in studies on the impact of this kind of organizational changes on the process of school upbringing and education. From this perspective, when teachers become officials of an institution managed in a modern manner, they are subject in their work to the same rules as other employees in other sectors of state administration, in private companies and the corporate world.

Weber identified several of the most important features specific to bureaucracies, such as: a clear hierarchy of power, formally codified rules of conduct and responsibilities defined for each position and level of functioning of the organization, permanent employment, fixed working hours and remuneration, separation of the domain of an official’s work from his personal life, property and private matters¹⁰. This type of order, on the one hand, promotes transparency, stability and predictability of the system. In this sense schools, just like factories operating at the mass production level, are subject to standardization, which enables long-term planning and quality control. Yet on the other hand, it generates oppositions and conflicts between what is general and what is individual, between the promoted and somewhat

⁹ C. R. Rogers, *A Way of Being*, New York 1995, p. 297, 300.

¹⁰ See M. Weber, “Bureaucracy”, [in:] M. Weber, *Economy and Society. An Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1978, p. 956-1005; R. Sennett, “Bureaucracy”, [in:] R. Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, Yale 2007, p. 15-83.

rigid and limited offer and the intrinsically unstable group and individual aspirations, between the statics of the institution and the dynamics of life, between predictability and the need to evolve and adapt to changing conditions and needs, between the sustainability of the organization and the tasks for which it was originally set up, between procedure and exception, security and creativity, formal education and learning, etc.

The antinomies generated by the institutional order survived modernity and became one of the main causes of the crisis of the ideologies of modernism, determining the directions of development of western societies¹¹. However, before it happened, it was widely accepted that the inability to remove contradictions or resolve conflicts was a temporary weakness of the time of social transformation. It was widely accepted that the search for the right proportions and equilibrium of the system carried out by researchers and philosophers is coming to an end, and that the numerous changes in the organization of institutions and the social division of labour made by politicians and social engineers signify civilizational progress¹². The same happened in the field of education, as evidenced, for example, by the concepts, utopias and educational practice of numerous reformers and alternative centres operating at the turn of the twentieth century¹³.

These contradictions and their effects can be related to the functioning of a school and at the same time define the conditions of its policy, as a result of which it was necessary to achieve internal consolidation and separation of the sphere of the educational system, including its specific institutions, from other social spheres. However, separation is not the same as detachment, although - importantly - it enables it to a large extent. The formation and separation of institutions, the definition of their borders and domains is symptomatic of modernism, striving for the ideal of a well-ordered society, while *detachment* in this case should be understood as a side effect of the social transformation process initiated as early as the Enlightenment.

¹¹ See A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, Cambridge 2004; Z. Bauman, *Legislators and Interpreters*, Cambridge 1989; Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, Cambridge 2000.

¹² See W. Lepenies, "Lęk a nauka", [in:] W. Lepenies, *Niebezpieczne powinowactwa z wyboru*, Warszawa 1996, p. 32-51; A. Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity*, op. cit., p. 1-54.

¹³ See S. Sztobryn, "Pedagogika Nowego Wychowania", [in:] *Pedagogika. Podręcznik akademicki*, vol. 1, ed. Z. Kwieciński, B. Śliwerski, Warszawa 2006, p. 278-292.

The working environment of modern officials, dominated by bureaucratic rules, was conducive to the formation of patterns and criteria for assessing behaviour, which would guarantee the required optimal efficiency achieved within the imposed framework of action. Inspired by the research conducted by the Weber brothers, in his book published in the 1940s *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, Karl Mannheim called this type of efficiency a functional rationality and defined as follows:

a series of actions is organized in such a way that it leads to a previously defined goal, every element in this series of actions receiving a functional position and role. Such a functional organization of a series of actions will, moreover, be at its best when, in order to attain the given goal, it co-ordinates the means most efficiently. It is by no means characteristic, however, of functional organization in our sense that this optimum be attained or even that the goal itself be considered rational as measured by a certain standard¹⁴.

Of course, it is not that this type of action occurred with the emergence of an industrial society. This is, as Mannheim explained, rather a difference in degree:

The more industrialized a society is and the more advanced its division of labour and organization, the greater will be the number of spheres of human activity which will be functionally rational and hence also calculable in advance. Whereas the individual in earlier societies acted only occasionally and in limited spheres in a functionally rational manner, in contemporary society he is compelled to act in this way in more and more spheres of life¹⁵.

Adaptation to bureaucratic rules is not tantamount to their internalization. Still, the long-term impact of the environment has socialization value, is not limited to the acquisition by an official of a routine and relevant habits but leads to significant changes in personality and adoption of particular attitudes. Mannheim addresses these changes briefly as follows:

Modern society attains perhaps its highest stage of functional rationalization in its administrative staff, in which the individuals who take part not only have their specifications prescribed – this sort of rationalization of tasks may possibly be more advanced in the Taylorization of workers in an industrial plant – but in addition have their life-plan to a large extent

¹⁴ K. Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*. *Studies in Modern Social Structure*, London 1960, p. 53.

¹⁵ *Ibidem*, p. 55.

imposed in the form of a 'career', in which the individual stages are specified in advance. Concern with a career requires a maximum of self-mastery since it involves not only the actual processes of work but also the prescriptive regulation both of the ideas and feelings that one is permitted to have and of one's leisure time¹⁶.

As evidenced by the study of both the overt and hidden school curriculum, the mechanisms and processes observed by Mannheim have found and continue to find their realizations also in education¹⁷. Both teachers and students adapt to the bureaucratic rules, thus giving them priority not only over the objectives for which the institution or a specific unit was created, but also over their own aspirations and potential. In the act of adapting to the rules of the school, they internalise the existing order and accept it as their own.

According to Erich Fromm, this state of affairs is symptomatic for the process of alienation of contemporary man and should be blamed principally on modern bureaucracies¹⁸. According to Fromm, who merged the theories of Marx and Freud, in the process of alienation, a person loses contact with his/her own needs and development potential, and at the same time succumbs to external strength, amplifying it with his/her work and devotion, which in consequence leads to personality disorders. As he explains:

In the widest sense, every neurosis can be considered an outcome of alienation; this is because neurosis is characterized by the fact that one passion (for instance, for money, power, women, etc.) becomes dominant and separated from the total personality, thus becoming the ruler of the person. This passion is his idol to which he submits even though he may rationalise the nature of his idol and give it many different and often well-sounding names. He is ruled by a partial desire, he transfers all he has left to this desire, he is weaker the stronger 'it' becomes. He has become alienated from himself precisely because 'he' has become the slave of a part of himself¹⁹.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 56. In this context it is worth mentioning Erving Goffman's research and the theory of total institutions, which seem to correspond and at the same time illustrate the theses put forward by Mannheim (see E. Goffman, *Asylums. Essays on the Social Situation of Mental Patients and Other Inmates*, London 2017).

¹⁷ See R. Moore, "Socjologia edukacji", [in:] *Pedagogika*, vol. 2, ed. B. Sliwerski, Gdańsk 2006, p. 317-459; M. J. Szymański, *Studia i szkice z socjologii edukacji*, Warszawa 2000, p. 100-162; W. Żłobicki, *Ukryty program w edukacji. Między niewiedzą a manipulacją*, Kraków 2002.

¹⁸ See E. Fromm, "Alienation", [in:] E. Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*, New York 1961, p. 43-58; E. Fromm, "On Disobedience as a Psychological and Moral Problem", [in:] E. Fromm, *On Disobedience and Other Essays*, New York 1981, p. 16-23.

¹⁹ E. Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion: My Encounter with Marx and Freud*, London 2017, p. 73-74. "In the Marxist system, by alienation is meant a mode of expe-

The concept of alienation proposed by Fromm may foster understanding of a certain type of dependence on institutions, creating conditions for seeking answers to the question why some students and teachers – the longer they stay within the educational system, the more they find it difficult to leave it in order to exist and cope independently in other areas of social life. According to the interpretation of the alienation process adopted by Fromm, school requires students and teachers to develop the ability to operate in the conditions of a specific form of organization, at the same time separating them from their proper needs and development potential, thus weakening them and subordinating them to an external force. Moreover, it separates them from other spheres of social life, which are characterized by different properties and require different skills, competences and knowledge from the people who engage in them. In short, the more subordinated a student and the more engaged to optimally meet his or her school requirements and expectations, the more alienated and weakened internally they are, and the more he or she feels as a stranger to himself or to the outside world. As a consequence, alienation increases distance.

The effect observed in the above-mentioned studies on education seems to be in line with the observation made by Robert Merton, another sociology classic, on the dysfunctionality of modern bureaucracy²⁰. Lack of flexibility of officials and avoidance of basing decisions on one's own judgements, resulting from the habit of adhering to established rules, may make the organization somehow sabotage the realization of its own goals. Moreover, it may be unable to react to cases requiring special treatment and care. Such dysfunctionality is an acute problem for the functioning of the educational system in accordance with humanistic values. It is also an argument in favour of the assertion presented in the title.

When talking about “schools *detached* from reality” in organizational terms, another important factor should also be taken into account, which has already been mentioned in a way. The coherence of the

rience in which the person experiences himself as an alien, whose acts and their consequences have become his masters, whom he obeys” (E. Fromm, *The Sane Society*, New York 1955, p. 120).

²⁰ See R.K. Merton, “Bureaucratic Structure and Personality”, [in:] R. K. Merton, *Social Theory and Social Structure*, New York 1968, p. 249-261; S. Czepiński, “Przyczynę w sprawie klasycznej teorii biurokracji: Robert King Merton i Max Weber”, *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska* 2004, vol. XI, p. 237-243.

internal structure, coordination of stakeholders and activities, as well as orientation and regulation of the dynamics of the educational system and its individual institutions depends on their educational ideology²¹. Awareness of the impact and nature of this factor, as Zvi Lamm emphasizes, did not play a major role in the educational spheres of traditional society, but gained in importance in modernity²². It determines the legitimacy of the order established for a given educational space, its uniqueness and specificity, as well as the policies and directions pursued within it. In modern societies, in contrast to traditional ones, the reconstruction of the whole social order, including the educational one, required in each case the adoption of an ideal, setting goals and creating a project that would meet the criterion of progressiveness - elimination of risk and superstition and improvement and, consequently, change for the better. However, more than once its implementation triggered unexpected side-effects, which were contrary to expectations. It was often acknowledged after some time that the new reality deviates from the initial project assumptions and that such a state of affairs is often due to the deficiencies of the project itself, which distorts the envisaged ideal. It was assumed that it was not the ideal that needed to be corrected, but rather the project and the way it was implemented. According to Fromm, who writes about the tasks of social criticism, only the distortion of the ideal, rather than the ideal itself, is an ideology; in this sense, unlike in this article, he applies a valorising concept of ideology: "Criticism is not to denounce ideals but to demonstrate how they transform into ideologies and to criticise ideology in the name of a betrayed ideal"²³. In other words, the "betrayed ideal" should be regarded as one of the factors contributing to "schools being *detached* from reality". This seems to be borne out, too, by Bogusław Śliwerski's diagnosis about the reasons for the aspirations of a few generations of educators to create alternative schools and educational projects:

²¹ See Z. Lamm, "Ideologies and Educational Thought", [in:] *Psychology and Counseling in Education*, ed. D. Bar-Tal, Jerusalem 1986, p. 19-50; M. J. Szymański, "Ideologie edukacyjne", [in:] M. J. Szymański, *Studia i szkice z socjologii edukacji*, op. cit., p. 62-86; G. L. Gutek, "Ideology and Education", [in:] G. L. Gutek, *Philosophical and Ideological Perspectives on Education*, Needham 1997, p. 166-193.

²² See Z. Lamm, "Ideologies and Educational Thought", op. cit., p. 19.

²³ E. Fromm, "The Social Unconscious", [in:] E. Fromm, *Beyond the Chains of Illusion*, op. cit., p. 70-103. See E. Fromm, *Marx's Concept of Man*, op. cit., p. 62-63.

The secret of [...] permanent reformatory ambitions stems not only from 'wishful thinking', i.e. the ideology of pedagogical individualism, neo-romanticism or the pedagogy of resistance, but also from the need, more and more strongly felt by the broadly understood educators, to abandon depersonalizing educational structures and practices in favour of real rather than declarative humanization of these processes²⁴.

The experience of the dissonance between the way the school operates and the ideals that guide it does not necessarily lead the educators to reject the latter, but in many cases it becomes an important impulse for them to find a way to implement it and to connect the school with the reality of everyday life around it.

Like Montaigne, who writes about traditional society, teachers focusing their own and their students' attention on theories of reality, abstract and thus move away from reality and their personal experiences. In modern institutions this distance is enlarged by the fact that they tend to submit to the forms and schemes appropriate to the institution in accordance with the way educational processes are organised. Moreover, by internalizing the imposed order, they risk alienation from students' expectations, goals and tasks of humanism, as well as their own aspirations and needs. If one considers that the teacher's involvement in the educational relationship with pupils and the creation of optimal conditions for their development plays a fundamental role in the process of school learning, one can see in the above trends the beginnings of the process of teachers' and pupils' distancing themselves from external and internal reality, but also more broadly - schools that are detached from the reality of everyday life, Husserl's *Lebenswelt*.

3.

There is one more aspect of "schools being *detached* from the reality of everyday life". although the phenomenon seems unique for the late modern era, its sources must actually be sought in the preceding period. In order to skilfully grasp the unique character of this *detachment*, we may return to Karl Mannheim's reflections on bureaucracy and stability of the social structure.

Mannheim assumed that social order may be at risk due to the disproportion between the progress of technological and natural

²⁴ B. Śliwerski, "Pedagogika alternatywna", [in:] *Pedagogika*, vol. 4, ed. B. Śliwerski, Gdańsk 2010, p. 447.

sciences and the incomparable development of knowledge about social and moral forces, which are unequally distributed among different social groups and classes. While traditional societies, as he believed, could afford some degree of disparity and imbalance in the integration of their structures, the growing democratization and complexity of the division of labour in modern Western societies, and with it the growing and increasing interdependence of individual elements and individuals on one another and on the whole as such, necessitates a control of the overall process based on rational and moral criteria, and the equitable distribution of mental and moral dispositions in social structure²⁵. The emergence of numerous small tensions, which, in principle, would not have an impact on the stability of the functioning of traditional societies, in the context of modern consolidation of the social structure gains a previously inaccessible potential for influencing the state and functioning of other elements of it. In other words, because of the close interdependence and the numerous links between the various factors that make up society and the actions of individuals and groups, the effects of even small shifts in the various parts of society's structure occur in a way that is difficult to predict and control and affect the entire society. The network of dependencies is so compact, complex and multifaceted that, according to Mannheim, it resonates easily at even a slight vibration within any social space. Therefore, the prevention of such tensions and disorderly displacements requires a stricter control of behaviour on the part of particular individuals. Functional rationalization in this case is not an adequate reaction to this type of interference. It does not suppress it. At the same time, Mannheim noticed that the form internalized by the individual is not the last stage of the rationalization process. As he says:

self-rationalization [...] it so far does not represent the most radical form of the rationalization of the acting subject. Reflection and self-observation, as distinguished from sheer self-rationalization, are an ever more radical form of it²⁶.

The reflectiveness of the subject, about which Mannheim wrote, becomes in this case a necessary component of participation in heterogeneous social spaces, so that the individual is able to mitigate the

²⁵ See K. Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, op. cit., p. 42-44. See also: K. Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia. An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York 1954, p. 1-48.

²⁶ K. Mannheim, *Man and Society in an Age of Reconstruction*, op. cit., p. 56.

tensions resulting from the unsynchronised displacements generated by the transforming individual institutions and social segments, which are independent of each other and according to their own internal logic. In the 1980s, Ulrich Beck drew attention to this problem, recognizing that this is the dominant late modernity trend which, in his opinion, creates the formation of a “risk society”²⁷. He pointed out that risks and threats cannot be removed by existing methods, i.e. by reforming and transforming the inherited institutions, since these reforms alone are the cause and transmission of further tensions within the social structure. In addition, they cannot be identified and assessed without recourse to expertise, which is itself responsible for generating risk, as it is neither certain nor static, but rather evolving and fragmented. Therefore, the most appropriate reaction of individuals is a declining confidence in institutions and the development of individual strategies for dealing with the contradictions and tensions of human collective organizations, for which reflective rationality seems to be essential²⁸. Beck is followed by Zygmunt Bauman: “one lives becomes a *biographical solution to systemic contradictions*”²⁹. While modernism retained faith in the legitimacy of the pursuit of the utopia of a well-ordered society, in which accidentally generated vibrations will threaten neither its stability nor the security of individuals, insofar as crisis situations are part and parcel of social life as its inextricable component to be managed to minimise or deliberately redistribute the effects of vibrations and tensions appearing in the social structure. In this sense, not only the individual, but also society as a whole should become reflective, so that in their emergence they can cushion the tensions created on the thresholds between relatively autonomous, evolving social spheres³⁰.

An example of such asynchronization and school’s *detachment* from social reality may be its relation to the labour market. The dynamics of this sphere has its own logic; the changes depend on current trends and technical possibilities and must respect consumers’ unstable needs and desires. Chance and risk cannot be ruled out. Similarly,

²⁷ See U. Beck, *Risk Society. Towards a New Modernity*, Los Angeles 1992; A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity. Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*, Stanford 1991.

²⁸ See U. Beck, W. Bonss, Ch. Lau, “The Theory of Reflexive Modernization. Problematic, Hypotheses and Research Programme”, *Theory, Culture & Society* 2003, vol. 20; U. Beck, A. Giddens, S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization. Politics, Tradition and Aesthetics in the Modern Social Order*, Cambridge 1994.

²⁹ Z. Bauman, *Liquid Modernity*, op. cit., p. 34.

³⁰ See U. Beck, A. Giddens, S. Lash, *Reflexive Modernization*, op. cit., p. 5-13, 112-119, 184-197.

the educational system has its own internal logic and dynamics, but the changes within it take place at a different pace, characteristic of this institution, thus creating an insurmountable gap. In other words, the school, using several-year periods of pre-planned education, is not able to reliably and exhaustively prepare students for active participation in the labour market, where trends not only cannot be predicted in advance, but occur in cycles of several months or even weeks (e.g. advancement of technical knowledge, the emergence of new professions and an atrophy of existing ones, changes in the employment structure, circulation of capital, relocation of production, migration, etc.).

This dimension of school's *detachment* from social reality can also be viewed from the perspective of criticism of ideology. First of all, the twilight of the era of "great narratives" did not bring about a decline in the demand for ideologies; the place of the powerful monopolists was taken by a number of different micro-stories and regional utopias. Democracy, human rights, rationalism, consumerism, postmodernism, technopoly, ecology, vegetarianism, paidocentrism, feminism, *laissez-faire*, corporations, Facebook, autonomy, state, further alter-globalism, Islam, Buddhism, Christianity, anarchy, race, nation, social justice, art, etc. - have become unconnected systems of orientation that mobilize action, each of which develops in a separate domain. Hence the image of a liberal democracy engaged in multiplying the common good of a citizen as modelled by the school is in conflict with the way in which students participate in civil society organizations, each of which legitimizes its actions by an ideology that is appropriate to its own group.

Secondly, as Zvi Lamm proves, the modern school, which was obliged to serve "three clients" with different, incompatible interests - society, culture and the individual - favoured the processes of socialization and acculturation in an attempt to reconcile the contradictions arising from the equal treatment and co-existence of these clients³¹. At the same time, experimental schools with a humanistic orientation, setting themselves in opposition to the tendencies dominating in education, opted for the priority of neglected individualism. The educational space of late modernity inherited this state of affairs, but a new era offered the Western society a ferment of the "revolution of subjects"³², with cultural plura-

³¹ See Z. Lamm, "Ideologies and Educational Thought", op. cit., p. 19-50.

³² See A. Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity*, op. cit.; A. Giddens, *The Transformation of Intimacy: Sexuality, Love, and Eroticism in Modern Societies*, Stanford 1992; Z. Melosik, T. Szkudlarek, *Kultura, tożsamość, edukacja. Migotanie znaczeń*, Kraków 1998; L. Witkowski, "Podmiot jako humanistyczne wyzwanie dla pedagogiki.

lity and extreme individualism being its two major reference points. As a consequence, this throws new light on the current role of orientations prevalent in the education system. In this sense school, subordinating education to the interests of society and culture, is not compatible with the everyday life of Western societies, in which the majority of people devote themselves to the politics of private life and group particularisms.

The content of the article does not exhaust the list of manifestations of “detachment of schools from reality”. Nevertheless, it is sufficient to justify the separation of its three historically shaped dimensions. They are different, but the processes taking place within them overlap, thus strengthening the ultimate effect of the gap created between the educational system and other social spheres and their practices. In the micro dimension, it is the gap appearing within individual experience, where school’s orientation on theory displaces the connection with everyday life and social practice. The organizational dimension of “detachment”, mezo, is related to the adopted form of institutionalization of the school, while macro - to the dynamics and consolidation of the social structure. We can try to eliminate the gap created in this way, looking for individual answers to the situation and counting on the effectiveness of the trial and error method. On the other hand, from the point of view of critical pedagogy, it seems much more important to ask what strategies and tactics - collective, individual and institutional - accompany the attempts to bridge the gap according to each of the distinguished dimensions? We can assume initially that there is no single line of action that would shorten the distance as much as possible in each of the indicated dimensions. Thus, the emerging sphere of research concerns the issue of how strategies and tactics enabling shortening the distance in one of its dimensions change the nature of the relationship between school and social reality in the other two aspects.

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Abstract:

Each institutionalized social practice, including school practice, is placed in a separate temporal, spatial and situational context appropriate for itself. In this way a distance is created between school education and social reality. This distance is changing under the influence of developments in the organization of schools and social practices. A number of studies reveal the negative effects of the increasing distance between school education and social practice. The aim of this paper is to show three dimensions in which the distance between school education and social reality is formed.

Keywords:

bureaucracy, experience, distance, school education, ideology, social practice, social realities, social structure