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# Pedagogical theory of medium

**Abstract:** The paper's central question is, is there a view of media that can be articulated through a specifically pedagogical theory, and if there is, how does the idea of medium open up to this pedagogical thinking? By answering this question, we would be able to articulate a specifically (pedagogically) determined outlook on media, but at the same time, we would be able to read pedagogical potentialities of the media themselves. By approaching the matter in this way, we would not be talking about pedagogical *use* of media but about pedagogical properties *inherent* in media and letting them speak in their own particular pedagogical strength without using them as means to a heteronomous goal. This line of inquiry relies on two other questions that must be answered before the central question above. First, *what* is pedagogical theory, and second, *what* is a medium? If we are able to answer these two questions and through them see the limited unity of the pedagogical outlook and the general properties of media (the idea of a medium), we could synthesize the answer to our central question. By approaching the inquiry in this way, we do not talk about *specific media* in this paper but prepare the theoretical outlook for pedagogical investigations of concrete, specific media. We see this paper as a preparatory theoretical work that tries to reflect the way in which we pedagogically see and ask questions about media, as well as how we use these media in a wide range of pedagogical relations.

**Keywords:** pedagogy, theory, medium, Bildung

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## Introduction

Our aim is to articulate a pedagogical outlook on media. There are two questions we need to answer, which constitute the conditions of such an articulation. The first one is, what is a pedagogical outlook itself? By that, we mean what kind of *perspective* is inherent in pedagogy as a science? The second question is, what do we mean when we say “medium” and “media”? If after answering these questions, we can synthesize them in the sense of their inner connectedness, we would be able to name such an outlook a pedagogical outlook on a medium.

There are explicit reasons for this approach to these two elements. The first is that if we would like to *pedagogically* view media, then we have to explicitly answer what a pedagogical *outlook* itself is, so we can understand what it is the object of our observation (the medium) that can be seen and treated as having pedagogical properties. Asking about the second element, situated in our question, “*What is medium?*,” has its reason in our attempt to look at the *medium*, meaning our question is not about the *content* in media but about the medium itself. One could argue that we necessarily view the unity of content and media in the sense of the unity of content and form, as content and form *for themselves* are abstractions. However, here we stress the aspect of form that is what gives content a specific shape. Focusing on content does not tell us anything about media themselves, as Marshall McLuhan (2017, p. 20) pointed out throughout his career. It informs us only about how a particular medium is used in some context. In essence, focusing on the content actually makes us blind to the effect of the medium itself. Looking at the shaping of content is different from looking at the content in the same way as looking at a discursive formation is different from looking at a particular “move” within a discourse (Gee 2015, pp. 36–38). Merely “making moves” within a discourse still keeps us blind to the discursive formation itself. The kind of inquiry focused on content when it comes to media, therefore, is political in the broadest sense of this word. By asking about the content in media and the use of media, we can ask questions about the informational value, possible manipulation(s), criteria for selecting content, democratic status of media etc. What we cannot ask within

that approach is how a medium itself *forms* the message and what is the language of the medium itself.

These two research questions form the basis for the kind of approach we find pedagogically potent, because pedagogy in its practical sense deals with interactions between subjects (the idea of a ‘pedagogical relation’), whose interaction is necessarily mediated. These interactions are those of subjects’ worlds of experience that are articulated in a particular sense in a concrete pedagogical relation. These articulations are essentially mediations. This leads us to the final question of this paper: the question of the pedagogical articulation of a medium. By “articulation,” we mean the possibility of a pedagogical *critique* of existing media but even more importantly, the possibility of the pedagogical *production* of media. Pedagogy cannot have only a reactionary stance toward “reality” but should also realize its productive essence in this area of research and practice. To achieve this articulation, we must synthesize idea of a pedagogical outlook with the general properties of the medium (on the formal and aesthetic level) that can be seen as pedagogical. Here, a medium is approached as an object of pedagogical thought and as a productive discourse-forming entity. We attempt to talk about the general pedagogical properties of a medium, but further inquiries should continually be performed at the level of concrete and specific media.

### **Use of media is affirmation of the media: the pedagogical insufficiency of the concept of media literacy**

We have to further stress that media and mediations themselves are not “transparent” in the sense that they do not affect the “content.” They also cannot be transformed in their use in such a way that we can “use the medium (in)correctly” and through that use negate the medium’s inherent structuring properties as if the whole interaction with media depended only on “media literacy” and “awareness.” That is why we focus on a medium as a particular kind of language. The inner, formal and aesthetic (in the original Greek sense of sensation, sensuousness) logic of a particular medium is a deciding factor for how the content and the subject interacting with the content will be construed. When we talk about “the pedagogy of a medium,” we focus on this aspect.

We can observe a relatively simple example of this kind of mediated construction of subject in the expression and interaction through text. We take a scientific book and a scientific article as two formally different textual expressions of hypothetically the same content. The attempted “sameness” of the content is not achievable through both forms. In the form of the book, if this hypothetical book is aware of its formal mediality and therefore, is written as a *book* for a reason, the thought and experience will be laid out in a slow tempo, deeply interwoven, systematically developed, with few or no jumps in development. The (self-)consciousness in the interaction with this book (the “reader”) will work in the same way inherent in the formal structuring of the text here. The reader will have to work synthetically, systematically and with deep and slow thought if it were to read successfully, as all of Nicholas Carr’s (2011)

investigations in his book *The Shallows: How the Internet Is Changing the Way We Think, Read and Remember* demonstrate. This “way of reading” is caused by the formal property of the medium of the book. It is not the “kind of use” that the reader chooses. If one is to read the book successfully, one has to have an ear for the book. The article, however, will always be fragmentary. It is not even intended to be a slow, systematic development of thought. The article’s form pushes the idea of efficient articulation of methodology and research results that can be produced, distributed and read quickly and efficiently. One can try to disobey the form of this kind of text and make an attempt at a slowly developed thought, but one will always fall short of accomplishing this attempt that is suited to another medium. The same thing will happen at the end for the “recipient” of the text. We can literally say that the book as a medium has its own educational properties, just as an article has its own specific educational properties. The same goes for every specific medium. Media do not have educational properties in the sense of something merely *external* to the subject’s experience of being. These properties do not form something *external* that the subject then “knows” or “can do” when he or she interacts with the medium. However, they form the subject’s *being* itself through the use of media. This is why it is appropriate to say that media as such have the effect of *Bildung*,<sup>1</sup> in the classical pedagogical sense of this word.

We claim that using a particular medium necessarily means following and accepting the rules of that medium itself. This is McLuhan’s old idea: that to use the medium by itself means to affirm the medium. We cannot think that the “right use” of any medium denies the effects of the formal structuring-of-experience properties of that same medium. McLuhan (2017) says, “Our conventional response to all media, namely that it is how they are used that counts, is the numb stance of the technological idiot” (ibid., p. 31). Pedagogically, it follows we have to understand the particular medium itself, in terms of its construction and critique. Otherwise, the inherent formal and aesthetic qualities of a medium can affect our pedagogical mediation in an unforeseen manner, and we can overlook great new pedagogical opportunities.

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<sup>1</sup> Hartmut von Hentig (2008) reminds us in his text *Bildung. Ein Essay* of the instrumental role of what Plato first meant under ‘*idea*’ for the concept of *Bildung*. An idea (gr. *idea*, *eidos*) is, in the concept of *Bildung*, understood as that to which a human being is becoming (purpose). However, it is crucial to understand that this purpose is not meant as a heteronomous “plan” or a technically produced “goal” but as what a human being in himself or herself already ontologically *is*. It is a category of *being itself*. In modern terms, a human being under the light of an idea is understood as *freedom*. This was developed primarily in the works of I. Kant (1976), J. G. Fichte (1974) and G.W.F. Hegel (1955). In the way in which J. F. Herbart (2015) pedagogically articulated the idea of *Bildung* in his book *The Science of Education: Its General Principles Deduced from Its Aim*, this idea of freedom is embodied in his principal idea of *Bildsamkeit* which then mediates itself through experience, as seen in the concept of *interest*, which is the main driving force of the process of *Bildung* (Herbart 2015, pp. 124–129). *Bildung*, therefore, is an experiential mediation of *Bildsamkeit* seen as a pedagogically articulated idea of freedom. In summary, *Bildung* seen from this classical standpoint means the process of the self-becoming (self-realizing) of a human being from the subject-object standpoint. One has to accentuate here that *Bildung*, therefore, is not a matter of only “knowledge” or even “competence,” but a matter of what a human being *is*, a matter of *being itself*. If one were to ask about the difference between *knowledge* and *Bildung*, we could say that *Bildung* is achieved *through* knowledge (among other things), but knowledge itself is not *Bildung*.

Mediation is always a *particular* articulation of some kind of experience of a pedagogical subject. Pedagogically, we have to ask whether this mediation is aware of itself and whether this articulation is done with theoretical-pedagogical reasons, because the *kind* of mediation has direct practical-pedagogical consequences. This awareness of theoretical conditions (and absence of it) has implications not only for the pedagogy of the medium but also for the didactics.

Our fundamental assumption here is that the media themselves are particular languages, with their possibilities and impossibilities of expression. Media are not “transparent” in such a way that we could talk about “content as such” that shows itself to us through a medium. A medium is a specific kind of optics that structures the content. We now examine this idea more closely.

### Idea of the medium and its formative nature

When trying to talk about media themselves as having structuring properties for their content, one could trace this approach back to what I. Kant did for epistemology. Before Kant’s philosophy unified empiricism and rationalism, and most explicitly his *Critique of Pure Reason* (Kant 1976), there was a clear division and duality of so-called empiricist philosophy and so-called rationalist philosophy. The empiricist focused on outside experience, which supposedly exclusively formed the subject seen as *tabula rasa*. This was John Locke’s approach to subjectivity, seen in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (Locke 2007). The rationalist focused on the world of pure thought, thought rid of outside experience, from which a complete system of thought was to be deduced. This is exemplified most clearly in Descartes’ (1993) deductions seen in his *Meditations on First Philosophy* and Spinoza’s (1959) deductions in his *Ethics*. The debate about the true nature and “source” of the formation of self (*noumena* or *phaenomena*) could not be settled between rationalism and empiricism before Kant.

Kant essentially unified empiricism and rationalism. This was done in the way that he conceived categories of pure reason, inherent in reason itself, as *a priori* (meaning they exist independently and prior to experience) forms of structuring of outside experience (Kant 1976, pp. 88–90). However, the outside experience gave categories of pure reason “material,” which categories as formal structures do not have by themselves (*ibid.*, pp. 110–112). These experiences constitute the necessary conditions for the appearance of phenomena, which can appear only as a *unity* of material outside experience structured according to categories of pure reason. Outside experience that is not structured according to categories of pure reason actually does not exist *for us* and does not appear to us (*ibid.*, pp. 118–119). Because phenomena are material experiences structured by categories of pure reason, there is a “left-over” in the possible idea of outside experience *by itself*, which is not structured by the categories. This “leftover” is the idea of *Ding an sich*, *thing per se*, and it constitutes something that Kant would call transcendent (not transcendental!). Kant (*ibid.*, p. 71) writes: “That of which synthetical a priori propositions can be stated are objects of appearance and not thing-in-itself [Translation Z. K.]”

This essentially means that the thing-in-itself is “unknowable” for the subject of cognition. Each time that we see a phenomenon, the work of the categories of pure reason has already been done for the phenomenon to be able to appear. Fichte (1956) later made a substantial critique of Kant’s idea of *Ding an sich*, essentially saying that it is a phantom and that all that exists is produced by “I,” by consciousness (ibid., p. 180). However, speaking about Kant, similar to experiences outside their unification according to the rules of a priori categories of pure reason, categories by themselves, without outside experience, are only empty forms that cannot lead to the formation of phenomena that can appear to us.

We believe we can see something to an extent comparable to this in McLuhan’s approach to media, in which he develops his idea that the medium itself is the message (McLuhan 2017, pp. 19–35). McLuhan conceptualized the idea of the medium as an “extension of man” (ibid., p. 19, pp. 63–68). What he meant by this is that anything that “amplifies” or changes some human faculty can be regarded as a medium. In this sense, he talked about media in a very broad sense. Media in this sense are not only electronic media, digital media and mass media but also technologies such as wheels, roads etc. Regarding media as extensions of man, he says: “[M]edia as extensions of our senses institute new ratios, not only among our private senses, but among themselves, when they interact among themselves” (ibid., p. 78). What he means when he talks about “new ratios” among our private senses (but consequently, this means our self-consciousness as well) is that extending a certain human faculty or faculties leads to rearranging the *whole* of the human subject. McLuhan also stresses that it is not just that the particular stimulated sense and faculty become amplified, but also the *whole* becomes rearranged according to this new amplification. Self-consciousness is always the unity of apperception, as Kant (1976, p. 104) writes: “every diversity of perceptions is necessarily related to: *I think* of that subject in which this diversity of perceptions takes place [Translation Z. K].” This principle of apperception, *I think*, is a necessary unity of self-consciousness, which relates its manifold experiences. In the same sense, McLuhan’s amplification of one sense and one experience cannot be contained within itself, but it rearranges the whole because our central nervous system always tries to be in a state of equilibrium (McLuhan 2017, p. 67). For media, this idea means that any *kind* of extension and any *number* of extensions in any of the faculties are necessarily a rearrangement of the senses and the unity of the self-consciousness of the subject. This means that media, understood in this way, structure subjectivity similar to Kant’s categories of pure reason structure subjectivity. Of course, media are something explicitly created by human *production* and therefore, could be called something like an exteriorized self and something that a productive human being has control of. The formative power of the media on a deeper level, beyond and beneath the surface of the content, can be seen as emerging here.

We also need to take a further look at the claim we made previously, that the media themselves, not their content, affect these extensions. “... [T]he medium is the message because the medium shapes and controls the scale and form of human association and action. The content of the uses of such media are as diverse as they are ineffectual in shaping the form of human association” (McLuhan 2017,

p. 20). McLuhan says that the medium in use extends a certain faculty or faculties in terms of the senses and our consciousness and practice. Therefore, things like sight, hearing, (de)concentration, synthesis etc. are all valid examples. This use rearranges the faculties' relation, just as it rearranges self-consciousness. The rearrangement is that of the "scale" and the "form" of the "human association" and "action." The scale and form express the relations of the senses, experiences and forms of self-consciousness, while the human association and action mean how we structure our *individual selves* and our *societies* on theoretical and practical levels. It can already be seen here that this amplification is done through the way in which a medium interacts with an individual, through the way in which a medium itself is aesthetically structured. This has to do primarily with the formal and structural aspects of the medium and the relations of our senses it affects and consequently, with the form of the senses' unity in our self-consciousness. Following this, McLuhan can say that "*medium is the message*," meaning it is not content that is the true meaning of the medium, but the medium's own formal properties, structures and language it effects in its use. Consequently, the kind of inquiry that wants to address media must focus on these languages.

This stance that media are material substances that have a productive quality not only on the individual level but also on the societal level is clearly expressed in the following lines: "If the formative power in the media are the media themselves, that raises a host of large matters... Namely, that technological media are staples or natural resources, exactly as are coal and cotton and oil. Anybody will concede that a society whose economy is dependent upon one or two major staples like cotton, or grain, or lumber, or fish, or cattle is going to have some obvious social patterns of organization as a result" (*ibid.*, p. 34). This stance almost reminds us of Marx's (1961) position regarding historical materialism seen clearly in this passage from his manuscript *The German Ideology* (among many other places): "The class that has means for material production at its disposition, in this very fact has means for spiritual production as well, and so because of this it [the ruling class] has thoughts of those who have no means for spiritual production at its disposition. The ruling thoughts are nothing more than ideal expression of the ruling material relations, that is, ruling material relations expressed in the form of thoughts [Translation Z. K.]" (Marx and Engels 1961, p. 369). The material conditions of production are crucial to the formation of our practices—both practical and theoretical. Once again, this reveals the aspect that is of the most pedagogical importance to us: the dynamic, productive quality of media. Of course, pedagogically, the individual aspect of formation through media is central for us, because pedagogy as a science does not deal primarily with society as a whole but with an individual's formation in the context of the pedagogical relation.

It would follow from this idea that pedagogy of media needs to understand the formative character of the media themselves in a *general* theoretical sense and a *specific* kind of formative character on the level of the construction and critique of specific, concrete media. But merely taking the dogmatic and uncritical position of "new is good, old is bad" (or vice versa), talking about how "interesting" and "dynamic" instruction is when using "old" or "new" media, does not take into

account that media by themselves are also always “working behind our back.” We need to pedagogically understand media themselves and show from the position of the theory of pedagogy how and when a particular medium makes sense for the faculty, self-consciousness and practice to be developed.

Our following assumption is that different media themselves have different kinds of pedagogical logic within their formal properties. If we should be able to examine their logic pedagogically, it follows that we have to know what pedagogy itself is, in the theoretical sense, in the sense of seeing the pedagogical way of seeing. We cannot talk of pedagogical properties of media if we have no clear idea of the pedagogical perspective of seeing.

### **Pedagogical outlook and pedagogical subject**

What do we mean when we say we are looking for a “pedagogical outlook”? We are not talking about pedagogical *phenomena* here, because a phenomenon itself can be determined as *pedagogical* only through self-knowing of pedagogical sight. We are not talking about the methodology of pedagogical research either, as it can also be articulated only after we know how we are seeing and what can be revealed to this particular kind of sight, so that only after that can we articulate methods that will reveal that which we pedagogically see as a pedagogical phenomenon in an appropriate way, which means exactly in its *pedagogical* properties. Self-aware, disciplinary articulate methodology can be developed only on that basis and through that discipline’s fundamental theory. An approach that *starts* with a general methodology of social sciences most often results in dissolution of the pedagogical subject, as well as dissolution of the theoretical identity of pedagogy as a science. If our starting point is neither the phenomenon (“object”) nor methodology, that leaves us with a starting point of reflection of a certain mode of thinking and seeing, a perspective that embodies the logic (in the old sense of *logos*) of pedagogy. In modern terms, one might say that we are starting from self-aware reflection of pedagogy’s own “language game” (Wittgenstein 1998) or pedagogy’s own “discourse.”

There is always a problem of the starting point of reflection that would allow us to proceed without making arbitrary assumptions. In such a case, it is always good to start from the word itself. If pedagogy is *leading of a child* (gr. *pais*; *agein*) in its very logic and not only in its mere and essentially irrelevant historical image of a slave physically leading a child to be educated, then within this idea there are several implicit conditions that constitute the possibility of this activity.

First, we have to ask what we mean by “child.” The biological aspect of a child is not central here, because the biological aspect by itself needs only adequate conditions for its growth and health to take place. This aspect certainly requires no leading. This reduced idea of a child is not enough to comprehend the logic of a human becoming. The sociological aspect of a child is much more expanded than the biological, and that aspect focuses on the interaction between child and society. One could talk about a wide variety of functionalist or interactionist theories, but in our opinion, they focus on something other than what we are after here, and that

is the *essential being of the child itself*. Our question is really, what kind of a human *being* is a child-being? To answer this question, one has to look in the direction of the philosophical foundations of pedagogy. The possibility of education in pedagogy, articulated as *Bildsamkeit* (Herbart 2015), has its roots in the philosophical idea of freedom. A human being does not have an external property of freedom. Instead, the human being *itself is* freedom. To *be* freedom means not to have a predetermined form and at the same time, to have the ability to give a particular form to one's self. The form that the self gives to itself is never a final form, an absolute form. Therefore, the basic, free self always transcends every possible self-given form. As Hegel (1989) says for human will, as the practical subject: "The will holds in itself an element of pure indeterminacy, or pure reflection into 'I,' in which every determination is absolved [Translation Z. K.]" (ibid., p. 38). This means that self-setting of this pure "I" transcends every concrete setting and absorbs it through reflecting it into itself, only to self-set again. In this fundamental self-transcendence is the root for human being as becoming. This logic was historically explicated in various ways, perhaps most paradigmatically in the entirety of Hegel's (1955) *Phenomenology of Spirit*, but it was also done clearly in Helmuth Plessner's (1994) work and particularly in his idea of *eccentric positionality* (ibid., pp. 105–109). To be free means not to be pre-determined. It means to be an observer that can make every possible thing an object of observation. To be able to make everything an object of thought means to be at the position of no-where and to be no-thing. This pure sight of self-consciousness was what Plessner called human eccentric positionality (ibid., pp. 105–109). We should also point out that if we see that freedom is not only a negative idea (a lack of determination, freedom *from* something) but also a positive idea in the sense of self-determination, then the idea of freedom takes on its full meaning as self-determination and self-formation. In this way, a human being as self-determination of freedom-thought is essentially *causa sui*, as Spinoza (1959, p. 3) put it. This is the starting point of all truly modern philosophy. Following this with a specific pedagogical reflection of these ideas, *Bildsamkeit* is a pedagogical expression of the negative aspect of the idea of freedom, dialectically followed by *Bildung* as a positive aspect of the idea of freedom. Following from this, the human being *by its own logic* needs education (*Bildung*) just as freedom needs thought to become self-becoming. This means that education as self-forming is an existential thing, not merely a question of one's vocation. Following these ideas, a 'child-being' can be conceptualized as the eternal youth of freedom's possibility for self-transcendence and self-becoming. This is exactly what Nietzsche did when he recognized the "final form" of the human spirit as a child, which he defined as "a circle circling from itself" and "being a fresh start" (Nietzsche 1962, p. 27). This means to be in the manner of fundamental self-production instead in the manner of taking outside forms upon oneself. Being rooted in this self-production means to be a child and in this sense, to be "young." This is the child-being that constitutes the possibility and the necessity of pedagogy.

One particular faculty of a human being that is present in the above and that needs to be stressed more explicitly is that of our being able to see ideas. Ideas in the sense of the Greek *idea* and *eidos* express the human ability to reveal being through

theoretical activity (the activity of thinking or mindful observation). The fact that being reveals itself to us in the activity of our thinking and that it reveals itself to us as an *idea, form of being, sight* of being, is the reason we can talk about any kind of determination. Without an idea as a form of being, the determining factor could not be constituted. This is why freedom in the pedagogical sense of *Bildung* needs to be seen in dialectical unity with the mind and reason, because the mind and reason are the principles of determination. The true subject of self-determination in us as humans can, therefore, be seen as the dialectical unity of the freedom-mind.

Pedagogy is the recognition, theory and awareness of a human as a child, together with the theory and practice of *leading* this child. Leading itself (*agein*) implies the idea of purpose and the purpose of *pais-agein* is *pais* itself. Pedagogy does not lead the child toward something outside itself and thus, is not reducing this child as self-formation to any particular image. It is leading a human being to his or her own center of being, enabling a truly human, free and authentically productive existence. If pedagogy conceptualizes itself in such a way that it leads child-being to something outside *pais* itself, then pedagogy becomes ideological in the sense that it reduces the absolute potentiality of freedom to a *particular* image of what it means to be human.

The final, explicitly pedagogical aspect of this self-becoming is that it happens in a pedagogical relation. What we mean by that is that although the process of *Bildung* is, in its essence, self-becoming, this self-becoming needs mediation through a pedagogical relation. What a pedagogue or a teacher does is a practical interaction with this inner possibility of self-becoming in a pedagogical subject. This practical interaction is most often pedagogically articulated as *Unterricht* but is not necessarily reduced only to this. There are many kinds of pedagogical relations, and almost any interaction can be approached and treated practically from a pedagogical standpoint.

In summary, the pedagogical outlook on a human being is that it is a free, not predetermined, being, that should be approached as a subject of one's own activity, and whose activity needs to be articulated in such a way that it reflectively (self) determines the fundamental freedom. This (self)determination is never finished, as we cannot achieve the "full" of the "final" form. Freedom is never negated in self-determination but always transcends each determination. The determination part is done not only through knowledge but through also the widest variety of possible human experience. In this sense, *Bildung* is not reduced to an area of narrowly understood knowledge but is also emotion, volition, intuition etc. Our next task is to identify which properties in media themselves facilitate and effect such an idea of human development.

### **Pedagogy implicit in the medium and the pedagogical use of media**

When we say "pedagogy of a medium," we are actually assuming within that phrase that there is pedagogy implicit in the medium itself to be found. Of course, that does not mean that the medium itself can be seen as a pedagogue or a teacher, only because the medium structures the subject in a specific ratio, focus and intensity

of senses and self-consciousness. The medium still has to be understood and used by a teacher or pedagogue for appropriate development and faculties that need developing in a specific case. But each specific medium has its own strengths and weaknesses when it comes to a particular kind of human development. No medium is by itself pedagogically “good” or “bad.” It all comes down to what the medium is used for. Note that we do not claim that we can negate the specific power or weakness of a specific medium in its pedagogical use. We claim that the pedagogue or teacher has to understand the specific medium and use it in the appropriate context, for the appropriate subject matter and for the appropriate student. Pedagogical use of media does not mean that we can pedagogically transform the specific properties and inherent rules of a certain medium, but that we knowingly and understandingly choose media appropriate for a concrete pedagogical case and that we artfully use the medium we have chosen, according to its own inner strength. This all means that a pedagogue or a teacher has to understand a specific medium and be able to produce within it, while doing that production in relation to his or her pedagogical theory, in which the theory is the area in which he or she decides what to use, when to use it, with whom and in what context. We claim that media themselves have (trans)formative properties. However, we do not claim that media by themselves are pedagogues and teachers. As humans, we mediate ourselves through media, which are not “neutral” languages, but we also exist outside media as languages and therefore, can transform them and even manipulate them to an extent. Media are produced by humans, which means that humans fundamentally transcend any “given” media. In conclusion, a medium needs a pedagogue or teacher, just as a pedagogue or a teacher necessarily practices pedagogy through some kind of mediation (we have to remember that even such a seemingly direct form of human interaction as *speech* is a medium).

What does a pedagogue or teacher have to concentrate on, in a general sense, when it comes to potentially pedagogical properties of media? And what does he or she have to concentrate on when it comes to pedagogical use of media?

We should explicitly show the *general potentially pedagogical aspects of a medium*. We say “general,” because our intention here is not to pedagogically analyze particular media but to describe on which general media properties the pedagogical analysis and construction should focus. We note here again that we treat a medium simultaneously as an *object* of inquiry and as a *subject* in the sense of discourse-producing material reality. If pedagogy deals with the leading of a human being, understood as purposeful self-becoming, then pedagogical thinking needs to operate within dialectical, transformative objects of thought (or their transformative aspects), just as pedagogical practice needs to approach the transforming in humans and not the static aspects of human beings. Therefore, we also see media not as static objects but as productive forces. Following from where we started our talk about the idea of the medium itself, the way in which the medium in use (trans)forms the subject that interacts with it is the deciding moment in the kind of subject and the kind of faculties that are being developed.

However, transformation *as such* is too broad a notion to properly capture the *pedagogically meaningful* notion of transformation. This inherent idea of trans-

formation that we are looking for has to be of a *particular kind*, so transformation can embody *pedagogical* self-becoming. This particularity of transformation has to be derived from the idea of the pedagogical outlook that we were developing above.

From what we have said, we can explicate several traits that media themselves and their pedagogical treatment should allow for and manifest, if they are to be effective in a pedagogical sense:

- If the arrangement of the senses that a medium stimulates is such that this particular arrangement amplifies one sense, the question is, what does amplification of that one particular sense do in terms of that one sense and in terms of the whole? For example, what does amplification of the visual faculty do to the kind of thinking a subject is able to perform? If multiple senses are being amplified, the additional question is, do they work in synergy, or do they produce a lack of focus? If they work in synergy, do they amplify one another in the sense of giving an additional meaning that otherwise would not be present? Different arrangements and ratios of senses and faculties in the use of a particular medium produce different effects.
  - a) An example of the amplification of one sense that enables deep synthesis is a frontal lecture done through speech that is open and slow and that develops thought. The speech can be arranged in such a way that it is not only a presentation of finished knowledge but also a development of knowledge through the speaker's inner dialogue that is being spoken in an open manner that invites listeners to co-think. This type of speech, similar to a book that has a reflective quality, enables deep thought and synthesis by amplifying one sense.
  - b) An example of the amplification of multiple senses that produces a lack of focus is a frontal lecture done through speech, connected to a PowerPoint presentation that shows banal (“funny” and “interesting”) visual cues for what is being said or that shows in a textual form the same thing that is being spoken. In this way, one sense does not amplify another and adds nothing but demands that a student focus simultaneously on sight and hearing and therefore, dissipates the focus, time and tempo required for thought.
  - c) An example of the amplification of multiple senses that work in synergy is a visual moment added to a speech through a presentation that stimulates an emotional connection with what is being said, such as a picture of the face of a thinker we are talking about that is chosen *specifically* to show emotionality in the eyes of that person, something that cannot be expressed in words, in sound or in anything else. This can emotionally color and add to the students' relation to the thoughts expressed through speech. Another example that is not explicitly pedagogical is a music album with a visual cover that expresses the feeling of music in the visual medium. This visual aspect can create an additional framework for “reading” of the music and vice versa.

- d) All of these examples are a mixture of the implicit and formal qualities of media themselves, as well as their pedagogical use.
- The medium has to allow for, and if possible, even invite and provoke the practical activity of the *subject's freedom*. This follows from our insight that freedom in the sense of not being predetermined and *Bildsamkeit* as a pedagogical expression of this idea are the basis of the pedagogical process seen primarily as *Bildung* in the sense of self-determination. Media can treat freedom and *Bildsamkeit* in a wide variety of ways, but in essence, this means that the medium cannot suppose who the pedagogical subject in interaction with it is and aim only to *reproduce* this subject. The medium cannot standardize its user. The medium has to be constructed in a non-industrial way. If the medium is constructed in an industrial way, then the medium has a predetermined way in which it is to be used, experienced and ultimately, only consumed (Adorno 2001, pp. 99–101). When structured through the principles of *culture industry*, the medium positions itself so that it primarily structures predetermined effects, construed as desired by the masses, with no regard for the inner development of the medium's content, and consequently, no development of the pedagogical subject. Formally, this means that it is ideal if a pedagogical medium is not too explicit and too "hot," as McLuhan would put it, with high saturation of high-definition data that extend only one sense or faculty.
  - As the pedagogical outlook demands the idea of reason and the mind as a determining principle, the medium has to allow for a moment of *inherent, detailed, clear showing*, but in such a way that this showing is not "complete" and finished. If this showing were complete, then it would not enable interaction, only consuming or passive learning. This showing cannot be banal. As Herbart (2015) says, "Interest arises from interesting objects and occupations. Many-sided interest originates in the wealth of these" (*ibid.*, p. 120). The showing has to have a determining potential and have a potent effect on the student. The showing has to provide substance and material for layered meaning. The only way in which the determining aspect of *Bildung* works is through the *forms* of knowledge and experience. A pedagogical medium should enable the forms to show. They can be shown in a visual medium, auditory medium, textual medium etc., and within different types of sensual structuring, the media will form different aspects of a human being. Further, the media will apply to different faculties of a human being, according to their inherent mediality: Some are more suited to deep thought (such as a slow text), some are more suited to emotional development (such as music), some are more suited to provoking the becoming of a practical subject (such as working with one's own body) etc. Of course, we are not saying there is only one way to do any of these things or that other media cannot also be effective.
  - The medium's showing has to allow for and invite further reflection based on this showing. This means the showing must be *dialogic*. What we mean by this is that a medium should be set up so it does not give the "final interpretation,"

“finished truth,” “fact” and “already fully structured knowledge.” Instead, the clear but not complete showing allows for concentrating on what is shown, to think and comprehend that object of thought, but then also invites the subject to reflect what is shown and try to synthesize, connect and systematize what is shown with his or her other, existing knowledge and experience. In this space, the subject will be active himself or herself, which means he or she will exist in a mode of self-determining. In contrast, the finished knowledge or experience embodied in some medium can be only passively accepted, “learned,” or perhaps even used in some pragmatic context, but this kind of structuring of knowledge does not allow for self-becoming. This is the central pedagogical category.

These are some of the things that can be said about the general characteristics that must be present in the character of the medium itself if it is to be viewed as potentially pedagogical. The list is by no means complete, or even the only possible way of conceptualizing the pedagogical outlook on media. This list is an attempt to deduce some points of a view of media that is based in pedagogical theory and that can also serve as a general outline for producing, critiquing and using media in a pedagogical way.

To summarize, the way in which a medium should allow the structuring of a subject to work for it to be potentially pedagogical is that the senses and kinds of (self)consciousness the medium amplifies should be appropriate for the kind of faculty and development we wish to effect. If our medial approach to pedagogical subject is multi-medial, there has to be a reason for multi-mediality, and there must be a mutual amplification of these different media in the multi-medial system. The medium should not be set up in accordance with presupposed effects but should allow for and invite its exploration, where the student’s freedom will manifest. The medium has to have a showing moment that is clear that can effectuate the forming that *Bildung* requires. Finally, this showing, although clear, should not attempt to be the “final knowledge,” or a mere “fact,” because that would disable the reflective and dialogic relationship with the medium. The power that we are able to gain from using a variety of media is that they can approach not only the classically literate human but also the widest array of our possibilities for experience, which sometimes remain neglected in our pedagogical practice that is primarily focused on the word and lately, on only the shallowly understood use of “new media,” “digital media” etc.

More specific considerations of pedagogical use of media should be done in the future. However, these considerations can be done only at the level of analysis of concrete media, because each medium is specific. The ideas above should be taken as (an incomplete) general-pedagogical outline for the pedagogical approach to media. The general ideas above will manifest through a wide variety of ways in concrete media, which should be continually pedagogically analyzed and used, due to their dynamic nature.

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## PEDAGOŠKA TEORIJA MEDIJA

**Povzetek:** Osrednje vprašanje prispevka je, ali je mogoč pogled na medij, ki bi ga lahko artikulirali skozi specifično pedagoško teorijo. In če je, kako se lahko pojem medija odkriva skozi to pedagoško misel. Iskanje odgovora na to vprašanje nam bo omogočilo artikulirati specifično (pedagoško) determiniran pogled na medij, hkrati pa nas bo vodilo k razumevanju samih pedagoških možnosti medija. V prispevku tako ne bomo razpravljali o pedagoški rabi medija, temveč o pedagoških značilnostih, ki so mediju *inherentne*, prepustili jim bomo, da spregovorijo s svojo lastno in partikularno pedagoško težo, ne da bi jih zvedli na golo sredstvo za doseganje nekega heteronomnega cilja. To je pot, ki se sicer opira na dve drugi vprašanji, ki terjata odgovor, preden se sploh lotimo osrednjega. Prvič, *kaj* je pedagoška teorija, in drugič, *kaj* je medij. Kolikor lahko odgovorimo na ti vprašanji in skozi njiju vzremo omejeno enotnost pedagoškega pogleda ter splošnih značilnosti medija (pojma medija), bi nam to lahko omogočilo sintezo odgovora na izhodiščno vprašanje. To je pristop, ki ne bo temeljil na razpravi o *specifičnem mediju*, temveč ima za cilj pripraviti teoretski okvir za nadaljnje pedagoško raziskovanje konkretnih, specifičnih medijev. Zato pričujoči prispevek razumemo kot pripravljalno teoretsko delo, ki skuša reflektirati način, kako pedagoško zaznavamo in se sprašujemo o pojmu medija, pa tudi, kako ta pojem uporabljamo v širokem razponu pedagoških razmerij.

**Ključne besede:** pedagogika, teorija, medij, Bildung

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