

Monika Jaworska-Witkowska

Between philosophy and pedagogy : about new horizons of humanities research

Rocznik Naukowy Kujawsko-Pomorskiej Szkoły Wyższej w Bydgoszczy.
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Monika Jaworska-Witkowska

KUJAWSKO-POMORSKA SZKOŁA WYŻSZA W BYDGOSZCZY

BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY AND PEDAGOGY – ABOUT NEW HORIZONS OF HUMANITIES RESEARCH

INTRODUCTION

The aim of the paper is to make an outline of the problematic space of relations between philosophical reflection and pedagogical concerns in a wide humanistic framework. I refer to the analysis made in a basic chapter of the book showing, the place of philosophical pedagogy among other “sub-disciplines and fields of knowledge about education” [4]. The paradoxical starting point is the assumption that there is no such “sub-discipline” neither should be considered and promoted as such. I try to prove that the approach taken other way round would destroy all analytic and reflective potential the philosophical approach to pedagogy offers to representatives of *ALL* such disciplines. The approach I promote is linked with the integral vision of humanities and pedagogy as such, starting with the conception of culture as “symbolic memory” (in which I follow Jurij Lotman in his semiotics) and then it follows that humanities should be perceived as any reflection upon the latter. Then it is immediately obvious that philosophy is to be considered as *any* reflection upon humanities, concerned about claims, methodology and leading towards critical assessment of any intentional activity.

This approach has much to do both with a hermeneutic approach to understanding and with critical pedagogy [1] as preparing education to meet contemporary challenges in a pluralistic world where societies are full of hatred and many people are hopeless, with their resistance strategies leading to even greater deprivations. Therefore we are determined to perceive whole pedagogy as requesting reflection going beyond just establishing links between methods and purposes of education and their intentional commitments. Therefore an overall reflection is needed to link for the quality of education all possible cul-

tural references *via* their philosophical elaboration and offering for individual creative transformation in applications for one's life.

PHILOSOPHY AS A CULTURAL ATTITUDE OF PEDAGOGICAL NATURE IN HUMANITIES

The analyzed approach has a number of conditions to be fulfilled in order to promote a mature, i.e. possibly responsible ethically and intellectually commitment to our tasks and the ways we perceive them in theory and implement them in practice. Therefore we must be more concerned about our beginning (sources) in our attitude and the quality of thinking. It is not just referring to philosophy as bringing in itself a philosophical stand and quality.

The basic reference links philosophy and symbolic culture *via* an effort to make progress in our striving to more profound entering the world of the language to express oneself, to perceive the other and to build relations between oneself and the other. It has nothing to do with any elitist claims to superiority, excluding the other neither with establishing an artificial and technical language permanently submerged in historical references for their own purpose. On the contrary it disclosed a minimum concern about human efforts of becoming able to develop our status as speaking animals, searching for rational visions and emancipative commitments with engagement in settling community of the widest possible scope profiting from human patrimony throughout the centuries.

In order to define relations between pedagogy and philosophy we have to avoid too narrow perception of 'philosophical pedagogy' or just 'philosophy of education', since the challenge is concerned with initiation into possibly wide and profound cultural participation which would bring with itself a chance to choose in ones' life from more alternatives and to reflect on one's own situation of choice and commitment, be it religious, social or the most intimate in a chosen relationship of personal devotion. Philosophy has to be read pedagogically and pedagogy treated philosophically. We are obliged to treat seriously the basic challenge inserted into the classical word *Paideia* with constant effort to transformation enriching the access to the world of language in its symbolic contents reshaping our memory in ways of seeing ourselves and the others. Philosophy is not automatically "educating" neither educational practices are not having developmental results, taken for granted. Sometimes the outcome maybe just closing the mind or rejecting the offered matter, as described by the Erik H. Erikson's concept of "negative identity", i.e.

the result of some efforts just opposite to their intentional purpose not despite the efforts but thanks to their hidden drawbacks [8].

AN OUTLINE OF THE PROBLEM OF RELATIONSHIP: PHILOSOPHY *VERSUS* PEDAGOGY

Such a task deserves rather a wide and profound research program, bringing reference also towards various traditions of narrowing the concept “philosophy of education” in order to be able to liberate the space from such local frameworks and to be able to individuate possible sharp tensions and traps we easily fall into. Certain traditions may be too scholastically attached to their historical authorities and bring with themselves incapacity to apply more mature psychological consciousness and critical concerns about human life and its social reductions. It is worthwhile to recall a critical vision of “socialization process” as linked with “whirl of reduction of complexity of the world” following a brilliant expression from Milan Kundera’s *Wisdom of Novel* – it permits us to introduce immediately an absent term emphasizing need for *desocialization* practice in education having much in common with intuitions put forward by the concept of *deconstruction* as settled in tradition by Derrida and his followers.

Pedagogy is not just to show the way or insist upon implementing some principles in behavior of the others, since it is responsible for its own critical self-consciousness and to learn thanks to its own errors or the scope of human resistance which has to be worked with and not just eliminated or suppressed. Pedagogy is not just technical or intentional, it is meta-normative in sense having obligation to introduce also meta-narrative reflection concentrated upon anything present in narrative practice. While communicating with the other we must constantly be aware about limits of access to anybody physically close and symbolically remote or even beyond possibility of getting in touch with despite superficial signs of presence. Here we have to remember about the normative challenge inserted into the word *presence* as indicated by Jacques Maritain that it is “readiness to engage oneself into meeting the other”, what can be complicated even more profoundly if we do not forget the hermeneutical warning that *meeting* in a profound normative sense requests ability to share (the value of) the common experience, lived through as vitally (existentially) essential (important). What was still stressed by the Polish outstanding humanistic psychologist Kazimierz Obuchowski in order to deepen

one's own subjectivity one has to be able to objectify (treat as object) one's own intentionality and be able to commit oneself into remote (long term) tasks without guarantee of success rather than just stem with the short time purposes requesting immediate prize or satisfaction.

We are obviously concerned here with need to redefine and constantly develop personal attitude towards "symbolic profit" in education from philosophical perspective in order to get a surplus gain of existential importance, and not just having passed another exam, or withstood another boring courses and practices. From the novel practices by Hermann Hesse we can refer to the challenge of sensibility as an access to stories which would wake up and transform profoundly our individual human imagination, social sensitivity in reference to one's possible guilt or shame and inferiority, against excesses of narcissism and arrogance and incapacity to engage into a long-term tasks with necessary patience and devotion. Therefore we have to change the quality of historical references, very often killed in their educational value by reducing them to dates and facts instead of comprehensive potential of building one's own historical identity *via* commitment into collective dramatic fate understood as being of primordial importance. It is equally necessary to redefine didactic procedures and to liberate them from a temptation of immediate assessment instead of wider and more profound qualitatively implementation.

We have to remember that history need not be treated just as not referring to our present life, what can be described in the formula that theory without historical examples is empty, while history without reflective distance is deprived of directives of understanding what was going on and what consequences all this bears upon contemporary world and individual lives. It is far too easy to apply in such circumstances a black-or-white scheme violating hidden complexity and human tragedy which should not be easily valued and sentenced to various punishments of scorn. Methodologically one has to apply here 'hermeneutical circle' principle of relationship between fragments and the whole narrative, as well as a warning put forward by the famous Polish praxeologist Tadeusz Kotarbinski against constant danger of reducing, closing and destroying a given discipline by those who claim to be specialists in its practicing without consciousness of making it damage and blocking access to its rich potential.

Of course there is a strong need for philosophical reflection here, since there is no possible way or technical/methodological device permitting to assess how far we are from the precipice.

WAYS OF FUNCTIONING AND CANONS OF THE PHILOSOPHICAL PEDAGOGY

Having the hitherto outlined sketch one might question even the applicability of the concept of 'philosophical pedagogy' in view of the positivistic approach, which would treat the latter as already overcome by the scientific (or any other) progress and modern aspirations. Some reduce their visions of adequate pedagogy inserting it into some stream or reduced tradition without searching for new inspirations. However it is vital for pedagogy as such to be able to learn from various traditions through revisiting them in a new critical reading as well as through inspiring itself from newly emerging sophisticated humanistic paradigms like cybernetic approach, environmental sensitivity. Sometimes it means a radical modification of stereotypes inserted even into academic manuals. I do not wish to insist upon indispensability of the concept 'philosophical pedagogy', provided we perfectly understand the most valuable intuitions inherited from its patrimony. They may be of course developed under other circumstances within – self-formative, socially and politically critical, culturally revitalizing and engaging in civic enterprise – broad and integrated humanities committed to pedagogical responsibility for new generations and individual flourishing of autonomous personalities and post-conventional (in Habermas-Kohlberg sense) [5] communities and collectives.

Methodologically speaking we may distinguish at least four types of perceiving relationship of philosophy *versus* pedagogy, namely: (1) genetic approach, treating the link as historical and overcome as unnecessary at present, treating deprivation of philosophical contents as result of maturity in modern passing beyond tradition of collaboration and respect of basic sources; (2) functional vision, attributing to philosophical capacity of some useful reflection but not justifying exposition of any single label; (3) structural division, tolerating within distribution of work some restricted area of specialized, historically and intellectually, but not valid for the whole pedagogical enterprise.

Looking from a different angle we may individuate the following approaches to the basic duality of philosophy *versus* pedagogy: (a) narrow or reduced, treated as interesting as only a historical case not, practically valid any more, (b) dispersed or superficial, with references to various illustrations, declarations and erudition rather than effectiveness, (c) overcome after a turn-over, closed and not ambitious enough in view of the positivistic ambitions, and

(d) integral and strategic, bringing a constant opening towards an effort to a mature ethical and intellectual commitment.

I promote and justify the last approach, which shows a vital role for understanding education as cultural implanting of human beings as a means for their growing in personal capacity to deal *via* symbolic memory with existential challenges, so that we become more spiritually developed and ready both for self-fulfillment, actualization of our aspirations and for self-transcendence, passing beyond what is temporary and local towards more universal and time-passing-proof, contributing to the treasures of human race. Therefore it stimulates openness in front of potential achievements of any human being which should be supported and encouraged to flourishing of one's dreams, fascinations and hidden individual 'genius' capacity, Hegel would attribute to anyone. Studying the culture and its history would protect us from disastrous effects of neglect, rejection, destruction and forgetful inclinations, cyclically coming to the fore at the expense of future for a number of 'historical' generations, trapped in their dramatic times like wars, hatred and catastrophes.

All this permits us not to be hostages of locally and temporarily dominating claims to superiority of a given approach, be it dogmatic Marxism or any religious doctrine, including inquisition or scholasticism in the Christian tradition, be it aggressive versions of Islamic fundamentalism or any fundamentalism at all. It applies also to any laic tradition like Enlightenment or any national or regional stream, be it continental, analytic, Anglo-Saxon, conservative or liberal; all such labels serve very often to cut access to not only alternative traditions but even to a more profound and culturally valid approach the one's own heritage. There appear also misleading names for such traditions as: 'progressivism' or 'reconstructionism', if not to mention in a wider context disciplinary approaches like 'humanistic psychology' or diversified traditions like psychoanalysis or last but not least postmodernism. All these make harm to a more detailed and pedagogically concerned efforts to understand what is going on while we apply such explicit intentions with their 'hidden curricula', which request treating philosophy as an art of suspicion for the purpose to elaborate critical tools and alternative emancipation commitments.

There is a rich tradition of philosophically sophisticated approaches in the Polish pedagogy from the Pre-War II period throughout the first decades of the twentieth century, what was described in monumental works by Lech Witkowski as *The duality turnover* and as a foundation discourse of social

pedagogy by Helena Radlinska, described by Witkowski again in the context of cultural preoccupations as *Invisible Environment* [6 and 7].

Of course, one should not forget or give up permanently modernized reading and revisiting of canonical approaches to the key problem of this paper like in case of John Dewey or William James and their pragmatist conceptions, being permanently trivialized in various underdeveloped philosophically ways of perceiving what pragmatic tradition brings to the fore of pedagogical discourse. Of course this new reading must be critical but also striving for profound inspirations, linked with concern about 'community of experience' as put forward by Dewey or with additionally crucial issue of relationship of philosophy *versus* psychology, if not to go immediately towards various problematic aspects of relations of psychology *versus* pedagogy. There comes also to the fore a general issue of "normativity" of pedagogical discourse and its types and limitations, as can be illustrated by the approach by Wolfgang Brezinka, whom we have analyzed in detail in Poland. It is worthwhile noticing that in the Polish pedagogy we have a very rich tradition of dealing in an integrated way with relations between pedagogical practice and philosophical theoretical considerations, with key figures like Bogdan Suchodolski and before him in a romantic period of Bronislaw Ferdynand Trentowski, the author of the fundamental "Chowanna", a posthegelian broad systemic elaboration of a complete set of issues to be taken into consideration even if not entirely sufficient for most modern challenges.

Of course, what is at stake here is the quality of such revisiting of the classic approaches in order to avoid a 'naive' approach to such historical phenomena without first elaborating a profoundly inquisitive and critical studying, but based within approach of partnership framework. There is an adaptive task of reading with an intellectual commitment consisting of asking difficult questions to solve our contemporary problems. Otherwise the classic will not talk *to* us as talking *with* us and in *our* times and in front of our challenges, helping us to understand our own situation and not only or primordially that of his era. Therefore we must make such an interlocutor a living partner and not an objectified and objective past authority, to be completely recognized or rejected. An excellent example of such a necessary approach is settled in my opinion by Pierre Bourdieu reading of Blaise Pascale in *The Pascalian Meditations* receiving worldwide recognition.

The above mentioned case of Trentowski and his monumental "Chowanna" should be known and studied throughout pedagogical (sub)disciplines, as

radicalizing tasks and scope of the “philosophy of up-bringing”, and inventing a number of excellent ideas of duality together with lying down a foundation for contemporary approach, which seems still backward due to the fact that such a “historical” case is usually left to historians not being able to evaluate completely theoretical gains for modern practice. What is more important and strange, even those who have read Trentowski in philosophical way very rarely would indicate adequately symbolic and notion-oriented profits from their readings for pedagogy. It is thus essential to promote a pedagogical lecture of such seemingly purely philosophical cases. Otherwise, one will come *after* classic with claims to be *superior* to his perception but in fact laying *behind* and *inferior* intellectually. This seems to be the drama of many books which do not pay tribute nor can be grateful and profiting from outstanding historical achievements. Otherwise we shall not revitalize and energize our present thinking in pedagogy.

TOWARDS CHANGES IN PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSE AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

It is beyond doubt that there is a minimum of political commitment necessary in any pedagogical approach, even if it may be differently defined and implemented. It is a completely different project which strives pedagogically to promote adaptive approach without questioning of the existing order, and the other effect can be gained when we stimulate critical concerns of autonomous citizens and representatives of minorities, claiming right to their differences and getting a support and not marginalization. Instead of efforts to define normatively the manuals contents to be taught in schools and their vision of memorizing knowledge and reproducing types of society a more sophisticated approach has to be meta-humanistic, analyzing the educational process in itself with readiness to modify and program alternative ways to deal with values, persons and traditions. The utmost importance is to be attached to support for critical investigating various tendencies in modern societies, including mass media domination and new technological gadgets over imagination of a new generation.

Therefore of a particular importance is an ability to deal with technological revolutions and media manipulations, all bringing some chances but also dangers not hitherto known, what Jean Baudrillard used to link with pressure of *simulacrum* stemming from screening experience via computer games, TV

channels, and internet networks with community practices and voyeurism inclinations deprived of reflection due to constant being in a hurry and in view of reducing the space for such reflection in schools and in refusal to read, to think and to discuss. Baudrillard's warning about a new 'hyper-real' type of simulation and seduction as the way of attracting attention and grasping human subjectivity seems of great importance for social and cultural philosophy as well as for pedagogical practice. We do not seem however prepared to treat it according to the degree of danger and risk stemming from it.

It therefore seems of utmost importance that we attach philosophical reflection to new dangers and challenges for educational institutions, practices and programs with their theoretical foundations. We have to learn from the whole humanities, treated as integral space of valuable inspirations to avoid educational disaster in the near future. Various traditional conventions in pedagogical activity may be reinterpreted as "epistemological obstacles" if to use an important expression by Gaston Bachelard. We may add also a warning by Theodor W. Adorno formula in his famous *Minima moralia*, that in order to avoid bringing barbarian results philosophy (and pedagogy, as I presume) should not stabilize *status quo* but help to build competences to criticize it and to promote emancipatory efforts from the position of a mature citizen and autonomous personality, invited to grow freely. Otherwise epistemological obstacles will become barriers blocking ethical development and increase of responsibility among individuals and collectives of present and future generations.

In pedagogy it would not be enough to continue to develop individual and separated disciplines like pedagogy of culture, pedagogy of creativity, or rely entirely upon manuals from other disciplines like psychology and sociology, or literary studies. We have to learn to read various cultural and scientific spheres and their contributions with an approach both pedagogically and philosophically mature and sophisticated. There must be elaborated anew basic categories of pedagogical discourse like authority, subjectivity, culture, identity, dialogue with an effort to indicate a broad spectrum of alternative meanings and opposed strategies attached to them. There are also new categories to be implemented in modern pedagogical discourse like duality and ambivalence, deconstruction and desocialization, seduction and simulation, interface and bricolage, explosive reading, initiation and waking up experiences, border effect and decentration rationality, to name only a few. There are a lot of achievements throughout humanities which belong to the category of "absent discourse". This last label has served Zbigniew Kwiecinski to organize

in 80. in Poland a legendary seminar to promote appropriation of these discourses for the pedagogical renewal in view of the beginning of system transformation processes. It seems necessary to carry out this task again and again if pedagogy does not wish to become backward in front of the most advanced humanistic achievements throughout the world.

CONCLUSION

The above text is rather a programming enterprise, having its partial elaborations and more profound justifications and descriptions in other places [2]. Together with other scholars in pedagogy and neighboring spaces we process an opening of access to inspirations both of pedagogical and philosophical nature within types of narratives other than scientific of explicitly and intentionally education-oriented. Recently I have referred in my application efforts to a typology proposal of discourses as streams of pedagogy by outstanding Polish sociologist of education Zbigniew Kwiecinski [3].

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SUMMARY

The aim of the paper is to make an outline of the problematic space of relations between philosophical reflection and pedagogical concerns in a wide humanistic framework. I refer to the analysis made in a basic chapter of the book showing, the place of philosophical pedagogy among other „sub-disciplines and fields of knowledge about education”. The paradoxical starting point is the assumption that there is no such „sub-discipline” neither should be considered and promoted as such. I try to prove that the approach taken other way round would destroy all analytic and reflective potential the philosophical approach to pedagogy offers to representatives of ALL such disciplines.

Key words: education, culture, philosophical pedagogy, social live, philosophy.

MIĘDZY FILOZOFIĄ A PEDAGOGIKĄ – O NOWYCH HORYZONTACH BADAWCZYCH HUMANISTYKI

STRESZCZENIE

Tekst ma na celu stworzenie zarysu problematyki dotyczącej budowania wspólnej przestrzeni badawczej pomiędzy refleksją filozoficzną a problematyką pedagogiczną w szeroko pojętych strukturach humanistyki. Autorka ukazuje miejsce pedagogiki filozoficznej wśród innych „subdyscyplin i dziedzin wiedzy o edukacji”. Jednocześnie za punkt wyjścia do owych analiz obiera założenie, iż że nie ma takiej „subdyscypliny” i ta kategoria nie powinna być traktowana i promowana jako taka. Stara się jednak dowieść, że to ujęcie z drugiej strony mogłoby zniszczyć cały analityczny i refleksyjny potencjał filozoficznego podejścia do pedagogiki jaki oferuje przedstawicielom wszystkich tego rodzaju (sub)dyscyplin.

Słowa kluczowe: edukacja, kultura, pedagogika filozoficzna, życie społeczne, filozofia.