

CENTRAL EUROPE

POSTMODERNISM IN POLAND

The present transient inter-epoch is defined as postmodernism. Postmodernism is a popular philosophical trend telling about all integral systems which could explain the contemporary world, civilisation, cultural, and educational phenomena. This trend emerged from the confusion in ideology and system of values as well as unpredictability of the public development. The postmodernist world consists of different contradictory phenomena and ambivalence and general chaos, which, according to followers of this philosophy, is the regularity. The inter-epoch various philosophical trends and orientations might be vividly described as the struggle between "culture of death" and decadence with "culture of life" and rebirth of human beings. The postmodernist fashion is directly derived from the expressed criticism of the reason oriented Enlightenment traditions, and from the comeback to metaphysical philosophies.

Negating the role of scientific cognition and technical development the postmodernism does not give a satisfying answer to the crucial challenges of contemporary civilisation and questions asked by a contemporary man: what is the sense of life, what is the mission of humanity (the people), where does the contemporary civilisation driving at, what challenges, chances and threats are there?

Subsequent epochs have passed since the time of the Enlightenment and Romanticism and people were trying to find the proper relation between the mind and emotions. At present postmodernism seems to alternate or struggle with neohumanism.

Only recently we began to see "the light at the end of the tunnel", namely, humanist psychology supported with many year thorough research, and first of all, American experimental psychology, undertook to settle the eternal dilemma of mutual relationship between rational and emotional intelligence. Daniel Goleman in his breakthrough work entitled "Emotional Intelligence" (1995) made an attempt to settle this basic philosophical and psychological dilemma.

This marriage of mind and feelings might be understood as an allegory of leading thoughts of two epochs – the Enlightenment and Romanticism – reconciled after several ages have passed. Therefore it cannot be said that romantic-emotional sources of human development have been fading.

In my opinion, the future will belong to neohumanism and neorenaissance, the trends which assume multidimensional development of human beings capable to

utilise new achievements in science to cognise and improve themselves and the surrounding world. Intellectual, cultural and moral renaissance of a human being is the issue.

A. Peccei "in a small booklet": The future is in our hands, writes among others: "Only new humanism is able to do this wonder, to realise the spiritual revival of human being. This new humanism of our epoch will have to prepare the grounds for the birth of new systems of spiritual, ethic, philosophical, social, political, aesthetic, and artistic values and motivations, which will bring back our internal balance; and will have to strengthen in us, as the highest goods and the highest needs, such values as: love, friendship, understanding, solidarity, ability to dedication and coexistence". It will be the ideal human being – creative, capable of overcoming various superstitions, intolerance, and xenophobia.

Similarly to philosophy and literature, pedagogy or widely understood education was subject to gradual evolution of various trends, starting with pre-scientific pedagogy based on passing the experience and standards to next generations mainly by means of tradition and imitation, through naturalistic or nativistic pedagogy, ending with pedagogy based on psychological orientations and on sociological (environmental) premises.

So called scientific or empirical pedagogy derived from positivistic scientism recognised only diagnostic research (question: what is reality like?), explicative research (question: why is it so?) and prognostic research (question: how can we foresee further development?). It was assumed that technological concluding (question: how to behave?) is not scientific in its nature, that it is an application. Analysis of actions and behaviour of teachers and pupils was to result in behavioural pedagogical engineering.

Postmodernism in education goes back to 70's – it was then a movement alternative to traditional school system and theory and practice of intentional and institutional education. It is known as anti-scholarism, anti-pedagogy or counter-pedagogy or as alternative education and critical pedagogy.

Concurrently to these contradictory trends a humanistic trend forerun by two European creators of "new education", pedagogy of culture and personalistic pedagogy has been developed. At present we observe new neohumanist trend emerging gradually in reaction to the extreme one-sided postmodernist orientation. This new neohumanist trend which wants to be a movement of profound humanism is derived from among others, philosophy of dialogue and phenomenology. It does not aim at "pupil shaping" narrow-minded education. Characteristic feature of such educational relations is interacting and the essence of such approach is mutual communication, unstopped dialogue and empathy in relation teacher – pupil, as well as supporting the development of both teachers and pupils.

We are at the threshold of the new age so it is high time we asked the key question from the point of view of philosophy and humanities – how long will the present inter-epoch called postmodernism last? What new trends herald the new epoch which will come after the year 2000?

Postmodernists, especially J. Habermas, H. A. Giroux, L. Witkowski and others supplied us with new impulses generating philosophical thinking about education brought new ideas, thoughts and proposals into numerous fields of educational sciences, particularly onto sociology of education and pedagogical thought or

pedeutology. However creative abilities of postmodernism are getting exhausted. New moral, cultural, intellectual, and informative order or new deal" will gradually emerge from uncertainty, ambivalence and chaos and will shape a new formation, I would like to call New Renaissance.

Humanity will revive thanks to science and education. It will be possible thanks to new scientific discoveries in unprecedented macro – meta and microscale, both in traditional and new disciplines in natural science, engineering and social science, and first of all the science about human beings including new medical sciences based on genetics and psychiatry. It will be the age of people learning all their lives, starting from early childhood, nursery, and school age, adolescence, andragogics and geragogics, and it will be the age of new subdisciplines of special pedagogy and psychology.

Expansion of science in new fields of cognition yet unknown are unlimited and positive or negative impact of such expansion is unpredictable. Furthermore, it will need new ethic and responsibility of scientists, educators as well as politicians and lawyers.

Evolution of the pedeutologic orientation in Poland

In Poland, thanks to the efforts of pedeutologists, actively supported by philosophers, sociologists, praxiologists and psychologists, the evolution of the concepts and theoretical models of teacher training is relatively quick.

The first model – called a psychological one – evolves from the initial behavioral and experimental orientation, though cognitive psychology and psychology of activity towards humanistic psychology, psychology of dialog and encounter psychology. Whereas, initially behavioral psychology constituted the essence of the general concept of teacher training, at present various aspects of psychology constitute merely the bases of various kinds of pedeutological orientations.

The first of the aforementioned orientations, aiming at making the theory and practice of teacher training more scientific, was based on the achievements of biomedical and psychological sciences – especially sciences of man and his personal development (physical and mental), as well as the knowledge of personality structures, mechanics of mental functions and differences between various personalities.

The psychological orientation was featured by such prominent mile-stone figures as John Watson, B.F. Skinner, John Dewey. In the group of experimental psychologists and pedagogues one ought to include eminent Polish pedeutologist Jan W. David, who introduced special experiments and studies based on the use of questionnaires as early as in 1913. Jean Piaget, father of the cognition development theory, whose adaptation psychology exerted enormous influence on theoretical concepts of teacher training in actually passing XXth century, or L. S. Wygotski, who discovered the immediate sphere of child's development being a theory which emphasizes that child's education and upbringing should be harmonized with its level of development, and that differentiation and individuation during the education process of retarded, average and gifted children is needed. Due to his revolutionary views, L. S. Wygotski is considered by many to be a psychologist of the next century.

The second model – called a technological-cybernetic one – is evolving from the scientific management of work through a praxiological orientation based on organization by aims to the present cybernetic-multi-medial model. This trend was initially based on the achievements of scientific organization of work and management F. Taylor and M. Weber's models of bureaucratic structures and E. Mayo's theory of human relations – contributing to the development of science of ergonomics, devoted to studying conditions of efficient and effective work. In this eminent group one ought to include also a prominent Polish psychologist, T. Kotarbinski, who was the founder of praxiology as a theory of good work (with "do-ro" being a nick-name thereof).

Aforementioned concepts of scientific organization and efficiency found a reflection in the optimization of teacher's and school's functioning, thanks to the application of the achievements of empirical and social psychology, as well as economizing of educational system and labor, including amount of time teachers devote to their schoolwork. Forefathers of this trend include S. G. Strumilin who was the creator of economics of education and P. H. Coombs (What is society contributing into its education system? What is it gaining in return? What is happening within this educational enterprise?)

Since the second world war, this model is evolving towards the present cybernetic and a multi-medial model. This is connected with the rapid development of science of ergonomics, and with growing influence of cybernetics and technology, as well as computer science and technology – within every field of man's activity. The method of cybernetic modeling and simulation is utilized in educational studies as well as in didactic processes, optimization of processes of teaching and education. The introduction of Internet as a "structured whole" into every area of man's activity – including education – is being compared, figuratively speaking, to the invention of printing technology by J. Gutenberg. It raises a fundamental question: will technological and cybernetic investments provide further progress and innovation, higher quality and efficiency of didactic and educational activities?

The third model – called a humanistic one – is evolving towards a personalistic and axiological concept and at present towards the multicultural education. Humanistic orientation of the "praxiological education of teachers" – according to the theory developed by A. W. Coombs – accepts an opinion that every didactic and educational situation constitutes an encounter of "I" and the "other", and that a teacher-educator ought to be able, above all, to discover his unique personality and to skillfully use it as an instrument of his didactic activity. This concept makes reference to an idea of the subjective engagement of a teacher and a child, to educator's ability to feel and express empathy and sympathy – qualities which enable mutual communication with a pupil, allowing the tutor to make child regain its dignity and authenticity. In keeping with T. Gordon's theory this is a concept of the "path free of failures" based on the skillful listening and communicating. In humanistic education, especially in the countries which are on their difficult path of transformation, issues pertaining to the value system and questions regarding meaning of life are playing more and more significant role. In all the countries, especially the European ones, where the very next stage of the political, economic, cultural and moral integration is taking place, multicultural education involving people of all ages (from the youngest to the very old) is acquiring enormous

significance. What is at stake here is no less than overcoming discrimination and prejudice throughout centuries accumulated in regard of race, skin color, sex, religion, political views, national or social origin, as well as material status. This guiding principle of recommendations regarding teaching staff's position has been adopted by 75 countries, in 1966, in Paris, France at an international conference organized by UNESCO, with the active support of the International Labor Organization. The principle still remains valid for all the European countries.

The fourth model consists of the concepts of multifunctional, multidirectional and multi-cultured or multi-module ("en-block") teacher training. The model of modern academic education of teachers ought to be scientific, functional and professional and open to all changes. It also ought to be featured by its profound and true humanist dimension. As a result of scientific education the future teacher ought to possess ability to think in scientific terms, i.e. to search for the truth through scientific methods. Functionality means an ability to recognize and to analyze basic functions and problems as well as an ability to combine theory and practice, including the discovery and interpretation of pedagogic theories and own personal approach thereto. Professionalism requires mastery of teacher's art and craft: now at least in two subjects, while in the future – in the blocks of subjects taught in the primary school and specialized subjects of the curricula of the gymnasium and the lycee. Humanization of the process of education will call for the development of intuition, empathy, positive motivation, control of impulses, realistic optimism, hope and self confidence. The teacher of the future school ought to, above all, learn and master different kinds of new capabilities which can be attained by him and his students through the rational as well as emotional intelligence.

Howard Gardner, a Harvard psychologist, who developed the theory of diversified intelligence considers providing children with an opportunity to achieve results commensurate with their intellectual potential and to experience attendant states of positive emotion, an element of the healthiest method of teaching – motivating from within rather than through the use of reward and punishment. In Gardner's opinion "It is important to find something one likes and to stick to it. Children behave badly in school when they are bored, and they are restless when overwhelmed by homework".

Similarly as the definition of the immediate sphere of child's development in the theory of L. Wygotski, in Gardner's model of diversified intelligence the methodological bases is the recognition of child's natural abilities, their development and an attempt to strengthen those that are weak.

The modern pedagogy is developing at the crossroads of these fundamental trends of philosophy, axiology, praxiology, psychology and sociology. It anticipates the preparation of teachers to more and more complex and diversified tasks – as a person (empathic and thinking), a professional (qualified) and an organizer, adviser, community worker and animator of culture.

Therefore, the future school teacher ought to be multidimensional, free, autonomous, creative, and expansive, as well as open, flexible, self sufficient, and – in the opinion of students – above all, just.

Teachers of the Future School

To begin with it may be worth while to quote W. Voise, who wrote: "Thinking about the future school, we are thinking not only about this school, which existed yesterday and which exists today, but also about the school formerly dreamed of by the people for whom also our fate was not indifferent.

During 1995-1998, within the framework of graduate and postgraduate work, diagnostic and survey studies on the subject of "Modern school of the future" and "Teachers of the future school" were conducted. During these studies, apart from questionnaire type interviews, brainstorming technique developed in 1938 by A. Osborn called "didactic game" was used. The subjects of these studies were members of school boards and selected groups of pupils. The studies have been carried out in 35 schools so far, out of which 26 were primary schools, 3 were secondary schools and 6 vocational schools. Out of the studies carried out so far an optimal picture of the future school is emerging. Indirectly, what is apparent is the fact that ambitions of teachers, pupils and parents are not to high.

Pupils from villages would like to attend rather a small primary schools and from cities prefer a bigger ones, but with classes of few pupils. They would like their school to be nice and clean, surrounded by greenery, with a swimming pool, gymnasium, weights room and other appropriate recreational and sport facilities. They would like it to be equipped with computers and other educational equipment. Everyone acknowledged that the modern school ought to teach foreign languages and basics of computer science and technology. Such school ought to develop individual talents, as well as support the development of children requiring special care. Likewise parents – union members of the Community Educational Society (STO) as early as in 1988 proposed: relatively small schools, small groups of pupils, well qualified teachers, personal contact between pupils and their teachers, development of creative abilities, incentives to conduct individual studies, attentiveness to health and physical development, respect for pupils, providing students with a sense of security and acceptance of joy. These concepts, at that time gave rise to the movement of community schools.

Therefore the future school, through teaching and education, ought to create conditions providing for the development of man – creative, self reliant, able to make quick decisions and manage in difficult situations. And that is an optimum model of the future school teacher based on the opinion of pupils, parents and teachers.

Model teacher generated by pupils

A teacher in the school of future is wise, good, just, tolerant, discreet, calm, nice, good-tempered, well mannered and cultured. His/her neat appearance, humour, and good manners arouse confidence. Active in didactic and educational work, interested in school and problems his/her pupils have, perceive talents of the pupils. He/she is capable of logical reasoning and drawing conclusions. He/she is just in judgement and marks. He/she continually improve and upgrade professional

knowledge and feels internal need to pass such knowledge to other people. His/her approach to phenomena occurring in reality is of scientific and realistic character.

Model teacher generated by parents

Parents describe a teacher of the future school as a good friend of school children, their advisor a well mannered and neat person, easily getting in touch with children. Parents are confident in the teacher thanks to his/her deep and broad professional knowledge and active performance. His/her marks are just. Such teacher collaborating with all school environment should create ideal atmosphere among pupils based on kindness and mutual respect. Thanks to ability of correct reasoning and drawing right conclusions, such teacher is logical and objective. World view and religious outlook of a given teacher should be his/her personal business.

Model of a Teacher Created by Teachers

The teacher of the future school is of sanguine disposition (i. e. calm and cheerful). He has an ability to reason logically and to draw logical conclusions. He has active attitude and interest in new knowledge and his active methods of teaching make him an attractive and good partner in the didactic and educational process. He is just in assigning grades. He has his own independent outlook upon the world. He is not susceptible to indoctrination.

In my opinion the teacher of the future school who is to deal successfully with more and more complex assignments, that are awaiting him, ought to be trained in a multidimensional fashion so that he will be empathic, trustworthy, protective, just, rational, competent, optimistic, responsible, cultured, community oriented and partner-like.

Our studies concerning teachers of the future schools confirmed that it is advisable to include into the decision process all persons concerned, i. e. those who care about the good of the education system – especially parents and teachers. These studies also confirmed that it is advisable to delegating responsibility to regional and local municipalities.

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