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**Krzysztof KAMINSKI**

## **THE ROLE OF PHILOSOPHY IN PEDAGOGICAL STUDIES**



*A contemporary pedagogue cannot be devoid of imagination; one cannot be devoid of curiosity of the world, ambition of grasping it in a sensible way and dreams of changing (improving) it. The contemporary pedagogue should be thoroughly prepared for one's profession. Philosophy can prove to be helpful in execution of such an ambitious program (but the only one worth playing this game for human's sake) at pedagogical studies. Thus, the role of philosophy at pedagogical studies is significant. Above all, it arouses curiosity and enforces us to think. Subsequently, it appears to be an intellectual framework of culture including education. Simultaneously, philosophy with its ideals constitutes an inalienable foundation of education. It is philosophy which, among other things, proposes various anthropological ideas which are finally significant in the shape of education. Premises of philosophy of education are priceless for pedagogical theory and practice.*

*Keywords: philosophy, pedagogical studies, pedagogue, teacher, curriculum of studies, (academic) philosophical subjects.*

*Philosophy is pedagogy's concern.*

Sławomir Sztobryn  
(Sztobryn 2003: 34)

A pedagogue cannot be devoid of imagination; one cannot be devoid of curiosity of the world, the ambition of its reasonable (if possible) overall grasping and dreams of its transformation (improvement). A modern pedagogue should not only have thorough factual and methodological preparation to one's profession, but also ought to be deeply convinced that it is worthwhile to do it, which will be manifest by the noticeable passion. The sole schematic fulfillment of the given tasks (even if done diligently) is not satisfactory to deserve the name of a good pedagogue or a teacher. In fulfillment of such an ambitious program (worth only for the sake of a human being) at pedagogical studies philosophy proves to be helpful: with its overall legacy of the past. It is, among others, philosophy or, above all, philosophy postulates human creativity, resistance to

manipulation, ease at taking decisions, being characterized with the ability to predict the future. Having said all that, it is difficult to imagine pedagogical studies without the philosophical background (if such pedagogy is generally conceivable).

On the one hand, the time and place in which we live enable us to refer to the rich resources of ideal *oeuvre* of the highest trial, elaborated by the human being over the centuries. On the other hand, there exists the risk of failure to use them because of not seeing the need to do so. Here the noble ideas are replaced by the interim and measurable profit. Interim effectiveness exceeds moral values, for instance. This logic of technocracy passes into education, including pedagogical education in which fast and concrete effect is crucial. This kind of result can be easily settled<sup>1</sup>. Obviously here and there we can hear voices calling for humanization of education, there are demands of teaching subjects in the broader range. As much as their right cannot be denied these ideas are still unfulfilled. At the same time, it does not have to be this way.

In the ancient Greece, in the times of reaching the highest possible point by philosophy, the upbringing ideal was created and it was understood as a totality of humanistic formation and it was expressed in the term *paideia*. Mikołaj Krasnodębski was trying to present its essence, for instance referring to the work by W. Jaeger *Paideia. Formation of a Greek Person* and he underlines that “The Greek term *paideia* (Latin *education, humanitas, cultura*) means the ideal of upbringing and educating a human being. The Greek *paideia* was defined as a universal foundation of the general education of a human being. It can be claimed, he continues, that only in Greek culture the upbringing was a conscious focus on <eternal> and <universal> ideal of a human being and not only a preparation to undertaking a profession or political activity. *Paideia* was connected with *kalokagathia* which is the ideal of goodness and beauty, nobility and perfection (including the moral one). It is a manifestation of a connection between theory of upbringing and theory of capabilities and virtues, which reveals *paideia*’s moral dimension. *Paideia* describes not only spiritual formation of a human being which is connected with one’s national culture, but also has got a universal and the highest ideal of humanistic formation. Thus *paideia* is equally the sole upbringing process and its result which is called culture (the Romans translated the term ‘culture’ as *humanitas*). *Paideia* is humanism which is not only the knowledge of a human being, but <a method> of coming to and reaching humanity which is achieved by updating and rational formation of one’s possibility in accordance with its nature. This process is called upbringing” (Krasnodębski, 2011:12).

<sup>1</sup> Effectiveness and capableness of action are not pejorative values, which they may become in the case of an inappropriate way of achieving one’s goals or the wrong aim. Relativity of the mentioned terms is conditioned by various criteria – decisions in this matter may have a fundamental significance to human activity.

To make the long story short, it can be said that throughout the next centuries in which upbringing was understood as passing the values from generation to generation, the ideals expressed in e.g. *paideia* were indicators of progress. This kind of tendency was present in western tradition until the 16th century. Subsequently, we can more and more often observe slow but sure tendency to disavow and supersede of humanities with reference to inversely proportional development of technology<sup>2</sup>.

Discussing difficult relations between pedagogy and philosophy it would not probably be problematic if we assumed that pedagogy is a crowning of a philosophical system (Krasnodębski, 2011: 21) and so it is somehow a philosophical discipline. This sort of position is expressed by numerous thinkers. For example, Kazimierz Sośnicki (1883–1976) teleologically highlighted that pedagogy is a philosophical major, because it practices upbringing in accordance with a special type of views, which is a derivative in relation to philosophy<sup>3</sup> (Sośnicki, 1963: 8–9). Marian Nowak gives methodological arguments that pedagogy is a philosophical major because it refers to the same questions as philosophy (Nowak.g 1999: 211). Tadeusz Lewowicki points at the meaning of reflection in matters connected with upbringing when he shows a close connection between pedagogy and philosophy (Lewowicki, 2003:18). Sławomir Sztobryn expresses his ideas on a similar note and he counters positions of those who stand on the ground of pedagogy and do not see the point in getting acquainted with philosophy. “Pedagogy as each sort of activity is endangered by being fossilized in the fixed forms of work. Beginning with Socrates philosophy and its questions and theses question tradition and, to some extent, the unreflectively accept position of pedagogy towards its subjects. Philosophy is pedagogy’s concern. Escape from philosophical reflection is a threat of the trap of narcissistic self-confidence” (Sztobryn, 2003: 34).

The flickering nature of ideals of the philosophical continent disposes us to uncertainty, to avoid freezing in questioning apparent and unapparent platitudes. The truth is the ideal at which the human being aims and formation of one’s own views on the way. Leszek Kołakowski expressed his views in this spirit: “I generally demonstrate ambiguity of matters and human activity, non-truisms and ambiguity of choices, which contradicts fundamentalist thinking. I have never

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<sup>2</sup> Tadeusz Gadacz asks: “How is it possible that in the 16th century Pico Della Mirandola proclaims the praise of human dignity and twelve years later La Mettrie wrote a book entitled *Human – Machine* and in 19th century vulgar materialism appeared and it was said that there is no difference between thought and urine, because the kidneys excrete urine and the brain excretes ideas?” (Gadacz, 2010: 128).

<sup>3</sup> The truth is that both in Sośnicki’s times and at present pedagogy likes manifesting its independence. Sośnicki saw sanctioning of this situation in the will of pedagogy’s becoming independent in relation to other domains or in a simple overlooking or being influenced by American tendency of practicality which does not see the need of general validations and sees itself as the foundation of pedagogical assumptions (Sośnicki, 1963: 9-10).

had a feeling that I was standing on a stable ground. I once wrote that my motto is: when matters are seemingly clear and understandable, the healing confusion should be sowed and at these clear matters the shadow of doubt should be cast. [...] Philosophy is the effort of questioning all platitudes” (Kołakowski, 2009: 143). *Scio me nihil scire* of Socrates was the foundation for philosophizing and became the symbol of the new academic method, which appreciates modesty and immodesty simultaneously in the spirit of Socrates’s irony; in both cases they express the reality of philosophical openness. Humility makes one accept their own limits and instructs them to listen to the arguments of others and even taking them as our own, immodesty demands reflection on the current convictions. Analogically to philosophy, also in education nothing is given once and for good, neither in the case of the educator and the educated nor if we take into account their relations. The Socrates’s *I don’t know*, also in pedagogy, is an onset of the way which is taken by non-ignorant and searching people. Their activity is not simple and because of that it especially demands profound preparation both intellectual and, broadly speaking personal. Irrespective of the arrangement of the curriculum of pedagogy studies, no matter if, at the moment, philosophy is presented in a historical or problematic dimension or as an introduction to the essence of philosophizing the undeniable rationale seems to be highlighting interdisciplinary connections and, above all, philosophical implications of pedagogy. Entering a more detailed ground various definitions of philosophical subjects may be proposed.

Undertaking the topic of studying philosophy at non-philosophical studies it is rather common to admit the need of doing an introduction to philosophy. At the very beginning it is indispensable to demonstrate the variety of connections which exist between philosophy and (in our case) pedagogical disciplines<sup>4</sup> (Szczęsny, 1998: 8). Among numerous motivational arguments one of them has an exceptional rationale for making a connection between the two majors which are separate nowadays. Already at this stage, at the very beginning, wanting to improve one’s skills of independent thinking and expressing one’s opinions by students as a main objective of philosophy’s propaedeutics it has

<sup>4</sup> (Seemingly) disparate position is held by Aldona Pobjewska according to whom limiting oneself in the beginning stage of teaching philosophy, on each stage of education to its propaedeutics, defined as transmission of a selection of theses and positions is not only insufficient, but it affects philosophical education and it discourages people from practicing it. I think that the problem does not lay in propaedeutics as such, but substantial and methodological values. Pobjewska proposes starting teaching philosophy from forming the adequate competences to practice it in its adepts. This task may be performed by workshops devoted to philosophical inquiries. The idea is both interesting and appropriate but it is rather hard to put it in practice in the current circumstances at non-philosophical universities. Being guided, however, by the same intentions as Pobjewska, bearing in mind procurement of motivation, skills and basics of philosophizing in students and agreeing with Pobjewska that philosophy is a never ending process, aiming at wisdom, the journey which takes place personally in the understanding of the world, the propaedeutics should be realized (as long as it is possible in the spirit of philosophical divagations) (Pobjewska, 2002: 134-143).

to be admitted that introducing students to the specific nature of philosophy as a way of rational and reflective thinking is important. In fulfillment of the assumption, familiarizing the students with the basic philosophical terminology and disciplines comes in handy.

Teaching philosophy demands taking an objective position in presenting the content. It is common knowledge that, in order for philosophy to be free, it has to remain outside the official ideological and confessional tendency although it is hard to clearly draw the boundaries. It also refers to the presentation of history and philosophy which constitutes a special sort of philosophizing in general. What also serves objectification is showing the circumstances and conditions in which the given views were developing. The presentation of views pronounced by the most outstanding philosophers, the most important schools and the most influential philosophical movements is impossible to do without the appropriate context: both the time and place in which they were created. What is also important is also awareness of chronological order in the history of philosophy. Even with a reference to the most genius philosophical ideas we can observe a dialogue concerning the timeless questions and each link contributes to our understanding of the world in a new way. Looking at the history of philosophy, the dialogue is initiated, which always brings some advantages<sup>5</sup>. Being familiar with the most philosophical *oeuvre* [...] hands in some keys to a wider and better understanding of things taking place in the whole culture and social life of contemporary people [... Furthermore, what is especially important in the case of future educators, that is to historic-philosophical knowledge] is that it can more actively and responsibly shape one's life and personality, that is the personality of the exact, individual human being whom fate brought into existence in the given socio-cultural conditions (Wendland, 2003:14). The capability of functioning in notions which are important to historical and philosophical thought, which along with Christianity and Roman law is the oldest pillar of European culture having a significant analytical and educational dimension consequently constitutes a foundation of philosophical upbringing.

With the conviction that teachers should have the knowledge of cultural *oeuvre* Gerard L. Gutek wrote his book entitled *Philosophical and Ideological Bases of Education*. He substantiated that since the beginnings of the world upbringing and culture have been inextricably linked. The cultural contexts of education are, above all, philosophical systems which to some extent were (and are) shaping thinking and educational practice. In other words, various suggestions of educational theory are linked with philosophical views with which all different proposals of education are connected and the basis of which

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<sup>5</sup> “The more intellectual gains in human beings, the more the monkey in them regresses. The less knowledge, skills, culture or memory in the given person, the more room is taken by an animal. The more it dominates, the less a human being experiences freedom” (Onfray, 2010: 36).

are concepts of the nature of universe, human existence, society, etc. Getting familiar with historical background on which the concepts were created enables the understanding of many different approaches used in education, which as a consequence can immunize us to propaganda slogans and at the same time can encourage the ones who deal with upbringing to analyze the defined objectives and formulate new personal and professional aims (Gutek, 2007: 9–20).

Theoretical grounds of bases of the upbringing process do not constitute the whole range of tasks of philosophy of upbringing. Thus along with so called descriptive and historical part of philosophy of upbringing we can talk about the normative part, in which on behalf of the accepted norms and values the defined aims are postulated, as well as aims of upbringing in the reality which is changing dynamically and it is indispensable (Jedynak, 2010: 9–11).

Philosophy of upbringing is presented in the practical philosophy initiated by Aristotle. This philosophy deals with nature of the human being, one's aims and values. It points at rationalism and caution with reference to human condition. Bearing in mind man's good he highlights that here we have to act effectively and ably, no matter if we talk about actions understood as *doing something* or *verbal actions* — including the art of argumentation. Also logics may be included in practical philosophy understood in this way, which has its right to exist in programs of pedagogical studies (Żarnecka-Biały, 2006: 18). Without any clear and strict formulation of thoughts, without the rules of the right understanding and supporting the theses, without the universal tool which is logics no sensible human activity can take place, especially the one aimed at the proper life<sup>6</sup>.

Ethical subjects at pedagogical studies are invaluable. At the theoretical level, these subjects refer to morality of both personal and social life. “It should not be forgotten that moral foundations of pedagogues are as important as their high professional qualifications”<sup>7</sup> (Sawczuk, 2007: 8). Conscious concentration on ethics: specific and professional, connected with a special nature of the studied domain calls for introductory familiarization with the history of ethics. Ethics would be a good base for characteristics of moral problems connected with education and the occurring challenges, duties and dangers. Broadly understood

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<sup>6</sup> Practicality of logics which expresses itself with a support of various domains of knowledge and skills serves the refine undertakings, but also the more common ones. “For instance, when we plan some activity and analyze various dependencies between the possible variants. Or when we look for rational arguments to convince somebody to something or to show somebody that one's arguments cannot to be proven. Or when we demand making unclear terminology (which hinders discourse) more specific” (Żarnecka-Biały, 2006: 17).

<sup>7</sup> When referring to academic work Stefan Swieżawski subscribed a great significance to moral virtues (along with intellectual values). He was aware that the learned can reach some state in which one ceases to be a human being and transforms into a specialized insect as a result of some circumstances and especially some feature of the spirit! Thus it is necessary to complement and mutual support of intellectual and moral capabilities in each learned person (Swieżawski, 1993: 257-266).

upbringing as “any sphere of life calls for moral reflection since life is action and no action can be morally indifferent. We are responsible for our conscious deed, for each negligence and also for people with whom we are connected by the bonds of loyalty and mutual care — at home, at work, among acquaintances and friends. Also in a relation with the strangers, even towards our enemies we have some moral obligations” (Woleński, Hartman, 2008: 11–13).

In the times of destabilizing of the rules and ethical norms it seems crucial to start a discussion within the scope of pedagogical ethics<sup>8</sup> both in the theoretical and practical dimension (Sawczuk, 2007: 8). An important indicator of the quality of pedagogical activity is everything that professional ethics includes: in the deontological and axiological dimension. In the end, professional and obligatory advantages of the pedagogue’s job stem from the world of values. Values — immaterial (creations of abstract thinking existing in human consciousness), such as e.g. various ideas, views and material values, mainly creations of social environment finally shape thinking, positions and behavior of human beings. According to Zygmunt Wiatrowski we can ascertain that the pedagogue needs ethics not only for subjecting one’s own activity, but also for achieving the most important aims of contemporary education (Wiatrowski, 2007: 80–89).

To sum up, one must generalize and claim that the role of philosophy at pedagogical studies is important. At first philosophy awakes curiosity and it stimulates thinking: it sensitizes us to obscurity of the world, the ability to accept differences, capability of posing creative questions. What is more, it appears to be an intellectual ground of culture, including education. Simultaneously, with its ideas philosophy constitutes the indispensable basis and teleology of education. It is philosophy which, among others, proposes various ontological, anthropological, ethical, axiological, praxeological, methodological concepts from which the shape of education relies in the end. Holistic approaches and planks of philosophy of upbringing are invaluable for theory and practice of pedagogy.

Bearing in mind the declared remarks it can be claimed that as long as *philosophy will be the pedagogy’s concern* it will be authentic (true) care of the present and future human being. “The presence of philosophy in pedagogy or philosophical nature of pedagogy itself is not a matter of ornaments, narrative pathos or erudition. It is a dramatic question of quality of truth and our being in the world, conversations and struggling for the quality of something which demands our agreement and even affirmation. Radical criticism and responsibility for our future world and the quality of life of the next generations is not a matter of whims of haunted philosophers but the minimum of care for our being worthy of something that remains an open way for a human being, worthy

<sup>8</sup> According to Janusz Homplewicz we have something to do with pedagogical ethics when the problems of morality of upbringing are transferred to the ground of pedagogy (Homplewicz, 1996: 22).

of the spirit of humanity and the power of humanity. Somebody who does not feel or understand it should never bring up children, educate the adolescents nor dominantly debate on the subject of the fate of society” (Witkowski, Jaworska-Witkowska, 2010: 41).

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#### **Кшиштоф Каминский. Роль философии в педагогических исследованиях**

Современный педагог не может быть лишен воображения; никто не может быть лишен любопытства к миру, стремления к осмыслению его рациональным образом и мечтам изменить (улучшить) его. Современный педагог должен быть основательно подготовленный к своей профессии. Философия может оказаться полезной (но не только единственной, достойной включиться в эту игру ради человека) в реализации подобной амбициозной программы в педагогических исследованиях. Таким образом, роль философии в педагогических исследованиях велика. Прежде всего, она пробуждает любопытство и заставляет нас думать. В результате создается интеллектуальная основа культуры, включая образование. В то же время философия с ее идеалами составляет неотъемлемую основу образования. Именно философия, помимо прочего, выдвигает различные антропологические идеи, реализующиеся в конечном итоге в образовании. Положения философии являются бесценными для педагогической теории и практики.

*Ключевые слова:* философия, педагогические исследования, педагог, учитель, учебный план исследований, (учебные) философские дисциплины.

#### **Кшиштоф Каминський. Роль філософії в педагогічних дослідженнях**

Сучасний педагог не може бути позбавлений уяви; нікто не може бути позбавлений цікавості до світу, прагнення до осмислення його раціональним шляхом і мрій змінити (покращити) його. Сучасний педагог повинен бути ретельно підготовлений до своєї професії. Філософія може виявитися корисною (але не тільки єдиною, гідною включитися у цю гру задля людини) в реалізації подібної амбітної програми у педагогічних дослідженнях. Отже, філософія відіграє значну роль у педагогічних дослідженнях. Передусім вона пробуджує цікавість і змушує нас думати. У наслідок чого створюється інтелектуальна основа культури, включаючи освіту. У той же час філософія з її ідеалами складає невід'ємну основу освіти. Саме філософія, крім іншого, висуває різні антропологічні ідеї, що реалізуються у кінцевому рахунку в освіті. Положення філософії є безцінними для педагогічної теорії і практики.

*Ключові слова:* філософія, педагогічні дослідження, педагог, вчитель, навчальний план досліджень, (навчальні) філософські дисципліни.