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THE PROBLEM OF DISCURSIVE OPENNESS IN THINKING ABOUT UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION

THE STARTING POINT AND THE SITUATION OF OPENNESS

Postmodern socio-cultural situation leads to a number of transformations and changes in the area of thinking about education, teaching and upbringing. It essentially leads to the deepening of the discourse on them on the philosophical, anthropological and pedagogical grounds, but also on social and cultural grounds. There reveals a kind of shift towards postmodernist pedagogy, adopting the situation of postmodernism – as Tomasz Szkudlarek points out – for “[...] **the starting point** for the construction of a new discourse, a new theoretical paradigm and a new vision of practice” and further “It does not necessarily have to mean a radical break with the past: but it certainly must include a revision of its experiences” (Szkudlarek, 2009, p. 82).

In the context of cultural changes, a kind of openness to postmodernism is manifesting, which is expressed mainly in the critical thought. According to T. Szkudlarek: “The situation of discursive openness resulting from the breakthrough nature of the postmodernist thought is only one part of the conditions enabling the inclusion of educational theories in [...] the trend of cultural criticism.” In turn, the second of them is connected – as he goes on – with the current state of the pedagogy itself and “a certain openness of its discourse to a radical change” (Szkudlarek, 2009, p. 86). This applies in principle to the broad field of knowledge and science, which in the postmodernist perspective has become an area of openness and transformation in relation to the category of reason and rationality. The aforementioned author analyzes mainly the openness in pedagogy, which is connected with the inclusion of educational theories in the trend of cultural criticism, openness to postmodernism in the area of critical pedagogy (as already mentioned), striving to redefine the categories: knowledge, reason, rationality and openness to the category of difference, and more specifically, the transition from one-dimensional models to multidimensional concepts. Significant is the fact that “In place of the subject understood as a central and autonomous structure, there appears a multidimensional structure, dispersed, entangled in contradictory conditions” (Szkudlarek, 2009, p. 98).

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OPENNESS IN CRITICAL PEDAGOGY AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE POSTMODERNITY

Critical pedagogy itself – as Henry A. Giroux points out – is expressed in two ways, namely in the worst and best meaning. In the first one it is seen as “a form of educational criticism,” completely shaped “by the modernist discourse” (Giroux, Witkowski, 2010, p. 224). In the second one: “it is developed [...] as a practice of culture enabling teachers and all others to understand education as a political, social and cultural project” (Giroux, Witkowski, 2010, p. 225). Especially in the latter approach, it reveals the ways of openness, creating a broad context for education and upbringing. Paying attention to transformations in the area of understanding and comprehension of social issues and the whole society, the way of thinking about culture, language, public life, the relationship of power and knowledge, it allows for the openness to the category of difference. Forming, *inter alia*: “a border pedagogy of postmodern resistance” (compare Giroux, Witkowski, 2010, p. 225).

Important, for the postmodern thinking, openness in critical pedagogy is visible, among others, in changing the concept of the subject – the appearance of “multiple subjectivity” (compare Szkudlarek, 2009, p. 98). The discussion about the subject and its subjectivity, both on the grounds of philosophy and pedagogy, is extremely complex and would require separate analyzes. However, what constitutes the openness and indicates some changes in the recognition of the subject concerns primarily the space of pedagogy. Although the inability to provide clarification and the problem of introducing man as a subject into institutional practice brings it closer to philosophical questions about the subject.

Nevertheless, multiple subjectivity, according to the considerations of T. Szkudlarek, involves describing it as based on unrelated and dispersed “positions” and subjective situations (compare Szkudlarek, Śliwerski, 2010, p. 47). It is also important to take into account in its meaning the multitude of contexts of its functioning, and thus: to recognize the thesis of the multidimensionality of discursive practices of shaping subjectivity and the turn towards texts of culture (compare Szkudlarek, 2009, p. 98-99).

All this in a visible and clear way connects with the postmodernist thinking, with the postmodernity in the understanding of Wolfgang Welsch. Its basic experience in his approach: “is the recognition of the indisputable right to various forms of knowledge, concepts of life (*Lebensentwürfe*), patterns of behavior” (Welsch, 1998, p. 9), which translates into the area of education and upbringing in the postmodern era. It can be assumed after W. Welsch that the old model of uniform thinking is no longer valid and everything that is subject to postmodern reason is affected by multitude and diversity. In his conviction: “[...] postmodernity offensively defends multitude and strongly opposes it to all old and new usurped hegemony. It defends the multitude of diverse concepts, language games and ways of life (*Lebensformen*) – not from carelessness and cheap relativism, but in the name of historical experience and the pursuit of freedom” (Welsch, 1998, p. 9). In this way, it visualizes and updates itself

on the basis of pedagogy, and although it is difficult to indicate one fundamental direction of its development, one can see the main assumptions that reveal through the thicket of thought and meaning horizons. The foreground includes such values as knowledge, reason and rationality or freedom. As W. Welsch writes: “Its philosophical impetus” is revealed as “also deeply moral” (Welsch, 1998, p. 9), which probably results from the fact that it is based on the belief that all claims are equal, both in the field of discourse and everyday life.

One can not disagree with the statement that “Its option is the pluralism – of ways of life and forms of action, types of thinking and social concepts, systems of orientation and minorities” (Welsch, 1998, p. 9-10), which does not mean, however, that it accepts everything uncritically, on the contrary, in every discourse of postmodernity, its critical spirit is clearly revealed.

This is necessary for the discursive openness, and extremely important in thinking about education and upbringing, especially when taking into account – on the one hand – closed and one-sided schemes, systems, models rooted in the mentality of many societies, and on the other – rapid socio-cultural transformations related to the presence of a number of phenomena, such as the spread of technology, virtualization or hybridization, taking place also in the area of education.

It turns out to be significant that the postulate of modernity assumed in the postmodernity has been extended to the whole reality and all its aspects of “being” and human life. Education and upbringing, like every space of this life, have been marked by pluralism, breaking the limited perception of their own field and space of action as separate and closed.

ASSUMPTIONS OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN H.A. GIROUX’S APPROACH AND THE POSTMODERN REALITY

The analytical perspective of the considerations undertaken in critical pedagogy by H.A. Giroux also seems important. It allows not only a critical approach to the possibilities and ways of explaining the socio-political, economic and cultural reality, but also to the unmasking approach to educational practice and not only, which is emphasized by the words: “The co-thinking of H. Giroux with the Frankfurt School, already on this one – among many others – example of the programmatic anti-positivism, shows that the critical social theory functions for it as a worldview matrix out of which the pedagogically radical thought can explain and evaluate the cultural, socio-political and economic reality and unmask ideological aspects of the approach to educational practice, the theory and practice of education, understood as elements of the system of social control aimed at maintaining the existing structures and processes of the influence of power” (Kruszelnicki, 2017, p. 8).

The already mentioned T. Szkudlarek writes about the postmodernist education in the approach of H. Giroux with reference to the main themes and theses of his concept, pointing to nine important issues, some of which are worth quoting. The first of them

concerns the project of pedagogy in relation to the issues of the policy of postmodern states; based on the perception of education as “production of knowledge” and “production of political subjects” (Szkudlarek, 2009, p. 107), and thus the understanding of the educational process and school tasks in a broad socio-cultural context. This is related to questions that arise in the context of this critical thought and which are worth quoting after T. Szkudlarek, namely: “[...] what citizens should be brought up by a public school functioning in the conditions of postmodernism; what kind of society is to be created as a result of current cultural reshuffle; how is the category of difference and equality to be reconciled – with the imperative of freedom and justice?” (Szkudlarek, 2009, p. 107). It is worth adding – is it possible to reconcile these categories with the imperative of freedom and justice on the basis of the existing institutions? One must first ask about their ways of understanding and comprehension. These questions determine the direction and the axis of the issues of ethics discussed by H. Giroux, which are to be the basis of pedagogical activities, as well as the already mentioned difference. The difference understood in two ways – on the one hand as an identity category, revealed and updated in relation to multiple relationships and social and cultural identifications; on the other – as a category differentiating and separating social groups located in given systems, structures and relations, creating society.

In order to implement these assumptions, it is necessary to “work out a language that allows for competing identifications and political languages to be included in the discourse of pedagogy so that the issues of power, justice, struggle, inequality are not subordinated to some new form of «prevailing narrative» [...]” (Szkudlarek, 2009, s. 108). It is equally necessary to develop new forms of knowledge allowing interdisciplinary activities and supporting them, which is associated with a revision of the category of reason, not only in relation to the discovery of truth and cognition, but mainly due to the adoption of the assertion that multitude and diversity constitute the domain of postmodernity, and hence – become determinants of postmodern daily life.

As T. Szkudlarek writes explicitly: “The revision of the concept of reason should enable the analysis of the so far omitted forms of learning and the creation of specific subjective positions related to the experience acquired in specific social situations [...]” (Szkudlarek, 2009, p. 109). This translates into the way of perceiving and functioning of a human being as a subject in all these relations and situations, but with an emphasis on the understanding of the subject as responsible and committed, critically considering both their own as well as the community experience and activity.

DIALECTICS AND TEACHING PHILOSOPHY TOWARDS POSTMODERNIST REFLECTION AND OPENNESS

In the face of postmodern thinking, the words of Theodor W. Adorno turn out to be relevant: “Today, no theory will escape the market. Each of them is offered as one of the possible opinions among other competing ones, they are all to choose from, all to swallow” (Adorno, 1986, p. 9). However, the dialectical character of the postmodern discourse can not be undermined. The market is in line with the assertion about the contradictory principles of scientific cognition, which is reflected, for example, in the teaching of philosophy aimed at visualizing the question of thinking. “To think – as T.W. Adorno writes – means to identify,” and this is associated with the creation of a certain conceptual order which is built at the intersection of what is real and what is apparent. In this the contradiction is revealed, which is “[...] the clue of the untruth of identity, the untruth of the fact that what is conceived coincides with the concept” (Adorno, 1986, p. 10). This allows for making the assumption that “Contradiction is what is not identical in the aspect of identity,” and “the primacy of the principle of contradiction in dialectics measures what is heterogeneous with a measure of thinking in terms of unity. It, while colliding with its own border, exceeds itself” (Adorno, 1986, p. 10).

Heterogeneity is also a feature of transversal reason, allowing for simultaneous diversity and complexity, both in the cognition and in the “being” itself in the world. According to W. Welsch, man as a subject exists in the presumed ultimate heterogeneity, perceived just as diversity as well as complexity, and in the irreversible dispersion (Welsch, 1998, p. 407-408), which constitutes the initial contradiction of the postmodernity and reveals the need for dialectics. However – as T.W. Adorno indicates – dialectics can not be reduced only to the “purely logical formula of contradiction,” because it reveals “[...] the full variety of what is not contradictory, just different” (Adorno, 1986, p. 11).

It can be assumed that through dialectics there is a certain openness to multitude. The path to this openness is revealed within the dialectics itself, but not without external connections. There develops a distinction in it, “the distinction between what is general and what is special,” which makes itself present “in the consciousness in the form of the dichotomy of the subject and object,” which, however, does not lead to separation, but “wants to find its end in reconciliation.” According to T.W. Adorno, the indicated reconciliation “[...] would free what is not the same, free it from coercion, including intellectual coercion, and thus reveal the multitude of what is different, the multitude over which the dialectics would no longer have power.” This reconciliation would involve “making oneself aware of the multitude” (Adorno, 1986, p. 12), that is, it would mean – in a sense – the recognition of the multitude, not only as the result of crossing internal contradictions but also as the principle of reality.

Openness to the multitude, if it can be called that, would have its consequences in thinking about education, which until now was largely associated with entering the right of the cognizing reason in common order – social, political or economic, thus allowing the production of knowledge. Philosophical thinking marked by a critical approach cuts off from this production.

Critical approach is simultaneously active, therefore philosophy, claiming after Jean-François Lyotard “exists only in act.” And as he contemplates further in *The script on the teaching of philosophy*, “education and teaching do not seem to be [...] neither more nor less «philosophical acts»,” therefore, philosophy as such is not only an area of knowledge in the space of various disciplines, and “the teaching of philosophy” is not just shaping skills. In his opinion, “[...] around the word *education*, *Bildung*, and therefore around pedagogy and *reform*, a fundamental game takes place in philosophical thinking [...]” and “It is based on the assumption that the human mind is not as it should be and that it must be reformed.” What has its part in it is “childishness” that sets the direction of education, revealing that “the mind is not given at once.” Therefore, teaching “[...] means that the teacher helps the potential mind, being in childhood in a state of waiting, to realize itself” (Lyotard, 1998, p. 132).

In the teaching of philosophy or philosophical teaching there also reveals the inability to break away from the relationships with childhood, the period of – as it is called by J.-F. Lyotard: “various potencies of the mind.” This is related to the fact that in the teaching itself “You have to start again and again. A philosophical mind can not be a mind (including the mind of a professor of philosophy) that approaches a problem with a ready solution, and when teaching, does not always begin from the beginning” (Lyotard, 1998, p. 133).

According to Lyotard, the key to teaching and education as well as upbringing is the child’s mind, and basically childishness. As he emphasizes: “The child monster is not the father of humanity, it is a departure from the rules [...]” (Lyotard, 1998, p. 133). But can the philosophical openness of the mind and the awareness of the need to continually start from the beginning become the assumption of a discursive openness in thinking on the ground different than philosophical? If in critical pedagogy a discursive openness to postmodernity has revealed, and thus – to the subject and category of difference, it seems possible to open up in thinking about upbringing and education, and thus to undertake interdisciplinary dialogue.

IN THE SPHERE OF CONCLUSION

It is worth considering the words of T. Szkudlarek regarding postmodernist thinking about education, teaching, and consequently – upbringing, facing the current question about the entanglement of knowledge in the relation of power. The aforementioned author writes: “If knowledge, entangled in the relationship of power, enslaves and if critical knowledge is to be a way to liberation, then the content of

education turns out to be the central point, the key moment of the ongoing process of the cultural transformation: a focal point in which all dynamic tensions of contemporary issues of knowledge and freedom should be focused” (Szkudlarek, 2009, p. 110), and it is worth adding – with an emphasis on inquiry and striving for knowledge as well as understanding and respect for the freedom of the subjects of education and teaching.

Despite the fact that the discursive openness in thinking about upbringing and education has become a fact on the ground of critical pedagogy, it remains a challenge. It is difficult to find oneself in a discourse undermining the basics of traditional normative thinking, as among others the aforementioned H.A. Giroux does (compare Szkudlarek, Śliwerski, 2010, p. 46-48).

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Keywords: openness, upbringing, education, postmodernism

Abstract: The article discusses the problem of discursive openness in thinking about post-modern upbringing and broadly understood education. Particular attention has been drawn to considerations concerning postmodernist pedagogy and philosophy, yet with reference to the broad perspective of the postmodern reality. Furthermore, the author of the article discusses the issues related to the general discourse in the area of the aforementioned sciences and the openness appearing in them, along with the matters connected with the dialectics and the teaching of philosophy in the context of the postmodernist approach to and reflection on openness in both a scientific and socio-cultural discourse. Reference was also made to the thoughts of, among others, Tomasz Szkularek, Henry Giroux, Theodor Adorno, Jean-François Lyotard.

PROBLEM DYSKURSYWNEGO OTWARCIA W MYŚLENIU O WYCHOWANIU I EDUKACJI

Słowa kluczowe: otwarcie, wychowanie, edukacja, postmodernizm

Streszczenie: W artykule rozważony został problem dyskursywnego otwarcia w myśleniu o ponowoczesnym wychowaniu i szeroko pojętej edukacji. Zwrócono uwagę zwłaszcza na rozważania na gruncie pedagogiki postmodernistycznej i filozofii, jednak w odniesieniu do szerokiej perspektywy rzeczywistości ponowoczesnej. Poruszono również kwestie związane z powszechnym dyskursem w obszarze wspomnianych nauk i ujawniającym się w nich otwarciem, ale też łączące się z dialektyką i nauczaniem filozofii w kontekście podejścia postmodernistycznego i refleksji nad otwarciem zarówno w dyskursie naukowym, jak i społeczno-kulturowym. Odwołano się do myśli m.in.: Tomasza Szkularkę, Henry'ego Giroux, Theodora Adorno, Jeana-François Lyotarda.