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Introduction

The twenty-first century has witnessed the initiation of a completely new range of humanistic and social research in the meta-cognitive field – the field in which the subject of analyses and disputes are the most important and most valuable ideas, phenomena, and trends in thought and in theory, which at the same time link the past, the canon, and tradition with the present and the challenges of the future. After all, it is they which have become, in every era, a current of search for and location of the essence as well as the scope or intensity of research phenomena of interest to scientists. For pedagogy, as for all humanities and social sciences, what creates knowledge about the condition of humankind here and now, or as imagined by futurists and forecasters, has not been, is not, and will never be a matter of insignificance, nor will the way in which it influenced, influences at present, and will continue to influence practice – including not only education and guidance, but civilization as a whole.

Moreover, there are no scientific disciplines that could be indifferent to the question of how the achievements of past ages and present times correspond to specific focal points of thoughts, ideas, and theories in the most characteristic currents, directions, and trends of a given time. In the case of pedagogy, the achievements are the most suitable to the morphology of the socializing and educational processes of all generations. It is precisely this area of research, possessing a distinct metatheoretical (metaphysical) character in every science, that enables us to compare, organize, synthesize, and evaluate the knowledge generated by scientists. It is impossible not to notice this, for a number of reasons:

1) didactic – in the education of adepts of a given discipline and scientific specialty, in order for them to obtain the knowledge which constitutes their professionalism and distinguishes them from amateurs, pop culture ‘connoisseurs’ or ‘experts’ on everything (German *Besserwisser*);

2) methodological – in the clear, maximally unambiguous construction of one’s research assumptions, the formulation of research problems, the distinction and definition of variables and their operationalization, as well as the interpretation of

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empirical data obtained in the language of the paradigm, theory, or the current itself;

3) cognitive – in the understanding of the perspectives of description and the appropriate explanations of the research object. It is essential to enable access to basic but systematic knowledge, to recognize the durability and universality, as well as the dynamics of thought in the process of reconstructing, rejecting, modeling or modifying it, and at the same time to avoid the existing stereotypes, myths, or prejudices in order to better understand the specificity of each theory in the language of its links with the canon or the anti-canonical avant-garde;

4) social – in the intervention in the sphere of public space (environmental, technical, medical, political, intercultural, artistic, cultural, legal, educational, *etc.*). This provides more professional involvement in social change, construction of reform programs, and creation of new practices by the followers of the status quo as well as experimenters, reformists, and innovators;

5) individual – in the construction of one's own research projects, theories, or cognitive models, and in professional improvement of oneself and one's own workshop.

In this type of research, positivistic support of the atomization of science is not essential; rather, the opposite is true: not so much a return to the scientific matrix, to philosophy, as the maintenance of one's own identity and openness to the commonality of thought, universalia, the timeless bonds of ideas, and the identity of sources. Andrzej Kaliszewski, in his analysis of the main trends of the culture of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, indicates the interdisciplinary nature of this type of research.

Thanks to the network of trends, it is possible to show briefly the dynamics of development processes which take place in a given discipline, and to do so in connection with other disciplines or cultural systems. The network of 'trends' is also a good basis for individual searches and shaping the sympathies of one's readership (Kaliszewski 2012: 9).

It is not surprising that each science creates its own specific keys or maps of currents of theories and paradigms, which, as it turns out, possess many common features. Regardless of the scientific discipline we represent, we appeal to the same sources, the same order of knowledge, surnames, and significant works, albeit reading in them disparate values for the phenomena that interest us. Despite their name, systemic studies are of reductionist nature, since in organizing someone's works, theories, or practical achievements, one must give up that foundational periphery, which, even though it plays a supporting and expanding role, was not crucial to their emergence and empowerment in science. The focus of interest is often, in a given area of science, what was and/or is the focus of interest for most researchers or acknowledged by them to be the approach of the greatest im-

portance or the highest value. Some present knowledge on this subject in chronological order, placing trends in thought in periods of time (epochs) distinguished by historians or by themselves; others are guided by a problematic, ahistorical order, systematizing knowledge and theories with regard to contemporary issues and problems.

Importantly, we cannot write today about contemporary directions, trends, or theories without considering the so-called 'milestones' of science and symbolic culture which create and preserve lasting, positive, possibly common and historical values, ideas, and theories, as well as various trends appearing on the horizon of a given epoch, the so-called "leap into modernity" or the "artificial paradises" of the global village and cyber culture, today's extremely attractive and progressive "pulsating categories" and flowing paradigms, aspiring to universal and global roles' (ibidem: 10–11). They have had or still have a unique and irreplaceable influence on the stimulation and development of the general progress of knowledge in the humanities, as an important contribution to the culture of values, without which pedagogy cannot exist as a science. It is precisely because of this that scientists examine what is, on one hand, a canon and, on the other, a positive or negative transgression against that canon characterized by attributive nature which treats thought as a whole, as the lasting achievement of generations and elites, as well as a distributive character, indicating its complexity, diversity, and variability. These are specifically the

(...) currents through which we look (...) at the most valuable phenomena of chosen systems of symbolic (spiritual) culture, which enable researchers and all other observers to organize phenomena, discover their hierarchies, extract the most important aspects and values (including canonical works). These trends (currents) are in fact constitutive components of periods (epochs) in symbolic culture, which possess in turn a cumulative character (ibidem: 21).

In this issue of Educational Sciences. Interdisciplinary Studies we offer readers an insight into analyses and studies in the social sciences whose common denominator is the subject not only of pedagogical research, but also of the humanities. Given the deep rift in international politics among the most economically developed countries in the world, the crisis of the migration of peoples seeking better living conditions, and at the same time resulting from growing national, ethnic, and racial conflicts, it is worth noting the results of Polish comparatists, such as Jerzy Niki-torowicz of the University of Białystok and Tomasz Gmerek of the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, on the dilemmas presented above.

We are fully aware that pedagogical research is not conducted within the qualitative paradigm, i.e. in terms of hermeneutic, biographical, or comparative ideas and values, but above all in the empirical paradigm of Science. Therefore, we also recommend Krzysztof Rubacha's paper on the subject of data languages as

a criterion for the construction of text and research reports. He is a methodologist in pedagogical research from the Faculty of Pedagogical Sciences of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun. This issue provides indispensable references to current events in science and higher education in Poland in connection with the extensive consultations and debates regarding the projected Act 2.0, prepared by the right-wing government, with the conviction of the need to radically accelerate the internationalization of Polish science and to intensify scientific research in this sector.

In this issue, you will also find two types of reviews – polemical and affirmative – of scientific papers, as well as reports on scientific conferences. We are looking forward to your joining the discussion on the issues which were at the center of the attention of the editors of this issue as well as on the thoughts and research results of authors from Poland and abroad presented here.

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References

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