



Bogusław Śliwerski

University of Łódź, Poland

ORCID 0000-0002-3875-8154

Pedagogical hermeneutics at the time of political transition in Poland

Abstract: The author analyzed the scientific dissertations of Polish scholars for whom hermeneutics as a direction of contemporary philosophy, including the method of researching ideas, theoretical premises of education and upbringing, contributed to the development of contemporary pedagogical thought and methodological self-awareness. The qualitative research paradigm requires researchers to be competent in understanding and interpreting the phenomena they are interested in. The aim of this article is therefore to make educators aware of the need to see in the analyzed dissertations from the period of the totalitarian state the use of hidden hermeneutics by scientists as a result of the existing political censorship. The freedom to conduct scientific research, regained in Poland after 1989, contributed to the dynamic development of general pedagogy, the theory of education and comparative studies of pedagogical thought. At the same time, the author warns against escaping from the freedom of a part of the scientific community as a result of subordinating the political correctness to the interpretation of the theories studied or the results of empirical research.

Keywords: freedom of science, hidden hermeneutics, fundamentalism, political correctness, humanities, multi-paradigm of pedagogy.

It would be a poor hermeneuticist who thought he could have, or had to have, the last word (Gadamer, 1975, p. 581).

Introduction

It is not possible to reconstruct the state of knowledge about hermeneutic pedagogy in the 21st century in Poland without relating its development to the political conditions that interfered with the freedom of scientific research. Without it, there can be no talk of hermeneutics either as a theory of interpretation and understanding of a spoken or written text, i.e. as a kind of research methodology in humanities, which, in contrast to natural sciences and their scientific model of research, allows, as a result of conducted inquiries, to understand ideas and to explain them. Hermeneutics is not only the art of interpreting a text, but also an epistemology of interpretation, a methodology, an expression of scientific approach in humanities. As Stefan Wołoszyn wrote:

Knowledge about education consists of both pedagogical views expressed in philosophical reflection on the phenomena of upbringing that are universal in human life, and the results of empirical research into the reality of education. The former - philosophical reflection - is almost eternal and constantly alive; the latter - empirical research - is just over a hundred years old. The philosophy of upbringing is sometimes inspired by the practice of upbringing as a source of formulated views, but to a higher degree it draws inspiration from more general views of man, his essence and the meaning of his life (...) Both the philosophy of upbringing in the sense indicated and scientific pedagogy together form a historically conditioned picture of educational science (Wołoszyn, 1998, p. 9).

The hidden dimension of hermeneutic inquiry in general pedagogy and theory of socialist education

The issue addressed in the title of this article arose in the early 1990s, after science had been liberated from political censorship and it was finally possible to undertake research into ideas, currents, theories and discourses on upbringing and education that had hitherto been forbidden in socialist countries, but had been developing in western European, democratic countries. For over four decades, they had been viewed as bourgeois, i.e. construed as dehumanising the essence of upbringing and education in the interwar period of emerging capitalism. Andrzej Rutkowski wrote quite directly about the scientific community taking over in Poland after 1948, which (also due

to his involvement) became subservient to the ruling party policies, that its task was to "(...) actually demonstrate, on a few examples, the factual errors in many of the views expressed in these works and, consequently (if correlations are actually established) the reactionary nature of their class function. (...) In the argument against bourgeois pedagogy, the point is to strike at the part which constitutes its most important component. And this seems to be precisely moral education. It is in it [moral education] that the typical features of bourgeois pedagogy, seen as a whole, and what we describe as its class character, are most fully expressed" (1959, p. 294).

Hermeneutics could not appear in the human sciences, including pedagogy, neither as a research method nor as one of its currents. Any analysis inquiring into the sense, the meanings, the essence of educational or didactic processes could not be described as hermeneutic, because this would have violated the only legitimate method of research of Marxist dialectics, according to which any thesis incompatible with socialist ideology was to be treated as unscientific, because it went beyond objectively verifiable phenomena (cf. Kotłowski, 1957; Muszyński, 1985). In a totalitarian society dominated by the aspiration to unify social and educational structures, the theory of education was to legitimise the ultimate and indisputable ideology of political interactions as pedagogy while rejecting all alternatives that could only undermine it and disrupt the educational process. It thus encouraged the entrenchment in isolation from other educational currents, while suppressing the capacity for self-criticism and socio-cultural change.

If this was done, the method used for the study of pedagogical thought was not clarified, instead the authors would go straight to outline the characteristics of only selected sources of knowledge, (Wołoszyn, 1968) in order to give it a new meaning. For example, at the beginning of her dissertation on the process of upbringing and its outcomes, Romana Miller indicated that she intended to describe and clarify the meaning of upbringing by replacing its previous meaning with the phrase "the process of upbringing". "Therefore, the problem of upbringing, viewed as the problem of a series of changes, becomes more complex and seemingly more difficult, but I believe that it is more in line with the achievements of modern science" (Miller, 1966, p. 7). Fifteen years later, in another dissertation, the author confirmed the validity of her previous position on the processual nature of upbringing by deepening it with an analysis of theories emphasising the links between social development and individual development as a result of the changes taking place between three processes: socialisation, upbringing and psychotherapy (Miller, 1981). In this dissertation she also failed to provide a method for

her theoretical research. This was pointed out and properly recognised by Małgorzata Malicka when in her review of the book she wrote:

Out of all the possible ways of practising pedagogy, two are the most common: one with a practitioner's orientation, which treats education primarily as a skill, as a set of rules of conduct or as a kind of targeted technology for interpersonal relations, and the other, which brings to the fore a theoretical reflection, based on the broadest possible knowledge of the human being. Romana Miller's latest book is undoubtedly a manifestation of the latter approach (1986, p. 183).

In the totalitarian regime, pedagogues were explicitly denied the right to undertake discussions, analyses, conduct disputes of a meta-theoretical, cultural nature, because the unquestionable and only acceptable Marxist-Leninist ideology was compulsory. Heliodor Muszyński, a Marxist-oriented pedagogue of those times, subordinated the methodology of educational sciences to the ideology of the one-party state, contributing to its academic depreciation and humanistic self-destruction. Even during the martial law of the 1980s, when addressing the dispute over the methodological status of education sciences over several decades, he stressed that a pedagogy which in its theoretical analyses draws on philosophy and its methods of enquiry leads to a crisis, as it reduces the discipline to a speculative science, thus preventing it from gaining autonomy. He wrote: "This was evident both in the issues addressed and in the methods used to address them. Pedagogy was dominated by considerations around general questions of the essence, meaning, tasks, ideals and possibilities of education. Education sciences practised in this way had no bearing on the reality of education: they neither studied it nor intervened in its processes. Thus, they weren't subject to any verification" (Muszyński, 1982, p. 1).

Consequently, in this difficult time for Polish science, representatives of general pedagogy or theory of education whose research was strictly hermeneutic did not refer to it as such, but instead used terms such as philosophical reflection or textual analysis. I recall a conversation I had with my master Karol Kotłowski, professor at the University of Lodz, pupil of the eminent philosopher of upbringing, comparatist and general pedagogue Sergiusz Hessen (1931; 1937; 1938; 1939), who had 50 pages of his dissertation on the hermeneutic analysis of the essence of patriotic upbringing removed by the censorship. The book had not been intended as a textbook or methodological guide for educators, since "the theoretical considerations contained in it are only intended to introduce the reader to this difficult and responsible area

of moral education and to enable him to create his own methods adapted to his individuality and the conditions in which he educates” (Kotłowski, 1974, p. 14).

Similarly, in another dissertation on the philosophy of values in relation to the tasks of pedagogy, Kotłowski analysed how, over time, the concept of freedom and values crystallized in non-Marxist and Marxist philosophies, but also in the pedagogy of culture in relation to human rights, to avoid cementing the readers’ already held beliefs. “The mind, when analysing an idea, unfortunately has to break it down into its constituent parts and, in Bergson’s words, “kill it”. The educator should do the opposite: to merge what the theorist has dismembered and, as it were, bring it back to life in the souls of his pupils” (Kotłowski, 1968, p. 207). The hermeneutic method of inquiry was expected to encourage addressing issues that are essential to pedagogy, so that through the analysis of ideas the essence of pedagogical regularities could be explored. The fact that this type of inquiry is not clear to practitioners of upbringing and education was not so much the fault of the author, but, as Kotłowski wrote, “(...) of the subject-matter under study itself, which is very complex, and it is not always possible to write clearly about vague things, and sometimes, under such conditions, some inaccuracies or even errors in reasoning cannot be avoided. But I believe that even the fear of the latter eventuality should not deter anyone from trying to tackle difficult issues, since error is often a great midwife to the birth of truth” (Kotłowski, 1964, pp. 6-7).

Polish pedagogues of the totalitarian socialist era used hermeneutics as a way to analyse and arrive at a humanistic understanding of the key conceptual categories of this discipline and education theories developed based on them. The belief, proposed by some, that they were to fulfil a servile function towards the government regime gained support in the publications of the Committee of Pedagogical Sciences of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the best example of which is the collection of texts and then separate volumes devoted to the critique of bourgeois pedagogy (Suchodolski, ed. 1959). The generation of teachers trained in the inter-war period or in clandestine during the Nazi occupation were educated on their work. When exploring the essence of self-education, following K. Kotłowski, I defined the research method as a philosophical and pedagogical reflection. As an organising criterion, I identified three types of situations where we can speak of self-education in social relations, that is self-education with heteronomous sources of its inspiration and intrapersonal activities understood as a kind of “intra-action”, self-feedback towards perfectionism and perfectiorism (Śliwerski, 2010a).

Pedagogy, which grew out of philosophy with its history of its disintegration and atomisation, became not only an ungrateful and possessive child of this *corpus philosophicum*, but also a barren, shallow product of a technical and scientific civilisation, surrendering itself utterly to the statist and occupying politics of a totalitarian, one-party regime. Fundamentalism in the humanities, and in pedagogy in particular, became dangerous because its proponents declared certain assertions and principles to be the only truth. And as confrontational and directed against others such statements often were, they did not allow scholars from other scientific schools to respond. They denied the opponents the right to their own generalisations of knowledge or theories, did not allow new research perspectives, and thus hindered the development of pedagogy as a humanistic science. At the same time, this type of possessive attitudes led to a dogmatisation of the main assumptions of the rejected stream, proclaiming the superiority of their own.

Breakthrough in the Pedagogy of “Border”

After Poland reclaimed its political sovereignty, domestic pedagogical thought was enriched by a number of scholarly works whose authors focused on their own distinctive reading of the works of their chosen classic of education sciences. This was because it was necessary to deny the banality of the thesis about the end of philosophy, which was first condemned during the communist period by positivists, doctrinaire Marxists, who however offered content for the education or upbringing of young generations that was questionable and often contrary to national tradition and culture instead. The fracture that emerged in 1989, the radical separation of the Polish humanities from the monistic, ideologically degenerated socialist pedagogy, was to prove to be a lasting achievement of the times of socio-political, cultural and scientific transition. With the political turn-around of the early 1990s, Polish pedagogy reoriented itself towards the values of pluralism and democracy, towards an open society, towards differences, multiplicity and strangeness, towards respect for individual freedom and democracy.

The year 1989 unlocked the space of freedom to practise research and disseminate its results, which was so important for this discourse. The space of scientific freedom so important for the development of humanistic pedagogy was created. Its significance was stressed by Zbigniew Kwieciński when he wrote:

Great hardship awaits pedagogy in the face of the challenges of social and cultural change. There are many paths we have to re-embark on. Close the door behind us and start working from scratch. Resume interrupted and forgotten discourses, make up for lost time, explain, bring to mind our marginalised achievements, create a preference for general pedagogy, for the philosophy of education, open ourselves to basic theories of man, society and culture, to global problems, pave the way to the world for scientific youth and the way towards us for texts and knowledge from the world, be closer to new practice, to courageous innovators and creators of good educational practice. It is necessary to help silence the pedagogy that had been instrumentally adapted to the misguided previous system (Kwieciński, 1990, p. 9).

At the time, the controversy over theoretical and applied research was independent of political and systemic divisions. What pedagogy needed was to generate synthetic approaches to develop theories of education that went beyond the boundaries and limitations of partial paradigms. By delving into the languages offered by such different varieties of them as philosophical and normative pedagogy, humanistic pedagogy, personal and existential pedagogy, social and personalist pedagogy, Gestalt pedagogy or postmodern pedagogy, it was possible to notice in them not only a richness of meanings, but also to realise, as it were, the “reversibility” of educational reality, these multiple worlds that are subject to permanent reconstruction. How very aptly Paul Ricoeur spoke of the need for research in the history of thought and scientific disciplines to inquire into the meanings of key phenomena as a result of their continuous interpretation. Any text of this kind is updated by the reception of its successive readers. “We never start from nothing, we are always, as I like to say, indebted. But this heritage is entrusted to us so that we develop it. That is, tradition is not a dead deposit, but a resource to be creatively developed” (Ricoeur, 1993, p. 23).

Individual schools, doctrines, orientations or currents of education theory are described and interpreted by scholars in such a diverse manner that their value is dictated not only by the principle of clear presentation, but also by the inevitably related arbitrariness of the selection and organisation of content, the selection of theories, their description and evaluation. Suddenly, there was an opportunity to convince not only academics and teachers that a deep reflection on the essence of the education or upbringing process, on their axiological, anthropological and ontological *rationale* could morally strengthen their current educational effort and their level of rationality, of pedagogical self-awareness. According to Andrea Folkierska (1990a, p. 110),

from the philosophical perspective “(...) upbringing, understood as the acquisition of personal identity, forces us to look at pedagogy in a different way. Here pedagogy is not so much the science of upbringing as the **thinking of upbringing**”. She was therefore right to plead for an education that is disobedient to what is presented as necessary and only true.

In her view (...) “a pedagogy that programs human behaviour, aspirations, attitudes, etc., must remain powerless towards the possibility of controlling human existence; but for this reason it is also in its power to realise how real upbringing happens. And it happens in education in the broadest sense of the term, teaching; the kind of teaching that makes it possible to experience knowledge in its real sense (...) requiring a detachment and critical reflection, but not the naivety of obedience to everything that these forms of objectivity carry in their immediate, empirical phenomenality. Real education opens up rather than blocks the effort to think. By bringing to light the conditions under which any knowledge is possible, it makes it problematic and non-necessary” (ibid., p. 110-111).

The time of Polish transformation has ushered in a return to freedom of scientific research, including the dissemination of the results of those studies that were censored or refused publication during the communist period.

“The time of transformation was at the same time becoming a prompt of the “universality of ‘border’”, of “political opposition” - and its challenges for education”, a time of the search for the meanings of freedom and its limits in different varieties of thinking - modernist and postmodernist. The present time, the time of controversy around pedagogy and education is still about uncovering discourses that are absent “here” but present “out there”. Importantly, it is about building democracy “here” - and it is a task - as it turns out - that is neither easy nor straightforward, always complex. Especially when we become aware of the different ways of understanding the idea, the “different practices of democratic thinking”” (Rodziewicz, 1996, p. 3).

The rejection of pedagogy as a discipline in Poland was an offshoot of thinking about it in terms of the ideological discipline of the communist period, that is a “science” deprived not only of autonomy but also subject to political manipulation or pressure. “In this situation, and with the style of critical pedagogy reaching Poland, it was relatively easy to marginalise pedagogy in public life and in academic discussions, or even altrove (here and there) to proclaim the decline or even death of pedagogy” (Nowak, 2010, p. 9). The reorientation of pedagogical research towards an interdisciplinary,

multi-paradigmatic approach, which is open to differences but at the same time makes use of already established and internationally recognised research methodologies in social sciences and humanities allowed pedagogy not only to catch up with their development, but also to regain the name of an integral science (Śliwerski, 2009).

In his analysis of the condition of Polish pedagogy, Józef Górniewicz stated (2011, p. 3):

“It seems that pedagogues do not have much confidence in their methodological competence and thus in the organisation and effectiveness of their empirical research process, constantly looking for validation not only from their own community, but also from outside, from representatives of other social disciplines, for confirmation that what they are researching and how they are researching falls within the scientific standard set by eminent representatives of basic sciences in the humanities. They often follow in the footsteps of other scientific disciplines by imitating both the research problem and the method of gathering knowledge about a given fragment of reality.”

Pedagogical research should be interdisciplinary, since it allows it to break free

“(...) from the monopoly of a single aspect of knowledge about education dominating over others, be it philosophical or otherwise (...). The pedagogue should strive for a scientific understanding of educational activity and, at the same time, be open to the world of ideas (philosophy of education) and to positions derived from the perspectives of other sciences interested in the knowledge of education, such as educational psychology, the sociology of education, the politics of education, etc. (...)” (Nowak, 2008, pp. 86-87).

It no longer makes any sense to undertake separatist work on constructing pedagogical research methodologies or constructing any theoretical narratives, as the phenomena or regularities they are concerned with require knowledge from different fields and disciplines. The educational processes under study are determined by natural, social and humanistic variables, and therefore pedagogy, as one of the many human sciences, has an integrative character in the social sciences and humanities, which study ideas, thoughts, doctrines or their main currents.

Thanks to the publications of, i.a., Krystyna Ablewicz (1994), Czesław Dziemidowicz and Wojciech Muzyka (1991); Andrea Folkierska (1990a;1990b; 2005a; 2005b), Jarosław Gara (2009), Janusz Gnitecki (1999; 2006a; 2006b; 2007), Rafał Godoń (1994; 2012), Józef Górniewicz (1997), Jolanta Kruk (1998); Robert Kwaśnica (1987), Krzysztof Maliszewski (2021), Ewa Marynowicz-Hetka (2019), Zbyszko Melosik (1995), Bogusław Milerski (2011; 2016), Urszula Morszczyńska (2009), Marian Nowak (1993; 2008), Katarzyna Olbrycht (2000), Paweł Piotrowski (2019), Andrzej Ryk (2011), Mieczysław Sawicki (1996), Paulina Sosnowska (2009); Dariusz Stępkowski (2010), Bogusław Śliwerski (2007; 2009a, 2009b; 2010a; 2010b; 2012; 2020), Danuta Wajsprych (2001), Wierciński (2015, 2019a, 2019b), Lech Witkowski (2009), Stefan Wołoszyn (1998), Alina Wróbel (2014), Hanna Zielińska-Kostyło (2005), which appeared after 1989, it was possible to convince the academic community, but also teachers and educators, that hermeneutic reflection on the essence of the educational process, on its axiological, anthropological and ontological foundations, can morally strengthen their current educational efforts and, at the same time, introduce Polish research into the current of worldwide debates on the meanings and senses of such key conceptual categories in pedagogy.

Hermeneutic comparison of currents in pedagogical thought

The humanist pedagogue reflects of an abstract and conceptual subject-matter, on the procedure for proposing theses and arguing for their validity, and the self-awareness of one's actions, i.e. the awareness of a multiplicity of potential solutions that equally claim universality and thus claim the rank of the best theory of upbringing or education. Paradigmatic philosophising cannot lead to definitive solutions, even though such a temptation may arise in the process, because the philosopher would then become a functionary of humanity or a missionary discovering hidden truth. Instead, they should assume the status, as Stefan Morawski puts it, of a "notorious parasite", a maximally self-critical researcher, a thinker discovering the uncertainty, the constant insufficiency of what they formulate, and aware that explaining the world and interpreting it are one of many. They thus experience the dramatic self-knowledge of multiple truths, while at the same time realising that, being, as it were, condemned to the ecumenism of a paradigmatic multiplicity, they cannot defend any of them (Morawski, 1999).

Thus, when pedagogues attempt to create a possible common matrix for multiple paradigms, without the ideological compulsion to distinguish or to indicate the necessity to make an unambiguous choice of which one

is the best, the most important, the most effective, the most appropriate, the truest, etc., this undoubtedly means coming to terms with the fact that Polish society, as well as the humanities reflecting its state of mind, is socially and ideologically diverse, and therefore science should express this axio-normative multiplicity, speak a multitude of languages, use tools to understand thought in a mixture of theories, trends, currents, directions, doctrines, ideologies and worldviews, defending the differences and thus broadening and deepening them, or eliminating them in favour of a return to uniformity. We turn our attention towards a thing that resounds with a multitude of voices, aspects, a multiplicity of messages and their interpretations. "Modern humanities, in many of its fields, emphasised the importance of ambiguity and ambivalence, without respect for which it is impossible to get to the heart of thought processes, of value judgements, of the way we react to another, etc." (ibid., p. 322).

The classification of thought currents in pedagogy, just like in philosophy, psychology, sociology or linguistics, stems from the need to capture the diversity of thought and ways of substantiating it into some kind of structure (hierarchical - vertical or non-hierarchical - horizontal), so that they can provide a kind of mental communication with the world, illuminate the situation of axio-normative differentiation in the science of education, highlight the sense of scientific achievements, evoke wonder or consolidate a sense of the rightness of the choices made. "In a word: the ability to see unity in multiplicity must be complemented by the art of seeing diversity in what from a certain point of view is identical" (Miś, 2006, p. 8).

By reconstructing a certain approach or pedagogical trend after some time, we in a way create it anew, because we inscribe in it a contemporary point of view, which may, after all, take into account some part of the past cognitive perspective, but at the same time re-evaluates it through a new interpretation. In the face of different research methodologies, complementary, contradictory or dialoguing with each other, the historical continuity of learning is at the same time connected to its historical discontinuity. Individual schools, doctrines, orientations or currents of education are described and interpreted by scholars in such a diverse manner that their value is dictated not only by the principle of clear presentation, but also by the inevitably related arbitrariness of the selection and organisation of content, the selection of theories, their description and evaluation. After all, attempts initiated in the 19th century to unify education sciences did fail.

Pedagogy, much like the rest of the humanities or social sciences, is a discipline with multiple paradigms, with one paradigm dominating at any

given time. A breakthrough in a given discipline occurs when the currently dominant paradigm gives way to another paradigm that has hitherto existed on the sidelines, in more or less overt opposition or on the periphery of learning. It is through one of the many different assumptions, or models of pedagogical rationality, that pedagogical reality can be described, explained, interpreted, understood and designed and pedagogical theory constructed. How can we describe or reconstruct pedagogical paradigms?

How many paradigms are there? Should they be considered from the perspective of only two aspects, the sociological and the epistemological one? “The sociological sense of a paradigm is expressed in the structure of scientific activity adopted by the scientific community. The epistemological sense of a scientific paradigm, on the other hand, consists of accepting the assumptions of a particular methodological orientation (e.g. in empirical pedagogy this would be: inductionism, hypothetism, essentialism or methodological anarchism)” (Gnitecki, 2007, p. 105). Should we reduce pedagogical paradigms to the classification in social sciences, in which there is a division into four types of paradigms: 1-2) subjectivism vs. objectivism or 3-4) gradual regulation vs. radical change, since they overlook the traditions of scientific development in European culture in the period of modernity and postmodernity and in anthropological issues and in the sphere of their interpretation and valuation do not take into account the facts given and tasked? Which criteria should be used when choosing a scientific paradigm in pedagogy? Janusz Gnitecki proposes (*ibid.*, p. 106): anarchistic, sociological, elitist (expert) and demarcative criteria.

A hermeneutic critique of educational theory would involve understanding it as “the art of explaining”. The role of the researcher of the essence of education in the hermeneutic perspective is to reflect on the pre-understandings of pedagogical thinking in order to detect the real (hidden) sense of knowledge, making it [the knowledge] both problematic and non-necessary. Such an approach has a spiral structure and its aim is to come closer to understanding, achieving each time a pre-understanding that is closer to what has been given to understand. It is therefore necessary to capture these pre-understandings, pre-judgements, preconceptions, tacit assumptions, our hidden, deep knowledge, in order to “grasp something as something” when faced with a text. The word “as” implies that it is still possible to change the context. The meaning of pedagogical phenomena is never unambiguous, but changes as the horizon of understanding of the pedagogues themselves changes. The aim of the reconstruction is to unmask this “tacit knowledge”, the mystifications and illusions that theories of education bring with them.

“The historical horizon is the horizon in which a given work was created. It is what makes thought bear the traces of its historical conditioning, of which it is unaware. It is expressed in the fact that thought is governed by certain prejudices, certain convictions, which are “responsible” for the fact that we understand something in one way and not another. It is the historical horizon that is “responsible”, as it were, for the fact that the author of a work has not thought everything through to the end, that what may be highly problematic for us today functions in his work as an indisputable obviousness” (Folkierska, 2005b, p. 14).

Conclusion

Fundamentalism in the humanities, and in pedagogy in particular, is dangerous when its proponents, declaring their assertions and rules as the only true or correct ones, while being confrontational themselves, do not see the need to allow other schools of thought to speak, and expect their theses to apply to all, regardless whether they accept them or not. They thus deny others the right to their own generalisations of knowledge or theories, do not admit new research perspectives and thus hinder the development of science. At the same time, this type of possessive attitudes leads to the dogmatisation of the main assumptions of a given trend, proclaiming their uniqueness.

“This leads to a rigidity of one’s own views, a rejection of the achievements of other people in science, which for a time shuts off the possibility of researching new problems, locks up the research questions in the categories used by a given scientist or team. It is not allowed to go beyond the “vicious” circle of analytical categories, which have, after all, been revised many times. As much as such an attitude is understandable at the outset of a school’s existence, at its finish it turns into dogmatism and fundamentalism. This fundamentalism was asserted at the beginning of the road by the founder, and at the end of the road it is done by epigones” (Surmaczyński, 2002, p. 135).

This is because fundamentalism and dogmatism are often linked to epigonism, in the sense that representatives of a given theory see any criticism of the theory as tactless, an attack on its “sanctity”, and so they radically oppose it. The state of fracture, the radical separation of the Polish humanities from the monistic, ideologically degenerated socialist pedagogy will prove to be a lasting achievement of the times of socio-political transition. Some hope that little will change in educational science, because once the right-wing formation comes to power, the authorities will not let this sphere of

influence, which legitimises human attitudes, orientates towards a certain world of values, serves statist indoctrination or socio-political grooming using the structures and processes of compulsory education, out of their control. Perhaps it will be necessary to disclose to the public the knowledge gained in the privacy of individual scientific exploration, as a result of the international contacts established over the years with scientists from countries free of various regimes or totalitarianisms.

It is not without significance for the hermeneutic research of pedagogical thought what position and role the scientist will take towards it: whether the one that applies to natural, experimental sciences of the *sophia* type, i.e. completely eliminating from the research the subjective factors, such as their personality, worldview, life attitude, political commitment, faith, likes and dislikes, etc., and applying to their investigations reliable, objective and therefore meta-theoretical or meta-paradigmatic criteria of insight and evaluation of specific content and related pedagogical practices. Or the one that is characteristic of the humanities (*phronesis*), in which it is not fully possible to “neutralise” or completely separate subjective factors in the process of learning, as they also become a presentable component of the research.

Pedagogy does not have, nor can it have, a meta-criterion that would allow a dispassionate or presupposition-free examination of thoughts, ideas or theories about education and upbringing. There is no single yardstick that would release the researcher from the possible (or necessary?) involvement of their own subjectivity in this process. We do not have theoretical constructs in place that would allow the scholar to analyse some or all paradigms in a completely impersonal manner, “(...) from the position of an utterly empty, abstract subject who merely “objectively” reports on what he reads, having put his own historically defined perspective of their understanding aside. (...) even such an eminent historian of philosophy as Władysław Tatarkiewicz, who had such a great feel for the diverse worlds of human thought that he studied, was unable to avoid a number of biases in the presentation of the views of certain authors” (Dybel, 2004, p. 126).

In my research on the critical reception of child-centred education (Śliwerski, 2007) or the return of the conservative ideology of upbringing in Poland (Śliwerski, 2021), I demonstrated what Paweł Dybel very aptly describes as epistemological hypocrisy, and which expresses itself in a glaringly unreliable, biased, prejudiced manifestation of discourse, with a strong aversion to certain ideas and their interpretations, under the guise of scholarly objectivity, which in fact is a confirmation of the critic’s dogmatic stance. The

wheel of history has come full circle, since we are once again dealing with intellectual colonialism, which manifests itself in the fact “interpretive rape” is being committed on texts. It consists of reinterpreting their fundamental meanings, symbols or metaphors for the purposes of the ideological culture war in Poland (2005-2007 and 2015 - 2023).

Such an approach involves some pedagogues in a political, world-view struggle rather than in the search for truth (Nalaskowski). It then avoids answering the question of how far a scholar’s personal involvement in the public domain, such as his/her political activity or his/her prominent position in institutions or public authorities, affect his/her way of reading, interpreting and evaluating the analysed pedagogical thought, since it is included in the contemporary context of socio-political, as well as cultural and educational events.

Since, as Stefan Wołoszyn argued, contemporary philosophical critical thought develops in the hermeneutic approach, so in order for pedagogues think education in the experience of its essence, of being in it, of understanding it, then also the subjective identity of each person involved in this process will be “(...) acquired in the “effort of being” in the world, in the constant “return to oneself” by assimilating what is “foreign”, incomprehensible, obscure. This is the ‘essence’ of the educating experience. Real upbringing “happens” in an “opening” and critical variety of education and teaching in the broad sense, rather than in their presenting (transmitting) variety that blocks any own efforts to think” (Wołoszyn, 1998, p. 135). One would hope that a much-needed hermeneutic reflection on the “pre-judgements” of pedagogical thinking would prevent the former political censorship from being replaced by self-censorship in pedagogical research as a matter of political correctness.

In view of the moral and world-view conflict that has been growing in Polish society for several years now, pedagogues should once again challenge politicians about the overall sense of upbringing and education of the young generations. Perhaps avoiding another “(...) dogmatism in holding on to what one considers to be right also lies in the fact that an orientation towards the good is not the same as the so-called a priori accepted moral principles to which one clings regardless of the situation in which one finds oneself. On the contrary, it is the specific situation which demands of each of us an individual response to the question: what is the right thing for me to do in this particular case. This reflection is particularly evident in situations of moral conflict, in which appealing to preconceived principles by no means resolves the conflict” (Folkierska, 2005a, p. 49).

References:

- Ablewicz, K. (1994). *Heremeneutyczno-fenomenologiczna perspektywa badań w pedagogice*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Dybel, P. (2004). *Granice rozumienia i interpretacji. O hermeneutyce Hansa – Georga Gadamera*. Kraków: Towarzystwo Autorów i Wydawców Prac Naukowych „Universitas”.
- Dziemidowicz, Cz., Muzyka, H. (1991). *Neopozytywizm i hermeneutyka – Ku nowej episteme pedagogiki. Kilka uwag pomniejszych*. Olsztyn: Polskie Towarzystwo Pedagogiczne.
- Folkierska, A. (1990a). Wychowanie w perspektywie hermeneutycznej. W: Z. Kwieciński. L. Witkowski (red.), *Ku pedagogii pogranicza* (p. 99-116). Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK.
- Folkierska, A. (1990b). *Pytanie o pedagogikę*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Folkierska, A. (2005a). Jaka filozofia, jaka pedagogika? W: P. Dehnel, P. Gutowski (red.), *Filozofia a pedagogika. Studia i szkice* (p. 42-55). Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Naukowe DSW we Wrocławiu.
- Folkierska, A. (2005b). *Sergiusz Hessen – pedagog odpowiedzialny*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Gadamer, H. G. (1975). *Truth and Method* (1960), trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, London: Publisher: Bloomsbury.
- Gara, J. (2009). *Od filozoficznych podstaw wychowania do ejdetycznej filozofii wychowania*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Akademii Pedagogiki Specjalnej.
- Gnitecki, J. (1999). *Zarys pedagogiki ogólnej*, wyd. III. Gorzów Wlkp.: PTP Oddział Poznański.
- Gnitecki, J. (2006). *Wprowadzenie do metod badań w naukach pedagogicznych*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Wyższej Szkoły Pedagogiki i Administracji w Poznaniu.
- Gnitecki, J. (2006b). *Wstęp do ogólnej metodologii badań w naukach pedagogicznych. Tom I. Status metodologiczny nauk pedagogicznych*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UAM.
- Gnitecki, J. (2007). *Struktura teorii pedagogicznej*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PTP Oddział w Poznaniu.
- Godoń, R. (1994). Pedagogika a narracyjność. Pedagogiczne implikacje filozofii hermeneutycznej Paula Ricoeura. *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny*, 4.
- Godoń, R. (2012). *Między myśleniem a działaniem. O ewolucji anglosaskiej filozofii edukacji*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.

- Górniewicz, J. (1997). *Kategorie pedagogiczne. Odpowiedzialność, podmiotowość, samorealizacja, tolerancja, twórczość, wyobraźnia*. Olsztyn: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna.
- Górniewicz, J. (2011). Metodologiczne problemy empirycznej pedagogiki – spór o status naukowy. *Wychowanie Na Co Dzień*, 3, p. 3-4.
- Hejnicka-Bezwińska, T. (1996). *Zarys historii wychowania (1944 - 1989). Oświata i pedagogika pomiędzy dwoma kryzysami*. Kielce: Wydawnictwo ZNP.
- Hessen, S. (1931). *Podstawy pedagogiki*, Z rękopisu drugiego wydania oryginału rosyjskiego przełożył i bibliografią polską uzupełnił Dr Adam Zieleńczyk, Warszawa: Nakładem „Naszej Księgarni”, SP. Akc. Związku Nauczycielstwa Polskiego.
- Hessen, S. (1937). *Světový názor a pedagogika. Studie k problému autonomie*, přeložila Žofie Pohorecká. Praha: Nakładem Dědictví Komenského.
- Hessen, S. (1938). *Szkoła i demokracja na przełomie*, przeł.: A. Zieleńczyk. Warszawa-Wilno: „Nasza Księgarnia”, Sp. Akc.
- Hessen, S. (1939). *O sprzecznościach i jedności wychowania. Zagadnienia pedagogiki personalistycznej*. Lwów: Biblioteka Pedagogiczno-Dydaktyczna, Ks. Atlas.
- Kotłowski, K. (1957). O przyczynach upadku pedagogiki uniwersyteckiej w Polsce Ludowej, *Nowa Szkoła*, 3.
- Kotłowski, K. (1964). *Podstawowe prawidłowości pedagogiki*. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Zakład Narodowy Im. Ossolińskich – Wydawnictwo.
- Kotłowski, K. (1968). *Filozofia wartości a zadania pedagogiki*. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich.
- Kotłowski, K. (1974). *Rzecz o wychowaniu patriotycznym*. Wrocław-Warszawa-Kraków-Gdańsk: Zakład Narodowy Imienia Ossolińskich. Wydawnictwo.
- Kruk, J. (1998). *Filozoficzno-pedagogiczne aspekty rozumienia tekstu*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”.
- Kwaśnica, R. (1987). *Dwie racjonalności. Od filozofii sensu ku pedagogice ogólnej*. Wrocław: Instytut Kształcenia Nauczycieli im. Władysława Spasowskiego w Warszawie.
- Kwieciński, Z. (1990). Pedagogika i edukacja wobec wyzwania kryzysu i gwałtownej zmiany społecznej. W: Z. Kwieciński, L. Witkowski (red.), *Ku pedagogii pogranicza*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK.
- Malicka, M. (1986). Romana Miller: „Socjalizacja, wychowanie, psychoterapia” (Warszawa 181, PWN, ss.270). *Rocznik Pedagogiczny*, 10, p. 183-187.

- Marynowicz-Hetka, E. (2019). *Pedagogika społeczna. Pojmowanie aktywności w polu praktyki*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Melosik, Z. (1995). *Postmodernistyczne kontrowersje wokół edukacji*. Poznań-Toruń: Wydawnictwo Edytor.
- Milerski, B. (2011). *Hermeneutyka pedagogiczna. Perspektywy pedagogiki religii*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe ChAT.
- Milerski, B. (2016). Racjonalność wiedzy w perspektywie hermeneutyki. W: B. Milerski, M. Karwowski, *Racjonalność procesu kształcenia. Teoria i badanie* (p. 67-120). Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”.
- Miller, R. (1966). *Proces wychowania i jego wyniki*. Warszawa: PZWS.
- Miller, R. (1981). *Socjalizacja – wychowanie – psychoterapia*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Miś, A. (2006). *Filozofia współczesna. Główne nurty*, wydanie piąte. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe SCHOLAR.
- Morawski, S. (1999). *Niewdzięczne rysowanie mapy... O postmodernie(izmie) i kryzysie kultury. Wykłady Kopernikańskie w Humanistyce*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK.
- Morszczyńska, U. (2009). *Normy w pedagogice. Aksjologiczne i metodologiczne wyznaczniki statusu zdań o powinnościach*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka.
- Muszyński, H. (1982). Spór o metodologiczny status nauk o wychowaniu. *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny*, 2, p. 3-10.
- Muszyński, H. (1985). Nauki pedagogiczne w PRL. *Kwartalnik Pedagogiczny*, 3-4.
- Nowak, M. (1993). Metoda hermeneutyczna w pedagogice. *Roczniki Nauk Społecznych KUL*, vol. 2(XXI).
- Nowak, M. (2008). Przedmiot pedagogiki w kontekście jej wyzwań i założeń. W: K. Rubacha (red.), *Konceptualizacje przedmiotu badań pedagogiki*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”.
- Nowak, M. (2010). Epistemologiczne, aksjologiczne i metodologiczne podstawy badań pedagogicznych. W: S. Palka (red.), *Podstawy metodologii badań w pedagogice*. Gdańsk: GWP.
- Olbrycht, K. (2000). *Prawda, dobro i piękno w wychowaniu człowieka jako osoby*. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego.
- Piotrowski, P. (2019). *Sytuacja wychowawcza w ujęciu metapedagogicznym. Zarys ontologii wychowania*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek.
- Ricoeur, P. (1993). Prawda nigdy nie jest naga. Z Paulem Ricoeurem, filozofem, rozmawia Jacek Poprzeczko. *Polityka*, 28 (1988).
- Rodziewicz, E. (1996). *Perspektywa modernistyczna w pedagogice i jej przekraczanie*, Ogólnopolska Konferencja Naukowa Szklarska Poręba,

- 25-27 października 1996, Wrocław: Uniwersytet Wrocławski. Instytut Pedagogiki. Preprint 9 (2/96).
- Rutkowski, A. (1959). O trzech tendencjach burżuazyjnej teorii wychowania moralnego. *Studia Pedagogiczne, tom VII*, p. 291-316.
- Ryk, A. (2011). *W poszukiwaniu podstaw pedagogiki humanistycznej. Od fenomenologii Edmunda Husserla do pedagogiki fenomenologicznej*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”.
- Sawicki, M. (1996). *Hermeneutyka pedagogiczna*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Semper.
- Sosnowska, P. (2009). *Filozofia wychowania w perspektywie Heideggerowskiej różnicy ontologicznej*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego.
- Stępkowski, D. (2010). *Pedagogika ogólna i religia. (Re)konstrukcja zapomnianego wątku na podstawie teorii Johanna F. Herbart'a i Friedricha D. E. Schleiermachera*. Warszawa: Towarzystwo Naukowe Franciszka Salezego.
- Suchodolski, B. (red.) (1959). Krytyka pedagogiki burżuazyjnej. *Studia Pedagogiczne, tom VII*.
- Surmaczyński, M. (2002). *Warsztaty metodologiczne doktorantów socjologii (Podręcznik)*. Wrocław: Oficyna Wydawnicza ARBORETUM.
- Śliwerski, B. (2007). *Pedagogika dziecka. Studium pajądocentryzmu*. Gdańsk: Pedagogika GWP.
- Śliwerski, B. (2009). *Współczesna myśl pedagogiczna. Znaczenia. Klasyfikacje. Badania*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”.
- Śliwerski, B. (2010a). *Teoretyczne i empiryczne podstawy samowychowania*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”.
- Śliwerski, B. (2010b). *Myśleć jak pedagog*. Sopot: GWP.
- Śliwerski, B. (2012). *Pedagogika ogólna. Podstawowe prawidłowości*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”.
- Śliwerski, B. (2020). *(Kontr)rewolucja oświatowa. Studium z polityki prawicowych reform edukacyjnych*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Wajsprych, D. (2001). *Pedagogika agatologiczna. Studium hermeneutycko-krytyczne projektu etycznego Józefa Tischnera*. Toruń-Olsztyn: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK.
- Wierciński, A. (2015). *Hermeneutics - Ethics - Education*. Reihe: International Studies in Hermeneutics and Phenomenology, Berlin-Münster-London- Wien-Zürich: Lit Verlag.

- Wierciński, A. (2019a). *Existential Hermeneutics. Understanding as the Mode of Being in the World*. Berlin-Münster-London- Wien-Zürich: Lit Verlag.
- Wierciński, A. (2019b). *Hermeneutics of Education. Exploring and Experiencing the Unpredictability of Education*. Berlin-Münster-London- Wien-Zürich: Lit Verlag
- Witkowski, L. (2009). *Wyzwania autorytetu (przechadzki krytyczne w poszukiwaniu dyskursu dla teorii)*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”.
- Wołoszyn, S. (1998). *Nauki o wychowaniu w Polsce w XX wieku. Próba syntetycznego zarysu na tle powszechnym*, wydanie drugie poszerzone. Kielce: Dom Wydawniczy STRZELEC.
- Wróbel, A. (2014). *Problem intencjonalności działania wychowawczego. Studium teoretyczne*. Łódź: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Łódzkiego.
- Zielińska-Kostyło, H. (2005). *Rekonstrukcjonistyczne koncepcje zmiany społecznej poprzez edukację. Antropologia pedagogiczna Theodore’a Brameld*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK.