
COLLOQUIA

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Pluralism of pedagogy in Poland

Summary

The author tackles the problem of the new quality of pedagogy in postmodern Poland. It is expressed in the absence of “one” theory, one meta-language which is used to describe and explain basic concepts and processes. Moreover, it creates theoretical foundations for the development of detailed pedagogical sciences.

Each attempt to set up a universal project or meta-narration becomes an unreasonable interpretation of phenomena or theories and the will to gain power. None of individual interpretations can be superior to any others. There are not any “better” or “worse” theories. I reveal new approaches to pedagogy as:

- science of pedagogical sciences (metapedagogy);
- comparative pedagogical thoughts;
- meta-science, or the science of all sciences about upbringing and education.

Key words: pedagogy, metapedagogy, meta-theory of education, philosophy of education, general pedagogy

Introduction

Postmodernity is a cultural phenomenon the essence of which goes beyond traditional formulas and structures. Some treat it as a term denoting the phenomena resulting from a crisis in the culture of civilisation, for others, it is a name given to a certain way of thinking about the world – the thinking that comprises not only the problems of philosophy, art or science, but also some social phenomena creating mass culture. In the 1980s, postmodernity

became a subject of worldwide discussion in aesthetics, philosophy, the study of science, theology, law, ethics and pedagogy. Its main assumption is that the society is not uniform and consistent any more. Everything is possible. Such notions as “progressive” or “conservative” lose their significance, because it is not possible any longer to match them, in a way that leaves no doubt, with particular behaviour forms and ways of conduct. Each step can be differently interpreted here. All that has been done can mean the opposite of what it has been aimed at. The questions which can be appropriately answered are unnecessary. The only fruitful questions are those which do not require obtaining trivial information but which open a space for seeking the answers.

Thus, every scientist may specify the own or apply another person's characteristics of postmodernity. In my analysis, Wolfgang Welsch's philosophy will be referred to. For him, postmodernity is “[...] this stage in history in which radical pluralism, as a basic principle of societies, becomes real and recognised, and the pluralistic models of sense and acting gain advantage or even become obligatory” (Welsch 1998: 8).

Due to the fact that the contemporary world is characterised by pluralism and that this cannot be ignored or totally omitted any longer, it has become a postmodern world on its own. However, now it should be attributed theoretical and practical significance, in this way offensively defending pluralism and opposing all fundamentalisms, totalitarianisms, old or new monopolies, hegemonies. Therefore, postmodernity is democratic in principle, as it is this organisational form of the state that comprises the belief in the occurrence of different, equally valid but eventually discordant demands. In its content and form, postmodernity is neither anti- nor trans-modernist – it is a cumulated form of the frequently manifested (in the present reality) pluralism. It is aimed not at overcoming or excluding modernity, the ideology of progress, religion, intensified innovations or the dynamics of changes designed as necessary, but at their multi-shaped continuation and the recognition of their right to unlikeness and heterogeneity – all this with a sharp view of the burden of problems or with new sensitivity in raising them. Postmodernity develops a vision concerning the democratic principle regulating the functioning of states or societies, which in the conditions of adequate pluralism gains an appropriate sense.

Postmodernity understood in this way meets as if half way the new epoch which emerges from modernism and which lacks distance, universal projects, social utopias, stability and explicitness. This takes place without affirming thoughtlessly any *status quo* of daily life, theories, social concepts, or systems of

orientation. The new epoch provides the right to various forms of knowledge, life models or behaviour patterns. A human being written into the postmodern society, into the pluralism of its cultures, values, systems of orientation and organisational structures – on one hand – experiences the right to many various behaviours, inclinations and identifications, is guided by different interests and values – and on the other – gets into conflict with this multitude and the criteria which contradict their views or standpoints, at the same time becoming aware either of the effort to achieve consensus and reconciliation or of their lack.

Pedagogy of (in) postmodernity

Each pedagogical theory or current constitutes a system of relatively systematised assumptions aimed at the generating, regulating, distributing and acting of particular forms of truth. Not reflecting the outer reality any longer, theory becomes social practice through which the reality acquires new meanings and values. In this cultural context, there is no possibility of ultimate “deciphering” or criticising the theory of education or of didactics, as they have open character. Poland has its own history and cultural heritage, which Pierre Bourdieu calls the habitus of thinking and behaving. Owing to this, the Polish pedagogical thought is in the centre of the worldwide debate on education. The year 1990 liberated the space for conducting studies and disseminating their results freely, which is very important for this discourse. At that time, this drew attention of Zbigniew Kwieciński:

A lot of effort waits for pedagogy in the face of some challenges of the social and cultural transformation. We have to start many paths anew. To close the door and start the work from the beginning. To restart the interrupted or forgotten discourses, to make up for losses, to explain and recall our marginalised achievements, to create preferences for general pedagogy, for philosophy of education, to open ourselves to fundamental theories of humanity, society and culture as well as to global problems, to open a way and the world for scientific youth and a way to us for the texts and knowledge from the world, in order to be closer to new practice, brave innovators and authors of good educational practice. What should be done is to help to quiet down the pedagogy earlier adopted to bad memory – the previous system (Kwieciński 1990: 9).

Humanistic and social sciences have a long-time problem with their theoreticality, as they are not exact sciences. Scientists claim that there is

no “one single” theory, one metalanguage, because each attempt to promote a universal project or metanarration becomes both an illegitimate interpretation of phenomena or a theory and a wish to gain power. None of the interpretations can be superior to another, there are no “better” or “worse” theories as well. What can be only accepted is the existence of personal, decentralised, heterological and specifically local forms of truth, among which each might be the truth for “another version of the world”. Similarly, it is impossible in sociological sciences to indicate the criteria which would allow for recognising some sociological theories as better and others as worse, for accepting some and rejecting others, in the situation when both empirical and logical criteria fail (Sztompka 1985: 26). Such type of the criterion of scientificity is not accepted by theologians, either. It is thought that the differences between scientific disciplines are so big that one (common to all) detailed criterion of scientificity cannot be binding.

The controversies concerning the theoretical and practical option in the whole sphere of educational researchers’ “engagement” in the world have stayed independent from political and system divisions. The crisis, understood in this way, affected social sciences in the West at the same time. However, there – it resulted from a change in the research paradigm which was institutionally binding in educational sciences through the epistemological “cutting off” the dominating research contents or methodology (Witkowski 1988). What is unceasingly needed in pedagogy is the generating of synthetic approaches which will lead theories of education beyond the limits and limitations of partial paradigms and their different authorial variants, also irrational or pseudoscientific ones.

Modern democratic societies are characterised by the pluralism of not only religious, philosophical and moral doctrines but also pedagogical ones – all of them cannot be reconciled even though, having applied appropriate motivation, they can be recognised as rational by the society. If the society’s right to pluralism, openness and differences is recognised, its functioning is possible on the basis of a just and stable “[...] system of collaboration between free and equal citizens who differ in the recognised doctrines. This means that the hope to create a political community should be abandoned if this community is understood as a society politically united by believing in the same extended doctrine” (Wróbel 2006: 13).

The scientific revolution has resulted in a change of the paradigm. Therefore, the binding criteria of scientificity are subjected to revision. The knowledge of education and didactics, as the whole consisting of historically, socially and politically changing research approaches, comes into being in both a cumulative and dialogical way, both evolutionary and revolutionary one. Yet, “[...] the existence of knowledge as well as its evolution open the big problem of values – a multisided problem, as what matters is not only the ethics of some applications of science but mostly the science as a value for humanity and science as a discipline of human creativity” (Heller 2013: 7–8).

In the period of the 3rd Polish Republic, pluralism of pedagogy has become something obvious, natural, though at the same time – not easy or willingly received by all representatives of pedagogical sciences. Not all of them are convinced that this state of crack, of radical cutting off of Polish humanistic science from monistic, ideologically degraded, socialist pedagogy will become a permanent achievement of the approaching times of socio-political transformation. With no doubt, a part of the new generation will capitalise on the chance to reveal and immediately pass down the society the knowledge acquired in peaceful personal scientific penetrations as an effect of international relations, established for many years, with scientists from countries which are free of any regimes or totalitarianisms. What cannot be forgotten here is the output of the previous generations – the contribution to the scientific advancement of those who are today called its classics. There are no scientific disciplines which are indifferent as regards the way how the accomplishments of the previous epochs and current times correspond with the specific focus on thoughts, ideas, theories through forming the most typical (of particular periods) currents and orientations. In the case of pedagogy – they are the most adequate to the morphology of socialising and educational processes of all generations. It is this range of studies, which in each science has clearly metatheoretical (metaphysical) character, which allows for comparing, organising, synthetising and valuing of the knowledge generated by scientists. For almost a century, there have been attempts within educational sciences to undertake the discussion on the development of theoretical pedagogy. Depending on the degree and scope of placing general pedagogy within pedagogy and in relations with the collaborating sciences, five categories can be distinguished.

General pedagogy as a theoretical science – the foundation of particular subdisciplines in educational sciences

In this approach, general pedagogy constitutes a counterpart of theoretical pedagogy – one of the subdisciplines of educational sciences in which the researchers, exploring a particular section of the reality in compliance with scientific principles, create a set of rules. As a consequence of the positivist approach to pedagogy, applied in the 20th century, and in turn its inner differentiation, the scientific expectation that this discipline can become independent as sovereign knowledge of (self-)education and (self-)learning has not been fulfilled. Pedagogy has not created one single and coherent system of knowledge, developing over the last century many dispersed research schools without their involvement in collaboration or integration. Stefan Wołoszyn has drawn attention to the impossibility to create the complex of knowledge as a single entity, a certain system, due to the following reason:

Educational practice, specialised fields and functions of education, the organisational forms and educational institutions which correspond with them, as well as the development of scientific cognition and specialisation of research techniques and tools, require a specialised “system of educational sciences”. Today, this system is not a coherent and consistently logical classification – it can be doubted whether it can be such and whether there is a need for building such a logically and methodically fragmented system (Wołoszyn 1998: 175).

As long as it applies the scientific paradigm of sciences, each pedagogical subdiscipline may autonomously decide what is the essence and specificity of its research object (also of its methods) so that the standpoints adopted within the particular discipline could not be replicated or excluded. It seems understandable that they will change alongside the development of pedagogical knowledge, but it is controversial for particular disciplines to refer to various epistemological, ontological and axiological assumptions and to differently defined notions. The same socio-educational reality is explored from various points of view, with various methods and techniques, which are a derivative of separate and opposing research paradigms. What is obtained as their result is not only the specific perspective in which the phenomena, people or events are seen but also their descriptions, interpretations and practical applications.

The complex, interdisciplinary approach obscures the exclusiveness of studies within just one discipline in favour of the community which seeks the truth regardless of the discipline and the applied research paradigm. Therefore,

the representatives of certain pedagogical disciplines take their own standpoint, from which they penetrate the educational reality or its ideas. Further advancement of each pedagogical subdiscipline leads to the improvement of research methods and the acquisition of the knowledge concerning processes that constitute the key subject of empirical and hermeneutical studies, both basic and applied ones. Andrzej Michał de Tchorzewski claimed that theoretical pedagogy should be aimed at elaborating such meta-scientific criteria owing to which representatives of particular pedagogical subdisciplines would distinguish the mythical and colloquial reasoning on education from the *stricte* scientific thinking, based on phenomenological, logical-linguistic or hermeneutic methods. These methods should serve:

[...] the overview and description of what is given in the recognition of education as education (as a being and a task) as well as arranging the subject matter of pedagogical sciences into an appropriate notional-linguistic apparatus and interpreting and explaining it. Meta-scientificity of general pedagogy should be aimed at the explication of the sense of statements formulated in pedagogical subdisciplines, at revealing their assumptions or the consequences of their development and further differentiation, at conducting discussion, at constructing and assessing the arguments leading to important generalisations concerning broadly understood educational phenomena in the form of social educational processes (Tchorzewski 1995: 156).

Theoretical (general, reflective) pedagogy should guard the ontological and epistemological correctness and accurateness in defining by educational theories the scope and the content of education as their object of exploration and it should ensure that its definition will be compliant with the conditions of strict generalness. Owing to this, theoretical pedagogy will ensure methodological correctness to pedagogical subdisciplines in their building of:

[...] a set of empirical tasks, which explain (with the help of laws, hypotheses, definitions, statements and classifying judgements) various facts, events and processes that belong to the object of cognition specified by them. In this way, such pedagogy will fulfil its explanatory and heuristic function itself (*ibid.*: 157).

Thus, what can be distinguished are: general social pedagogy, general adult pedagogy, general didactics, general early school pedagogy, etc. A multi-sided (and felt till today) impact of subdisciplines on pedagogy has consisted, among other things, in enhancing their autonomy as research schools and academic subjects. In the mid-1960s, sciences of education entered the stage

of heterogeneous development, manifested in interdisciplinary and multisided analyses of phenomena which went far beyond the traditional divisions between subdisciplines of pedagogy and sciences supporting it. Due to obtaining the status of a discipline by pedagogy, the development of its numerous subdisciplines (Marynowicz-Hetka 2006) has no justification any longer – general pedagogy does not need to answer, within subdisciplines, what its basic notions are and how they should be understood. The advancement of contemporary science has already achieved such a level that what is developing within each discipline is the reflection upon reflection, the theory of theories, models of models, the knowledge of knowledge – in other words, the meta-knowledge.

Keeping up the development of pedagogical specialisations does not result in the birth of global pedagogy, in other countries often called synthetic pedagogy. The strongest tendencies to exclusion are expressed by special education teachers, who for years have made efforts to develop their own pedagogy simultaneously with pedagogical sciences. General pedagogy specialists are also very interested in developing “their” pedagogy as the highest ranked in the hierarchy of all subdisciplines of pedagogy due to its philosophical legitimisation.

General pedagogy as an autonomous subdiscipline among scientific specialisations in pedagogy

This type of general pedagogy emerged already in the period of the 2nd Polish Republic and it has had the greatest traditions and achievements, owing to its inspirations drawn from philosophy and history of social and humanistic thought. The debate concerning general pedagogy at first focused on its relations with the whole of educational sciences and their particular subdisciplines. It was thought that it should comprise the fundamental anthropological problems and should constitute the scientific-theoretical assumptions for the other pedagogical disciplines (e.g. the discourse concerning philosophy of education, defining notions, etc.). The extensive debate, conducted since the early 1990s, on the significance of pedagogy in the more and more pluralistic world has become a part of the worldwide discussion of scientists on the “pluralisation” of humanistic and social sciences. The hopes of Tadeusz Lewowicki which concerned its development were right. He wrote:

At last, general pedagogy (educationalists who practice it) has an important role to fulfil of a subdiscipline which facilitates the flow of thought between various pedagogical subdisciplines and between pedagogy and other sciences or scientific disciplines. In pedagogy, there is a need for transferring many motifs undertaken by general pedagogy to other pedagogical subdisciplines which are more focused on social practice (Lewowicki 2005: 51).

Stanisław Palka suggested building theoretical pedagogy which “[...] should be (I write ‘should be’ because it is still in the stage of projects)”:

- the metatheory of education, teaching, human self-education – therefore, it should subject to theoretical analysis various theories of pedagogical processes and different varieties of systematic pedagogies, educational currents and orientations;
- a discipline which discovers and systematises the regularities and unchangeable factors of education, teaching and human self-education – relatively not limited by time (occurring not only currently but also in different periods in the past) and relatively not limited by space (occurring not only in Poland but also in other countries and other cultural or civilisational circles);
- a discipline which analyses and organises the scientific output of practically oriented pedagogies [...], designing the directions of major pedagogical studies and expressing the standpoint of educationalists in various social issues (social function);
- a discipline relatively independent from temporary ideological, or cultural situations which often determine pedagogical practice and practically oriented pedagogies (Palka 1987: 21–22).

General pedagogy was to develop as a subdiscipline of pedagogy which would lead this science out of the research chaos and would provide it the uniform scientific character. “Building it would aim at raising pedagogy to a higher scientific level, at making it a discipline equal to other humanistic and social sciences. It would also serve practice, giving it a broader – in the spatial and time dimension – insight into the phenomena of education, teaching and human self-education” (Ibid.: 22).

General pedagogy understood in this way becomes an epistemologically and methodologically independent subdiscipline of pedagogical sciences if it formulates general judgements and theories, skilfully (selectively?) drawing knowledge from other pedagogical subdisciplines. Many years ago, Stefan Wołoszyn postulated the creating of theoretical pedagogy as a global science, alongside developing the system of subdisciplines of pedagogical sciences as a result of their atomisation and differentiation. Such a meta-reflective and analytical-synthetic role of general pedagogy in educational sciences was noticed by Zbigniew Kwieciński as well:

A lot of our effort is needed to combine the return to the theoretical foundations of pedagogy and to general pedagogy as the critical metatheory of education through providing access to the most important texts from the major currents of pedagogical theories, missing here in the period of full prosperity of grotesquely prolonged orthodoxy and the paidagogia of pretence, which was instrumental towards this orthodoxy (Kwieciński 1994: 28).

As S. Wołoszyn also emphasised, theoretical pedagogy was to have the status of a critical science. Its research would make it possible to drift away from orthodox, fundamentalist pedagogy, which was practiced in the times of the Polish People's Republic. Such a role of general pedagogy was also seen by Andrea Folkierska, who thought that it should be aimed at "[...] generalising, synthetising, merging 'partial' results obtained by particular scientific subdisciplines" (Folkierska 1990: 43). Thus, general pedagogy would be "[...] a scientific crowning of the studies conducted in various educational sciences, which would indicate educationalists' way of thinking about pedagogy" (ibid.).

General pedagogy as the science of educational sciences (metapedagogy)

Stanisław Palka has expressed an opinion that general pedagogy faces the task of elaborating at first the metapedagogy of particular pedagogies, the pedagogy of educational subdisciplines, so that it could become the basis for the rise of general pedagogy as metapedagogy (Madsen 1980). Taking this into account, the following understanding of metapedagogy was suggested by me as an analogy to Kristen Bent Madsen's metapsychological theory of motivation:

Metapedagogy (from Greek: *meta* – all which is "beyond" something) is the superior theory to pedagogy as a science of education, the theory which goes beyond one single pedagogical theory, higher level pedagogy, dealing with the vocabulary (notions) and language (theories) of pedagogy. Metapedagogical studies are purely empirical or descriptive, hermeneutic, consisting in the analysis and comparison of various theories of educational processes and different varieties of systematic pedagogies, pedagogical currents and orientations (Pedagogika 2000: 121).

A German educationalist Dieter Lenzen promotes a certain type of general pedagogy, which he calls "reflective science of education", as a science synthetising the knowledge concerning the multitude of pedagogical theories (Lenzen 1992). Thus, reflective science of education is a turn towards other

kinds of paidagogia and other educational projects which have been explored by pedagogical (sub)disciplines and other sciences dealing with education and teaching. The science of educational sciences understood in this way would not be an applied science which indicates how to contribute today to education in the current sociocultural conditions but it would assume the metaoverview and real evaluation of functional and intentionally created educational processes. The reflective exploration of these phenomena takes place in three spheres of knowledge, which have undergone their realistic and critical breakthrough over the last three decades. This exploration focuses not on education understood as a method of influencing others and the compliant instrumental understanding of science but it has a philosophical sense, which would lead to the understanding of the essence, functions and tasks of education and teaching.

What should distinguish pedagogy from its related sciences, e.g. sociology or psychology, is its practicality associated with the necessity to interfere into a particular reality, into direct pedagogical acts and activities towards people, social groups, and/or towards the transformation of socialising environments, environments of life and diverse forms of activity of these educational subjects. Therefore, the question can be raised whether the birth and development of general pedagogy in this sense is possible if general theories of pedagogical subdisciplines do not come into being first. Can general pedagogy really become the theoretical foundation for many pedagogical subdisciplines as a kind of their *a priori* assumed metapedagogy?

General pedagogy as comparative study of thought

This approach to general pedagogy is associated with the development of comparative pedagogy from the historical standpoint (Dziekoński 2004; Kunowski 2000; Kupisiewicz 2011; Marek 1994; Możdżeń 2001; Wołoszyn 1995) and as comparative studies of modern educational thought (Berner 2006; Brezinka 2005; Krüger 2005; Nowak 2008; Śliwerski 1998; 2009; Witkowski 2013, Wołoszyn 1998). There are not many analytic-synthetic dissertations concerning contemporary educational orientations and currents, therefore pedagogical literature most frequently comprises reconstructions of pedagogical thoughts of some selected educationalists, philosophers of education or particular educational currents (Ryk 2012). Yet, they are of due significance

for reading the maps of pedagogical concepts, for reinterpretation and dissemination of the timeless dimension of each pedagogy. Although scientific advancement may lead to invalidating the theories or concepts of the previous epochs, conducting the studies on their evolution, dissemination or dying out should be guided by the truth. Creating metapedagogy was undertaken by me in 1992 as a result of noticing in this a chance for Polish pedagogy in the early 1990s to get out of the stage of ortho- and heterodoxy of educational thought and to head for its heterogeneity (Hejnicka-Bezwińska 1997).

Since then, only few general educationalists have reached for this category to look at pedagogy synthetically, without involving their own theoretical and/or ideological preferences (Leppert 2005). However, metapedagogy understood in this way could become an impartial “mediator” and “scanner” in pluralistic pedagogy, it could restore thinking in the categories of common wisdom, rationality, not negating the inner differentiation and autonomy of pedagogical subdisciplines. In this way, metapedagogy would offer a chance for the development of each current, direction, model or theoretical orientation within them, simultaneously raising a firewall against the thoughtless blindness to defend the own or ardently aim at eliminating others. It could also help theoretically less developed pedagogical subdisciplines to get chances for levelling their presence in science and public debate. Metapedagogy in this sense could describe, reconstruct, compare what unites representatives of particular pedagogical sciences and it should not focus on what divides them. It could reveal the negativity of both the excess and the shortage of certain currents or theories of thought, already present in other fields of science.

The stage of heterogeneity in pedagogical sciences in Poland came with the 1990s, when they lost the monopoly to “organise” humanity and the world through socialist education and teaching. Then, some theories appeared in Polish pedagogy coming from subjectivist traditions – theories of radical humanism (critical theories) and of interpretivism (phenomenological and hermeneutic theories) which promoted anti-positivism and idiographic methods. This is also the (typical of pedagogy) intertextual, conditional, holistic, reflective, pragmatic and eclectic style of practicing science. This was a period of various debating with each other and interwoven – though complementary – scientific theories and schools, a period of mixed languages (of science and ideas), pluralism of educational theories and discourses. In the 1990s, what appeared in the expert literature were the first full maps of pedagogical theories, yet they still did not have any application in socio-educational solutions.

Whereas in pedagogical research the comparative studies on thought and theory have been treated as a separate discipline and research methodology since the 19th century, in modern linguistics they should be an answer to the growing globalisation of the world and should comprise in their exploration the foundations of thinking and acting and should sensitise scientists to cultural differences in scientific theories. Such a research approach is needed as there is no possibility to handle the categories of difference, pluralism, mixing up, multilingualism in the situation of the open access to the common heritage of world humanities – to recognising in it what is common in thoughts, theories, ideas and values, as well as what differs, raises anxiety, fear or conflicts. The permeating to Poland of the styles, patterns, ideas, theories or models of educating young generations naturally necessitates the interest in them. As a result of the lack of understanding, this might trigger their negation, intolerance, no respect or consent to their existence in our cultural sphere.

It is owing to comparative studies in humanistic sciences that pedagogical sciences are not only intradisciplinary but also inter- and transdisciplinary. Researchers should trace what is going on within their own discipline as well as worldwide, because:

[...] comparative studies are a discipline in motion, a discipline which constantly transgresses and deconstructs itself, [...] this discipline does not only search for new research fields but deals with itself, its condition, weak points, its amendment and melioration systems, adjusting languages to the requirements of modern humanities. It is a discipline which keenly reacts to the challenges of the modern world (Komparatystyka 2011: 11).

The knowledge concerning pedagogical paradigms, currents and directions has due significance for contemporary researchers into the cultural reality, who read and interpret them in the intertextual and interdiscursive dimension as well as in the dimension of their rooting in cultural practices, lifestyles, patterns of influence or institutional relations. Every synthesis of a particular orientation or their multitude becomes a source of and also a platform for reconstructing the conflict concerning meanings. This aspect of socio-pedagogical studies is excellently presented by such authors as Agnieszka Gromkowska (Gromkowska 2002), Zbyszko Melosik (Melosik 1996a, b; 2013), Tomasz Szkudlarek (Szkudlarek 1993), Hanna Zielińska-Kostyło (Zielińska-Kostyło 2005) or Lucyna Kopciwicz (Kopciwicz 2003; 2005; 2007). The pluralism of pedagogical sciences, the multitude of educational ideas, theories and philosophies still cannot be handled well – they push into the centre to force educationalists to cognitive activeness,

to move through consecutive narrations and discourses which constitute the territorial separateness of epistemological, ontological or anthropological premises. A specific “epidemic” or inflation of pedagogical theories and their still needed dispersion make some researchers lose their ability to differentiate between them and to build some key distinctions for the dualistically perceived world of opposition.

In the history of pedagogical thought, each of the appearing paradigms, currents or directions has been unrelative to the rest of knowledge, but historically and systematically relative to other, similar theories or theoretical constructs. A remarkably convincing statement was provided by Karl Jaspers, who wrote in one of his dissertations on the sense of conducting such studies:

If we focus our sight on what is universal, we will find compliance in important things and we will understand separatenesses as local ones, associating them with place and time. This universality cannot constitute the appropriate human unity. Just the contrary. If we focus our sight on the depth of the emerging truth, we will find within the particularity what is historically great and within the universality – what is common, a non-historical constant, which is as if the water environment of factuality and correctness. If between the furthest cultures such a common possession is the very substrate of humanity, it is something amazing and important that there are still some deviations, even where we have expected to find absolute universality – that somewhere what is typical for humanity will be missing and that absolute universality always has the abstract character and is a certain uniformity (Jaspers 2006: 243).

Not only educationalists but also philosophers and historians of psychological and sociological sciences have indicated in their studies that there is no possibility to work out by particular sciences the common metacriterion for comparative analyses, because each theory or current of thought conceals some *implicite* premises of the ontological, epistemological, anthropological and axiological nature. “In order to be able to compare the hypotheses of two incommensurable theories, a third theory will be needed to ground the two competing theories in it or to confront each of them with experience” (Folkierska 1990: 44).

A similar opinion is expressed by Piotr Sztompka – it is unfeasible to indicate the criteria which will allow for recognising some sociological theories as better and others as worse, for accepting some and rejecting others, as both the empirical and logical criteria fail here (Sztompka 1985).

General pedagogy as metascience, the science of educational sciences

This is the most utopian project of thinking about pedagogy as the science of educational sciences, which will integrate knowledge of all scientific disciplines – humanistic, social, technical, related to physical education, medical, artistic, natural sciences – in such a scope which is indicated by broadly understood self-education as a subject of its exploration. Heliodor Muszyński suggested that pedagogy should become an integral system of educational sciences, the science of educational sciences that would integrate the knowledge about this research object from all humanistic sciences: “What is needed is an integral system of educational sciences, related to the sciences which explain the reality of education. Owing to this, a researcher will have the methodological awareness to explain and modify educational phenomena” (Muszyński 1982: 9).

This has brought no effect – not because this scientist’s voice was not noticed, but – as it seems – due to a too low level and range of the integration of specialised, detailed pedagogical sciences and the sciences which cooperate with them unidirectionally, the representatives of which try at all costs to preserve their positivist separateness, uniqueness and independence. Thus, the last category of general pedagogy is utopian in the sense that it makes efforts to develop pedagogy as the science of educational sciences – holistic-systematic pedagogy of metahumanistic, metasocial, metanatural (ecology of human life), metamedical, metatechnical, metaartistic, etc. character. Metapedagogy understood in this way would have a very broad scope and significance with its relations with other scientific fields and their disciplines. This would create the necessity to subordinate other sciences to pedagogy understood in this way – pedagogy which supports philosophy for years functioning as the metascience. A social, clinical or educational psychologist, a sociologist of family, sport or culture, a physician, biologist or geneticist, as well as a philosopher, anthropologist, ethicist or cognitivist will not entrust their research results to educationalists so that they could attribute the metadescriptive, metaexplanatory and metanormative status of the science of educational sciences to the knowledge of education and teaching.

The knowledge of education cannot be accumulated and given a common, universal label, because “[...] every theory, to some extent, may describe the world. The social world is not ontologically monolithic: it is diverse, complicated,

internally contradictory, dynamic, constantly open, in the unceasing becoming” (Melosik 1996a: 20).

What seems perfectly realised is that the inter- and intradisciplinary approach in pedagogy is necessary, as solving didactic, educational or guardian problems requires the use of knowledge from different sciences in order to – while analysing the phenomena, events or processes which are complex, multidimensional and hard to capture – explore and integrate them on the basis of interdisciplinary knowledge. As Piotr Oleś writes, “[...] in order to explain developmental problems and behaviour disorders at school, it is worth reaching for the theory of education and medicine, not being limited only to psychology itself” (Oleś 2010: 44).

However, pedagogy as a science which integrates knowledge from other sciences, also those exploring education, teaching or care, would have to avoid the situation of substituting the interdisciplinary approach by methodological eclecticism – the unreflective and deprived of any metascientific criteria combination of knowledge from other sciences about the investigated phenomenon. Moreover, pedagogy should make efforts not to omit the (frequently exclusive to one another) theories and premises of all sciences, which often constitute the foundation of these phenomena. Another trap of “interdisciplinary thinking” comes with unjustified generalisations that are compliant neither with the obtained results nor with the theory within which they are interpreted (Ibid.: 46).

Following the current case of sociologists, educational researchers might abandon the category of general pedagogy as metapedagogy or the science of educational sciences in favour of pedagogy of knowledge, pedagogy without boundaries, or – as Z. Bauman suggested – “discourse without formation” (Sojak 2004: 35). In humanities and social sciences, it is impossible to treat scientific disciplines as developing only due to the cumulative scientific advancement and obtaining the common consent concerning major research problems and methods. It is the rejection of the existing research paradigm and the rise of a new research tradition and style which have resulted in some changes which infringe the tradition and generate new research approaches.

In this way, what emerges is the new paradigm of practicing science, which is defined as:

“post-academic science” (J. Ziman), “triple helix” (H. Etzkowitz and L. Leydesdorff), “technoscience” (B. Latour), “post-normal science” (P. Weingart), “grassroots science” (T. Hansen), “academic capitalism” (S. Slaughter and L. Leslie). The differences between the

aforementioned concepts do not only concern terminology but also the contents (Lekka-Kowalik 2010: 79).

Contemporary scientific advancement has reached such a level that what starts to develop within each science is the previously mentioned reflection upon reflection, the theory of theories, the model of models, the knowledge of knowledge – the metaknowledge. Scientific studies are not any longer the “objective” exploration of the natural or social world by an isolated exploring subject, because the boundaries between sciences have been opened and hierarchically functioning communities are disappearing in favour of provisionally appointed research teams which implement short-time scientific projects. What also takes place is the engagement in the solving of research problems formulated in these projects of the new type of organisations – think tanks.

New forms of controlling research quality are shaped, the theoretical criteria for the quality of knowledge melt with practical criteria. Traditionally, the quality of studies and results was assessed by representatives of the same discipline, with the help of such mechanisms as peer reviewing; [...] there is no stable taxonomy of disciplines from which the evaluating “experts” should come from, moreover – the well-known forms of quality control cannot be easily applied to problems that are solved with the participation of various “producers of knowledge”, its “conductors”, “salespeople” or “distributors”. There are no clear criteria for assessing the quality of research and acquired knowledge, because there are many dimensions of quality (Ibid.: 82).

Therefore, in the time of postmodernity and the integration of knowledge from bordering sciences of particular scientific disciplines, general pedagogy might be enriched with metapedagogy understood in this way, owing to which it would be possible to specify the key problems of educational sciences in their numerous registers. In no way should this lead to any new form of removing from knowledge the theories or currents belonging to pedagogy due to ideological or methodological reasons, because the development of humanistic and social sciences naturally generates both the depth and fluency of thought, the diffusion of various discourses, “performativeness of cultures” – also in the area of theory of education.

Each orientation or current in pedagogical thought has many varieties. This depends on whether the source of their development was the philosophical, sociological, psychological or politological thought. Metatheoretical studies can serve the deciphering of their values and meanings and might be favourable for empirical studies which will allow to verify the validity and adequacy of the applied anthropological, social, cultural or psychological assumptions. Owing

to these studies, it is possible to decide whether the constructed process of a person's (self-)education is an adequate (to their fundamental assumptions) "[...] roaming towards the truth, good and beauty in co-experiencing and aiming at co-understanding" (Rynio 2004: 356) for both the educator and the learner. Yet, this requires a new language, a new narrative structure, which does not mean a better one or such which eliminates others in the field of humanities. What I mean here is the need for writing and talking about pedagogy adequate to a particular current of thought as well as thinking and acting in compliance with this pedagogy.

Probably, the dream about constructing metapedagogy as the perfect and absolutely certain science of educational sciences based on rigorously understood *episteme* should be abandoned in favour of developing general pedagogy with loosened positivist rules of *doxa* – uncertain knowledge, which would be characterised not by certainty but by probability, adequately expressed in its actually possible probabilistic judgements. My view is close to Józef Życiński's opinion concerning the results of the 20th century metascientific revolution, in which:

[...] an important feature is abandoning the epistemic theory of the only, certain, omnipresent knowledge and accepting the doxastic knowledge stigmatised with cognitive pluralism, fundamental imperfection and the development in time. The territory of metascientific revolution stretches between the unattainable *episteme* and the reachable *doxa* (Życiński 2013: 23).

Ending

General pedagogy, regardless of its place in the aforementioned range, is a theoretical science or theoretical pedagogy, which formulates and constitutes pedagogical reasoning as well as stimulates intuition and deepens pedagogical rationality. Exploring the pedagogical thought necessitates formulating some criteria, which in the light of researchers' perception might have influenced the birth of a particular theory. The phenomena investigated by pedagogy are not treated as the only true or right ones if they are located in a theory belonging to the centre or the dominating paradigm, because a human is a multidimensional, multi-layered being and, therefore, can be educated not only in compliance with tradition, but also in a different way. Today, there is no doubt any longer that all humanistic and social sciences are confronted with the pluralism of educational ideas, ideologies and

philosophies. The development of systematic pedagogies within particular currents or paradigms takes place in complex conditions, however – it mobilises the representatives of all these orientations to construct their own educational guidelines.

The postmodern era drifts away from metanarration, a super-project (in the commonly binding singular form) in favour of multitude and diversity. “Today, humanity lives with projects, not a project. Designing and other procedures needed to implement projects have been subjected to privatisation, deregulation and fragmentation” (Bauman 1995: 19). None of pedagogical (also postmodernist) theories can be regarded now as a well-distanced, objective form of viewing and evaluating the whole social reality. Its pluralism and sociocultural multidimensionality do not allow the postmodernist discourse to take away the right to claim the recognition of universality of their analyses and systems of values from any of the so far recognised modernist theories. As postmodernism does away with universal values, the projects of pedagogical activities should be based on the idea of “local” emancipation. This means the opening of the authorities and the society to the articulation of individual and group standpoints, where subjects would have the right to create and cultivate differences as important elements of the educational environment, and – simultaneously – to create separate pedagogies addressed to particular areas of social diversification. Such articulation of changes, based on the policy of differences and multidimensionality, requires treating educationalists as transformative intellectuals in service of emancipation practice and the discourse of liberty.

Pedagogy will still comprise the unceasing need for keeping the antagonisation of educational theories so that, owing to this measure, their perception can be manipulated and the supporters, protagonists, of someone’s or some pedagogy can be gained (Dziewiecki 2002; Kiereś 2009). However, this results from the engagement (in the 3rd Polish Republic) of some scientists, also belonging to the pedagogical environment, in polarising the scene of political support for the ruling or for the opposition through scientific argumentation. The category of dualism instead of dichotomy is of key significance for the development of social sciences as long as it is not narrowed to the synergy of two theories, two approaches, two cognitive orientations, but creates a chance for going far beyond them (Witkowski 2001).

Thus, the aim is to develop general pedagogy in its possible forms, the source of which are all sciences and disciplines dealing with humanity

and social functioning. Their intra-, inter- and transdisciplinary development is a *sine qua non* of the existence of pedagogy as a science. The development of general pedagogy calls for scientific pluralism, open dialogue and openness to the truth, so that it could not serve temporary political, economic and technical goals, but also apparently useless goals, such as the implementation in the life of every person of transcendental, cultural and humanistic values. The post-industrial revolution makes pedagogy face the particular challenge of building the *humanum* civilisation, in which children, youth, adults and the elderly will be offered help in solving their daily problems in the real world, at the same time understanding the senses which take place in the virtual world.

transl. Agata Cienciąła

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