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## A pedagogical history of education: Ethical and aesthetic aspects of historiography in the context of education

### The status of the history of education

In the face of the changes occurring in contemporary humanities, the traditional arguments over the methodological status of the history of education — its disciplinary category and the boundaries of research — lose their significance. What has for decades, at least since the mid-war period, captured the attention of researchers — whether the history of education should be included within the sphere of history (with its characteristic way of regarding sources and the accepted fields of socio-political references), or rather whether it should be treated as a sub-discipline of pedagogy (irrevocably tied to the contemporary problems of education), or whether it should be given an autonomous status (with only applicable relationships to history and pedagogy); whether its research subject should be educational institutions or rather educational ideas, or perhaps artistic or philosophical cultural influences (Hellwig, 1993; Jakubiak, 1993; Drynda, 1993; Palka, 1993) — today, in a situation that forces us to rethink the consequences of various cultural turns (Bachmann-Medick, 2012), it seems insignificant and is of little concern to anybody (apart from, perhaps, isolated groups who have lost contact with contemporary thought, with whatever happens outside of their fossilized specialization). A geodetic approach to academia, where little research plots are fenced in and rigorous respect for the boundaries ensures their purity, has already long ago exposed its infertility in the attempts at a fuller and deeper explanation of human reality. The conventional social division of academic research does not necessarily ensure an integral and subtle interpretation of human

life. The contemporary humanities in their mature form do not exist as enclosed, expert fields.

Today, history is an existential discipline, with ambitions to use the perspective of the past in a reflection of the human condition. As Ewa Domańska writes, it is a dynamic engaged discipline, which combines analytical, synthesizing, methodological, historiographic reflections, to recognize the *being* of humankind. It is not about a simple transfer of an existential philosophy's concept into history, but about a research perspective that in its inquiry into history and historiography would seek the meanders of human condition, would be an exercise in situational thinking (White), and would allow to shape a moral impulse (Bauman). At stake here is endowing history with the quality of *seeking wisdom* (Domańska, 2012, pp. 11–12).

Similarly, pedagogy — despite many of its common associations — has long ago ceased to be a set of teaching and child-rearing instructions; it is now an advanced discipline that integrates the knowledge of the development of the identity of a human being. Pedagogy is today one of the main disciplines concerned with culture. Already before the Second World War, Zygmunt Mysłakowski stressed the fact that the best source of education for a human being is culture. The thoughts and feelings are shaped by: language, economy, law, custom, art, fashion, politics, religion, nationality, etc. (Mysłakowski, 1933). Bogusław Śliwerski, on the other hand, characterizes modern pedagogy in the following way: “The exceptional nature of this discipline of knowledge, and, at the same time, a study subject, stems from the fact that pedagogy as an academic field has undergone a profound transformation on our continent, presenting the most interesting achievements of modern humanities. It combines the highly appreciated in the society disciplines of philosophy, psychology, and sociology of child-rearing with biomedical, anthropological, and political knowledge, including even the technical knowledge of the human being and its conditions of living and development. Integrating the knowledge from other discipline [...] responds at the same time to the needs of young people to find the answers to the most basic questions about the meaning of life, the possibilities of development, the functioning and the support of a human being in this extremely complicated world” (Śliwerski, 2006, p. VII). Even if for the tendencies that dominate the discipline, this is still more of a program than reality, it does not change the fact that more and more frequently, in its most valuable variants, the pedagogical discourse derives from the vast humanist inspirations — *pedagogy emerges from culture* (Witkowski, 2007; Jaworska-Witkowska, 2009).

Disciplinary independence is no longer about a maximally non-ambitious defining of a separate subject of study and polishing one's “own” research methodology. A discipline — at least in the humanities — is alive and developing, as long as it is capable of creating synapses with other disciplines,

if it opens a perspective of the integration of knowledge, if it can move and enrich *the semiosphere* with a contextual relocation of symbols (Łotman, 2008). Today, we speak not only of the interdisciplinary research, but of the transdisciplinary ability to move across conventional academic divisions (cf. Witkowski, 2009; Kubinowski, 2010; Włodarczyk, & Żłobicki, 2011). The best (in the sense of the most perceptive and inspiring) representatives of given disciplines, such as Clifford Geertz, Michaił Bakhtin, George Steiner, Zygmunt Bauman, Michel Foucault, etc. — can move on the borders, meeting points, problem connections and thus are capable of saturating their own disciplines with *others' voices*, uncommon perspectives, and enrich the entirety of knowledge of the human being with their own original insights.

Neither the history (of education), nor pedagogy (historical), nor the tendency to autonomize the discipline, nor the focus of educational institutions, nor the exploration of pedagogical thought are any longer adequate — under the threat of wasting their own achievements — as separate, safely delineated research activities. Numerous *cultural turns* — in particular, the linguistic and the ethical — made us realize that every disciplinary, thematic, or methodological research engagement has its own style of the synthesis of experience (aesthetics) and its own level of axiological reception (ethics). The result of the work of a historian of educational institutions capable of drawing from a vast pool of cultural heritage (including modern thought) will be closer to the achievements of a pedagogue interested in culture (including the changes in the humanities) who researches the old perspectives on education, than to the creations of the representative of the same discipline, who has entrenched himself or herself in the precisely delineated position of an “expert” and cannot regard his or her own field from a different perspective, through a different medium, by the use of different symbols and contexts. Aesthetics and ethical sensitivity are the dimensions that truly differentiate the quality of the discourse of the history of education (cf. Maliszewski, 2007; 2009).

## The changes in historiography

In the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, history — like other disciplines — succumbed to a strong tendency to follow a methodological unification patterned on the ideal of science. Detailed empirical evidence, the search for laws, methodical measures as a repeatable scheme of testing reality and building certain knowledge defined the core of historical craftsmanship. Detailed criticism of sources intended to establish and collect

“facts” became identified as the essence of a historian’s work. Even when the type of those facts changed — for instance moved, as in the *Annales* school, from the individual and political sphere to a structural and civilizational one — it happened in the name of the “scientification” of the discipline. The goal was not to exchange a scientific explanation for a humanist interpretation, but the transfer of interest onto other objects of research — common, mass, typical phenomena occurring over long time periods (Wrzosek, 1995, p. 69).

In the 20th century, history changed in numerous ways. The loss of trust in the modernist (methodologically positivist), scientifically-patterned way of practicing history became apparent in many ways, and hermeneutic ally-oriented theories made their appearance (the arts). It turned out that there can be very different ways of approaching history, and each way carries different consequences for human insight into the reality and the way of functioning in the world. The theorists of history have indicated many silently present tendencies in traditional historiography, for instance: the drive toward totality by formulating so-called grand narratives, in which the awareness of the cultural situating of the observer remains voiceless; reductionism in the form of a cult of an unambiguous, certain “fact”; eurocentrism based on a dualistic perspective *superior* — *inferior*; patriarchy as the dominance of the perspective of a “white male”; narrative linearity narrativized in the manner of a 19th century realist novel (Radomski, 2006, p. 28; Domańska, 2006, p. 54; Topolski, 2002, p. 32). In the contemporary humanities, which accentuates micro-narratives, the dialogic character of truth, multi-vocal tradition, linguistic mediation, those presuppositions are no longer accepted. The faith in the possibility of an unfailing and complete “reconstruction of history,” in the importance of a “historical source” as a basis of the certainty of knowledge, or in the “scientific” character of history, has drastically been reduced.

In his text *History as the Art of Beauty*, Leszek Kołakowski, while reviewing the work of Johan Huizinga, stressed that the only warranty for the correctness of a historical description of the figure of the researcher is his or her academic experience, familiarity with the atmosphere of the era, the maturity of judgments. Every phenomenon from the past can be illuminated differently or illustrated by a different set of examples, thus the final effect depends of the sensitivity of the researcher: “[...] it is difficult to image that a description of something like a spiritual atmosphere of the era could be done differently than through multiplying appropriately selected details, whose ‘typical nature’ would remain the matter of the personal responsibility of the author” (Kołakowski, 2002, p. 154). Top historians possess the awareness of the fact that in the contemporary humanities, *the research tool* is one’s own ability to open up to the cultural heritage and one’s own sensitivity to the human experience. This was once very pointedly expressed by an

outstanding French historian, Marc Bloch: "But every branch of knowledge possesses its own, unique aesthetics of language. Human matters are, by nature, very delicate phenomena, whose majority cannot be rendered by mathematical formulae. To express them properly, and, as a result, penetrate deep [...], a great finesse of language is required, with the proper shade of tone and words" (Bloch, 1960, p. 51).

The antipositivist turn between the 19th and 20th century (Dilthey, Windleband, Rickert, Weber, Simmel, and others) has shown that the scientific paradigm turns attention away from the specificity of human reality — the spiritual life (*Geist*). The latter linguistic turn and ethical turn have deepened the awareness of the multi-dimensionality of culture, which yields to the methodical scientific reduction only at the price of the loss of understanding. It was Hans-Georg Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, one of the most famous philosophical books of the 20th century, who explained that truth in its richness and fullness cannot be framed by the schemata of modern science. Philosophy and art constitute a warning for the scientific consciousness to acknowledge its limits. The magnitude of the great texts — Plato, Aristotle, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, etc. — and the truth of a work of art cannot be fully recognized or exhausted by scientific analysis. The academic character of the humanities resides rather in the concept of educating as an idea of preserving heritage (also in the categories of feeling, authority, common sense, taste) rather than in methodology (Gadamer, 2004, pp. 19–79). History practiced in the spirit of science has proved to be an overly "bulky," clumsy tool for deciphering the multi-layered human fates and the intertwined, impenetrable ties of the past and the present. It served more the purpose of securing the need for certainty (of individual facts) and thus political control, rather than an academic response for *Dasein's* way of being as understanding.

Hayden White was one of the academics who fundamentally contributed to the destruction of the authority of the "scientific" approach to history. Ewa Domańska writes of him: "[...] a researcher who undermined history's pretences to the status of a scientific discipline and 'ruined' the prestige of historical sources [...]" (Domańska, as cited in White, 1974, p. 7); and of his book *Metahistory*: "It was an expression of rebellion against the positivist view on history, and its purpose was to destroy the myth of scientific history" (Domańska, as cited in White, 1974, p. 12). According to the American thinker, history is an *art of interpretation*, not an explanatory science. In his conception, instead of *models* we have *tropes*, instead of *explanation* — *interpretation*, instead of *logical rules* — *a rhetorical play*. When a historian conducts a critique of sources, he or she does not confront the data found therein with reality (to which he or she has no access) but with his knowledge and other sources — one cannot compare the representation with the original, but only

confront representations and chose the most persuasive one. This does not mean that the past does not exist, or that it itself is a constructed text, but rather that the only access we have to it is through a text — historical events probably took place, but facts (in the sense of statements concerning these events) are created by historians according to their preferences and chosen language rules. If that is so, the cultural awareness of the researcher (and particularly, the literary and linguistic) is important. White wrote: “In my view, history as a discipline is in bad shape today, because it has lost sight of its origins in the literary imagination. In the interest of appearing *scientific* and objective, it has repressed and denied to itself its own greatest source of strength and renewal” (White, p. 108).

The breakdown of “scientific” history, or rather its reformulation and inscription into the hermeneutic (interpretive) paradigm was expressed by, among other things, the change in the approach to historical sources. According to the traditional approach, the source is the absolute foundation of the research process, the warranty — after critical verification — of the scientific character of exploration, acquiring knowledge free from fantasies, myths, and projections. It is thanks to the source that the historian has access to the facts from the past. However, in contemporary historiography, *facts* appear less important than *narration*, they are perceived as raw material, constructs referring not so much to past reality, but to some conception of it. Hence, more and more frequently, the attention of researchers is focused not on *sources*, but on *texts*, and, to use Charles Taylor’s formula for depicting the cultural background — on *imaginaries*, not on reconstruction but on *interpretation*. Spinning a tale, the historian does not reflect the past, but creates its representation (an image that replaces it) from various pretexts. This indicates the shift of research procedures from the logical field of truth and falsehood towards the ethical and aesthetic field (although, it must be added, frequently in the name of fuller truth, irreducible and more *human*). This concerns not so much individual events, but larger, narrative wholes — the sense that we give to those events. Hayden White argued that we do not have to regard historical explanation as either true or false — it can be understood in categories of metaphorical wealth, which indicates the order of articulation (offering a perspective as one of the possibilities of describing a given issue) (White, p. 69). A similar view was given by Frank Ankersmit, who explained that narrative interpretations are proposals to look at the past from a certain perspective — they can be useful, fruitful, or not, but not true or false. Names such as: “the 17th century crisis,” “the Cold War,” “mannerism,” “the Industrial Revolution” — refer to interpretations, and not to the bygone past (we should not therefore ask about the causes of “the Cold War,” since it is an interpretive *construct*; who asks that question, in fact asks not about the relationship between events, but about the inter-

pretation of the events of the second half of the 20th century.) This does not mean that the narrations should be arbitrary. Facts are arguments in favor or against a particular conception, but they do not determine it. Every description of, for instance the Renaissance, is "true" in the sense that it can be derived from a definition of the Renaissance suggested by a given historian. This is not about establishing the truth, but which tale is more useful, what kind of conversation on the subject we want to conduct (Ankersmit, 2004, pp. 61–83).

A trait characteristic of the humanities today is "blurring the boundaries," the strategy of constructing knowledge about the human being in an interdisciplinary manner, across the traditional divisions into academic fields. This process had already been initiated within the frameworks of modernist historiography. Fernand Braudel argued: "[...] precise boundaries between the disciplines in humanities do not exist. Each of them is a gateway open to all of the social reality, leading to all rooms and to all floors of the house, under the condition that the researcher does not stop in his or her journey because out of the respect for his or her neighbors — specialists; if necessary, let us use their own gates and their own stairs" (Braudel, 1971, p. 233). Today, in high-quality academic work, such an approach is evident. Ewa Domańska admitted: "I am not afraid of eclecticism and I am inspired by all that can lead me toward some interesting trail. Paradoxically, I have been taught more about history and its research by poets, writers, artists, philosophers, or the classics of historiography, then by modern historians" (Domańska, 2005, pp. 27–28).

An important moment in the process of the evolution of the writing of history was its encounter with literary theory. It happened thanks to the so-called linguistic turn. The term became popular together with the publication of the book *Linguistic Turn. Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, edited by Richard Rorty in 1967. It marked an increased interest in text, narration, discourse, and the sign. One of the fathers of this phrase, the French structuralist linguist Roland Barthes, placed in front of literary theory the time task of revealing to the sciences the all-powerful force of language, the ubiquity of narratives. For a historian, it meant that the past is accessible only through texts (not through the artifacts themselves, but through what and how we speak of them), and a given narration is only one of the possible stories. The linguistic turn made the researchers realize that language is not a transparent, neutral medium between the academic and the reality, but a tool through which we construct an image of the world (Topolski, 1996, p. 7). Hayden White, who in his book *Metahistory* from 1973 provided a narrativist explanation of the philosophy of history, argued that the past is to a lesser extent the matter of empirical evidence, than it is of plot. A historian endows the past with sense, constructs a tale (he or she

gives the events their beginning, the climax, and the end). Life itself does not have the form of a story, it is a shapeless stream. The facts that the positivist historians are so attached to, even chronologically ordered, constitute only an indeterminate, shapeless matter — a chronicle that does not communicate anything significant. A series of events (a, b, c, d, e) requires plot, and that can be realized in a number of ways, each highlighting a different link in the chain (a, b, c, d, e / a, b, c, d, E). A story that gives the first element of the series, a particularly important sense — explains Hayden White — is “deterministic” (such a form appears in the writings of, among others, Rousseau, Marx, Freud); a narration that accentuates the last event is “apocalyptic” (it is a plot present, among others, in the writings of St. Augustine or Hegel); between them lies a number of possible stories related to fictional narrative structures — romance, tragedy, comedy, satire. In the humanities, the way of presenting data is dictated by the conventions of rhetoric. “This means that the shape of the relationships which will appear to be inherent in the objects inhabiting the field will in reality have been imposed on the field by the investigator by the very act of *identifying* and *describing* objects that he finds there” (White, pp. 100–101).

One of the fathers of the linguistic turn in historiography, the already mentioned Dutch thinker Frank Ankersmit, stressed the necessity of distinguishing historical research (the domain of facts) from historical writing (the domain of interpretation), but not to — as in the modernist model — highlight the priority of seeking the truth above the “inferior” form of its presentation. To the contrary, it was to demonstrate that the essence of history, despite our knowledge of many facts, is synonymous with an “endless discussion.” Ankersmit explained that: “the most important and the most interesting intellectual challenges faced by a historian lie on the level of historical writing (selection, interpretation, and ways of perceiving the past)” (Ankersmit, 2004, p. 57). Thus, narrativism in historiography does not question the very necessity of establishing historical facts, but it induces a realization that what the researcher does with those facts, the stories that he or she makes, are dependent on the dictionary that he or she chooses.

In the 1970s, another approximation occurred: that of history and symbolic anthropology (James Clifford, Clifford Geertz, Victor W. Turner). In this version of anthropology, already mindful of the anti-positivist turn, culture has a semiotic existence — it constitutes a system of meanings. Studying culture is not only an empirical establishing of laws, but an interpretation of the sense of human creations and practices (cf. Geertz, 2005, p. 19). A historian who employs such an anthropological filter traces the lives of people from the past like an ethnographer observing strange natives — his source is not so much the reality, but its interpretations, and an overlaying of voices.

In the 1990s, history began to employ axiological categories, within the context of a broader ethical turn. Some researchers came to the conclusion that the metaphor of the text has been exhausted, and that it encloses the past within a space of language games to a great extent. For that reason, it is necessary to revitalize the category of *experience*, accompanied by: memory, encounter, dialogue, responsibility, etc. Ankersmit changed his perspective and suggested to move from the interest in language to the interest in historical experience (particularly that of melancholy and trauma). He regarded the linguistic turn as a new version of Kantian transcendentalism (language as a condition for cognition) which led to a philosophical disregard for the limitations that reality imposes on knowledge (in other words, to idealism, or enclosure within a text). Hence the narrativists' problems with regarding moral catastrophes, like the Holocaust. Here appears the noumenal dimension of responsibility for the past, and no literary model can capture such an atrocity (Ankersmit, pp. 381–382). But historical narrative reveals its limitations not only in radical cases. The stream of the story enforces an accentuation of those elements of life which are less important from the perspective of identity. For instance, when writing a *curriculum vitae*, we exclude personal events that create one's life experience (the atmosphere of the family home, experience of some work of art, a brief moment during holidays, etc.). The experience has no narrative integrity; it has no plot, and disregards the criteria of importance. How can that be grasped in historiography? A *testimony* – said Ankersmit – is a way of expressing experience. Naturally, it is also a form of narration, but less integrated, directed not so much at the representation of the researched reality, but at the change of the subject. A testimony is not only a tale, it is a turning towards, entrusting oneself, giving the narrative to others, and so, above all, the establishment of a relationship. It needs no words, because it is an excellent pedagogical trail. The pedagogical history of education – as an existential discipline engaged in the problems of identity development) – here acquires a great research territory.

Transdisciplinary changes present new challenges for the history of education. Due to the complexity of reality – and brought into awareness by those changes – one can no longer reduce research to the “truth of the epoch” or the “necessity of the moment.” The abandonment of the logic of inclusion (this and that) will inevitably lead either to dry, boring history, devoid of meaning for the majority of receivers, even the educated ones, or to becoming locked in a flattened, current horizon. This is why nowadays, the complementarity of historical and theoretical perspectives is stressed, a fluidity of the demarcation line between the history of education and pedagogy (cf. Majorek, 2006, pp. 43–44). Lech Witkowski (2007) warned against the “pathologies of the social division of academic work,” indicating

that the professional ghettos of historians and theorists harm the quality of pedagogy, causing a permanent “under-reading” of cultural heritage and a barbaric reduction of the works of the classics. We need a wide space for methodological breathing, an ability to move across many theoretical fields, which turns our attention to aesthetics.

## Aesthetics in historiography

The styles of the synthesis of experience in historical narratives can differ, depending on more or less consciously adopted presuppositions. From the perspective of the *pedagogical* history of education, I distinguish four kinds of historiographic aesthetics: (1) the aesthetics of warranty; (2) the aesthetics of inspiration; (3) the aesthetics of dialogue; (4) the aesthetics of cooperation (cf. Witkowski, 1997).

History as warranty is a modernist mode of writing history, based on a conviction that there exists only one history, one past reality and it is the researcher’s task to reflect it as accurately as possible. It is a historiography which believes that it is in possession of a methodological workshop capable of an inarguable establishing of facts, of the separation of truth from falsehoods and of detecting laws that govern past events. It is that kind of research attitude that opts for objectivity, treating axiological indications and contemporary interests as contaminations which ruin academic value, or — in the best case — as a possible, sometimes interesting, yet not necessary addition. Here, a frequent misunderstanding must be indicated. Many historians defend the “objectivity” of their research, refusing to practice tendentious history, or strongly politicized, radically ideological history (many examples may be found in textbooks written in communist times, or extreme versions of feminist or ethnic historiography). However, epistemological objectivity is not the same as standard intellectual tact. When describing a historical phenomenon, the researcher does not have to explicitly engage his or her own opinions (worldview, and/or political beliefs) and, in this way, try to present the subject in a most balanced way. This distance is not, however, objectivity, the abandonment of a subjective perspective, but results from “tact,” which is a part of the tradition of European humanities. Objectivity means breaking out of the limitations of a perspective, appealing to some unerring measure that gets rid of the point of view of the subject, assuming a view from nowhere. Tact, on the other hand, means a distance that allows one to better grasp one’s own perspective — like stepping back before a painting (cf. Dybel, 2004, pp. 125–126). Although the first aesthetics significantly

reduces the perspective on the world — which resulted in the turns of the 20th century — I do not think that it can be simply shrugged off. There is a longing in it that we do not necessarily want to give up. It is difficult to accept a conviction that facts are not important or do not interest people at all, whether they are a fragment of reality or just human constructs. Krzysztof Wieczorek wrote: “[...] it is difficult to imagine a more fateful error than a mistaken categorization of an existential state of the object (we all probably know Andersen’s tale of the emperor who was naked as he mistakenly took non-existent robes for a real object)” (Wieczorek, 2004, p. 23). We are deeply concerned whether something happened for real, or not — even if it does not have any practical consequences. Also, the turn towards *experience*, the helplessness of narration in the face of phenomena such as the Holocaust or the Gulag is evidence of the intuition of some “hard,” reality, independent of words. So if this kind of historiographic aesthetics has anything to offer, then it is the preservation and reminding — rather than the realization — of the idea of truth, which is more important for us than some hasty refutation would seem to suggest.

History as *inspiration* is history that transmits ideas and values (“the teacher of life”), a reservoir of impulses and a mirror for one’s contemporaries. The outstanding German philosopher, Karl Jaspers, puts it in a following way: “history will cease to be a mere field of knowledge, and become once again a question of the consciousness of life and of existence; it will cease to be an affair of aesthetic culture and become an earnestness of hearing and response. The way in which we look at history is no longer harmless. The meaning of our lives is determined by the manner in which we know ourselves” (Jaspers, 1965, p. 256). Within the framework of this form of historiography, researchers try to tightly connect the image of the past with contemporary interests, and make history a way of thinking about the contemporary world. Fernand Braudel wrote in one of his books: “our task was a constant confronting of the past and the present, a numerous crossing from one to the other, an endless concerto of two free voices. [...] History is nothing other than the ceaseless questioning of bygone times in the name of problems and interests — even in the name of anxieties and fears — of the present time, which surrounds us and besieges us from all sides. [...] The condition for being is the fact that one already has been” (Braudel et al., 1994, p. 7). This type of historiography concentrates not on establishing the true version of events, but on introducing into discourse important, inspiring motives from the past. Hayden White argued for this: “We need not so much the past as it ‘really was,’ but a past with which we can live. This does not mean that we have to lie about it, but that we have to rethink the questions that we ask of it” (p. 37). The second aesthetics is a style saturated with care to extract something important from the past, so as to induce *thinking* and

rejuvenate the source of desires. As such, it becomes a form privileged in the space of pedagogy, where developmental awakenings, shocks and deepening are most important.

Historiography as dialogue is historiography of liminal thinking, an attempt at cultural mediation. Traditional history has most frequently been (and still is) written from a national point of view, excluding foreign perspectives (which can be vividly seen, for instance, between the discrepancies between Polish and Ukrainian interpretations of the past). Yet — as Fernando Sanches-Marcos argued — historians travel through time, reflexively crossing cultural and spacial boundaries — they can thus provide the world with bridges of understanding. “Historians are very well prepared for such a journey, for crossing the boundaries of separate identity, and that baggage of experience will allow their fellow citizens adjusting to the life in a multicultural society” (Sanchez-Marcos, 2002, p. 39). Numerous unconventional histories recently created (micro-history, anti-histories, interventional histories) (cf. Domańska, 2006) attempt to “give voice” to the narrations of those groups who were culturally dominated, never fitting into the field of the discipline’s interest. It is thus an effort convergent with the *politics of the voice*. The third type of aesthetics, attempting to confront contexts, collide traditions, is deeply entangled into world-view discourses, constantly at risk of slipping into ideological propaganda. However, without the confrontation with the Bakhtinian non-coexisting, without caring for revealing worlds so far invisible, amplifying voices that are too quiet, we would lose the opportunity for assuming a mature attitude towards our own tradition (accepted too easily, one-sidedly, in a shallow manner) and for broadening our field of ethical sensitivity.

History as cooperation, on the one hand, expresses care for the historical craft and workshop, particularly for the linguistic sensitivity, and on the other, it involves cultivating broad interest and the ability to move in the space of symbolic culture (one never knows in what situation historical perspective may become useful). The fourth type of aesthetics means a careful, deepened reading of historical trails and the readiness for cooperation in a space of integrally understood humanities.

Moving within only one of these aesthetics shouts out for the values carried by others. History — also the history of education — needs a methodological horizon of oscillation between styles of research and building narrations, so that it does not eventually lose truth, inspiration, dialogue, and cooperation — which are values integral for pedagogy.

## The ethical elements in historiography

The changes in the contemporary writing of history made us aware of the irremovable and consequential presence of values in the research process and its effects. The dictionary of modern historiography became populated by axiologically saturated terms such as: responsibility, shame, guilt, forgiveness, redemption, and care. Narrations constructed by the researchers of the past ceaselessly — explicitly or implicitly — engage valuing procedures. At stake is not only the fact that ideals, norms, and obligations constitute an irrevocable element of social landscape and it is impossible to omit it in reconstruction if we desire an adequate image. Nor is it the fact that it is impossible to eliminate value judgments from descriptive language (Ossowska, 1994, pp. 400–415, 457–464). Essentially, the historian's role includes the function of a guardian of the mythical — in Eliade's sense of meaning-making and axio-carrying — layer of culture. The relaying of history is a fundamental act, which shapes human subjectivity, including moral sensitivity. The knowledge of one's inner self is acquired through communication with the environment. This was explained by Hans Jonas. At first, people are children, or receivers — they learn from their environment who they can be, what to think and feel. Later, they are capable of filtering everything through their own experience, but if they limited themselves only to such an attitude, they would not learn anything new. Cognition would be replaced with projections. Even an adult needs meaningful tales. Development happens in contact with the message. It is the symbols of cultural heritage that introduce a human being to the sphere of his own possibilities. "My potential for love" — Jonas writes — "may quite probably be awakened for the first time by Romeo and Juliet, the sense of beauty, on the other hand, that is contained in heroic sacrifice, by the tale of Thermopylae. Reading and listening are one and the same experience, opening before me the undetectable possibilities of my own soul [...]" (Jonas, 1993, pp. 16–17). Alasdair MacIntyre wrote about the inconceivability of a society without including the tales that build its dramatic potential — the range of possible and worthwhile roles (MacIntyre, 1996, p. 386), and Charles Taylor argued that subjectivity — whose essential component is the idea of goodness — exists only within the frames of the so-called conversational network (cf. Taylor, 2001, p. 70). A historian is not only a (re)constructor of past events, he or she is also *the guardian of conversation* — someone who recalls that which is worthwhile, and should be retold and remembered.

We are introduced to the ethical dimension of history by the well-known and disturbing phenomenon of "writing history by the winners." History is by some named a "policing discipline," because within its framework occurs defining and guarding of that which is important and worthy of remember-

ing, and can fade out of memory. At stake here is the right to speak of someone's past, and thus the kind of power exercised over those who possess no voice (cf. Domańska, 2006, pp. 39–40). And it is not only about radical manipulation, such as omitting or deforming the achievements of pedagogy between the two World Wars during the period of communism. Not only in the so-called anti-knowledge (a lie) are the relations of dominance revealed, but in a historian's every effort, in his or her everyday work. Constructing texts about Plato, Komeński, Rousseau, or Herbert, the historian employs their helplessness. Those authors can no longer protest, repel an attack, they cannot explain anything, defend themselves against an imputation or a reductionist reading. In this sense, history is always written by the winners (those who live and possess a voice) and constitutes a discourse of power, a mechanism of control over memories, such are the resources of human identity. This generates tremendous *responsibility*, as to how one gathers and presents historical data. Too often the researchers become hasty judges of the past.

Thus, there appeared the idea of "Levinasian history" as the space of an encounter with — an absent, bygone — *face* of the other. Within its frameworks, it is assumed that the problem of historical cognition must be reshaped from an epistemological to an ethical one. The crux of the matter is that the researching of what is past should be based, first and foremost, on the relation of responsibility towards the people of the past. The historian should *represent* them (like people whose face appeals), not only present them (like objects) (cf. Domańska, 2002, p. 19).

An American professor, Dominick LaCapra, wrote of the necessity for an "ethical turn" in history, by which he understood an intensive work of memory against traumatic events, ones that destroy a given political community and international relationships. The continuity of ethical responsibility does not include the very deeds of ancestors, but it does encompass their consequences. A living memory of suffering is necessary and the strive towards working out a critical distance towards ideologies which steered the executioners (Lacapara, 2002). The ethical meaning of the traumatic experience of the past is also underlined by Frank Ankersmit. Trauma breaks a familiar and tamed world. However, otherness is an axiological salvation, because it protects the human being from appropriating the past. For instance — argues the Dutch thinker — the memory of the Holocaust should never be overcome, a reconciliation with the nightmares, but should remain [...] an open wound. Genocide is, after all, a constant threat — it appeared in the 20th century in an unpredictable way, and therefore can equally unpredictably and suddenly reappear. Ankersmit wrote: "[...] we can appropriately recall and reinterpret traumatic events, so far as we do *not* allow the wounds connected with them to heal. These are wounds that should always hurt.

Sometimes, in the life of a civilization, illness is better than health" (2002b, p. 181). Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht wrote in a similar manner, stressing that there is never enough repentance in the dealings with the past (2002, p. 126).

The traces of ethical problems that are inscribed in the very tissue of historical narration also take on radical forms. Within the frameworks of the so-called new humanities, or the critiques of multi-leveled systems of power (cultural studies, postcolonial theories, feminist studies, post-humanist studies on animals and objects) insurrectional, and interventional history are being created, according to Michel Foucault's terminology: anti-history. Its creators fight a ceaseless battle for justice, for cultural reassessment, for the recognition of memory of groups and individuals marginalized in the dominant discourse. Thus, they engage in wars which are utterly ethical, whether they are justified or not (Domańska, 2006, 17–19). Modern historiography is also treated like an ethical laboratory, where, on the basis of an understanding insight into the experience of the people from the past, we are able to conduct imaginary tests of contemporary projects. Frank Ankersmit argued that the historical discourse is the best point of reference for the selection of political or moral norms. Our actions may be based on establishing which representation of the best is the best and which values it presents. "Historical literature," he wrote, "is a certain kind of an experimental garden, where we can try out different political and moral values, while the aesthetic criteria allow us to judge the relative pros and cons of individual representation. We should be thankful to historiography for such a garden, because thanks to it, we can avoid tragedies to which we would be exposed, if we had to verify the pros and cons of various political and ethical norms in socio-political practice" (Ankersmit, 2002a, p. 79). A subjective historian — Ankersmit explained — writes texts, which allow us to orient ourselves in the options accessible in the presence. Meanwhile, works where values were erased in the name of cool objectivity camouflage world-view choices, do not allow for a clear insight, and, as such, lessen knowledge about the accessible options of thinking and acting. An interesting research approach — if we desire to capture the subtleties of human experience — is *micro-history*, or the approach to history from the perspective of an individual or a small community (description of small worlds). This trend appeared in Italy in the 1970s and gained recognition when it was used by the third generation of the French historical school *Annales* (Jacques Le Goff, Georges Duby, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Philippe Aries, and others). Micro-history is concerned with what traditional historiography placed in footnotes or margins, for instance family, childhood, old age, death, love, fear. It offers a vision of reality full of respect for the alterity of the other, intimate reality, where feelings and values of people making up a "small world" are found. It is, to a large extent, the touching of spheres where fundamental truths about human existence

and axiological memory of culture are kept. In micro-history, we get to know a human being with cases, miniatures, and anthropological tales. It frequently employs so-called existential traces, or memories which are unimportant for gathering facts, but important due to the subjective experience of the described people. A realistic style cannot always face up to the traumatic or extremely complex, subtly differentiated reality, thus the creators of micro-historical narration make use of literary references, fragments of poetry, philosophical metaphors, mythical analogies, difference subjectivity, fleeting, deeply personal traces of the past. Philippe Aries argues that the real subject of historical research is not a collection of facts from some fragment of the past, but an *aura* of given times. Striving for an exhaustive and objective representation of the past reality builds a coherent and logical picture of the world, but a misbegotten one, located next to the living world. He wrote that “actually, the difference between one epoch and another is similar to the difference between two paintings or symphonies — it is of an aesthetic character. We find the real subject of history in the awareness of the aura, which individualizes a temporal moment, just like a painter’s style characterizes the whole of his or her work. The lack of the awareness of the aesthetic nature of history on the part of historians resulted in a total discoloring of the time which they intended to recall and explain” (Aries, 1996, p. 237). It is precisely such small worlds that constitute an excellent laboratory of human existence, contextually showing the human experience, humanity’s choices and their consequences.

The reflections on history co-create the future — motives, categories, symbols, values by repetition enter the *horizon of expectations* of culture. The kind of ideals that are defended by the critics of historiography and the writers of history determines in a certain way our vision of the possible tomorrow. Ewa Domańska wrote about the prophetic function “repeating, highlighting, quoting certain circulating [...] ideas, motives, symbols, metaphors the ‘prophetic critic’ is a vehicle of cultural memory, who helps to transgress the present stage of development and move the boundaries of the ‘horizon of expectations’ of a given community” (cf. Domańska, 2005, p. 182). Here is a short illustration from the sphere of the history of pedagogical thought. One of the key points of Sergey Hessen’s philosophy of education was the demonstration of the difference in the identity of the social and cultural layers of educating children. The Russian pedagogue argues that the pressure of the environment and the pressure of values are two different — even fundamentally different — forms of pressure, releasing completely different actions of educating children. The awareness of the irreducibility of education to socialization, and the real presence of values in educating children (in their axiological, not utilitarian sense) functions only marginally in the “horizon of expectations” of pedagogy. Lech Witkowski is one of the few

contemporary authors, who — thanks to profound communing with tradition, and against the common adaptive tendency — turn our attention to the differentiation between the social and the cultural dimensions of educating children. He writes: “[...] the logic and worth of culture cannot be subordinated to thinking of social mechanisms, [...] education cannot be the hostage, it cannot copy the logic of socialization. Following Milan Kundera, I am impressed by the observation that every socialization is necessarily a sucking in ‘a whirlpool of cultural reduction.’ [...] Meanwhile, already in the language of Bakhtin, a conviction was highlighted that the care for culture requires giving voice to that which is ‘non-copresent’ (Witkowski, 2007b, p. 119). If Hessen’s thought — and this is just an illustration — was present in historical reception to a greater extent, references to this key distinction would be more frequent and easier (and profitable for the educational practice). Whether in our pedagogical imagination there will be a place for perceiving the difference between socialization and upbringing of a human being will also depend on the way in which historians will read Hessen, what they will extract from his thought and whether they will manage to connect that reading to the reflection from other spheres of the humanities.

## Conclusion

In conventional research practice and common teaching of the history of education, we rarely encounter advanced methodological awareness, sensitive to the aesthetic and ethical aspects of historiography. Sławomir Szto-bryn wrote: “[...] during the period of the 20th century, which has been the fundamental temporal orbit for the development of the discipline, we were faced with the prevalence of positivist conceptions, [...] the idea of reducing pedagogical historiography to ‘pure’ history was, and still is, dominant [...]” (2007, p. 497). This tendency entered a deep crisis. As a solstice situation, a crisis is an opportunity for development, but also an undermining of accepted and deeply internalized convenient conventions. Hence in practice it is easier to ignore it, settling for the low status of the discipline (disliked by students, pared in academic curricula and absent in important academic debates), rather than openly face the in-evident character of what was regarded as evident.

For many contemporaries, the knowledge of the past is a burden, an unnecessary encumbrance — which can very well be seen in the sphere of teaching history. The present times appear completely different from the by-gone days, and they are special in their possibilities, cares, and satisfactions.

As Hayden White indicated, the one who researches the past “in itself,” must seem to be an antiquarian escaping from the present, a cultural necrophile prowling in the space where death reigns. This is why “a contemporary historian must restore the value of exploring the past, but not as ‘a goal in itself,’ but as a way towards finding a perspective for the present” (White, 1974, p. 61). This is, in my opinion, the greatest challenge that stands before the history of education — to metamorphoze into a truly *pedagogical* discipline, capable of generating energy for development, opening a perspective of a better (ethics), more beautiful, profound (aesthetics) existence.

Two more practical observations arise: if we desired to revitalize the history of education in the spirit of the ethical turn, it would be wise to remember the complexity of the space of values. Leszek Kołakowski wrote: “[...] the world of values is not a world logically binary [...]. In other words — there exist values which are mutually exclusive, but still remain values [...]” (2002, pp. 255–256). It is important for the historian to describe reality in a possibly most complete manner — acknowledging the conflictive nature of goodness, being sensitive to the tragic character of choice, aware of the tendencies of values to turn into their own opposites. For instance, to present the idea of national citizenry, it is not enough to enthusiastically refer to the ideas of citizen-raising. It is also important to remember the danger of indoctrination — in the horizon of reconstruction, to remember both the advantages and the disadvantages, the damage that a strong country and loyalty toward it can inflict. The ethical sensitivity and the scope of an axiological gaze both belong to the methodological workshop of a historian.

On the other hand, the ethical dimension of the renaissance of the history of education, apart from the already described tendency to oscillate between historiographic styles, sensitizes to the language that the researcher of history employs. Not every code grants access to a believable description of the experience of goodness and other values. One could say that a good historian is a sensitive, well-read literary practitioner. The quality of his or her academic work also depends on the flexibility of this person’s vocabulary and care for the word.

The voice which I suggest here, is a reminder for the history of education as one of the key forms of self-reflection of culture and one of the important pathways for the moral self-discovery of a human being. Its pedagogical and historical character must be understood more profoundly and seriously than before. Historicity is a quality that opens the dimension of education (the access to cultural heritage, placement orientation), and pedagogy is an attribute that opens the dimension of tradition (the space of dialogue, horizon of possibilities).

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## Histoire pédagogique de l'éducation

### Aspects éthiques et esthétiques de l'historiographie dans le contexte éducationnel

#### Résumé

Étant donné les mutations qui se produisent dans les sciences humaines modernes, les différends sur l'appartenance disciplinaire de l'histoire de l'éducation et sur la précision des limites de ses intérêts de recherche perdent de leur importance. Attendu les conséquences de nombreux *culturalturns*, les stratégies de recherche avancées deviennent transdisciplinaires. Le trait caractéristique des sciences humaines modernes est la « dilution des limites ». Les styles de la synthèse de l'expérience dans les narrations historiques varient selon les hypothèses ; du point de vue de la *pédagogicité* de l'histoire de l'éducation, on peut distinguer des styles se formant autour : *de la garantie, de l'inspiration, du dialogue et de la coopération*. L'historiographie de l'éducation n'est pas seulement une (re)construction des événements textuels et éducatifs passés, mais aussi un engagement éthique consistant à veiller sur la sensibilité culturelle et à raconter ce que l'on peut, ce qu'il vaut et ce qu'il faut raconter. La négligence des mutations méthodologiques condamne l'histoire de l'éducation à une stérilité cognitive. À présent, une tâche fort importante est de la transformer en une discipline *pédagogique* au sens profond du terme, c'est-à-dire en celle qui soit capable de participer à des débats importants de l'époque contemporaine et qui puisse générer l'horizon des attentes de l'existence éthique et esthétique.

Krzysztof Maliszewski

## Pedagogiczna historia wychowania

### Etyczne i estetyczne aspekty historiografii w kontekście edukacyjnym

#### Streszczenie

W obliczu przemian zachodzących we współczesnej humanistyce spory o przynależność dyscyplinarną historii wychowania i wyrazistość granic jej zainteresowań badawczych tracą na znaczeniu. W obliczu konsekwencji licznych *cultural turns* zaawansowane strategie badawcze stają się transdyscyplinarne. Charakterystycznym rysem humanistyki współczesnej jest „znięcie granic”. Style syntezy doświadczenia w narracjach historycznych są różne w zależności od przyjętych założeń – można wyróżnić z perspektywy *pedagogiczności* historii wychowania style formujące się wokół: *gwarancji, inspiracji, dialogu, kooperacji*. Historiografia wychowania to nie tylko (re)konstrukcja minionych zdarzeń tekstowych i edukacyjnych, ale także zaangażowanie etyczne – straż wrażliwości kulturowej, m.in. tego, co można, warto i powinno się opowiadać. Ignorowanie przemian metodologicznych skazuje historię wychowania na poznawcze wyjąłowanie. Obecnie wielkim zadaniem jest przekształcenie jej w dyscyplinę *pedagogiczną* w głębokim sensie, tzn. zdolną do włączenia się w ważne debaty współczesności oraz generującą horyzont oczekiwań etycznej i estetycznej egzystencji.