



Philosophy of Education in Contemporary Society

Introductory

Every year at its symposiums, the Croatian philosophical society proves that it wants to and can be in step with current happenings in the world and social needs which open up questions that ask for quick and well thought out answers. Such was foremost the symposium during the annual assembly of the Croatian Philosophical Society in 2000 under the title Philosophy and Education. There was also the international symposium held during the 13th Days of Frane Petrić in Cres, September 20–22, 2004 – under the title Philosophy and Education in Contemporary Society. The focal point of philosophical elaborations at the symposiums was one of the hot topics of the contemporary world: education.

In the second half of the 20th century, the sudden development of science and knowledge which must mediate education, placed the shaping of new educational paradigms as unavoidable demand, according to which education could be structured in accordance with personal and social needs of man in the post-industrial age. Man who must master not only more knowledge than what was sufficient for previous generations, but he must constantly supplement it and re-shape it. And not only to maintain work efficiency but to be able to give meaning to one's own life – and it is precisely this that is being emphasized more and more.

When we consider the education of future scientists, it is no longer sufficient to begin at the university level, it must be present from the beginnings of education. Investing into education is becoming the most important economic investment. And while on the one hand interest in education is on a rise, on the other hand the multiplicity of questions about education, even under the supposition that we disregard the question “what is education?”, have outgrown the possibilities of pedagogy manifold. Therefore education, rightfully so, has become the subject of more and more sciences. We are thus in the second half of the 20th century witnesses to the appearance and development of the sociology of education, psychology of education, economy of education, history of education and many other scientific branches of education.

But with the rise of the number of scientific branches which research education, the need of a branch which would correlate their results into one consistent system is becoming stronger. However, this is not possible without answering some basic philosophical questions about man. Thus the philosophy of education is showing itself more and more as the center of awareness, where the knowledge of not only different philosophical branches – such as philosophical anthropology, epistemology, ethics, philosophy of science, philosophy of language etc. – meet with insights from other special sciences of education. It is becoming all the more obvious that behind every scientific approach to education there is necessarily some philosophy or ideology that, unlike philosophy, unawaresly

directs scientific research and influences the interpretation of scientific results. The only philosophy that can confront such a tendency when education is in question is, rightfully – the philosophy of education.

The international conference Philosophy and Education in Contemporary Society brought together a hundred participants from 15 countries, which had the opportunity to hear 61 presentations in Croatian, English, German, Italian and French. The rich interdisciplinary debate – which included not only philosophers but also theologians, educators, sociologists, political scientists, mathematicians, physicists, artists and many others – inspired many, according to the testimonies of the participants themselves, to new approaches in education in general.

The journal Metodički ogleđi has already published (in volume 20/2004) eight presentations and will publish more. Some of the presentations are published in the journal Filozofska istraživanja, and the thematic segment will be published in its entirety in a separate collection of works.

We hope that works published here and elsewhere will find their place in the literature of those who professionally deal with education, but that they will also help those who lead the politics of education, especially school education, in finding better and contemporary social needs in accordance with educational solution. Particularly now, when the whole educational system, especially university education, is in a state of flux and when solutions are being sought that would bring Croatia closer to Europe. In the three days in September of 2004 a part of that Europe, which deals with education, came to us to show us and offer us what they know.

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