



Will the Internet replace schools and parents in education and upbringing?

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The core of the analysis is countering the myth that allegedly using new communications technologies by children and youths is toxic to their development. In the post-modern world, children enter into partner and educational relationships with their parents specifically thanks to their better abilities to use new media. Changes the science of upbringing and education management are also necessary.

KEY WORDS: new media, Internet, virtual network, upbringing, pseudo-upbringing, family, school, globalisation, nihilism

(...) media are much more than “the press, radio and television”. They are an intermediation institution that is almost fundamental for the human condition, changing in the course of history its technical equipment, operating in this regard with various carriers of meaning – but retaining the basic property of constructing the paradoxical relationship of man and their world based on substitution².

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² T. Szkuclarek, *Media. Szkic z filozofii i pedagogiki dystansu*, Kraków, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls” 1998 (2nd ed.), p. 139.

Introduction

In the title of my paper I have suggested a question, which – as with every polar question – in actuality an easily foreseeable affirmative answer. Despite this, it is not really that simple, as we are living in a time of “fluid reality”, full of changing meanings and system solutions in public education. Pedagogical sciences in Poland do not have a problem with responding to such a question. For at least twenty years of coming to terms and using new technologies in a world of global and open communication, we know sufficiently much about their positive and negative conditions and effects. The common response to a rhetorical question in this regard can thus at most have a character akin to the style of the former President of Poland, Lech Wałęsa (“I am FOR, and even AGAINST”), and be as simple-sounding as possible: YES and NO.

Education science in a world of crises and myths

The role of science is not to react to temporary crisis situations and the results from various kinds of diagnostic polls, as this is the role of professional educators, pedagogues, teachers, therapists and specialists in the field of the invoked, allegedly crisis situation, analysing and studying them on a daily basis – well-educated and learning all their lives, I trust. The role of education as a science is primarily the execution of diagnostic, descriptive, explanatory studies, but also basic research in terms of constructing theories and (meta-)theoretical or experimental models so as to enable, through publication of their results and contents:

- the conduction of rational educational policy in the state by its (hopefully) enlightened leaders,
- initiating or supporting social forces, including NGOs;
- co-operation of education specialists with the environment designing and manufacturing new technologies and tools of communication;

- education in this regard of biological and foster parents or caretakers of children;
- education and development of teachers' ranks in the country.

Children's biological parents can never be replaced by anyone or anything, irrespective of how special, wonderful or even cheap the new technologies and tools of communication will be. I stress - NEVER-ANYONE-ANYTHING. I mean here parents that are happy to have children, love them, care about them, and at the same time exercise full-fledged, normal, direct communication among themselves in the family. Even in a situation of temporary or long-term separation or parting, technology serves them only just to sustain, strengthen and deepen common bonds and openness, rather than to replace them. In healthy family environments, digital technologies facilitate the strengthening of social bonds thanks to better and faster possibility of communication of e. g. parents with their own children by the use of mobile phones.

Let us thus not exaggerate the myth of an alleged and possible substitute of things as if they could be personified, and the reverse - let us not reify our children, let us not reduce them to technology, because every time the parent shifts to intermediate communication with their own child in their own home (and this is starting to emerge), this means that in the psycho-social sense they are forgoing and retreating from being parents. Thus, branding media as the EVIL-BEING is the perfect escape route from one's own responsibility with respect to own children for who they are and who they become in the relevant constructed relations.

It's not the MEDIA that destroy bonds, as these are the results of actions of pseudo-parents. New media open up a direct, real, and an indirect, virtual, space for those under care of parents, as being NOT THEIRS any more - to new items, yet in reality items that are alien to them. In such a situation, the case always concerned, concerns and will concern EXTERNAL INTERESTS, of good, but also of bad will, with positive, but also negative intentions, with obvious, but also covert needs of initiation of influencing the personality of young generations. In the sense of so-called influence, the MEDIA

and the VIRTUAL WORLD become either a positive co-actor, a mentor, advisor, friend in the development of children and youths, or a destructive factor for them, an intermediate tormentor or subversive enemy. Situations may well emerge that they are all of these at once. In a situation of psycho-social abandonment of the child by the parents, everything is possible in their life, however, studies on monozygotic twins indicate that if they have the proper genetic make up, the case is not lost.

Education specialists know that approx. 30% of parents in fairly wealthy, economically-developed societies – and Poland is one of these – are those who for some reason did not want to have children, and hence they came to the world under conditions and in a socio-economic atmosphere that are not always favourable. There was no bond with them already at inception and the pre-natal period, even more so in the post-natal period, hence they require particular closeness and positive feelings even when they have to be reliant on foster parents, professional educators, teachers from the crèche, pre-school, all the way to compulsory schools³. They will channel their unsatisfied needs of bonds, acceptance, affiliation on-line, putting on masks so that, as users of e. g. games, they would be able to take on the roles of “discoverers”, “companionship seekers”, “competitors” or “killers”⁴. It’s foster parents, be it institutional or environmental, who have to strive for their acceptance, openness and readiness to cooperate if they want to be educators in the full meaning of the word, implement the assumed functions and goals of the institution/ unit they represent. So, they have to win over the CHILD first, ‘BIND THEM’ to themselves in the psycho-social manner so as to make, together with them, the joint effort of existence and development. They have to learn from one another, get to know each other mutually, to respond to mutual expectations and needs.

³ D. Kornas-Biela, *Pedagogika prenatalna*, [in:] *Pedagogika. Subdyscypliny i dziedziny wiedzy o edukacji*, ed. by Bogusław Śliwerski, vol. 4, Gdańsk, GWP 2010.

⁴ T. Boellstorff, *Dojrzewanie w second life. Antropologia człowieka wirtualnego*, translated by A. Sadza, Kraków, Wydawnictwo UJ 2012, p. 158.

The other side of this situation is winning over unwanted children of parents by those for whom they are just a business, a means to achieve various goals. The media can be negatively or supporting in this regard. They act negatively if they are a lure, a trap, bait for unworthy acts, to hurt children or treat them as customers to make money on their peripheral needs (e. g. banks, IT manufacturers, the pharmaceutical industry, the food industry, para-medical services, etc.), they can be supportive, however, if they become the means of crying for help (e. g. would-be suicides, sexually-abused children, etc.) or supporting their individual path of self-education and development.

Enmity against children

The author of the book “Zeit für Kinder” (*Time for children*)⁵ differentiates between two kinds of hostile attitudes of adults towards children, namely: objective and subjective enmity. The first is a derivative of structural solutions, e. g. the lack of protection of children against too easy access to demoralising content and imagery. The ambassador of EVIL becomes an objective enemy of the child, against their own will, limiting or degrading the psychological and physical development of one under their care. Available is literature on the subject, e. g. edited by Józef Bednarek and Anna Andrzejewska of the Maria Grzegorzewska University⁶, by Wojciech Skrzydlewski and Stanisław Dylak of the University of Poznań⁷, authored by Michał Klichowski and Hanna Krauze-Sikorska of the University

⁵ E. von Braunmühl, *Zeit für Kinder. Theorie und Praxis von Kinderfeindlichkeit, Kinderfreundlichkeit, Kinderschutz. Zur Beseitigung der Unsicherheit im Umgang mit Kindern. Ein Lehrbuch*, Frankfurt a. Main, Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag 1978, p. 24.

⁶ *Człowiek w obliczu szans cyberprzestrzeni i świata wirtualnego*, red. Józef Bednarek, Warszawa, Difin S.A. 2014; *Dzieci i młodzież w sieci zagrożonych realnych i wirtualnych. Aspekty teoretyczne i empiryczne*, ed. by Anna Andrzejewska, Warszawa, Difin S.A. 2014.

⁷ *Media. Edukacja. Kultura. W stronę edukacji medialnej*, red. Wojciech Skrzydlewski, Stanisław Dylak, Poznań-Rzeszów, UAM 2012.

of Poznań⁸ or Stanisław Juszczak⁹. Subjective enmity, in turn, is an expression of personal hatred of someone weaker. It is a type of rational sadist who experience satisfaction from the physical and/or psychological maltreatment of children. Among others, Jacek Pyżalski¹⁰ writes about this using the example of cyber-bullying. Due to the entanglement of education and development in general social processes, the specifics of mutual relations between the caregiver and caretaker, the multitude of paragons and subjects of education, including contradictory or competitive ones, and the delayed effects of this process, there may emerge in its course unfavourable or even harmful (pseudo-educational) effects affecting the development of those under care.

I have noticed on a wall of one of the houses in Lublin, Poland, an enormous advertisement showing a young, elegant man, amended by the following sentence: "BEING YOURSELF IS A LUXURY". Well, in a normal family, being yourself is not a luxury, but the norm, the obvious fact, and in a dysfunctional family in which the child is alienated, feels as if they were an obstacle, a burden, etc. BEING ON-LINE using a mask of anonymity confirms observations by cultural anthropologists, ethnographers of the virtual world, and confirms the experience of such children that may be summarised by statements such as: "*Here I can convince myself that I can truly be myself, the real "I", Here we express our souls*" or "*Here it is easy for me to be many persons simultaneously*"¹¹.

On-line technologies thus aren't the source of social alienation for everyone. I believe that children who are already alienated in their own families can win back their identity, reconstruct their per-

⁸ H. Krauze-Sikorska, M. Klichowski, *Świat digital natives. Młodzież w poszukiwaniu siebie i innych*, Poznań, WN UAM 2013.

⁹ S. Juszczak, *Człowiek w świecie elektronicznych mediów – szanse i zagrożenia*, Katowice, Wydawnictwo UŚI 2000.

¹⁰ J. Pyżalski, *Agresja elektroniczna wśród dzieci i młodzieży*, Sopot, GWP 2011; idem, *Agresja elektroniczna i cyberbullying jako nowe ryzykowne zachowania młodzieży*, Kraków, Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls” 2012.

¹¹ Ibidem, p. 158.

sonality (...) *perceiving their lives through the prism of possible modes of life offered by all kinds of mass media*¹². Let us not be deluded, and let us not create such expectations, or – as the sociologist Jan Szcze- pański aptly described it years ago – let us not generate peripheral needs among those under our care in a situation, where they are not able to satisfy their basic, first-order needs. Never intermediate, because the virtual “touch”, movement, etc., will never be the same as the experience of natural, direct contact or the feeling or the experience of natural movement. Even more so, I do not need to refer this to the spiritual and psychological, the emotional and the sensory. Reality is where the Internet is not, just like the Internet is but indirect access to reality that is not available to us directly.

The fact that the virtual, on-line world frequently functions as a synonym of the real world, perhaps, to a certain extent, experienced as highly and as equally, and similarly importantly – due to the stimuli received from it and transmitted to it – however, it is not real, because that is not its ontological status. Perhaps it indeed has consequences for our real lives, but from the psycho-social point of view it is nothing new in this respect (e. g. there was a blind-date show on television, and a future partner can just as well be met through other media, e. g. printed press). I do not need to expand upon this in our respectable circle of experts.

One of the attributes of reality is spatiality, and hence, education science must be found at every spot in actual and virtual space, and itself it should have some kind of spatial structure. A debate focusing on issues of socialisation, education or upbringing in both these zones is not an argument of disembodied spirits existing outside of space of actual history, as it applies to specific characters, even if they are the subjects of animation, technological constructs. Any one of these spaces can be explored, and one can enter their lives, because each character creates or co-determines the actual reasons for life of each of us. Their ontological and ontic foundations cannot be separated from the axiological foundations, because – as the philos-

¹² Ibidem, p. 162.

opher Andrzej Nowicki accurately noted on space: *“Its constituent components can be: a) independent of one another, b) one can serve the other as a foundation; c) they may share a border due to the subdivision of a larger area into parts, d) they can partially overlap, e) one may fit in the other, and f) they may permeate each other”*¹³. Let us thus study, let us analyse, how both these spaces (the real and the virtual) and the levels and items existing in them meet. Let us not create a pedagogy of borders, because it is a way towards self-exclusion.

Contemporary social sciences decode the post-modern world as a world facilitating fragmentation of identity of persons, its distribution, even its staging or orchestration. Accordingly, the phenomena of the post-modern world cannot be approached as if we would still be dealing with a world from the past era, a modern world, because our actions – I am thinking of education science specialists here – will be ineffective, as not fitting in with the freedom and pluralism, the heterogeneity and continued staging of differences, not the uniformation of identities of those under our care. As Zbyszko Melosik writes on the subject: *In an era of modernity, the borders of identity were clearly defined, cohesive and stable. Its discipline was based on a precise response to the question: “who are you allowed to be, and who aren’t you”. Presently, disciplining one’s identity entails the duty of being fragmented – the message “you have to be such and such” was replaced with the message “you can be each one (simultaneously). So, I believe, we are dealing here with disciplining identity through the construction of a feeling of freedom in the area of making consumer choices (assuming that identity “plays out” mainly around consumption)*¹⁴.

The role of education in the post-modern world

The world of every child, and of every adult, together with “THEIR” world in all its forms assumes OTHERS as subjects that

¹³ A. Nowicki, *Spotkania w rzeczach*, Warszawa, PWN 1991, p. 255.

¹⁴ Z. Melosik, *Tożsamość, ciało i władza. Teksty kulturowe jako (kon)teksty pedagogiczne*, Poznań–Toruń, Edytor 1996, pp. 106–107.

co-constitute it. OTHERS are for the subject always an open possibility, regardless of whether they are actually, or just intermediately, virtually, present in it. None of us may negate or hinder access by or presence of ANOTHER to or in our own SELF, as they would necessarily have to assume the lack of ability of a person to recognise the possibility of co-existence of two worlds. For education specialists, key is the response to the question – how is the virtual world experienced by those under our care, and what do they “carry” in themselves of this world? Perhaps it would be worthwhile to use the category of intersubjectivity that is becoming one of the basic terms in social sciences. *The space of interpersonal relations, the sphere of the inter-objective, and that which is “public” – as these are the relevant dimensions when one would talk of intersubjectivity – is assumed in all important theories of broadly-understood human sciences or legislation*¹⁵. If one would consider upbringing as a phenomenon emerging “between” the virtual assignor of meanings and their recipient (the learner, the one cared for), then they may not just be reduced to anything that is party just to the sender (caretaker) or integrated solely with the person under care, and they furthermore cannot be subjected just to any general laws. *What plays out between us and does not belong to just one entity or to all together. In this sense it creates a no-man’s land, a borderland that both joins and divides. Anything present in just such a way that it escapes our own access, is called – alien*¹⁶.

Upbringing or education in light of such an approach is not just someone’s action or the subject or effect of it, but something that occurs in intersubjective space. Hence, one can perceive education at the same time from two sides engaged in the process – the (directly or indirectly) acting subject and the subject experiencing one’s actions (also directly or indirectly) as a single thing. *The difference here are aspects, but not education, which is one. This perception from two different sides should not be looking at two different things, but at “one*

¹⁵ P. Makowski, *Wymiary intersubiektywności. Słowo wstępne*, [in:] *Intersubiektywność*, ed. by Piotr Makowski, Kraków, Universitas 2012, p. 7.

¹⁶ B. Waldenfels, *Podstawowe motywy fenomenologii obcego*, przeł. J. Sidorek, Warszawa 2009, p. 108–109.

and the same thing". We look through two different windows, but are looking inside the same room. And just like a cone "projected" on one surface looks like a circle, and "projected" onto another one – seems as if a triangle, education "projected" on an experiencing subject is different than education "projected" on the acting subject. But just like neither the circle nor the triangle are a cone, education is not one or the other aspect of education¹⁷.

Hence, one cannot perceive these two worlds separately, as a set of two independent, stand-alone components – subjects – or build walls to separate one, as they are present. Indeed, any kind of (...) social union is living fusion. Our psyche is by its very nature two-fold and always functions in the categories of "I" and "us". This duality was also registered by psychology (...). So, it is not as was suspected historically that an isolated, ready, closed personality will freely take on an attitude with respect to other, equally independent personalities, but that from the earliest years of our lives, our psyche develops by us and the environment perceiving, seeing and parsing the alien "I" in itself, and its own – in others', experiences itself in the environment, and the environment in itself. (...) the individual and society are not terms of substances, but of functions and (...) that is why all attempts at cause-and-effect separation be it of the individual from the group or the group from individuals are utterly false. These functions can, alas, be characterised by various levels of tension, and this is how various forms of social relationships differ. (...)

The intensification of one's personal life becomes at the same time the inclusion in oneself of broader social areas, and an increase of intensity of psychological life around us acts to stimulate our psyche. To put this in the category of duality of our psyche, one could say that strengthening the "I" causes at the same time the strengthening of "we" and vice versa. In this way, personality and society seem to be immobile beings, and become intertwining processes¹⁸. Nowadays we more frequently resort to the cate-

¹⁷ J. Filek, *Pytanie o istotę wychowania*, „Studia Filozoficzne” 1984, No. 4, p. 125.

¹⁸ L. Witkowski, *Dwoistość jako kategoria i paradygmat w pedagogice polskiej (o pracach Bogdana Suchodolskiego metodologicznie inaczej)*, pre-print of conference lecture, „Problemy współczesnej metodologii” Komitetu Nauk Pedagogicznych PAN, Wydziału Pedagogiki i Psychologii Uniwersytetu w Białymstoku, Wszechnicy Mazur-

gory of identity than personality, the I. This term is, however, just as abstract as the other, and social sciences really do not provide us with a clear message of response to fundamental questions: *How so we know who we are, and how do others identify us? How does our feeling of being unique individuals relate to the fact that always and everywhere we share certain aspects of our identity with many other people? How do we reconcile our feeling of continuity of ourselves with the awareness that for various people, in various situations, we are different? Is it possible for us to become someone or something else than we are now? Can one just "be oneself?"*¹⁹.

So, when we just pose the question of whether the internet will replace schools and parents in education and upbringing? – we are making a mistake. First of all, because there are no children in general or parents in general, that children are not equal to children just like parents are not equal to other parents, and second of all because both worlds intertwine, supplement each other whether one would want it or not. An individual cannot in the virtual world tend to ANOTHER, ALIEN that it experiences differently than when they would have to approach it face to face, but without being obligated to reverse the relation of the OTHER to the SELF, if its intermediation does not make it symmetrical. The parties are not the source of moral responsibility with respect to each other.

It is also good to know, which category of parents and children is the subject of our cognition or pedagogical. Enemies of children learn from the Internet faster and more about their possible utilisation than children could be able to gain knowledge on how to recognise subjective and objective enemies, and how to defend themselves against them. Adults always had, and always will have, this advantage over children, despite the fact that they are able to surf the web better and more efficiently. If one were to assume, following Zygmunt Bauman, that all inhabitants of the Earth are subject to

skiej w Olecku, September 11th-12th, 2000. Olecko-Kraków-Toruń-Warszawa 2000, pp. 21-22.

¹⁹ S. Rudnicki, *Ciało i tożsamość w internecie. Teoria. Dyskurs. Codziennosc*, Warszawa, WN SCHOLAR 2013, p. 27.

the already irreversible process of globalisation, this means that children are also “globalised”²⁰. Thus, following the footsteps of researchers of this phenomenon, it is worthwhile to consider what does this mean for people, and in particular, what this process means for children?

The end of geography in a global world of interpersonal relations

We are the witnesses of the end of geography, as distances cease to be meaningful. The world has become smaller for everyone, even if it is not at arm’s reach for everyone. Some are divided by globalisation, others united in something. Education scientists ask themselves the question, to what extent does this process initiate, with respect to children, additional factors of their marginalisation, and to what extent does it facilitate their development? To what extent does globalisation impact the situation of children in the world? Can one find negative as well as positive aspects of it?

Table 1. Two dimensions of two worlds

	The real	The virtual
Positive aspect	Educationability	There is no duality here, but clearly positive intentions, the readiness of support, aid, mentoring, coaching, etc.
Negative aspect	Pseudo-education	A hidden scheme, potential possibility of instrumental treatment of ANOTHER, using, manipulating them, etc.

Source: own work.

Some believe that globalisation should be supported, others – that it should be combatted or controlled or supervised. If one were

²⁰ Z. Bauman, *Globalizacja. I co z tego dla ludzi wynika*, translated by E. Klekot, Warszawa, PIW 2000.

to assume, however, that it means experiencing a new quality, then perhaps it would at least be worth it to look at how it impacts the shape of our children's childhood. *The key is for globalisation processes – imminent, perhaps even historically necessary – not to take place without us. Our culture must strive to elevate to the highest possible level that which is most valuable in our own culture*²¹. Man needs help to better find their way in existing and other cultures that they are up against. Education and upbringing should thus aid one to cope with the plurality of human cultures, understand them and break the feeling of uncertainty. *Through inner maturity we should elevate that which is particular and most own to what is universal. The perfect should be given to the world. And in this, not only passive, but primarily creative way, become participants in globalisation*²².

Social philosophy and sociology in post-modernity indicate ever stronger distancing of individuals from all that is social, common, only focusing on what is personal and dependent on the individual. We enter a state of neo-narcissistic self-adoration. Education specialists should thus not avoid the nihilistic context of inculturation of younger generations. As the Italian psychologist and philosopher Umberto Galimberti writes, cultural nihilism hit the weakest link of post-modern societies, meaning, children and youths, (...) *creeping into their souls, entering their thoughts and feelings. In this way, it demolishes their perspectives and desiccates their dreams*²³. The nihilism of youths is expressed by the following symptoms:

1. Lack of interest in schools, bullying the weak in schools; education turns into an economic battle of cool and quantifiable indicators of success, without emotion ties between them.
2. Emotive vacuum – the result of uptake from the media of emotionally extreme experiences without the ability to select and analyse these.

²¹ W. Stróżewski, *Kultura i rozwój*, Tygodnik Powszechny, 2001, No. 1, p. 12.

²² Ibidem.

²³ As quoted in: A. Rajský, *Nihilistický kontext kultivácie mladého človeka*, Filozoficko-etický pohľad, Trnava, Typi Universitatis Tyrnaviensis 2009, p. 139.

3. Lack of the notion of intimacy – shame, disgrace, shyness protect our intimacy, our freedom and the core of our personality when we decide on the type of relations that we would like to form with others. Reality shows confirm that in society, the division between the internal and the external, discretion, privacy and publication of one's secrets, is vanishing.
4. The allure of drugs and designer drugs.
5. Indifference to death – daily media bombardment with a cocktail of sex and violence. Death has become a product without a broader meaning or negative consequences in the homogeneous, virtual world.
6. Indifference, psychopathy, sociopathy – generation X and generation Q.
7. Ritual violence – during the Olympic games, stadium hooliganism, participation in violence orgies, extreme events, euphoria due to excess, harassment of others²⁴.

Michael Adler from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada, indicates based on conducted research the following traits of a pathological narcissist:

- *Increased feeling of importance (e. g. exaggerating their achievements and talents, expecting recognition from superiors without according effects);*
- *Indulging in fantasies on his unlimited success, power, perfection, beauty or ideal love;*
- *Believing that they are unique and lonely, and seeming to understand that they should become closer to other persons (offices) of higher orders;*
- *Expecting constant admiration;*
- *Having the feeling of being in demand, e. g. having heightened expectations;*
- *Conformist when dealing with other people: using others to achieve their own goals;*

²⁴ Ibidem, pp. 160-167.

- *Losing the ability to co-experience; rejecting experiencing emotions and the needs of others;*
- *Often envying others or believing that others envy them;*
- *Arrogant traits, pompous behaviour and attitudes*²⁵.

The meaning of school education

School is and will be necessary for youths also in the 21st century as it will help them find their reasons for living, the lack of which leads to all kinds of psychological trauma. Live in the void means an existence in a sterile culture, e. g. a culture without a vision of the past or future, without rules to organise it, without clear values and authorities. *The reason for school is found in exactly this, that individuals learn in an environment to subordinate their individual needs to group interests, as opposed to mass communication media that stimulate individual reactions and private experiences*²⁶.

In changing societies, there exists a sufficient volume of proof of the necessity of school education before children accept it as a value and internalise it. *The case is primarily of creating an appropriate environment for them to support their cooperation, sensitivity and responsibility for others. Exactly this is why school demands pupils to proceed at a specific place and time in line with specific rules, e. g. raising hands when one would want to speak their mind, and remaining silent when others speak, or not chewing gum, not getting up before the bell rings, not leaving the class room, and to have patience for persons learning more slowly. This process is referred to as acculturation, the formation of civilised people*²⁷.

In the view of Neil Postman, everyone dealing with issues of education of children and youths must solve two basic problems: the technical and the metaphysical. The first of these deals with

²⁵ K. Hvižd'ala, *Interviewer aneb restaurování kontekstů. Rozhovor s M. M. Marešovou*, Portál, Praha 2010, pp. 60–61.

²⁶ N. Postman, *Keine Götter mehr. Das Ende der Erziehung*, Berlin, Berlin Verlag 1995, p. 66.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 68–69.

methods and means thanks to which youths gain knowledge, hence pedagogues deal with the issue of where, when and how should teaching take place. *However, it is worth remembering at the same time that the technique of learning is very frequently overestimated, and hence, people assign to it much more than it really deserves. As the old saying goes: - All roads lead to Rome, and all are right. It is similar with learning. Nobody can say that that or another type of learning is the best*²⁸. In truth, one can become a different person thanks to what one learns, but for this purpose one needs not only a vision, concept or attitude towards the world, but primarily its substantiation, and this is already a metaphysical issue. This is not about any motivation towards learning, awakening interest in the content of education, passing exams or doing homework, but something much more abstract, something of which pupils are not aware and something that is not easy to describe, without which school cannot function. I am thinking here of the world of timeless, universal values that were described in Poland's constitution and the law on the education system as Christian values.

Educators - in light of analyses of culture sociologists of the United States - belong to a small professional group that is particularly full of admiration for the god of technology. There are even pedagogues who believe that technological progress in the transfer of information is so large that soon, schools will be needed by neither children nor adults. Outside of the classroom, one can obtain much more quickly much more information about issues of interest. Accordingly, e. g. Diane Ravitch, former Assistant Secretary of Education under the Secretary of Education of the United States, believed that (...) *in this new world of pedagogical plenty, children and adults will be able to dial up a programme on their home television to learn whatever they want to know, at their own convenience. If little Eva cannot sleep, she can learn algebra instead. At her home-learning station, she will tune in to a series of interesting problems that are presented in an interactive medium*²⁹.

²⁸ Ibidem, p. 70.

²⁹ Ibidem.

Postman criticises this perspective, believing that this is not the case of a new technology, but a certain type of open determinism of a world of images and a surreal world. Man is not free in his choices, but adapts their needs to the ready offers of the consumer industry. It cannot be denied that the idea is interesting to turn on the home computer to reconstruct a simulation of biological life forms or conduct a teleconference with a scientist on a given subject who has specific research successes in a given field, instead of sitting in a boring class room. It is difficult to imagine, however, that scientists around the world would be ready to participate in thousands of phone conferences with pupils who have the fancy of doing homework with them. Postman thus poses the critical questions:

- Will a trip into the virtual world really eliminate boredom from the learning process? If so, will pupils want to return to the real world? Is it not so that just like all technologies were in the past, these are a kind of a pact with the devil, e. g. that they give something, at the same time taking something away? Does entering virtual reality cause computer technology to become the main motivation, authority and psychological advisor in the solution to human problems? Which content of learning will be neglected, and which impossible to provide?

Schools as state institutions are not able to change societies, being but a reflection of their attitudes. At the same time, there exist opposing views as to the goals of school education, as some citizens are in favour of adapting children and youths at schools to accept the world, with all its rules, compulsions, limitations and prejudices on the existing culture; others expect schools to shape critical minds, enable in pupils independence and self-sufficiency far away from conventional cliches of their time, and with enough power to effect social change.

Media pedagogy cannot limit itself to knowledge about media, the genesis of their emergence and evolution, to normative sighs, alternative (auto-)educational utopias, multitudes of surveys on views about media to give rise to fear of temporary and marginal or

possible threats to children and youths. This is quite unrelated to pedagogy! Science should facilitate, through its interdisciplinary approach, to exploring the virtual world, recognising, supervising, estimating and undertaking various kinds of application, experimental, reformatory or innovative initiatives with the participation of the most creative educators and scientists in cooperation with hardware and software companies, with creators of the virtual world. This space, in actuality, differs little from that in which we move about daily, meeting each other or our pupils, those under our care or those we are to educate.

Let us not scare societies, in particular the young generation, with media, the virtual world, because thus we exclude ourselves from their space and the intermediate public sphere as unbelievable, because politically correct commentators of ideologically marginal phenomena. Pathologies were always present and always will be, irrespective of how much we would like to introduce prevention, isolate ourselves from them or exaggerate, in a scientifically unsubstantiated manner, the alleged ubiquity of their presence across the entire population or its majority. Pedagogy never was and should not be a science of the lost, the frustrated, the pessimistic, mainstream or media-present quasi-experts and surveys because their value loses power on the day of publication. The basic role of the pedagogue is to lead upwards, positive and active accompanying of others in their lives and development, wary, sensitive and empathic coexistence with our children and youths, and in present times, perhaps in a particular manner also with adults and older people, because communication illiteracy in a time of new technologies is broadening, deepening the generational divide.

Evil is good for the media and sells well, but luckily it does not prevail in the world, including the virtual world. Pedagogy, in effect, is not about spreading the marginal instance of the evil of both worlds, because in this way it contributes to it multiplying, expanding and not to the creation of positive socialisation, education and self-education or self-achievement of everyone. I understand that one can achieve academic recognition on this basis easily

and quickly, prosper fruitfully thanks to one's lectures, foreign conference visits, courses and expertises, because it fashionable is what is temporarily worrying and in the public eye. However, this has little in common with the science of education. Because of EVIL, pathologies, hurt, the sphere of the virtual world cannot be ignored, and it even more cannot be used as a tool for spreading fear because this would equal excluding oneself as a pedagogue from possible and necessary actions, and foremost from our presence and engagement.

The fact that we have an archaic, former-century, centralised education system, meaning, one that is completely out of touch with the political order, with society, and mostly with the education reality of the post-modern world, does not mean that it will be better if we maintain the great moods of the ignorants in power so that they could continue to satisfy private and party needs at the cost of millions of children and youths under compulsory education. I understand that one can make a great profit on this, that there are people already sniffing for further seven-figure education grants to be subdivided in local governments. Is this not the reason for inner-party clique battles for local governance in the coming years? Remember, just like they were formerly, these resources will be spent on simple consumption, furthering power and strengthening one's colleagues, and not to change the quality of education in Poland!

Without decentralisation and local governance of schools, and without improvements to their management, we will not be able to let go of the deeply rooted remains of "homosovietism" and we will not be able to cope with the formation of a modern and effective system of education and the education of young generations in our country, we will not stand to the challenges of post-modernity. Polish education needs a structural, programmatic and methodic revolution so that with each passing year, public resources are not wasted on it. For the purpose of emotional, social and communication development of children, improved should be the care for such classes like: reading, speaking and telling stories, listening, playing (fun), performances and music. An end to uniform and homogene-

ous school education in favour of an introduction of diversity and multiculturalism. The school should become a kind of a house of learning, a laboratory – an educational workshop, and the teacher should shift to the position of educational and developmental advisor of children.

The key to solving the above problems of education could be, among others:

- using modern forms of integrated learning (topical blocks instead of learning by topic);
- multimedia learning (or tele-learning);
- workshop learning (training of various competences) instead of learning;
- the teacher as a trainer-advisor or coach, instead of a transmitter of knowledge;
- letting go of classes lasting 45 minutes;
- introducing open classes and the project method instead of teacher-focused classes³⁰.

The above changes should make the learning process more effective, motivating and caring for the comprehensive physical, psychological, social and political development of pupils. More time is thus gained for movement, playing, co-operation with persons of interest, working in pairs and groups, development of cognitive, action and conflict-solving competences, prevention, compensation and integration of learning content. Computer-based “tele-education” as home learning permits optimum usage of time for learning, as the participants can by themselves control the speed at which they cope with specific content, repeat them, expand upon them and integrate them with other knowledge. Attention is also drawn to the fact that tele-education reduces the syndrome of professional burn-out in teachers, minimising issues of discipline, reducing the effects of unjust judging (exaggerating or diminishing actual achievements).

³⁰P. Struck, *Erziehung von gestern, Schüler von heute, Schule von morgen*, München, Wien, Carl Hanser Verlag 1997.

By equipping schools with perfect education programmes, the direct, negative influence of certain teachers on pupils is also eliminated. Thanks to computer-based tele-education, knowledge conveyed over the course of a class can be mastered in a time that is shorter by at least three weeks, and the durability of the remembered content is at the same time improved by the period of learning speed reduction. The internet is, however, no boarding house, and the interaction of pupils with the multimedia world must be appropriately controlled. In them must also be instilled a critical approach to it so that the pupils are not enslaved by the media. Teachers gain time to shape in pupils the competence neglected by tele-education, meaning, creativity, social and moral sensitivity, introduction to a world of values, physical activity, making social relations, satisfying emotional needs, coping with conflict situations, etc.

Democracy demands not only social but also political maturity from school graduates, hence it is immensely important to prepare the young generation to appropriately choose values and make decisions in line with these. This industrial society needs a school that teaches, that has knowledge, and the information society should replace this type of institutional education with a school-laboratory (*Lernwerkstatt*), dominated by shaping key competences such as the ability to gather information and act, the ability to cooperate in a group, creativity and the ability to think globally.

Even if school was to be replaced by remote education, we will still refer to it as school, even if we perceive it differently. It will be stripped of learning programmes that dull pupil creativity. It will also not divide pupils into class units according to their age, as this diminishes the possibility of them learning from each other. The school of the future will be much more natural and organised like education of young children, meaning that learning, life and love will not be separated from one another in it. Working on computers creates for them enormous opportunities of development of their creative potential and achievements. They will be able to compose music, write, read, draw, count, communicate or just play. Even if

somebody thinks that they are right in their response to the question in the title of my paper, (...) *this does not means that this affirmation refers to everything, and if one is not right, this does not mean that one is wrong about everything*³¹.

Incontrology as the vantage point to healthy interpersonal relations

The social philosopher, the creator of incontrology – Andrzej Nowicki – indicated the possibility of creating common meeting spaces for pedagogues, psychologists, teachers, therapists, priests, caretakers, parents, etc., thanks to which it would be possible to reconcile two worlds of the everyday life of children and adults, namely:

1. If one would want to find positive values, but also warn of negative experiences of persons they meet in both spaces (the real and the virtual), then it is noteworthy to identify mutual expectations, meaning, desires so that what is to take place and what is to be effective or what is to be designed, as a result of care for the course or fear of the emerging interference would facilitate required and good effects;
2. Assuming that “sources not queried remain silent”, one should strive to form key questions, which – akin to powerful magnets – will necessitate responses, dividing what is important from what is secondary³².
3. Fruitful and enriching for us are meetings primarily with what is different, new, alien, so meeting spaces should be filled with sensitivity to difference, strangeness, uniqueness, diversity³³.
4. Fruitful meetings are not meetings that strip us of our personality, but those that enrich it, so the space of the planned

³¹ J.-CV. Kaufmann, *Ego. Socjologia jednostki. Inna wizja człowieka i konstrukcji podmiotu*, translated by K. Wakar, Warszawa, Oficyna Naukowa 2004, p. 127.

³² A. Nowicki, *Spotkania w rzeczach*, Warszawa, PWN, 1991, p. 260.

³³ *Ibidem*, p. 261.

- meeting should be filled with critical attitudes, evaluating independently all content of the meetings³⁴.
5. The most important component of intellectual independence, conditioning progress, is encompassing every object (and in that, every subject), so accordingly, the meeting in its aspect of the possibility of being different than it is³⁵.
 6. Filling the space of planned meetings with thoughts and objects as a composition, the values of which can make the meeting space a work of art, meaning, something worth meeting
 7. The purpose of a meeting cannot just be enriching one's personality achieved through internalisation of the most valuable values borne by the objects (and subjects) met, but also, and primarily, enriching the existing world of human creations by formation of new values. So, the meeting space should also be filled with that which exceeds the meeting, a perspective of exteriorisation of our personality, which, enriched by the meeting, creates new works, which were not there until then³⁶.

The Internet has changing the world, and the world is changing the Internet. Education cannot be a lost vagrant on-line. *The world is not as much slipping, as rather careering towards a new transnational dystopia. (...) The Internet, our best tool of liberation, was transformed into the most dangerous assistant of totalitarianism with which we ever had to deal with. The Internet has become a threat to human civilisation. These transformations have taken place quietly, as persons aware of them operate in the global surveillance business and are not motivated to speak up. Global civilisation, abandoned on its current trajectory, will within a few years turn into a post-modern surveillance dystopia, from which nobody but the best-trained individuals will be able to escape*³⁷.

³⁴ Ibidem.

³⁵ Ibidem, p. 262.

³⁶ Ibidem, pp. 262-263.

³⁷ J. Assange, J. Appelbaum, A. Müller-Maguhn, J. Zimmermann, *Cyberpunks. Wolność i przyszłość internetu*, przeł. Marcin Machnik, Gliwice, Wydawnictwo HELION 2013.

Pedagogy as a science cannot be a tool serving anyone, not governments, not markets, even more so information media, because pseudo-surveys mislead the government and public opinion not giving anything in return. Interested parties should be interested in using research papers, truly scientific ones, and not surveys, to responsibly create their own tasks (in politics, education, production, innovation, etc.). Let us stop complaining and whining. If challenges are in the title of the debate, then please notice that they are nothing new for education or other social sciences, humanities or medical science. Man is still the same person that develops and needs social, including professional, support, even if they are subject to external surveillance until the end, partially implanted with electronics. Teachers, caretakers, educators cannot be replaced by robots in their roles, which does not mean that robots are not necessary in school education.

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