

PEDAGOGY IN POSTMODERNITY

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Abstract

To avoid a conflict between the *mentality* of the society in which we live and the *didactic procedures* that school employs for the education of youngsters represents a fundamental challenge for the institutional authorities. Present day society needs new formulas of public and intellectual adjustment, expecting behaviours that are different from those proposed by the educational institutions.

Modernity is fashioned beyond the outlines that had ensured its virtues, features in which school used to excel being now put under question. “A new (post-modern) world” has carved its place in the very body of modernity. The restless youngsters vehemently dispute the personality traits, behaviours and, most of all, the values of modernity. Post-modernity has no patience to wait respectfully to be invited among the structures of modernity. The new society is no longer satisfied with a shaping of the tree’s branches; it demands a cutting down of the whole crown, a replacement of the entire “plantation.” Post-modernity unscrupulously barges in upon modern institutions, with a mind of changing their functions and behaviours. One such institution is *school*, which today lacks the authority for implementing the “new education.” The generation conflict has exceeded the limits of a natural, progressive and positive contradiction.

Cohabiting at the borderline of different mentalities, the generations (modern and post-modern) embrace a disjunctive attitude. The moderns would like the younger generation to take over at least part of their values, which they had also inherited and which had given them an existential satisfaction; the restless post-modern youngsters, on the other side, challenge the becoming, the options, and even the structure of the formers’ behaviours. They try to occupy “the armchair of authority before the wall-to-wall carpet has been changed,” lecturing on authority and expecting the “grown-ups” to share their temptations. They propose new guiding values, defying old ones either by ignoring them or by altering those that invoke them. The *new world*, with its globalizing ideas and neo-humanistic attitude, with its “wholes” built up of pieces and its disguised stories, needs a *new* kind of *education*. School today seems unable to find solutions to such a contagious and passionate behavioural aggression. We get the impression that educational institutions are desperately looking for solutions to overcome the deadlock in which

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they find themselves. Pedagogy has a new mission: *to offer didactic paradigms and methodological ideas suited for post-modern education*. The dynamism of despairs that can be witnessed in field of education, the social pressure exercised upon the pedagogical epistemology, have urged me to write the present study, even though I am aware that certain issues deserve greater attention, while others require serious reconsideration

Keywords: pedagogy, education, didactics, sciences of education.

A new mentality

In contemporary society, didactic undertakings must focus on the formation of a new kind of individual, with new dimensions of his mental, intellectual and moral capacities. Priority is focused on developing creative, innovative and inventive thinking, a shrewd and critical mind, spirit of observation, flexibility and ingenuity of the mind. The basic responsibility for accomplishing this requirement falls on the school system, which represents not only the main factor for the conservation of mankind's spiritual heritage, but also one of the main vectors of social dynamics. Essentially, the training-educational process focuses on the development of highly operational abilities, aimed at engaging and fostering the levels of thinking: analysis, synthesis, comparison, analogy, various types of reasoning and argumentation.

Due to the need for (individual, group or social) adjustment to unpredictable situations, to new social processes and professional problems, teaching today must focus on developing flexible thinking, as well as abilities, such as that of using the acquired competences with maximum effectiveness, or that of acquiring new ones in accordance with the rapid progress of social life. Formative training targets the acquisition and development of skills of intellectual work: selection and systematisation, establishing new links, making generalizations. Social relations are stimulated; complex mental features are dynamised; qualities – such as independence, originality, curiosity, investigative spirit – are cultivated. In other words, in the age of (post)modernity, school gives precedence to formation, rather than information, to the development of the learner's personality, rather than his intellectual growth, to the improvement of his productive-creative thinking, rather than the development of his memory. This complex issue affects all structural and operational aspects of the training-educational process, challenging teachers to reconsider teaching techniques so as to find new didactic procedures for their classroom work. The postmodern approach

suggests that school can become an organisation focused primarily on a pragmatic kind of education. It needs to develop a space for itself where youngsters can find answers to their questions.

Pedagogy on new foundations

The restructuring of a scientific domain begins with establishing the language used. Knowledge finds its expression in the modality of naming. The aim of describing a scientific reality is to identify the representative outline by which it is set apart from others it may get confused with. The personality of a science does not exclude variations and intersections with other domains of knowledge. The specific concepts and notions that describe a “science” denominate its identity and safeguard its condition. In its status of (young) science of education, *pedagogy* has defined a set of concepts and notions that ascertain its identity, distinguished from psychology, from philosophy or sociology: “*The evolution of **Pedagogy** can be surveyed from the perspective of the effort accumulated in the direction of acquiring the status of autonomous science, a complex and contradictory process that imposes certain limits to be overcome – limits of an etymological nature (in Greek, paid = child, agoge = to lead; paidagoia = to lead the child), historical (in the tradition of Antiquity, the paedagogus was a mere slave whose duty was to lead the child to school), methodological (pedagogy is viewed as an art, rather than a science), epistemological (given the uncontrolled extension of the domain of reference, approached by other sciences also, pedagogy has no sharply delimited object of study, it has no “epistemic object”)* (Noveanu & Potolea, 2007: 835²). The present study wishes to rehabilitate the science of pedagogy, on the one hand, and setting it apart from other sciences (such as psychology, sociology, anthropology or philosophy), on the other.

Today, pedagogy is in serious danger of being deprived of its scientific status, a danger fostered by the tendency of educationalists to dilute its character and by the ease with which they assimilate indiscriminately a terminology borrowed from other fields. I shall present arguments to show that pedagogy is a *comprehensive science* of education, that there is only one science of education, called *pedagogy*.

² All translations of the quotations are my own.

Is pedagogy still a science?

Detached from philosophy and sociology, **pedagogy** is considered to be a *science of education*, but the specialists' attempts to endow it with the logical connotations of an authentic science brought about a puzzling situation. Today, pedagogy is not (exactly) a science but, arguably, a sum of "sciences of education;" this situation usurps its status among the "sciences" it had delimited itself of. The most confused by this "theoretical clamor" were the practitioners, i.e. the educators meant to apply the theory to the field of training. The "sciences of education" (i.e. the "actional" components of the educational process, e.g. theory and methodology of the curriculum, theory and methodology of training, theory and methodology of assessment etc.) are thus turned into "practical sciences" (*theory and methodology* or *theory and practice*). With its "scientific" domain thus de-framed and with its structural components multiplied (and labeled as "sciences," with a plural form), the field they stand for is made to appear as less-than-serious and is severely taxed. As a consequence, neither psychologists nor sociologists or philosophers believe in pedagogy any more, because "pedagogicians" themselves have since undermined its unity and coherence.

If we were to accept the opinion of the French educationalist L. Not, we should accept one of two variants, i.e. to be viewed as either retrograde or out of fashion. "Today," he argues, "*it is retrograde to speak of pedagogy; in fashion are the sciences of education.*" (L. Not, 1984: 5). I accept the risk of appearing retrograde, pleading for a *science of education*, named **pedagogy**, with other theoretical preoccupations related to education put together under the umbrella term *pedagogical sciences*. Obviously, an analytical survey of the fundamental pedagogical notions is essential. ***Pedagogy must delimit its nucleus of specific terminology, its "hard core," which should reconsider its integrality and its scientific status.*** Without such clarification a *science of education* will run into serious difficulties, including an essential one: its breaking up into further "sciences of education" and its absorption by those domains of knowledge which promote terminological stabilization in a more determined way.

What arguments can we bring up to support the need to revise the present scientific status of **pedagogy**? The first terminological "Odyssey," perhaps a prejudice, is triggered by the word "**pedagogy**"

itself³. “**Pedagogy**” has detached itself of philosophy, of psychology, and later on, of sociology, claiming for itself the status of “*science of education*.” Pedagogy gives a theoretical form to the educational process, establishing its principles, structures and procedures of pragmatic configuration. But, by using the phrase “sciences of education,” “*pedagogists*” have sprayed out its concerns, turning the components into complementary sciences. The parts of the whole have broken up its unity, claiming for themselves the status of “sciences.” The obvious result was not only a degradation of **pedagogy** as a unitary science, but also a draining/a mutation of its content, a fact sustained by semantic incertitude. Due to this terminological vacillation, the “science” of pedagogy is now unable to offer strict theoretical solutions for the restructuring of procedures and the improving of the young generation’s general education. Furthermore, psychologists, sociologists, philosophers, doctors, anthropologists, started issuing doctrines for education from the perspective of their scientific domain, offering solutions for the restructuring of didactic activities. Such an interference looks like “harassment” (S. Cristea, 1996: 201), a harassment that pedagogy is unable to fight back.

The difficulties of educationalists to serve the domain they theorize result from their lack of preoccupation for an authentic terminology. By importing too many terms from other sciences – e.g. *curriculum, training, efficiency, strategy, design, manager, capability, project, goal* etc. – **pedagogy** runs the risk of diluting its “personality” even further. For example, by accepting the term “curriculum” in its corpus, Romanian (and European) **pedagogy** has compromised its status of science. Taken over without a stabilized sense, the word “*curriculum*” puzzles and confuses teachers by its lack of precision, various grammatical forms (in Romanian we have “*curricula*,” “*curricule*,” “*curriculumului*”, etc.). “Training” was imported from the military science, meaning “doing exclusively what the superior says”; “manager” was borrowed from the economic sciences, meaning “to administrate,” “to coordinate” and, perhaps, “to put the kitchen in order” (< Fr. “*ménage*”). Lack of scientific inspiration has led to formulations such as “*învățarea învățării*” (i.e. „learning teaching”), “*formarea formatorilor de formatori*” (i.e. “training trainer trainers”),

³ Since pedagogical thinking has long detached itself of the etymological origins of the word “pedagogy,” we view a justification based on the word’s genesis as obsolete.

“evaluarea evaluatorilor” (i.e. “evaluator evaluation”), “construirea competențelor” (i.e. “building competences”).

More than ever before, what is needed is the elaboration of a set of professionally designed specifications regarding the terminology of the science of education. A semantic study is required for the creation of a scientific corpus that should ensure long term structural coherence of the *pedagogical* terminology. We need an inventory of definitions, of representative types of studies, and especially, a critical, perhaps aggressively polemical, attitude aimed at eliminating errors and establishing precise options meant to clarify the basic concepts in the field.

Finally, practitioners (teachers of all levels, from those working in kindergartens to those teaching in high schools) are waiting for a *pedagogical paradigm* to be provided, a paradigm that can offer ideas and practical solutions to continuously deferred expectations of the (so called “post-modern”) present-day society. Scientific pedagogy needs to make order in its own domain before it can expect to become credible. The infrastructure in the pedagogical field for clarifications and delimitations is available: we, in Romania, have numerous Institutes of Pedagogical Sciences, a pedagogical press (incoherent as it may seem in the absence of a *Magazine of Pedagogy*), some twenty Faculties of Educational Sciences, a host of university professors with a Ph.D. in educational science, etc. This does not exclude teamwork with other sciences. The credibility and authority of pedagogy in the domain of the educational practice depends on a clarification of its terminology, of the concepts it operates with, of the systems of thinking it promotes.

National pedagogy, too, is in difficulty both in terms of epistemological delimitation and of pedagogical language: “*The dysfunctions are triggered by the personalized configuration of the educational information, by the confusions, the ambiguities inherent in certain terms and concepts, by the over-diminished or over-amplified significances of concepts, by the overindulgence in verbal clichés and in « super-concentrated » notions, removed by content and form from the educational requirements*” (Ionescu & Bocoș, 2009: 13). We share the opinion regarding the essential vice identified by the authors quoted above, a vice pertaining to the language, the linguistic invention, the strange codes employed – codes that fail to denote clearly enough the procedural field of education. The same risk results from the

“overindulgence” in a kind of pedagogical discourse that carries insufficient informational charge.

I am aware that, by operating exclusively at the level of language, logicians can easily refute my plea for a reconsideration of the scientific nature of pedagogy. I know only too well that language is the vehicle by which theories, laws and principles (which provide theoretical content to a science) take on the form of definitions, notions and explanations. A language that is vague and dominated by semantic fluidity indicates (and induces) vulnerability in the perception of the reality described. A fact is known only if language gives it a voice, e.g. a *theory* “represents a set of descriptive and explanatory pieces of knowledge regarding a domain”; or “explanatory mental constructions” (Șt. Bârsănescu, 1976: 350). A theory, a law⁴, a principle (or norm) is defined and explained by means of notions and concepts. Uncertain language betrays incoherent thinking.

Pedagogy and/or didactics

There is a tendency to dilute the epistemology of *general pedagogy* into *didactics* by extending didactics (in definition, at least) so as to include non-formal education, self-education and the education of adults. In a wider conceptualization, *didactics* intersects with *pedagogy*, by which process the two words used for describing the same educational reality become redundant⁵. A “generative explanatory model” for the concept has also been proposed, i.e. “the system of educational sciences,” which excludes altogether the word “pedagogy” and thus totally ignores the reality it ought to represent. In my opinion, *pedagogy* is the science of general education, while *didactics* is a descriptive and an applied science pertaining to the training process, a science that employs the conceptual apparatus of general pedagogy. In other words, *pedagogy* is the science of education, while *didactics* is the art of education.

⁴ “Scientific laws in education must not be confused with educational norms or rules; a law establishes what exists, while the rule prescribes what needs to be done.” (Șt. Bârsănescu, 1976: 355).

⁵ “Formal training (i.e. training viewed as a process) is not the exclusive subject of didactics, even if this is the aspect that has been studied most thoroughly. Today, the concept « didactics » has a very wide scope, its concerns extending far beyond school walls, to include teaching and self-education in informal and non-formal frameworks, as well as the systems of continuing education and of adult lifelong learning.” (M. Ionescu, M. Bocoș, 2009: 31).

With the title of his book published in 1995, *Arta și știința educației* (*The Art and Science of Education*), Cezar Bârzea triggered confusion, reflection and attitude. Art operates according to its inner, somewhat subjective rules, while scientific rules are entirely objective and rational. The author himself asserts this, when he says that “*a subject cannot be simultaneously science and art, as we are talking here of two modalities of knowledge that are fundamentally different.*” (C. Bârzea, 1995: 7). A copulative “and” placed between systematic reflections and esthetic impressions in the case of the educational phenomenon represents no more than an innocent challenge. **General pedagogy** is a speculative science since, as C. Cuceș (2002: 17) asserts, it has won for itself “an epistemic dignity” by fulfilling certain conditions:

It has an object of investigation (“the educational phenomenon”);

- It has its own tools for methodological investigation;
- It has a set of methodological research instruments
- It possesses principles, regularities and norms typical for the domain;
- It develops reflections into consistent theories.

Supporter of many theoretical mistakes (S. Cristea, C. Bârzea, E. Planchard, D. Popovici, 1998: passim) regarding “the leap from pedagogy to the sciences of education,” educationalist Ioan Negret asserts, with arguments borrowed from the field of logic, that pedagogy has acquired the status of an objective science, being today “*a normative and prescriptive scientific subject*” that has reached its “*full maturity*” (D. Popovici, 1998: 46). The same consensus is reached by M. Bocoș and D. Juncan (Bocoș & Juncan, 2008: 80-81), who argue that **pedagogy** is “*the integrative science of education*” and that “*contemporary pedagogy, as a form of reflection on education, places itself in an axiological-normative perspective and, simultaneously, has both a theoretical-explanatory character and a practical-applied one.*” F. Ortan makes a clear distinction between traditional pedagogy and the new pedagogy, which further complicates the concept’s ambiguity and status. For example, studying the problem from a certain perspective, he asserts that “*while traditional pedagogy focused on ideals, values and methods for achieving them, new pedagogy foregrounds elements of management, as well as decision and control evaluation.*” (F. Ortan, 2007: 105). Pedagogy is pedagogy, beyond time and space. Finally, but without considering his opinions as sufficient, M. Momanu argues that

pedagogy is a fundamental science, one that projects upon education an interdisciplinary vision; “*today, such an interdisciplinary vision on education is provided by pedagogy, which thus continues to remain the fundamental science of education*”⁶, a science that can integrate all reflections and results of scientific research on education” (M. Momanu, 2008: 80-81). The following definition by G.G. Antonescu also supports of the concept of **pedagogy**, when he asserts that “*pedagogy is the science which, based on knowledge of the human nature and taking into account the ideals towards which mankind should strive, establishes a system of principles that guide the educator’s intentional influence of the educated*” (G. G. Antonescu, 1930: 14). To avoid sounding outdated, I shall refrain from quoting the words of an outstanding Romanian educationalist from the previous century; let me, therefore, conclude by quoting the definition proposed by C. Cucuș: “*pedagogy studies the essence and the features of the educational phenomenon, the goal and tasks of education, its values and limits, its content, principles, methods and procedures of paideutic processes*” (C. Cucuș, 2002: 20). While acknowledging the “*epistemological maturity*” of contemporary pedagogy, as well as its status of “*integrative educational science,*” Bocoș argues that contemporary pedagogy alters “its bone structure”, its “disciplinary scientific matrix” by dividing concerns into “*macropedagogy/a pedagogy of systems, and micropedagogy/a pedagogy of teaching/learning and of self-directed learning*” (M. Bocoș, 2007: 13-17).

Pedagogy as a science

Numerous other opinions can be identified in the Romanian pedagogical literature, reflections of the European or American thinking. Unfortunately, no sooner had **pedagogy** consolidated its place among sciences than educationalists themselves set out to usurp it by replacing the concept defined with the *proximal genus* of the logical definition. It is disagreeable to notice the tendency to not only leave out the word “*pedagogy*” (and the reality thus named) from the system of educational sciences, but even to contest its very ability to be a speculative science (after the models “philology,” “psychology,” “sociology,” “anthropology,” “biology”). *Pedagogy is the science of education, a science whose function is to explain the educational reality*

⁶ Original emphasis.

on the basis of general norms regarding the appropriate integration of the individual in society.

(General) **pedagogy** is descriptive and normative, i.e. characteristics which set it apart from **didactics**, defined as an applied discipline that employs principles, norms, models and paradigms in the educational practice. **Pedagogy** cannot be an appendix of the sciences it broke away from (psychology, biology, sociology, anthropology), nor can it be diluted in the impersonal pot of “educational sciences.” The observations above do not exclude the intersection of socio-human sciences with natural sciences. The status of pedagogy in orchestrating sciences that deal with man’s fate in the universe can be neither contested nor claimed. The most fervent supporters of the idea of preserving pedagogy as an autonomous contemporary science should be those whose profession it is to serve the field of education. Take, for example, Dumitru Popovici who, in his analysis of “the avatars” of general pedagogy, questions the scientific status of education vehemently (D. Popovici, 1998: passim). Considering that pedagogy has reached a crossroad in its becoming, the author proposes to “re-elaborate” it, a project too easily overlooked by educationalists themselves. It involves “a processal-organic model” based on the social virtues of education. The individual’s adjustment occurs thanks to his capacity to process the information the social environment provides, an adjustment that leads to a new kind of behavior. The author is even tempted to suggest a new term for pedagogy, i.e. *educology*. Just like the author, I believe that it is essential to reassess the educational terminology calmly, so as to decontaminate the scientific territory of emotive phrasings, trivial ambiguities or metaphysical expressions. All conceptual language is meant to name a reality or experiments made in that reality. If a field of knowledge, e.g. education, claims for itself the status of science, then the logic of language follows the defining path set by scientific logic. A thorough analysis of the pedagogical language must begin by establishing the semantic relation between denominator and denominator, i.e. between *education* and *pedagogy*. A negligent attitude can be observed even in the texts of rigorous psycho-educationalists, where the word “education” is often used instead of “pedagogy” and vice-versa. The confusion results from a personal preference for nuanced expression, the fundamental rigor for logical perception being altogether ignored.

By replacing a relation with a theory of reality and vice-versa, by substituting para-reality with reality itself, theoreticians cause doubt and semantic suspicion. By defining **pedagogy** as a science of education, science is endowed with a propositional, verbal and, simultaneously, cognitive condition. In this position, **pedagogy** can claim for itself the *status of science*⁷ and, as a result, it is entitled to call for a *corpus of knowledge* that is well delimited from others that might intersect its way (psychology, anthropology and sociology). As a man of science, the Educationalist emits principled, normative and synthetic propositions on education. They take on the form of directive theories, descriptive principles and prospective norms, valid for a certain sum of realities and experiences analyzed. Pedagogy reinterprets the data supplied by other sciences (philosophy, psychology, sociology, medicine, biology), forming the foundations for a unitary and autonomous science, a science that can provide solutions for an efficient and rational organization of the educational process.

Pedagogy and education

Education is a social process – it engages individuals and communities – meant to improve personal and collective behaviors. Education represents a training ground and a suggestibility space for **pedagogy**. When the educator deals with the current, processal issues of education, he is describing a certain social reality in which language games and sentimental analyses have no restrictions. Such an educator can offer solutions to several components of the educational structure. By suggesting a paradigm or building a doctrine, a true **educator** targets a general speculative theory of education. Such rigor allows no room for either emotional phrases or moralist preferences, nor for logical structure deviations. Starting from the hypothesis according to which “*present-day education does not satisfy*,” the educator will study the scientific field of education and will generate a theory that should change the relationship between the domain’s components. The theory will be valid if “*new education satisfies*”.

⁷ A science consists of the logical expositions of certain truths that function as necessary laws and general principles. As far as we are concerned, they are applied to all identical situations that concern education. Thus, for example, the principles of intuition, of active learning, of an integrated education, of a passage from the concrete to the abstract, from the easy to the difficult, from the analytical to the synthetic, etc., represent stable values in pedagogy, values presented to the educational practice.

Education has been analyzed by numerous sciences, but only one provides a structuring of the ideas into doctrines. The syntagm “sciences of education” is acceptable only if **pedagogy**, as a science of education, acquires a status of integrative science, open to (and receptive of) other sciences it cooperates with for the clarification of numerous aspects of its fundamental domain: education. The difficulties of pedagogy – as a science of education – are triggered by the (justified) apprehension of intersecting with its scientific partners, of which it had scarcely managed to individualize itself. Just like psychology, sociology, philosophy and anthropology, **pedagogy** targets the problems of mankind, those of the human condition. The socio-humanistic sciences mentioned above have failed to provide a clear projection regarding man’s evolution/becoming: “*the human condition defines the inter-connection of the psychological structure with the biological and the social infrastructures*” (Mărgineanu, 1973: 213). Every person is the result of an ethos, and the system of education is enriched by the expressive molds of that ethos. **Education** serves the collective behavior, transmitting its mental and cultural genetics to the new generation. At the same time, **education** suggests and creates facilities meant to enrich the given genetics. A pedagogical model suits only an education based on the representative ethos, all other visions (even if verified as efficient) being excluded.

Let us now turn our attention to philosophers: “*Give educators the configuration of a representative humanistic ethos that should reflect education! Identify the specificity of the profile (social, economic, cultural, behavioral) of the community whose character and thinking we aim to educate!*” Then, and only then, will educators have a reliable landmark for education. School has a general function: to facilitate the integration of youngsters in the society to which they belong. But what happens outside school, in society, triggers an uninterrupted chain of experiences for learning and development. The **social ethos** exerts adjustment “pressures” upon the youngsters, pressures that are too persistent to ignore. The process of education is too complex and too individualized for an *apriori* and *apophtegmatique* formula. And again, pedagogy falls into a new error: is it a science of general education, or a science of institutionalized education?

Projective pedagogy

Consequently, to **pedagogy**, every new social configuration represents an important challenge and idea stimulator. I agree with the assertion of certain ideologists according to whom society relies on school to represent its political interests. School takes on the image and likeness of the community that produces it. When institutionalized education becomes too far removed from the expectations of society, **pedagogy** has the right to step in, providing normalizing paradigms for the relationship between school and society. This is the kind of situation we find ourselves in at present. The individual satisfactions of the child and the social experiences of the community do not provide a secure enough existential comfort. The role of **pedagogy** is to suggest structural theoretical solutions (principles, norms), while that of **didactics** is to put into practice, via its educational activity, the specific procedures for the spiritual development of man. Results will be reflected in education, as a summation of the values that every youngster assimilates so as to become part of the collective spiritual architecture.

Every rigorous theory is based on normativity. **Pedagogy** operates with theories, norms/ principles and causalities, based on an established philosophy which delimits the evolutionary process of the individual's biological forces. The norms assumed ascertain that the child should develop a harmonious (spiritual and biological) personality, a balanced psychological life and moral standards befitting those of society. The entire personality of the educated is made up of pieces, i.e. of cognitive education, esthetic education, moral education, etc. The relationship between these synergetic behaviors is congruent, working together dynamically for the crystallization of the core personality.

On the other hand, culture is a cause of, as well as a goal for education. Through culture, the educational process is activated, becoming in its turn the basic objective of the process: "*Cultural values are causes – from the perspective of collective social life (since they are a given for the children and youngsters in formation) and conscious goals – from the viewpoint of the young generations who get integrated in the rhythm of the culture*" (Todoran, 1946: 92). Consequently, if it is to provide decisional politicians with solutions for improving and correcting education, **pedagogy** must have personality and credibility.

A balanced pedagogical doctrine, thrifty in its ideas, will structure as coherently as possible the capacity of society (institutional and non-institutional) to harmonize with its own requirements the individual's bio-physiological development. Such a doctrine would meet with the individual's aspirations for self assertion, his need to fulfill his social obligations and to keep social relations in good repair by respecting the group's values. A pedagogical doctrine capable of suggesting an educational configuration consistent with the individual's aspirations and the community's requirement should be based on the idea of a balance between mutual duties and personal freedom.

Our age – so complex by its informational globalization (in which every person can identify or differentiate himself whenever he wishes) – requires a new type of pedagogical discourse. The educational theorist exceeds his condition of “didactician,” i.e. of theorist of educational concerns typical for schools. **Didactics** organizes institutionalized education in a programmatic/curricular way. By its speculative attitude, **pedagogy** generates a system of global education, aimed at man's becoming an integral part of human condition and integratable into it. Thus, its theory will focus on the unified man.

From the perspective of behavioral sciences, the stages represented by “the first seven years at home,” by “school education” and by the “professional activity” have a unitary configuration. Education expects educationalists to provide a guiding principle, and most importantly, a paradigm according to which they should rank their actions. If **pedagogy** wants to remain a science (of education), the only rescue relies in a passage from the descriptive to the projective. Description of what education was and still is, can only represent a support for a viable and credible paradigm. A theory based educational project would unify the idea of a social well being with that of an individual well being. Here are some suggestions for a (so badly needed) organizational model for education:

- Identification, for an educational purpose, of human resources that can alter the perspective regarding man's happiness in the group dynamics;
- Establishing a comprehensive personality profile that should include elements pertaining to character development, as well as factors derived from social normativity;

- A global organization of the educational contents, based on determining the relationship between freedom and constraint, science a dogma;
- Promoting new types of teaching/learning methods that should redeem the viability and dynamism of the educational program;
- Projecting a discourse of social evolution that should allow every person to occupy the place he deserves best, according to his profile and personality.

Instead of conclusions, or On human condition

This leads us to a definition of life itself. Man's life, argues Nicolae Mărgineanu, is "*the individual's process of adjustment to the world, aimed at preservation and development,*" and this process is based on "*an interaction between the individual, society and culture, by which man's existence in the world can be defined*" (N. Mărgineanu, 1973: 17). In the duplicity of his essence, man will bear the dramatic beauty of his existence. Although forced to make numerous concessions, ranging from the mental and natural aspirations of the individual to the aspirations and constraints of the social community, man will always be a happy Sisyphus. Society is the only institution that makes room for authentic manifestation of the human values, but in this way, individual's freedom are restricted and compensated with the community's rigors. **Education** is a form of compression that discriminates the individual's becoming positively. When speaking of *education*, we press forward a good portion of what the curriculum (visible or disguised) involves in terms of significance. Society educates the individual so as to integrate him in his representative logos and ethos. Consequently, a man has no significance except by his contribution to the community's harmony. In his *Republic*, Plato discusses the eternal forms in which Homer's characters would like to be reincarnated. Ajax wishes he were a lion, Orpheus would like to take on the shape of a swan, Agamemnon would rather be a vulture, but Ulysses wants nothing but a human form. He wants to become a man again because his destiny, that of wandering sailor, had given him the opportunity to taste both the satisfaction and the risks of action. He knows that man embodies the idea of evolution because experiences, whatever their nature, renew options and ennoble them.

Since I am in no position to organize *a team* able to bring into being such a doctrine, I shall merely draw attention to the

responsibilities of **pedagogy**, *compelled* by its epistemic status to find solutions that can improve human condition.

Furthermore, the present generation of educationalists must feel responsible regarding the labels stuck on their scientific domain: pedagogy, pedagogical sciences, educational sciences or sciences of education. In its condition of science of education, **pedagogy** is *now* in a position to either bring arguments and thus preserve its scientific *vocation*, or to linger on as mere *aspiration*, occasionally challenged by questions and arguments.

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