

## Indebted: Philosophy of education and educational cultural studies at the University of Gdańsk – foreword

The current issue of “Ars Educandi” is devoted to issues concerning the philosophy of education and research in the field of educational cultural studies. However, it is accompanied by highly significant life circumstances, and the texts published here – which would probably have appeared in some form anyway – were inspired by this important event. That is, after many years of service, the retirement of Prof. zw. dr hab. Tomasz Szkudlarek – a person who, at some stage in his intellectual life, has inspired every Author publishing in this issue. Some of them, and certainly those writing this introduction, could interpret meeting Professor Tomasz Szkudlarek as an event of philosophical stature – the event, according to Alain Badiou (2007). Meeting such a person, such a teacher and master as Tomasz Szkudlarek constitutes an event from the category of the adventurous, or even the impossible. However, it did happen. It happened and had transformative power. An emancipating force. It took the form of a materialistically conceived grace that befell us.

With retrospective certainty, we can conclude that the relations between us had the nature proposed by Jacques Rancière (1991) in his famous *Ignorant School Master*. Even though this thought was only just emerging and this form of cultivation, of intellectual culture, still seems alien to the Polish university, Tomasz Szkudlarek applied solutions straight out of Rancière. He was not an all-knowing master who, in his intellectual power deriving from the privilege and curse of an earlier birth, leaves the pupil a mediocre role of apprenticeship in the fetters of his own ignorance and incapacity. *Enforced stultification* as a solution specific to traditional education, as a result of the myth of unequal intelligences, was something we did not experience in our relationship with Tomasz Szkudlarek. For many, it was a refreshing change after years of being in the education system. All the more so because the intellectual adventure we went on concerned mostly education.

The current, twentieth issue of the scholarly yearbook “Ars Educandi” contains – in addition to this introduction – Joanna Rutkowiak’s manifesto and twelve scholarly papers. A unique feature of this issue consists in the drawings by Tomasz Szkudlarek, which we include as spacers between the texts. On the other hand, the papers have

been divided into three unequal parts in terms of text size. Firstly, there are seven texts concerning topics and methods similar to the philosophy of upbringing; these are texts with a theoretical character, in which the authors discuss pedagogical issues and those from related sciences. The four following texts present the results of empirical studies and can be placed in the field of educational cultural studies. Whereas the final text includes theological inclinations.

The opening text is Joanna Rutkowiak's manifesto *On educational dialogue – against burnout*, which – due to the form adopted – is easier to read than to summarise accurately and correctly.

Whereas Piotr Zamojski in his paper titled *To Apply, to Debunk, to Perform. Types and Uses of Educational Theory* asks how, at the metatheoretical level, education can be theorised in relation to the potential use of theory. Using (following Max Weber) the theory of ideal types, the author develops a typology of pedagogical theories in relation to their applicability, dividing theories into technical, critical and affirmative/performative. In doing so, Zamojski remains an advocate of a post-critical conception of education as a process – however imperfect – but one that is possible in its experience and practice.

Marcin Boryczko offers an article entitled *Decolonising social work. An analysis of theory in the perspective of the Legitimation Code Theory*, in which he argues for applying the postcolonial concept of decolonisation of the mind (following Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o) and Legitimation Codes Theory (following Karl Maton) to gain in-depth insights into social work's entanglement with processes of power. The paper also includes numerous examples of decolonisation-oriented social work. However, their significance is discussed in the perspective of the Legitimation Code Theory.

Piotr Kowzan writes about the pedagogical significance of geese. It was inspired by a competition including peculiar rewards organised by the Lviv School of Mathematics. A goose, which was one of the rewards for solving a mathematical problem, here becomes a symbol of intellectual problems which – although the very act of posing them may be a feat – cannot be solved at a given historical moment and are therefore passed on to the following generation. Kowzan's text is actually a case study that provides an in-depth insight into intergenerational intellectual bonding.

Agnieszka Woynarowska's article is entitled *Disability and work. Discursive constructions of exclusion and dissensus*. This article constitutes an example of successful philosophical inquiry at the border of pedagogy and *disability studies*. The author tackles the issue of work and employment in capitalist realities characterised by the exclusion of "unproductive bodies" that is crucial in special pedagogy. The author concludes by outlining (following Nancy Fraser) two conditions fulfilling which could bring contemporary society closer to greater justice concerning the issue at hand.

Jarosław Marzec, in his article entitled *The regress of culture, the end of the future and the end of development – reading culture with Bauman and Wilber*, proposes a reflection on the status of the future in contemporary culture marked – according to the author – by a process of regression. Marzec’s text fits perfectly into the procedure of reading one author’s works through another in the formula long proposed by Jacques Lacan (1989) with his famous text *Kant with Sade*. Mutual readings of Zygmunt Bauman and Ken Wilber provide some unusual insights into the phenomenon of the withering away of the notion of the future.

Monika Popow has included a text in the current issue under the title *Learning in the process of civilisation. An attempt of pedagogical reading of selected themes in Norbert Elias’ theory*. It constitutes an example of successfully combining issues in the philosophy of education and the history of ideas. The author draws on Norbert Elias’ reflections concerning the development of civilisation, which is identified with eliminating violence between individuals and reducing social asymmetries. In doing so, the opposing civilisational dynamic described as a process of decivilisation is emphasised. Popow makes an argument about the intertwining of these two dynamics in relation to educational phenomena.

The following article was proposed by Beata Karpińska-Musiał and is entitled: *Motion between the Stage and the Foyer: discursive shifts of the subjectivity of didactics in scientific narratives*. The author makes an attempt to look at the status of didactics from the perspective of the subjective use of selected categories from the field of Critical Discourse Analysis. In the course of the argument, Karpińska-Musiał proposes to unravel the question of the status of didactics by applying Szkudlarek’s understanding of the identity of an individual, with particular reference to the notion of the “subject in drift”. The author then develops this concept towards the notion idea of “semantic drift” to conclude with the hegemonic role of scientific discourses depreciating the status of didactics.

The section dedicated to educational cultural studies opens with an article by Lucyna Kopciwicz entitled: *“It was winter that finished Gierek’s government” – climate narratives of two generations of women*. The text constitutes a partial research report of a qualitative study concerning the image of climate change in the narratives of two generations of women. The article presents extensive research material. In the conclusion, the author discusses the relevance of a pedagogical response to the climate crisis, when this response comes down to implementing the demand for sound education. Such a response seems, according to Kopciwicz, to be inscribed in apparent actions, since knowledge concerning the climate crisis is already there and has the character of biographical knowledge, both critical and adaptive.

Piotr Stańczyk in his paper entitled *Pornland school communications. Images of schools in mainstream porn* also presents a partial research report. The author undertakes an attempt to reconstruct the images of the school found in the image-texts created by porn cultures. Stańczyk accepts the premise (following Lech Nijakowski) that pornography is a mirror of society, and also (following Ludwig

Wittgenstein) that there is a family resemblance between the real school and the school in porn cultures. The author concludes that the genre characterisation of pornography has the effect of highlighting the violent nature of the school, which may account for the unintentionally oppositional nature of porn cultures.

For this issue, Jarosław Jendza proposed a text entitled *Symbolic inversion in the narratives of Montessori practitioners – additions to the Discursive Construction of the Subject*. The article constitutes a partial research report on how Montessori teachers experience their professional reality. The author directly refers to the results of research concerning the discursive construction of the subject conducted by a team led by Szkudlarek (Cackowska et al. 2012), as well as his insights into the “unusual school” (Szkudlarek 1992). After analysing the presented empirical material concerning inversion present in Montessori schools, the author interprets the particular case represented by the example of Szkudlarek’s “unusual school”. An analysis of a day on which a child’s birthday is celebrated leads Jendza to raise fundamental questions concerning the status of a child in Montessori education.

The final text we include in the section on educational cultural studies is an article by Adam Jabłoński – at the time of closing this issue, the last doctoral student of Professor Tomasz Szkudlarek. The author proposes the article *Violence-help as a pedagogical category. Part I. About the violent role of the teacher*. This is the initial part of a longer text, which we could not include in its entirety due to publishing requirements. On the other hand, the length of the text results from the Author’s particular ability to tell stories. In his ethnographic tale, Jabłoński takes us to an Irish school where stories reminiscent of Dickensian prose happen. Jabłoński’s story is structured by the notion of *violence-help* proposed by the author, which problematises both the role of the school and the duties of the teacher and educator.

The issue closes with a text by Mirosław Patalon – one of Tomasz Szkudlarek’s first doctoral students. Patalon, in an article at the intersection of philosophy of education, theology, and translation studies, attempts to answer the title question: *Do we need new translations of classical source texts?* The author gives an affirmative answer based on a comparison of translations of the *Ecclesiastes*. In his conclusion, Patalon emphasises the significance of knowing the texts from which the roots of contemporary culture grow.

Freely referring to Rancière (1991: 77): therefore, as independent forms of intelligence we move in the free orbits of our intellectual journeys. Due to the far-reaching relativity of language and the diversity of experience, our trajectories only occasionally intersect, although we gravitate towards the truth, we gravitate towards the material centre of our universe. At a certain stage in our lives, such an ability to attract our trajectories was demonstrated by Tomasz Szkudlarek. Perhaps not much has changed in the universe, but a lot has changed in our lives.

We are intellectually indebted to Szkudlarek. Just as Karl Marx was indebted to Hegel, the Frankfurters were indebted to Marx, while American critical educators to Frankfurters and Paul Freire. Now we also want to offset part of this debt.

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## Literature

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