

Introduction

We hope you will enjoy the present, already fourteenth volume of the annual *Ars Educandi*, examining topics focusing on socio-cultural and political determinants behind the development and functioning of contemporary people. This year's 35th anniversary of the Polish Pedagogical Society, as discussed in the text by Professor Joanna Rutkowiak from Józef Rusiecki Olsztyn University College, fits this topical line very well. The Polish Pedagogical Society substantially contributes to the development of pedagogy as a diverse scientific discipline, which, comprising many subdisciplines drawing from other sciences, including psychology, sociology, philosophy, and political science, tries to solve problems of contemporary people taking interdisciplinary perspective on an ongoing basis. The Society has clearly determined statutory objectives, which are the foundations behind its huge achievements and indicate the direction for further actions – a direction connected with a much greater than previously activity consisting in the introduction of pedagogical thought facilitating the change of education understood as a social movement and a social project to the general public.

Today's reality is marked by a high level of changes and their unprecedented dynamics in virtually all spheres of human life. What is equally interesting, the use of the term "reality" in singular seems to be not entirely correct at present. At very early stages of their development, people become active participants in not only real, but also virtual reality. Our education, exploration of the world and meeting people largely take place with the help of the so-called new technologies. The internet, not long ago available only to the very few in Poland, and requiring appropriate financial resources, has suddenly become ubiquitous. Along with new opportunities, new threats have appeared. The virtual space has taken possession of contemporary people. It is there that they establish relationships with others, look for support and the sense of community, sense of closeness. Is this the right direction? Does it foster a positive functioning of human beings and build their mental well-being? Does it therefore become necessary to mobilise all actions to "drag" today's people back to the real reality, where interpersonal communication and direct contact with others allow one to experience their emotions, and thus correctly interpret and understand one's own emotional states?

It is worth noticing that researchers keep looking for effective solutions and develop new projects and programmes, attempting to combine the virtual and the real world so that it creates a safe environment for people to live at all stages of their

development. For many years now we have been living not only in Poland, but also in the European Union, and are its integral part, drawing on the cultural, social, and economic wealth of other UE member states. Similar actions apply to the world of theory and practice. Pedagogy is a science with a very rich theoretical background, but also an equally strong practical drive, and a diverse array of methodological tools helping us to discover and understand the social reality.

The articles published in this volume of *Ars Educandi* refer to all the above-mentioned issues. The annual contains texts from the area of pedagogy and, more broadly, social sciences, which at the same time do not fence themselves off from other disciplines. To understand the world that surrounds us and the phenomena taking place within it, we need to adopt an interdisciplinary perspective.

The current achievements of pedagogy would not be possible without the activity of certain persons who, sadly, are no longer with us. Professor Teresa Bauman, a long-standing head of the Unit of Didactics, Institute of Pedagogy, University of Gdansk, is one of them. However, complex and difficult as it is today, the world of science does offer a chance for researchers to remain present in their publications, projects, and thoughts of the subsequent generations of students and scholars. Hence, we have an opportunity to use the scientific achievements of Professor Teresa Bauman, as presented by Katarzyna Wajszczyk.

This volume offers texts containing culture-related, philosophical and pedagogical analyses of the contemporaneity, which however do not remain in opposition to historical references. The annual is opened up by the already mentioned essay by Joanna Rutkowiak concerning the 35th anniversary of the foundation of the Polish Pedagogical Society taking place in 2016. The subsequent text by Piotr Zamojski presents some very interesting and inspiring reflections on the theory and its references to the surrounding world in the context of broadly understood education. Jolanta Dyrda's paper leaves the readers in the area of education, albeit one particularly devoted to children with special educational needs. The author's critical attitude makes it possible for her to notice many new opportunities of work with such charges. Agnieszka Sojka transfers the readers to the area in which questions are posed concerning the gist of sociocultural animation and reflections related to it, directing attention to the huge significance of the staff teaching future animators. In turn, Sława Grzechnik focuses on styles of communication implemented by teachers in verbal interactions with their pupils, i.e. interpersonal communication in gender perspective. The next text, authored by Piotr Prósinowski and Piotr Krzywdziński, discusses the closeness of the real world to the virtual one and their close relationship in the context of enculturation and educational potential of video games. Agnieszka Budnik's text *Prawa osób z niepełnosprawnością intelektualną w świetle europejskiego i polskiego ustawodawstwa* [Rights of People with Intellectual Disability in the Light of European and Polish Law] presents issues related to the functioning of this group of people from the legal point of view, while indicating how to create and organise effective forms of assistance to people with decreased intellectual capacity.

The author of the subsequent paper, Przemysław Szczygieł, transfers the readers to the times of Francisco Franco's dictatorship, presenting issues related to the Spanish (Castilian) educational policy in relation to Catalonia of the time. This section of the periodical is closed by Tomasz Nowicki's text *Zoo jako projekt socjalizacyjny* [The Zoo as a Socialisation Project]. Using metaphorical approach, the author presents a trip to the zoo as a historical journey to the very source of the manner of cognition he indicates, as well as questions concerning the meaning given to representation of animals. According to the author, just like a panopticon, the tradition of existence of zoological gardens and the discourse developed around them teaches that the production of objectivity, i.e. normativity, is a process of the construction of conditions of human look as a knowledge-power relation.

The content of this volume is supplemented with reports concerning two selected scientific events that took place at the Faculty of the Social Sciences, University of Gdansk, during the first half of 2017, and a review of the book *Więcej niż teatr. Sztuka zaangażowana i angażująca wychowawczo – Romany Miller inspiracje dla współczesnej pedagogiki* [More Than Theatre. Pedagogically Engaged and Engaging Art – Romana Miller's Inspirations for Contemporary Pedagogy] (Gdańsk 2017). The said publication is a collective work devoted to the achievements of Professor Romana Miller connected with Gdansk pedagogical environment, with particular focus on her theory of theatre education.

The first presented scientific event is the symposium *Education: What for and Why?*, which took place on 12–13 June 2017, and was organized in cooperation with dr. Tony F. Carusi (Massey University, New Zealand). The symposium was designed as an attempt at a revitalization of the network SCAPE (Studies of Conflict, Culture & the Political in Education). Another scientific event discussed is the three-day series of lectures by Professor Gert Biesta based on his publication *Beautiful Risk of Education*, held on 1–3 March 2017.

We are providing you with this year's volume of *Ars Educandi* hoping that it will inspire you to reflect on today's world, its resources, deficits, and, above all, the contemporary people, who never cease to astound theoreticians or practitioners, motivating them to create new scientific projects.

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